# Marshall Memo 554

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
September 29, 2014

## In This Issue:



## Quotes of the Week

"We don't know what the future holds for our students, but we do know that they will have to think critically, make connections, and communicate clearly."
Denise Cassano (see item #1)

"*Always* overplan. It's better to run out of time than to run short on a lesson.
Rebecca Alber (see item #7)

"Cheating is an immense and complex problem that damages both the integrity of the perpetrator and assumptions about the quality of education."
Susan Taylor (see item #6)

"Today's 'science of talk' tells us, then, that it's not about how much talk children and youth hear that influences their reading development, but the substance, the *matter* of that talk. This is actually in stark contrast to what we used to think – that it was all about how many words parents used with young children. And now we know that this is about educators, too."
Nonie Lesaux (see item #8)

"You can have plenty of grit, and multiple wits, but they need to be directed towards becoming a good person, a good worker, and a good citizen."
Howard Gardner (see item #8)

"There's a 'triple helix' of good work and good citizenship: excellence, ethics, and engagement."
Howard Gardner (*ibid.*)

## 1. Using Art to Get Students Thinking and Creating

"We don't know what the future holds for our students, but we do know that they will have to think critically, make connections, and communicate clearly," says artist/educator Denise Cassano in this *Edutopia* article. She describes how she had her sixth-grade students examine Winslow Homer's painting, *The Gulf Stream*, which depicts a young black sailor in a small boat in a stormy sea surrounded by sharks.

"What's happening?" she asked, and students came up with a number of observations: *He's a slave trying to escape. He's a fisherman lost at sea. The boat looks rickety. He's going to be eaten by the sharks*. Then a quiet, shy girl raised her hand and said, "It's OK, he'll be fine. The ship will save him." Everyone was mystified by this statement until the girl walked up to the painting and pointed out that in the top left-hand corner, almost out of sight in the distance, was a ship.

"This revelation changed the tone and content of the conversation that followed," says Cassano. "Some thought it was the ship that would save him. Others thought it was the ship that cast him off to his death. Would the storm, sharks, or ship get him?" Students argued these and other points of view – and then, stimulated and enriched by the discussion, wrote about them.

Drawing on this experience, Cassano suggests a three-step process to use great works of art to enhance students' powers of observation and expression:

• *Observe*. "Asking students to look carefully and observe the image is fundamental to deep, thoughtful writing," she says. Use works of art that have many details, interesting human or animal characters, colors that convey a mood, and an interesting interplay between the foreground and background. Help students go beyond "I like it" by asking:

- What shapes do you see? Do they remind you of anything?
- What colors do you see? How do those colors make you feel?
- What patterns do you see? How are they made?
- Do you see any unusual textures? What do they represent?
- What is the focal point of the image? How did the artist bring your attention to it? How did the artist create the illusion of space in the image?
- If you were living in the picture and could look all around you, what would you see? What would you smell? What would you hear?

At this point, ask students to make observations, not inferences or judgments, and record what they say.

• *Make inferences*. The next question is, "What is happening?" – this challenges students to interpret the image and give specific reasons for what they say. For example, a student might conclude that the storm has passed, judging from the damage to the boat. Cassano suggests:

- Give adequate wait-time so students can think and reflect.
- Ask students to listen to, think about, and react to each others' ideas.
- Highlight specific details to focus on – characters, facial expressions, objects, time of day, weather, colors, etc.
- Explain literal versus symbolic meaning – for example, a spider's web can be a spider's web – or it can symbolize a trap.

It's important to keep your questions short and to the point so students are doing most of the talking and thinking.

• *Create*. Now that students are abuzz with ideas, get students working. Cassano suggests these steps for younger students;

- Locate and describe shapes and patterns.
- Describe time of day and mood.
- Make a detailed character sketch of a person, animal, or inanimate object.
- Write a story based on this image including a brand-new character.
- Suggest specific vocabulary that must be incorporated in their story.

For older students:

- Write down the possible meanings of the image, swap with a partner, and persuade your partner to believe that your story is the correct one.
- Identify characters and their motives. Who are they and what do they want? Give details.
- Pretend that you are in the image and describe what you see, smell, feel, and hear.
- Describe the details that are just outside the image – the ones you can't see.
- Introduce dialogue into your story. What are the characters saying?
- Sequence the events of the story. What happened five minute before this scene, what is happening now, and what happens five minutes later? How do you know?
- Write from the perspective of one of the characters in the image.
- Explain who is the protagonist and who is the antagonist. What is their conflict?

"Inspire Thoughtful Creative Writing Through Art" by Denise Cassano in *Edutopia*, August 7, 2014, http://bit.ly/1tbbdJF

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## 2. A High-School English Teacher Takes on the N-Word

In this article in *Rethinking Schools*, Portland, Oregon teacher Michelle Kenney describes how she prepares her diverse 10th and 11th graders to deal with the n-word before reading *Fences*, August Wilson's play about an African-American family in 1940s Pittsburgh.

• First, she asks them to write about the word. "This is not the first time that a middle-aged, white English teacher in sensible shoes tried to get down and dirty over a sensitive

subject," says Kenney. Students sigh and roll their eyes, but they write earnestly for ten minutes and are ready with their opinions when she asks, "So, what do you know?" "It's a derogatory word for black people," says one student. "It's a bad word," says another. "No, it was only bad a long time ago, until rappers started using it," says another. "It's not a big deal anymore, Ms. Kenney," says another. "We have a black president now, and things aren't racist anymore."

• Kenney then shows the first 30 minutes of "Awakenings," the lead-off episode of *Eyes on the Prize*, a documentary about the U.S. Civil Rights Movement. The images of lynchings and the face of murdered Emmett Till, and then a description of the trial that followed, are disturbing.

• The next day, Kenney has students take notes in two columns as she shows "Funeral for the N-Word," a CNN report on the symbolic burial of the n-word by the NAACP in 2010 and a debate between Michael Eric Dyson and Roland Martin. Kenney pauses the video at several points to paraphrase the fast-moving dialogue, model note-taking using a document camera, and explain words that students may not know, including "term of endearment." Kenney then shows a clip of Maya Angelou scolding rappers Snoop Dogg and Kanye West for their use of the word, a discussion between Oprah Winfrey and Jay Z about whether black people "have taken the power out of the word," and a clip of Richard Sherman, a football player with the Seattle Seahawks, talking about the use of the word "thug."

• The following day, Kenney has students break into three groups according to the opinion they are forming and stand in different parts of the room: those who think it's okay to use the n-word; those who think it is never okay; and those who think it is okay for some people to use it, but maybe only some of the time. She asks each group to take five minutes to pool their notes and evidence from the videos they'd seen and prepare for a class discussion.

• She then leads a debate with the usual ground rules about interrupting and decorum – and the additional requirement that the word itself not be used. "Everyone had an opinion, and no one was shy about expressing it," says Kenney. "You should never use the word," says a white student who had previously thought the opposite. "It makes black people remember bad times." "How do you know?" replies a black student. "We're not all the same. Anyway, a lot of black people use it all the time." "You can't tell us not to use it," says another. "It's a term of endearment, like that guy in the tape said. We took the word back." "Even white or Asian people can sometimes say it around black people if they're all good friends," says another. "Not all black people like it," says another. "My grandma says not to use it. She thinks it's vulgar, like that old lady said on the YouTube thing."

• Kenney then sends students back to their seats, has them brainstorm a list of criteria for a persuasive essay, and asks them to write about the use of the n-word in modern U.S. culture. Students work in silence for 40 minutes.

• She then asks students to share the "hottest" parts of their essays, again refraining from using the actual word. "Even though I always enjoy student writing," she says, "this time I was blown away by their ability to weave their own stories and experiences into solid and well-developed arguments using the evidence they gathered." A Latina student says the word should

disappear. "According to Oprah, the word is ugly and hurtful to a generation that fought and fought to get rid of the word so that people would stop thinking about them differently and labeling them that way." "These days, the n-word has replaced 'friend' and 'buddy,'" says another. "There is no longer any malice in the word." "If you ban the n-word, racist people will only come up with a new word like 'thug,'" says another. "Overall, my relationship with the word is like my room's lightbulb flickering on and off," says a mixed-race student.

• It's finally time to begin reading August Wilson's play, and Kenney leads a discussion on how to handle the use of the n-word as they read and perform *Fences* in the weeks ahead. She requests that the actual word not be used and several students challenge her. "What happened to taking the word back?" asks an African-American student. Kenney replies, "Yeah, sure, I'm white, and that makes me feel a little awkward teaching a lesson like this. Plus, like Oprah, I'm older, and I was around when the word was only a derogatory term. I'm not telling you to never say the word, but I am trying to point out the difficulty of using, even reading out loud, such a sensitive word in a classroom… I'm willing to bet that no one would want to hear it from me. Anybody?"

Students silently agree to the pact, and they plunge into the play, deciding who would read which parts. "Maybe no one but me noticed," Kenney concludes, "but as we settled into Act I, the atmosphere gradually relaxed and lightened, the same way it does when you open a window and let some air into a hot and stuffy room."

"Teaching the N-Word" by Michelle Kenney in *Rethinking Schools*, Fall 2014 (Vol. 29, #1, p. 19-23), no e-link available; Kenney can be reached at mkenney45@gmail.com.

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## 3. Key Insights on Vocabulary Instruction

In this article in *The Reading Teacher*, Patrick Manyak (University of Wyoming) and a team of educators from Wyoming, Colorado, Missouri, and Illinois report on their insights from the federally funded MCVIP Project (a comprehensive, multifaceted vocabulary instruction program) in grade 4-5 classrooms. The researchers start with these findings:

- Many children, especially those from low-income and non-English-speaking families, enter school with large deficits in English vocabulary knowledge.
- Most schools have been unable to overcome those disadvantages.
- A deficit in vocabulary knowledge is a major obstacle to academic achievement in vital areas such as reading comprehension.
- It takes a multiyear, high-quality instructional program to overcome serious vocabulary deficits.
- The average high-school student knows about 40,000 words, which means that students must learn many more word meanings than teachers can explicitly teach. In other words, vocabulary instruction needs to be multifaceted – teaching individual words, developing word learning strategies, and fostering word consciousness.
- Teachers should vary their vocabulary-teaching strategies depending on the nature of the words they are teaching – for example, a word like *peninsula* can be taught fairly

easily by showing a visual image, but a word like *democracy* is abstract and requires a good deal of knowledge-building to understand.

- Teaching dictionary definitions of words is ineffective; students need to see words in a variety of contexts, see them a number of times, and actively process new meanings.

Manyak and colleagues then propose four specific strategies for effective vocabulary instruction, each of which takes a significant amount of class time:

• *First, establish efficient yet rich routines for introducing target words*. MCVIP teachers taught 12 high-priority target word meanings a week using these steps: (a) Present the word in context; (b) Provide a kid-friendly definition; (c) Provide multiple examples of the use of the word; (d) Get students thinking about and using the word; (e) Show and briefly discuss a visual image that illustrates the word; and (f) Conclude with a thought question or a quick interactive activity. It took some time before MCVIP teachers mastered the art of moving briskly through the steps.

• *Second, provide review experiences that promote deep processing of target words*. Teachers put target words on a vocabulary word wall and had students compare and contrast word meanings, tease out nuances of meanings, use words in writing, or apply target words while analyzing texts, characters, and concepts. They suggest these classroom activities: (a) Connect Two; students find two words on the word wall that are connected and explain the links; (b) Two-in-One: students write one or more sentences using two or more of the target words, and other students evaluate the usage of the words in the sentences; (c) Character Trait Writing: students choose a word that describes a character trait and write two or three sentences about how it fits a character in a current or past narrative text; and (d) Concept Word Précis Writing: students choose a word and explain it in writing in under 15 words, and other students evaluate their explanations.

• *Third, respond directly to student confusion by using anchor experiences*. The researchers found that students struggled to learn many words, especially the finer points of definitions. "Without correction or amplification," say the authors, "these misunderstandings can spread." For example, one group of fourth graders learning the word *perceptive* (definition: "You see, feel, and understand things that other people don't") latched onto a narrow, concrete element – what a character actually *saw* – and failed to grasp the broader meaning. It was important for teachers to diagnose students' incomplete understanding, insist on fuller comprehension, and follow up immediately with concrete anchor experiences and kid-friendly definitions.

• *Foster universal participation and accountability*. The researchers noticed that teachers tended to focus on excellent responses from their "vocabulary virtuosos" – students who had more extensive word knowledge and participated eagerly in discussions – and failed to recognize that many other students were passive and not grasping the new words. "Over time," say the authors, "we began to sense that the non-virtuosos were less engaged in and felt less accountable for learning new word meanings." So they urged teachers to get all students discussing words in pairs and then cold-calling students in whole-class discussions. "This

structuring of participation made clear that all students were capable of and responsible for learning and using the target words," say the researchers.

"Four Practical Principles for Enhancing Vocabulary Instruction" by Patrick Manyak, Heather Von Gunten, David Autenrieth, Carolyn Gillis, Julie Mastre-O'Farrell, Elizabeth Irvine-McDermott, James Baumann, and Camille Blachowicz in *The Reading Teacher*, September 2014 (Vol. 68, #1, p. 13-23), http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/trtr.1299/abstract; Manyak can be reached at pmanyak@uwyo.edu.

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## 4. Adapting Interactive Writing for Grades 2-5

In this article in *The Reading Teacher*, literacy consultants Kate Roth and Joan Dabrowski say that interactive writing, a strategy usually associated with the primary grades, can be refined and used as an effective approach for meeting Common Core literacy standards in grades 2-5, helping students become more proficient at:

- Writing opinions and arguments with text-based evidence;
- Writing informational pieces that consider complex ideas and topics;
- Writing narratives filled with details and well-structured sequences.

"Moreover," say Roth and Dabrowski, "we believe that the writing demands of the Common Core standards require explicit and efficient teaching guidance, which is at the heart of interactive writing."

In the primary grades, interactive writing lessons involve the teacher "sharing the pen" as the class composes and writes a short piece, strategically calling on students to come up and do most of the actual writing on an easel sheet. The essential components of interactive writing lessons are: (a) Choosing a shared classroom experience to write about – for example, content from social studies or something that happened on a field trip; (b) Prewriting – thinking about the audience, the overall message, and why it's important; (c) Composing the message, with the teacher synthesizing the ideas students are suggesting and proposing how to express them, ultimately formulating the actual sentence; (d) Sharing the pen, with students and teacher taking turns writing letters and words on chart paper, taking note of letters, spelling, punctuation, and meaning; (e) Review, with the teacher pointing out examples of principles explicitly taught during the lesson, such as having a student come up and find a word that ends with *–ing* or saying, "Today we used a question for our lead. It was a good choice because it will immediately get our audience interested in our writing. We also focused on adding *–ed* to words to show the story already happened," and finally, (f) Extend, with the class continuing to use the completed piece as an instructional tool – for example, mounting it on the wall to make a class book or mural that students can re-read regularly.

"Interactive writing helps young children make progress in their own writing by inviting them to participate, *with support*, in the act of writing," say Roth and Dabrowski. "Theoretically, this makes sense for older writers as well." But they believe it needs to be adapted in four ways:

• *First, the lesson sequence is more fluid and dynamic*. Older students might write several sentences or whole paragraphs in one interactive writing session. "To do this, the class would move back and forth between the composing and constructing phases," say Roth and Dabrowski. "They would negotiate the precise message sentence by sentence and then share the pen after each sentence is decided. Then they compose and then write again."

• *Second, elements of share the pen are modified*. In the upper grades, the pace is quicker, with students writing several words or an entire phrase and the teacher writing high-frequency words to move things along. Punctuation, spelling, and grammar can be discussed before a sentence is written. "Are there any tricky words to spell?" the teacher might ask, or "What do we need to think about for punctuating this sentence?" or "Is there anything we need to think extra carefully about when writing this sentence?" The passage can also be composed on a keyboard and displayed on a screen, with the teacher sharing the keyboard with students.

• *Third, lessons decrease in frequency while increasing in length*. Instead of asking students, "What will we write about in interactive writing today?" upper-grade teachers ask themselves, "What do I need to teach my students about writing today, this week, or within this unit of study, and how will the method of interactive writing help support this writing principle?" Interactive writing lessons typically take 10-15 minutes in the primary grades but might last 20-30 minutes in the upper grades.

• *Fourth, teaching points expand and extend around genres*. In grades 2-5, the focus on genre expands and often becomes the central goal of the lesson, say Roth and Dabrowski. Aiming toward mastery of opinion writing, explanatory pieces, and narratives, interactive writing might focus on organizing reasons in third grade; writing with clarity, grouping ideas, and writing conclusions in fourth grade; and strengthening opinion writing in fifth grade with logically grouped ideas and logically ordered reasons supported by facts and details. In interactive writing lessons, students can receive detailed, in-the-moment guidance on all the elements of good writing.

Roth and Dabrowski suggest these points for getting started with interactive writing in the upper elementary grades:

- Teach routines first, for example, telling students to come up to the easel quickly when it's their turn and standing to the side so others can see what's being written.
- Consider the time of day to deliver the lesson, since students need to be highly focused.
- Create a comfortable space near writing resources. "Interactive writing is a community experience with teachers and students working together as a group to produce a written text," say Roth and Dabrowski. "The physical environment is important for bringing everyone together in supporting the shared nature of the task."
- Use highly visible materials – for example, chart paper with lines, appropriate line spacing, and easy-to-read markers.
- Prepare to make thoughtful teaching decisions. Teachers need to come into interactive writing lessons with a clear idea of what students are doing well and where they need support – while keeping in mind the ambitious goals of the Common Core standards.

- Keep all students engaged. To accomplish this, interactive writing lessons need to be fast-paced and relatively brief and pull all students into the content and process. One idea is to have all students writing on individual dry-erase boards.
- Be patient with yourself. "It typically takes a class several weeks to find a natural rhythm in interactive writing," conclude Roth and Dabrowski. "As classroom routines become more secure, teachers are able to home in on their instruction, refining it to better meet the needs of their students."

"Extending Interactive Writing Into Grades 2-5" by Kate Roth and Joan Dabrowski in *The Reading Teacher*, September 2014 (Vol. 68, #1, p. 33-44), http://bit.ly/10fZORO; the authors can be reached at kate_roth@post.harvard.edu and joandabrowski@gmail.com.

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## 5. A Teacher Decides to Dump Her Weekly Reading Logs

In this article in *The Reading Teacher*, Illinois teacher Sarah Davis says that for several years, she had students keep a reading log to hold them accountable for reading after school. Over time, she decided to eliminate the required parent signature and began to ask students to write briefly about what they were reading. She intended the logs to take very little of students' time and de-emphasized the role they played in grades.

But there was a problem. "My students were completing the reading log assignment," she says, "but they were considering their *reading* an assignment as well. Even if they were enjoying their books, they did not consider themselves to be reading for pleasure." One week, Davis didn't assign a reading log and a student protested that he'd read an entire book and hadn't received credit. He clearly felt he'd done a lot of work for nothing, even though he'd clearly enjoyed the book.

This was a turning point for Davis. "I immediately began looking for ways to keep my students reading outside of school without stifling their enjoyment of it," she said. Here's what she did:

- She eliminated the reading logs altogether.
- She held her students accountable for their reading by asking students to tell their current book and page number during independent reading.
- She had students participate in Book Buzz once a week – they wrote a focused reflection on what they were reading and shared the reflection with classmates.

"I am gaining the same information as I did from the reading logs," says Davis, "but the students provide the information in class. They are excited to get rid of the reading logs. They recognize that I am asking them to do the same amount of work, but it is no longer on their own time. My hope is that not only will my students continue to read, but they will see it as nothing more than a pleasurable experience."

"Rethinking Reading Logs" by Sarah Davis in *The Reading Teacher*, September 2014 (Vol. 68, #1, p. 45), http://bit.ly/1BxroFn

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## 6. Preventing and Confronting Plagiarism

In this article in *The Journal of Adventist Education*, Susan Taylor (Andrews University) describes the increase of students hiring online ghostwriters to write term papers and plagiarizing content from the Internet. "Cheating is an immense and complex problem that damages both the integrity of the perpetrator and assumptions about the quality of education," says Taylor. "Ill-prepared students can wreak mayhem in their careers." It's essential for teachers to seek out and confront dishonest practices. Here are her suggestions:

• Make sure students know the rules for citing references, understand when they have crossed the line to plagiarism, and what the consequences of dishonest practices will be.

• Stress the actual process of learning and doing versus grades and competition. When students choose their topic, are passionate about their work, collaborate with peers, and care about developing competence, they're less likely to cheat.

• Early each semester, have students produce a baseline sample of their writing in one or more in-class essays; this can be compared to out-of-class writing to detect differences in style and proficiency.

• Have students submit an outline and sources for term papers a few weeks before each paper is due and conference with students on their progress.

• Require that part of each paper is completed in class or in the library under the supervision of the teacher or an assistant, and review drafts before the final version.

• Have students work in pairs to complete papers and require interim reports on progress.

• Use plagiarism detection software like Turnitin to spot copied material (although programs like this can't spot ghostwritten material).

"Term Papers for Hire: How to Deter Academic Dishonesty" by Susan Taylor in *The Journal of Adventist Education*, February/March 2014 (Vol. 76, p. 34-41), spotted in *Education Digest*, October 2014 (Vol. 80, #2, p. 52-57), no e-links available

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## 7. Classroom Management 101

"I made a good number of blunders my first year teaching that still make me cringe," says Rebecca Alber in this *Edutopia* article. Here's what she learned on her way to becoming an effective teacher:

• *Always have a well-designed, engaging lesson*. If you don't have a plan for them, they'll have one for you, says Alber: "*Always* overplan. It's better to run out of time than to run short on a lesson… Bored students equal trouble!"

• *Use a normal, natural voice*. "Raising your voice to get students' attention is not the best approach, and the stress it causes and the vibe it puts in the room just isn't worth it," says Alber. "The students will mirror your voice level, so avoid using that semi-shouting voice. If we want kids to talk at a normal, pleasant volume, we must do the same." It's also a good idea to vary voice tone appropriately: use a declarative, matter-of-fact tone when giving directions, an inviting, conversational tone when asking questions.

• *Speak only when students are quiet and ready*. Sometimes this requires some excruciating wait-time until all students are tuned in – it's worth the wait. Ideally, students do the work of getting everyone paying attention: "Sshh, she's trying to tell us something!" "Come on, stop talking!" "Hey guys, be quiet!"

• *Establish non-verbal quiet-down routines*. Alber suggests three: You raise your hand and students raise theirs until everyone is focused; turn the lights off and on to let students know they have three minutes to finish up; and clap three times and students clap twice in response.

• *Address behavior issues quickly and wisely*. "Bad feelings – on your part or the students – can so quickly grow from molehills into mountains," says Alber, so deal with them promptly. If the disruption must be addressed during instruction, a positive approach works best – "It looks like you have a question" rather than "Why are you off task and talking?" If the problem can be handled a little later in the hallway or after class, suppressing your anger and asking a naïve question can be effective: "How might I help you?" rather than an accusation. With student-student conflicts, meeting at lunch can be helpful, along with using neutral language, acting as a mediator, and trying to resolve the problem – or at least reach an agreeable truce.

"5 Quick Classroom-Management Tips for Novice Teachers" by Rebecca Alber in *Edutopia*, updated September 12, 2014, http://bit.ly/1rvvmfk

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## 8. Eight 8-Minute Talks by Harvard Education Professors

At a recent event at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, eight faculty members gave super-brief talks on a variety of hot topics. You can view the talks in full at this link: http://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/14/09/8x8-hgse-faculty-share-their-bold-ideas-improve-education

• Paul Reville: *Getting to "All Means All"* – What can we learn from the failure of education reform, so far, to deliver on the promise to bring high-quality education to all? asks Reville. How can we get past demography being destiny?

• Karen Brennan: *Getting Unstuck* – Helping students and teachers move beyond using social media and use computers more powerfully. Brennan describes using ScratchEd, a platform for creating projects, and students' problem-solving strategies when they're stuck.

• Todd Rose: *The End of Average* – What neuroscientists have found about how differently people remember and process information, leading to the conclusion that we can't understand individual brains by using group averages. The same goes for how we deal with students; we must treat them as individuals, which we now can do better with recent advances in classroom technology.

• Bridget Terry Long: *Nudging Students to Success* – The gaps between low-income and higher-income students being admitted to and succeeding in college are still as wide as they were 40 years ago, says Long. She describes strategies for giving disadvantaged students the information they need for college success, starting years before they apply.

• Tom Kane: *Learning What Works* – The U.S. labor market has changed in recent decades, and schools haven't kept up with the task of preparing students for the changed world. What strategies will work, and how can we develop them quickly? asks Kane.

• Karen Mapp: *Linking Family Engagement to Learning* – Relationships between schools and families have to be relational, interactive, collaborative, developmental, and linked to what students are learning, says Mapp, so that families can be more effective supporting learning at home. In particular, Mapp is critical of traditional open-house meetings in schools.

• Nonie Lesaux: *A Matter of Talk* – "Today's 'science of talk' tells us, then, that it's not about how much talk children and youth hear that influences their reading development," says Lesaux, "but the substance, the *matter* of that talk. This is actually in stark contrast to what we used to think – that it was all about how many words parents used with young children. And now we know that this is about educators, too." The words that teachers use in classrooms are essential to developing students' vocabulary and conceptual knowledge, she says, yet the use of complex vocabulary varies greatly from teacher to teacher. Her research shows that teachers who use a greater number of conceptual words per day boost their students' reading achievement significantly more than teachers who use simpler words – and than many programs and curriculum packages. What's more, teachers can rapidly improve their use of more-conceptual words once they are made aware of this insight.

• Howard Gardner: *Beyond Wit and Grit* – Our understanding of "wit" has been expanded to include multiple intelligences, says Gardner, and we now realize the importance of "grit" – the cluster of non-cognitive skills. But these are not enough. Gardner believes we also need a moral dimension. "You can have plenty of grit, and multiple wits," he says, "but they need to be directed towards becoming a good person, a good worker, and a good citizen… There's a 'triple helix' of good work and good citizenship: excellence, ethics, and engagement."

"8x8: HGSE Faculty Members Share Their Bold Ideas to Improve Education" September 19, 2014 (see above for the link)

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## 9. Short Items:

***a. The Out of Eden walk*** – Journalist Paul Salopek is retracing the route taken by early humans from East Africa through the Middle East, across Asia, and down the Americas to Terra de Fuego. "Moving at the slow beat of his footsteps," says his website, "Paul is engaging with the major stories of our time – from climate change to technological innovation, from mass migration to cultural survival – by walking alongside the people who inhabit them every day." See http://outofedenwalk.nationalgeographic.com to share the adventure.

"Walking the World" in *Educational Leadership*, October 2014 (Vol. 72, #2, p. 8)

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***b. Three TED-Ed Talks*** – *Educational Leadership* recommends these curated educational videos as classroom resources:

• "What Makes a Hero?" by Matthew Winkler, for English teachers, available at: http://ed.ted.com/lessons/what-makes-a-hero-matthew-winkler

• "A Digital Reimagining of Gettysburg" by Anne Knowles, for history teachers, available at: http://ed.ted.com/lessons/a-digital-reimagining-of-gettysburg-anne-knowles

• "The Infinite Life of Pi" by Reynaldo Lopes, for math teachers, available at http://ed.ted.com/lessons/the-infinite-life-of-pi-reynaldo-lopes

"ScreenGrabs" in *Educational Leadership*, October 2014 (Vol. 72, #2, p. 9)

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***Do you have feedback? Is anything missing?***

*If you have comments or suggestions, if you saw an article or web item in the last week that you think should have been summarized, or if you would like to suggest additional publications that should be covered by the Marshall Memo, please e-mail:* kim.marshall48@gmail.com

# About the Marshall Memo

### *Mission and focus:*

This weekly memo is designed to keep principals, teachers, superintendents, and others very well-informed on current research and effective practices in K-12 education. Kim Marshall, drawing on 43 years' experience as a teacher, principal, central office administrator, and writer, lightens the load of busy educators by serving as their "designated reader."

To produce the Marshall Memo, Kim subscribes to 64 carefully-chosen publications (see list to the right), sifts through more than a hundred articles each week, and selects 5-10 that have the greatest potential to improve teaching, leadership, and learning. He then writes a brief summary of each article, pulls out several striking quotes, provides e-links to full articles when available, and e-mails the Memo to subscribers every Monday evening (with occasional breaks; there are 50 issues a year).

### *Subscriptions:*

Individual subscriptions are $50 for a year. Rates decline steeply for multiple readers within the same organization. See the website for these rates and how to pay by check, credit card, or purchase order.

### *Website:*

If you go to http://www.marshallmemo.com you will find detailed information on:

- How to subscribe or renew
- A detailed rationale for the Marshall Memo
- Publications (with a count of articles from each)
- Article selection criteria
- Topics (with a count of articles from each)
- Headlines for all issues
- Reader opinions (with results of an annual survey)
- About Kim Marshall (including links to articles)
- A free sample issue

Subscribers have access to the Members' Area of the website, which has:

- The current issue (in Word or PDF)
- All back issues (also in Word and PDF)
- A database of all articles to date, searchable by topic, title, author, source, level, etc.
- How to change access e-mail or log-in

### *Core list of publications covered*

Those read this week are underlined.

American Educational Research Journal
American Educator
American Journal of Education
American School Board Journal
AMLE Magazine
ASCA School Counselor
ASCD SmartBrief/Public Education NewsBlast
Better: Evidence-Based Education
Center for Performance Assessment Newsletter
District Administration
Ed. Magazine
Education Digest
Education Gadfly
Education Next
Education Week
Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis
Educational Horizons
Educational Leadership
Educational Researcher
Elementary School Journal
Essential Teacher
Go Teach
Harvard Business Review
Harvard Education Letter
Harvard Educational Review
Independent School
Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk (JESPAR)
Journal of Staff Development
Kappa Delta Pi Record
Knowledge Quest
Middle School Journal
NASSP Journal
NJEA Review
Perspectives
Phi Delta Kappan
Principal
Principal Leadership
Principal's Research Review
Reading Research Quarterly
Reading Today
Responsive Classroom Newsletter
Rethinking Schools
Review of Educational Research
School Administrator
School Library Journal
Teacher
Teachers College Record
Teaching Children Mathematics
Teaching Exceptional Children/Exceptional Children
The Atlantic
The Chronicle of Higher Education
The District Management Journal
The Language Educator
The Learning Principal/Learning System/Tools for Schools
The New York Times
The New Yorker
The Reading Teacher
Theory Into Practice
Time
Wharton Leadership Digest