# Marshall Memo 421

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
January 30, 2012

## In This Issue:



## Quotes of the Week

"[T]he flexibility, diligence, and industrial skills of foreign workers have so outpaced their American counterparts that 'Made in U.S.A.' is no longer a viable option for most Apple products."

Charles Duhiggs and Keith Bradsher in "How the U.S. Lost Out on iPhone Work" in *The New York Times*, Jan. 21, 2012, http://nyti.ms/wRTPOd

"Brainstorming seems like an ideal technique, a feel-good way to boost productivity. But there is a problem with brainstorming. It doesn't work."

Jonah Lehrer (see item #1)

"Attending to background knowledge is like getting inside students' minds, which is a great place for middle level teachers to be."

Douglas Fisher, Nancy Frey, and Diane Lapp (see item #5)

"Misconceptions are fundamental errors in reasoning and have a cascading effect that influences subsequent learning. A multiplier effect occurs as the learner retrofits new concepts onto these misconceptions in an attempt to preserve incorrect background assumptions."

Douglas Fisher, Nancy Frey, and Diane Lapp (*ibid.*)

"[K]ids need to have a legible and fluent style of handwriting, and they need to have fluent typing skills. But that's because I don't want kids to have to think about those things. I want them thinking about what they're going to say and how they're going to say it."

Steve Graham (see item #6)

## 1. Why Brainstorming Doesn't Work – and What Does

In this intriguing *New Yorker* article, Jonah Lehrer describes how the idea of brainstorming – groups generating lots of creative ideas without criticizing or judging them – was invented by business guru Alex Osborn in 1948 and spread to countless businesses and classrooms. "Brainstorming seems like an ideal technique," says Lehrer, "a feel-good way to boost productivity. But there is a problem with brainstorming. It doesn't work."

Surprising as that may sound, numerous studies have come to the same conclusion. "Decades of research have consistently shown that brainstorming groups think of far fewer ideas than the same number of people who work alone and later pool their ideas," says Keith Sawyer of Washington University. The most striking follow-up study was done in 2003 by UC Berkeley professor Charlan Nemeth. She gave three groups of female undergraduates 20 minutes to come up with suggestions on how to reduce traffic congestion in the San Francisco Bay area. The first group got standard brainstorming instructions – no criticism as the ideas flowed. The second group got no specific instructions. The third group was told to freewheel and generate as many solutions as possible, *debate* them, and feel free to criticize others' ideas.

The third group did by far the best, generating 20 percent more solutions than the brainstorming group and far more than the no-instructions group. When researchers interviewed participants afterward about whether they had any additional ideas on traffic, the debating group had lots more.

Nemeth's conclusion: "While the instruction 'Do not criticize' is often cited as the important instruction in brainstorming, this appears to be a counterproductive strategy. Our findings show that debate and criticism do not inhibit ideas but, rather, stimulate them relative to every other condition… There's this Pollyannaish notion that the most important thing to do when working together is to stay positive and get along, to not hurt anyone's feelings. Well, that's just wrong. Maybe debate is going to be less pleasant, but it will always be more productive. True creativity requires some trade-offs." It seems that dissent and disagreement stimulate new ideas because they encourage people to engage more fully and reassess their viewpoints.

Another problem with brainstorming is its staple, free-association. Nemeth has found that people aren't very good at it. Most of them come up with very predictable responses. To be creative, it's important to be exposed to new ideas and unfamiliar perspectives. They surprise us, we work to understand them, and they make us reassess our initial assumptions and

try out something new. "Authentic dissent can be difficult," says Nemeth, "but it's always invigorating. It wakes us right up."

So what conditions produce the most productive collaboration? Brian Uzzi, a Northwestern University sociologist, studied teamwork in 474 Broadway musicals, charting the group dynamics of thousands of artists from Cole Porter to Andrew Lloyd Webber. He found that musicals produced by teams who didn't know each other did poorly – but so did musicals produced by teams who had collaborated many times before. A slew of shows in the 1920s produced by superstar teams including Cole Porter, Richard Rogers, Lorenz Hart, and Oscar Hammerstein II were mostly flops. "Broadway had some of the biggest names ever," says Uzzi, "but the shows were too full of repeat relationships, and that stifled creativity."

The sweet spot, Uzzi found, was shows like *West Side Story* produced by people with a mix of relationships (unknown 25-year-old lyricist Stephen Sondheim joined superstars Leonard Bernstein, Jerome Robbins, and Arthur Laurents). "These teams had some old friends, but they also had newbies," says Uzzi. "This mixture meant that the artists could interact efficiently – they had a familiar structure to fall back on – but they also managed to incorporate some new ideas. They were comfortable with each other, but they weren't too comfortable."

Physical proximity is another key variable in productivity. Studies have shown that co-authors who work within ten meters of each other publish better papers than those whose work locations are more remote. Steve Jobs had this in mind when he designed the office space at Pixar so the bathrooms, cafeteria, mailboxes, and gift shop were all in the central atrium. "At first, I thought this was the most ridiculous idea," said producer Darla Anderson. "I didn't want to have to walk all the way to the atrium every time I needed to do something. That's just a waste of time. But Steve said, 'Everybody has to run into each other.' He really believed that the best meetings happen by accident, in the hallway or parking lot. And you know what? He was right. I get more done having a cup of coffee and striking up a conversation or walking to the bathroom and running into unexpected people than I do sitting at my desk."

Lehrer goes on to describe MIT's Building 20, a temporary 250,000-square-foot, three-story office structure thrown together in the spring of 1942 to house scientists developing radar for the Allies. Despite the fact that Building 20 was freezing in the winter and broiling in the summer and had dim corridors and a leaky roof, this "plywood palace" survived until 1998 and became known as "the magical incubator." It was the site of extraordinary amounts of innovation – radar technology that won the war, Noam Chomsky's groundbreaking work in linguistics, Jerald Zacharias's atomic clock, Amar Bose's audio innovations that spawned the Bose Corporation, and more.

The key to all this innovation? "Knowledge spillovers" in the corridors of this chaotically organized, mostly horizontal structure. One of the most productive symbioses was between linguistics professor Morris Halle and the young Noam Chomsky. Although studying different aspects of language, they talked all the time because they were in adjacent offices. "We became great friends," says Halle. "And friends shouldn't be shy about telling each other when they are wrong. What am I supposed to do? Not tell him he's got a bad idea?"

"The fatal misconception behind brainstorming," concludes Lehrer, "is that there is a particular script we should all follow in group interactions. The lesson of Building 20 is that when the composition of the group is right – enough people with different perspectives running into one another in unpredictable ways – the group dynamic will take care of itself. All these errant discussions add up. In fact, they may even be the most essential part of the creative process. Although such conversations will occasionally be unpleasant – not everyone is always in the mood for small talk or criticism – that doesn't mean that they can be avoided. The most creative spaces are those that hurl us together. It is the human friction that makes the sparks."

"Groupthink: The Brainstorming Myth" by Jonah Lehrer in *The New Yorker*, Jan. 30, 2012 (p. 22-27) http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/01/30/120130fa_fact_lehrer

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## 2. Ten Steps to Turning Around a Struggling School

In this *Education Week* article, HOPE Foundation president Alan Blankstein and NYU professor Pedro Noguera say that in too many cases, "turnaround experts" who don't know what they're doing are selling their wares to low-performing schools as part of School Improvement Grant initiatives. "We are concerned that desperate schools will waste scarce resources on efforts that will promise much but deliver little," say Blankstein and Noguera. "Meanwhile, millions of children throughout America will continue to languish in failing schools."

The good news, they continue, is that there is a usable knowledge base from schools that really have been transformed. Here's what we can learn from those schools:

• *Signaling a "new day"* – "Whether the change process begins with a new principal, a newly formed leadership team, or the entry of an external partner," say Blankstein and Noguera, "the idea that things are going to change for the better is conveyed in very positive terms."

• *A careful diagnosis of the school's problems* – "Rather than firing teachers or the principal," they say, "it makes far more sense to carefully assess their strengths and weaknesses to determine which staff members should be removed versus which can be improved through professional development."

• *Reaching out* – "Often, low-performing schools are islands, and their interventions are administered in isolation from their neighboring schools," say Blankstein and Noguera. "Just the opposite is needed."

• *A new vision of what's possible* – This can come by having staff members visit successful schools with similar student populations. "This is important because it provides the staff with a clear sense of what success looks like," say Blankstein and Noguera. "It also helps overcome the 'normalization' of failure, in which there is a belief that the problem is that 'our' students simply can't achieve."

• *Quick wins* – It's important for the new leadership to take care of one or two high-profile problems right away – for example, reducing student fighting.

• *Clear, measurable, and attainable goals* – It's important to avoid trying to do too much at once.

• *A strategy for improving instruction* – "Adopting a consistent approach to teaching is essential for changing student learning outcomes," say Blankstein and Noguera. "Professional development must be directly related to the skill areas where assessments show students are weakest… Creating a climate of collaboration among teachers is essential."

• *A problem-solving ethos* – This includes adjustments in the length of the school day and reassignment of students who are not working well with particular teachers.

• *Engaging and listening to students* – Blankstein and Noguera advocate including students in hiring new teachers, since students are quite perceptive about teaching quality.

• *Partnerships with parents and community organizations* – Mutual accountability is key with parents. Outreach to non-profits, businesses, churches, and civic groups should supplement the school's resources.

"What Really Works in Turning Schools Around?" by Alan Blankstein and Pedro Noguera in *Education Week*, Jan. 18, 2012 (Vol. 31, #17, p. 32, 26), http://www.edweek.org.

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## 3. Principles for Differentiating Instruction for ELLs

In this helpful *Middle School Journal* article, Hunter College professor Laura Baecher and New York City teachers Marcus Artigliere, David Patterson, and Adrian Spatzer address the challenge of differentiating instruction for English language learners. Lots of teachers worry about how to do this, asking questions like, *Am I supposed to make up five different lesson plans every day? How am I supposed to maintain classroom management if everyone is doing something different? Are you telling me to 'track' students in my classroom?*

The authors begin by distinguishing between sheltered and differentiated instruction. Here are some common sheltered practices, which involve whole-class techniques aimed at making lesson content more accessible to lower-proficiency students:

- Linguistic adaptations – Making language more comprehensible by modifying speed, complexity, and syntax;
- Scaffolding – Activating background knowledge, using pairs and small groups, and getting students working independently;
- Cultural responsiveness – Building English language skills based on knowledge of students' home languages; not discouraging use of the first language; making connections to students' cultural backgrounds; and creating a classroom environment that highlights rather than avoids cultural comparisons and contrasts;
- Print modifications – Providing an enlarged text that is read aloud, adding visuals to a text, and providing audiotaped versions.

Differentiation, by contrast, is geared to specific subgroups of students and involves variations in instructional content, the teaching process, and student products.

How can regular classroom teachers differentiate to support their ELLs' success? The authors suggest these principles:

• *Know ELLs' strengths and weaknesses in English*. Teachers should use high-quality reading, writing, listening, and speaking assessments and not be misled by students' level of oral proficiency.

• *Set a common objective and differentiate linguistic input and output*. Teachers should be clear about the knowledge, skills, and understanding that all students should have by the end of the lesson, and then adjust the linguistic demands of the materials and what ELLs will need to produce. For example, in a lesson aimed at getting students to recognize that stress patterns in a poem help to convey its meaning, the language objective is getting students to be able to use stress and intonation to present a poem aloud to the class. Differentiation by domain:

- Content – Higher-proficiency students are given a longer poem with two or more different stress patterns, lower-proficiency students get a short poem with one main stress pattern.
- Process – Higher-proficiency students practice identifying stress marks independently, lower-proficiency students work in small groups with the teacher.
- Product – Higher-proficiency students orally present a six-line poem without referring to notes, lower-proficiency students orally present a three-line poem and may refer to notes.

Thus all students aim for the same objective, getting there in different ways.

• *Identify a base activity for higher-level students and tier downward*. A common mistake, say the authors, is starting with low-level activities geared to low-proficiency students (drawing a picture, copying text, putting things in order, or looking up words in a dictionary) and then formulating a lesson objective that isn't challenging for any students. Start the other way around, they urge: set a common lesson objective that every student will find interesting and challenging and figure out ways to make it manageable for all students.

• *Make differentiation manageable for teachers*. The example above shows how this can be accomplished. "Differentiation should be achieved through small variations to a base activity, or the process may become too daunting and time-consuming for teachers," say the authors. "Differentiation can then become part of everyday practice rather than an occasional event."

• *Make learning manageable for students*. Some teachers worry that differentiation waters down the curriculum for ELLs. Quite the contrary, say the authors; it makes robust lesson objectives do-able for low-proficiency students and ramps up their learning.

• *Avoid pairing high-proficiency with low-proficiency students*. "The higher-level student is often working below his or her capabilities," say the authors, "and the lower-level student merely copies or imitates without really developing needed language skills." It's better for the teacher to gather a leveled group in a small circle and reteach objectives, modify content, and offer support – or, with higher-proficiency students, offer additional challenge questions, encourage interaction, and clarify understandings.

• *Use flexible rather than fixed groups*. Homogeneous groups are fine for differentiated skill instruction, but ELLs should regularly interact with native-speaking students in varying teacher-formed groups.

• *Offer a choice of activities to let students do some of the differentiating*. Students should occasionally be able to choose an activity they believe is at the right challenge level for them.

• *Don't let low language proficiency prevent higher-level cognitive work*. "A low level of language proficiency will prevent ELLs from expressing conceptual understanding in English," say the authors. Bloom's taxonomy is a useful tool for differentiating prompts and questions to different levels of cognitive complexity.

• *Allot the same number of minutes for a set of differentiated tasks*. When some students have 10 minutes and some have 20 minutes, it raises equity and classroom management problems. It's also good to have students from different groups share thoughts and ideas when they finish the activity.

"Differentiated Instruction for English Language Learners as 'Variations on a Theme'" by Laura Baecher, Marcus Artigliere, David Patterson, and Adrian Spatzer in *Middle School Journal*, January 2012 (Vol. 43, #3, p. 14-21), no e-link available; the authors can be reached at lbaecher@hunter.cuny.edu, marcus.art@gmail.com, dpatterson7@schools.nyc.gov, and Adrian.spatzer@gmail.com.

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## 4. Value-Added Accountability in Non-Tested Grades and Subjects

In this *New York Times* article, Michael Winerip says the Obama administration's Race to the Top program is getting an amazingly large bang for relatively few bucks. For starters, Race to the Top has influenced state policies on teacher and principal evaluation, especially the use of student test scores for evaluation, merit pay, and dismissal. Winerip also notes that the feds have been clever about getting states and districts to do most of the hard work: "For teachers in subject areas and grades that do not have state tests (music, art, technology, kindergarten through third grade) or do not have enough state tests to measure growth (every high-school subject), it is the state's responsibility to create a system of alternative ratings. In New York, that will have to cover 79 percent of all teachers, a total of 175,000 people."

Winerip interviewed Paul Infante, director of fine and applied arts in the Commack School District on Long Island, who is struggling to come up with before-and-after assessments to measure student learning in band classes. Infante has visions of band teachers trying to listen to each student play a piece at the beginning of the year and again at the end of the year. He's naturally concerned about how burdensome this would be and how much time assessment would take away from actual instruction.

"A lot could be riding on this," says Winerip: "Tenure, a bonus, the band teacher's job. Or, if a teacher challenges the assessment, a lawsuit. So Mr. Infante would want to assess the accuracy of the ratings a teacher gave, to make sure they were not artificially low at the start of the year or artificially high at the end. To do that in an objective way, he would want to use an outside evaluator." Which he can't afford.

Joel Ratner, the music coordinator for another Long Island district, is frustrated by the state's bureaucratic requirements and unsure about how aggressively they will be enforced.

The best end-of-year assessment for a band teacher, he said, would be students putting on a first-rate concert, but that probably wouldn't pass muster with Albany.

[In my view, it's important to include student learning gains in teachers' evaluations, but problems arise if the stakes are too high, the assessments are too burdensome, and teachers are evaluated individually (rather than as part of same-grade or same-subject teams). I sketched an alternative approach in my *Education Week* article in September 2010, which you can read at http://www.marshallmemo.com/articles/Kim%20Marshall%20Ed%20Week%20Sept.%201,%202010.pdf or in Marshall Memo 350. K.M.]

"Far From the Capital, the Race to the Top Is an Unhappy Slog" by Michael Winerip in *The New York Times*, Jan. 23, 2012 (p. A16), http://nyti.ms/wEx070

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## 5. Building Background Knowledge in Young Adolescents

In this *Middle School Journal* article, San Diego State University professors Douglas Fisher, Nancy Frey, and Diane Lapp focus on the importance of building students' background knowledge. Because of the uneven job elementary schools do in this area, students enter middle school with great variations in knowledge. "Some students have had experience with snow and winter storms; others have not," say the authors. "Some students have seen governments collapse; others have not. Some students have been taught multiplication facts; others have not. Some students have been to every museum in the community; others have not. Some students have access at home to new media texts, while others must depend on schools and libraries for Internet access."

Fisher, Frey, and Lapp give the example of a girl who immigrated from Afghanistan and took an active role in her class's discussion of *The Breadwinner*, a book about life under the Taliban – but was utterly confused studying *Hattie Big Sky*, a book about a farm in Montana. The teacher helped by giving the girl YouTube videos of life on farms and rural America and setting her up with a pen pal in Montana. "Attending to background knowledge is like getting inside students' minds," say the authors, "which is a great place for middle level teachers to be."

Fisher, Frey, and Lapp suggest six steps that teachers should take to do the best possible job of activating and building background knowledge:

• First, decide which knowledge is most important. Here are some criteria for homing in on core knowledge, as opposed to nice-to-know information:

- Representation – Is the information essential to understanding the core concepts of the lesson?
- Transmission – Does the information need multiple exposures and experiences?
- Transferability – Will the information be required when studying future concepts?
- Endurance – Will the information be remembered after the details are forgotten?

These can help a class focus on the most important knowledge, draw out the knowledge students already have, and steer them away from interesting but less important information.

• Second, develop effective strategies for building background knowledge. Wide reading is important, with books selected to match students' reading levels. Direct experiences are available through YouTube videos. For example, here are three resources on Ancient Rome:

- *Western Civilization*, Annenberg: http://www.learner.org/resources/series58.html
- *The Roman Empire* from PBS: http://www.pbs.org/empires
- YouTube videos: http://www.neok12.com/Ancient-Rome.htm

Students can also do virtual museum tours, which should be structured by the teacher to get the most out of the experience.

• Third, anticipate students' misconceptions. "Misconceptions are fundamental errors in reasoning and have a cascading effect that influences subsequent learning," say the authors. "A multiplier effect occurs as the learner retrofits new concepts onto these misconceptions in an attempt to preserve incorrect background assumptions… The intractability of misconceptions makes them very difficult for teachers to correct." That's why anticipating misconceptions and planning powerful learning experiences is so important. Here's an outstanding website constructed at MIT's MOSART Project to help teachers uncover and deal with misconceptions: http://www.cfa.harvard.edu/smgphp/mosart/index.html. Among other things, the site has videos of college graduates voicing common science and math misconceptions. Here are other misconception resources:

- Math, science, and technology – http://www.card.unp.ac.za/home.asp
- Physics – http://www.physics.montana.edu/physed/misconceptions
- Algebra - https://eee.uci.edu/wiki/index.php/Algebra

• Fourth, assess the extent to which students possess relevant background knowledge. Fisher, Frey, and Lapp suggest several strategies: making a cloze test out of a passage on the topic by deleting every fifth word and seeing whether students can fill them in accurately (spelling doesn't count); having students write captions under photographs or illustrations on the subject; having students sort terms from the subject matter into categories (for example, before a unit on Ancient Civilizations, sorting *agora, democracy, architecture, wars, exports, Mediterranean, enslaved people, very rich and very poor people, polis, Acropolis, Cyrus, pharaoh, and king*); and having students fill out an opinionnaire about the subject (a sample question: The Roman Empire was the greatest of the ancient world. Agree or disagree on a 1-2-3-4 scale and why?).

• Fifth, teach key vocabulary effectively. Students should do more than memorize words; they need to learn word-solving techniques, actively use the words with classmates, and "own" their understanding of words. For example, key words for a unit on Ancient Rome might include: *vault, satire, ode, anatomy, Forum, gladiator, paterfamilias,* and *rhetoric*. Students need to become proficient at doing structural analysis of unknown words (that might help with *paterfamilias*), making contextual connections (helpful with *ode, satire*, and *rhetoric*), and using other resources to solve words, such as glossaries, the Internet, and knowledgeable people.

• Finally, activate background knowledge. Questioning is one of the best ways to do this, being careful to ask questions at different levels of Bloom's taxonomy, for example:

- Horace wrote satires. What's an example of a satire in contemporary America?
- Why are roads essential to empires?
- How were the lives of boys and girls in Rome similar and different from those in Egypt?

"Building and Activating Students' Background Knowledge: It's What They Already Know That Counts" by Douglas Fisher, Nancy Frey, and Diane Lapp in *Middle School Journal*, January 2012 (Vol. 43, #3, p. 22-31), no e-link available; the authors can be reached at dfisher@mail.sdsu.edu, nfrey@mail.sdsu.edu, and lapp@mail.sdsu.edu.

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## 6. Should Elementary Schools Teach Handwriting?

In this *Education Week* article, Jaclyn Zubrzycki reports on a recent conference about whether students need to learn handwriting in a digital world. Keyboarding is mentioned in the Common Core State Standards – but handwriting isn't (California and Massachusetts have already supplemented CCSS with handwriting standards). An analogous question is whether students in math classes need to learn computation when they can use calculators.

Handwriting advocates make three arguments for including it in the elementary curriculum. First, a person's handwriting affects how he or she is perceived by others (one study found that teachers gave lower marks to papers with less-legible writing). Second, when handwriting isn't automatic, it interferes with the writing process and fluent communication of ideas. Third, brain scans show that handwriting, unlike keyboarding, leads to adult-like neural processing in the visual system, which suggests that handwriting may prepare children for reading acquisition.

How do other countries handle handwriting? Finland's National Core Curriculum for Basic Education has grade 1 and 2 standards on "drawing the form of letters, learning capital and lower-case printed and cursive letters, and combining letters." In England, handwriting instruction made a comeback in the 1990s, students learn cursive, and they are scored on handwriting in national examinations.

But it's not either-or, says Steve Graham of Vanderbilt University, and it's not an end in itself. "We don't live in a handwriting world, and we don't live in a digital world," he says. "We live in a hybrid world… As far as I'm concerned, kids need to have a legible and fluent style of handwriting, and they need to have fluent typing skills. But that's because I don't want kids to have to think about those things. I want them thinking about what they're going to say and how they're going to say it."

"Experts Fear Handwriting Will Become a Lost Art" by Jaclyn Zubrzycki in *Education Week*, Jan. 25, 2012 (Vol. 31, #18, p. 1, 13), http://www.edweek.org.

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## 7. Research Casting Doubt on Single-Gender Classes

In this *Education Week* article, Jaclyn Zubrzycki reports on a study of single-sex classrooms in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Researchers found that although sex-segregated classes benefited a minority of girls who preferred them, such classes were not inherently beneficial for boys or for most girls.

Research on single-gender classes in the U.S. has been inconclusive because of self-selection and differences in curriculum offerings in those programs, says Zubrzycki. A recent article in *Science* co-authored by Chicago Medical School researcher Lise Eliot said that gender-based teaching methods were unproven and might exacerbate stereotypes and differences. The American Civil Liberties Union has brought suit against a number of school districts to stop single-gender classes based on the argument that they are separate and unequal.

The Trinidad and Tobago study was more authoritative because it controlled for students' preferences and academic performance and involved a large number of students (219,849 in 123 schools). Kirabo Jackson, the lead researcher, affirmed the positive finding about girls who preferred all-female classes but said "not all girls benefited from single-sex schools." He and his colleagues also found that in all-girl secondary schools, girls were slightly less likely to take math and science courses. The study's key finding was about choice – when girls who preferred to study only with other girls were able to attend single-gender classes, they benefited. This was not true of boys.

"Single-Gender Schools Scrutinized: Caribbean Study May Offer Insights for United States" by Jaclyn Zubrzycki in *Education Week*, Jan. 18, 2012 (Vol. 31, #17, p. 1, 12-13), http://www.edweek.org; the full study will be published in February 2012 in the *Journal of Public Economics*.

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## 8. Short Items:

***a. Hans Rosling video on population growth*** – Here's another Rosling video, this one decidedly low-tech: http://bit.ly/yDhLlT

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***b. National sex education standards*** – The American Association for Health Education, the American School Health Association, the National Education Association Health Information Network, and the Society of State Leaders of Health and Physical Education have collaborated in drafting "National Sexuality Education Standards: Core Content and Skills, K-12", available at http://www.futureofsexed.org/index.html.

"New Standards Aim to Guide Sex Education" by Nirvi Shah in *Education Week*, Jan. 18, 2012 (Vol. 31, #17, p. 1, 12-13);

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***c. Vocabulary exercises in four languages*** – The Learning Chocolate website – http://www.learningchocolate.com – helps learners of English, Spanish, Japanese, and

Mandarin memorize vocabulary with pictures, sounds, and games.

"Web Watch" in *The Language Educator*, January 2012 (Vol. 7, #1, p. 60)
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***d. Latin dictionary*** – Glossa http://athirdway.com/glossa has an online Latin dictionary and one that can be loaded onto a computer desktop.

"Web Watch" in *The Language Educator*, January 2012 (Vol. 7, #1, p. 61)
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***e. Tech tools for teachers*** – The SuperTeacherTools website has free technology tools for games and classroom management: http://www.superteachertools.com.

"Web Watch" in *The Language Educator*, January 2012 (Vol. 7, #1, p. 61)
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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 41 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 44 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 about 50 issues a year).

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- How to change access e-mail or log-in

### *Publications covered*

*Those read this week are underlined.*

American Educator
American Journal of Education
American School Board Journal
ASCD, CEC SmartBriefs, Daily EdNews
Better Evidence-Based Education
Ed. Magazine
EDge
Education Digest
Education Gadfly
Education Next
Education Week
Educational Leadership
Educational Researcher
Elementary School Journal
Essential Teacher (TESOL)
Harvard Business Review
Harvard Education Letter
Harvard Educational Review
JESPAR
Journal of Staff Development
Kappa Delta Pi Record
Language Learner (NABE)
Middle Ground
Middle School Journal
New York Times
Newsweek
PEN Weekly NewsBlast
Phi Delta Kappan
Principal
Principal Leadership
Principal's Research Review
Reading Research Quarterly
Reading Today
Rethinking Schools
Review of Educational Research
Teachers College Record
Teaching Children Mathematics
The Atlantic Monthly
The Chronicle of Higher Education
The Language Educator
The New Yorker
The Reading Teacher
The School Administrator
Theory Into Practice