Marshall Memo 482

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
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Quotes of the Week

"Abstraction never leads to action."
Paul Bambrick-Santoyo on effective professional development (see item #1)

"There are people who say I'm brutally frank, but one doesn't have to be brutal; one can tell the truth in such a way that the listener really welcomes it."
Maya Angelou (see item #8)

"A leader sees greatness in other people. You can't be much of a leader if all you see is yourself."
Maya Angelou (*ibid*.)

"My art teacher saved my life that day."
Michele Sommer (see item #6)

"Achieving the full benefit of diversity means trading the comfort of being surrounded by kindred spirits for the hard work of fitting various kinds of people, work habits, and thought traditions into a vibrant culture."
Rob Goffee and Gareth Jones (see item #2)

"The thing that keeps me fresh and ready to do my best every day no matter what's come the day before is my ability to turn off school in my head when I get home. Home is when and where we re-energize, where we clear our minds so we can bring it all again the next day."
Kimberly Moritz in "A Generation Apart: What We Expect from Teachers" in *School Administrator*, April 2013 (Vol. 4, #70, p. 14-15), KMoritz@rand.wnyric.org

1. Keys to Effective Professional Development

In this thoughtful *Kappan* column, Paul Bambrick-Santoyo asks why professional development so rarely improves teaching practice, and shares three lessons he's learned as a school leader:

• *Abstraction never leads to action*. The first step with a PD session is to define the objective in terms of concrete actions teachers will take in their classrooms. "Until you name an outcome, your workshop doesn't have teeth," says Bambrick-Santoyo. For example, planning a workshop on diversity, here are three possible objectives:

- Abstract: Be aware of the diversity of our students and the experiences they have had.
- Still too abstract: Understand the current political and social challenges of our community and how they affect our students.
- Actionable: Redirect a noncompliant student with one of the three nonbiased strategies presented in the workshop.

Actionable objectives should also be observable in classrooms so administrators can keep track of whether they are implemented effectively.

• *Bite-sized is best*. "Once you start breaking down your PD topic into actionable objectives, you'll soon realize that there are far too many to teach all at once," says Bambrick-Santoyo. "A PD session should never have more objectives than you can accomplish in the amount of time allotted." Better to take one bite-sized objective for each session and accomplish the broader goal over time. Here's an illustration:

- Very broad: Teachers being Common Core ready;
- Narrower: Effectively teaching more-complex texts;
- Narrower still: Using a "ladder" of texts within a specific topic; teachers select a set of increasingly complex texts on the same topic so that students will evolve more quickly as readers by staying within a topic and applying their new learning to more-complex texts on the same material.
- Optimal: Teachers find three informational texts on a topic in the novel they are reading with students, each passage at a higher Lexile level. Teachers then work in grade-level teams to exchange feedback on their text choices and begin to design a lesson plan.

Bambrick-Santoyo also suggests some common-sense strategies for improving the quality of professional development: (a) Make PD routine; weekly or bi-weekly is best. (b) Make PD sessions longer; this is possible only if students are dismissed early on PD days. And (c) Make

hard choices. "Because you can't address everything," he says, "always select your PD objectives with an eye to what's most urgent and what actions will have the biggest effect."

• *To see change, practice*. Teachers need high-quality practice opportunities if they are going to have the skill and confidence to implement new skills. Bambrick-Santoyo recommends:

- Repetition – "The more 'at bats' and opportunities teachers have, the more deeply they can learn a skill," he says.
- Feedback – As teachers practice, peers and administrators should say how they are doing.
- Immediacy – Practice should take place right in the PD session; it's unrealistic to expect teachers to go off and practice on their own. In the diversity PD example above, teachers get a series of written classroom scenarios in which a student acts out and the teacher responds inappropriately; then teachers rewrite the responses and role-play to see how their ideas work.

"Leading Effective PD: From Abstraction to Action" by Paul Bambrick-Santoyo in *Phi Delta Kappan*, April 2013 (Vol. 94, #7, p. 70-71), www.kappanmagazine.com; the author can be reached at pbambrick@uncommonschools.org.

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2. The Ideal Workplace

"Work can be liberating, or it can be alienating, exploitative, controlling, and homogenizing," say Rob Goffee (London Business School) and Gareth Jones (IE Business School/Madrid) in this *Harvard Business Review* article. They go on to describe their findings on the conditions that support and inspire employees to do their best work:

• *Let people be themselves*. "Achieving the full benefit of diversity means trading the comfort of being surrounded by kindred spirits for the hard work of fitting various kinds of people, work habits, and thought traditions into a vibrant culture," say Goffee and Jones. "Managers must continually work out when to forge ahead and when to take the time to discuss and compromise." In the ideal organization, individual differences are nurtured and a wide range of personal and professional styles are accepted and appreciated. Passion is encouraged, even if it leads to conflict, and people feel they can be the same person at work as they are at home.

• *Be candid, complete, clear, and timely with information*. "Some managers see parceling out information on a need-to-know basis as important to maintaining efficiency," say Goffee and Jones. "Others practice a seemingly benign type of paternalism, reluctant to worry staff with certain information or to identify a problem before having a solution… The organization of your dreams does not deceive, stonewall, distort, or spin. It recognizes that in the age of Facebook, WikiLeaks, and Twitter, you're better off telling people the truth before someone else does." There are multiple channels for information to flow in all directions within the organization, and employees should feel able to give dissenting input and sign their names to it.

• *Magnify people's strengths*. "The organization adds value to employees, rather than merely extracting it from them," say Goffee and Jones. "The ideal company makes its best employees even better – and the least of them better than they ever thought they could be." It does this by providing training, orchestrating networks, fostering creative interaction among peers, and offering assignments that stretch people. One sign of all this is low employee turnover.

• *The organization stands for something meaningful*. "People want to be a part of something bigger than themselves, something they can believe in," say Goffee and Jones. They tell the story of a young man who was laid off as a teacher because of a budget reduction. The layoff had nothing to do with merit – it was "last in, first out." He decided never to work for that kind of organization again and went to work for New York Life, where his performance was what counted.

• *The work itself is intrinsically rewarding*. In the ideal organization, employees see that what they are doing has real value in the world. When they have to work late, they don't call their significant other and say, "I'll be home late. I'm increasing shareholder value." They say something like, "I'll be home late. Very busy on the plan to take insulin into East Africa."

• *There are no stupid rules*. "Organizations need structure," say Goffee and Jones. "But systematization need not lead to bureaucratization, not if people understand what the rules are for and view them as legitimate… What workers need is a sense of moral authority, derived not from a focus on the efficiency of means but from the importance of the ends they produce. The organization of your dreams gives you powerful reasons to submit to its necessary structures that support the organization's purpose."

"Creating the Best Workplace on Earth: What Employees Really Require to Be Their Most Productive" by Rob Goffee and Gareth Jones in *Harvard Business Review*, May 2013 (Vol. 91, #5, p. 98-106), no e-link available

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3. Maximizing a Student Teacher's Learning

In this helpful *Kappan* article, Douglas Larkin (Montclair State University, NJ) has these suggestions for mentoring student teachers, based on seven years of working with high-school science teachers:

• *Don't just leave them alone*. "During my research," says Larkin, "I was surprised by how many cooperating teachers simply disappeared, thinking that they were doing their student teachers a favor." Big mistake. Student teachers often enter the classroom with inchoate ideas about how to teach based on their own experience as K-12 and university students. Student teaching is the ideal time for them to get detailed feedback and suggestions from their mentor teachers – one or two pointers each lesson. For most student teachers, support is much more important than autonomy.

• *Give real-time insights on your own teaching*. Larkin likens this to the director's commentary track on a movie DVD, providing a window into the mentor teacher's decision-making process as he or she teaches.

• *Work with your student teacher to find creative outlets*. Many novice teachers want to try innovative, creative lessons and run into the brick wall of the district's required curriculum. Mentor teachers should allow their student teachers some flexibility while helping them to understand that a curriculum does not teach itself.

• *Model how to teach in a constructivist manner*. "Student teachers need to grasp that student ideas are the raw material of our work as teachers," says Larkin. Informal classroom assessments and real-world connections are the best way to surface those ideas (and misconceptions) and build student understanding from the ground up – rather than by having students copy notes off the board.

• *Share topic-specific teaching knowledge*. For example, the mentor teacher may know twelve ways to teach the concept of density, while a student teacher knows one or two. Mentors should expand novices' knowledge base as well as their skill using lab equipment.

• *Model how to learn new content*. Student teachers need help building the depth and flexibility of their subject-area knowledge. "Be up front with them about your own learning," says Larkin, "and help them connect what they already know to the big ideas of their discipline."

• *Plan together*. Beginning science teachers were usually high-achievers themselves and often forget what it's like not to know something simple – for example, Newton's laws, the periodic table, or basic cell structure. They also tend to plan activities rather than experiences that will build deeper understanding. It's therefore essential for mentor teachers to plan curriculum units and lessons with their student teachers, always asking, "What do you want students to learn from this and how will you know that they know it?"

• *Make time to talk*. In addition to a daily check-in, student teachers need longer talks that address the big picture, get beyond the immediate challenges of classroom management, and get into issues that may arise around professionalism and demeanor.

• *Connect student teachers to the larger political world of the school*. This might include attending a school board meeting, talking to the union representative, understanding the teacher-evaluation system, attending a child study meeting, learning legal requirements, looking at test data, and seeing teaching in the larger ecology of education and society.

• *Treat student teaching as a learning opportunity, not a performance*. "There is nothing more natural than saying, 'That lesson went well,' to a student teacher after a lesson," says Larkin, "but such language can be counterproductive in the longer-term goals of improving practice and student learning because it feeds the impression that each lesson is to be judged. Begin instead with the assumption that in each lesson there will be parts that are good and other parts that can be improved."

"10 Things to Know About Mentoring Student Teachers" by Douglas Larkin in *Phi Delta Kappan*, April 2013 (Vol. 94, #7, p. 38-43), www.kappanmagazine.com; Larkin can be reached at larkind@mail.montclair.edu.

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4. Possible Downsides with "No Excuses" Policies in Some Charter Schools

In this thought-provoking article in *Educational Researcher*, Joan Goodman (University of Pennsylvania) examines the "rule-oriented" environment characteristic of the inner-city schools run by certain Charter Management Organizations (CMOs). "A conspicuous feature of the regulated environment," says Goodman, "is an insistence on continuous compliance to pervasive rules that shadow children throughout the day", as well as a single-minded focus on high test scores and college success.

Goodman gives these school credit for creating a safe climate for learning, in stark contrast to most urban schools. She also commends the schools for creating a supportive climate in which teachers and administrators believe in and care for students and put in long hours to back up their conviction that all students can achieve at high levels. And she acknowledges that students in some CMO schools are getting significantly higher test scores than those attending district schools.

"But these accomplishments come with a downside," says Goodman. "One would not consider a competitive runner successful, for example, if he or she won a match but acquired an anxiety disorder from the stress of training, or a student worthy of honor if he or she cheated his or her way to success." She examines four commonalities of the CMO schools she studied with an eye to their long-range effects on students:

• *Pervasive monitoring* – This is driven by the belief that every minute counts and students can't afford to waste time chatting with peers or being off-task. "Compounding the emphasis on using time productively is the division of academic instruction into tiny subunits," says Goodman. "The clock's tick becomes an extension of the instructor's monitoring." Three minutes to copy instructions from the board, another three minutes to read the passage, five minutes for discussion, all to ensure continuous learning. Because children are never 100 percent compliant, rewards and sanctions are administered on a regular basis. In Mastery Charter elementary schools, green and blue are good, purple is a warning, yellow is a privilege denied, and red is a phone call home. In Mastery middle schools, there are merit and demerit cards. After six offenses, students get a three-hour in-school detention. Classes are rated on a 5-4-3-2-1 scale on participation, body language, and adherence to the classrooms rules. Rewards in some schools include field trips and access to special events as well as acknowledgement in assemblies. Punishments can include public confessionals, wearing a different color shirt, and not being allowed to speak to peers or be spoken to.

"This laser focus on behavioral compliance through the continuous ministration of sanctions and rewards may or may not be necessary to preserve an educational environment suitable for learning," says Goodman. "What students clearly learn is never to lose sight of adult expectations, never to be distracted from what they are expected to do by what they might want to do. Children's initiative is suppressed in favor of conformity, autonomy in favor of heteronomy. The goal is to meet performance criteria, while internal interests remain unexpressed and unexplored. Presumably, they can await the acquisition of foundational skills when there is time to "waste."

• *Sweating the small stuff* – This approach is based on the "broken window" theory of law enforcement, which holds that busting people for little stuff will make it less likely that they will do more serious stuff. Many CMO schools are aggressive in disciplining students for minor offenses like talking quietly to a neighbor in the classroom or hallway, slouching while sitting or standing, gazing into space, having one's feet next to rather than under the desk, wearing jewelry, leaving one's desk momentarily, or wearing brown rather than black socks. "Behaviors not problematic in themselves are off-limits because authorities believe they might escalate into a behavior that leads to another behavior that threatens the learning environment," says Goodman. "It could be called the harbinger theory of discipline."

"Children as young as 5 and 6 are expected to follow these standards all day," she says. "And they do. But are they reasonable expectations? If good posture is important to health, it should be practiced and acquired as a habit with that end in mind, but is it a proven necessity for learning? And violations of the rules result in a penalty, not merely a reminder… To protect the dignity of the child, does there not have to be some evidence that what is prohibited or demanded at school is clearly relevant to the educational project, or can an adult do anything to a child for the sake of order?" (Goodman acknowledges that none of the CMO schools use physical punishment.)

• *Attributing independent agency to children* – The CMO schools Goodman studied are strong advocates of children making the right choice. "Repeatedly one hears teachers commenting on the poor choice a child made as an explanation for the penalty to follow," she says. "The initial problem with this language is the restricted use of the word *choice*. Genuine choice implies the opportunity to weigh options without threat and to make selections from alternatives with impunity; in school, it might be choosing a subject on which to speak, a book to read, a topic to investigate, or sides and arguments to debate. When choosing becomes a matter of right and wrong decision-making, it is coercion – choice under threat… The invitation to choose is merely a smokescreen, obscuring the demand for submission. The teacher's power, and the child's dependency on his or her judgments, makes independent thought all but impossible… [T]he CMOs curb exposure to options and genuine deliberation in their effort to control students' actions; the verbal emphasis on choice disguises the mind control they try to exert… Rules and incentives… do not generate moral will; they are a substitute for them."

• *Preventing authenticity* – Students in the CMO schools Goodman studied seem compliant with the rules and consequences, but she wonders about what is happening to students' sense of themselves. "Although one might assume frequent teacher approval, merit badges, and monetary rewards boost self-confidence and self-esteem," she says, "when approval is so highly contingent on following orders, it can have the reverse impact. By registering disapproval for so much of what students may want to express, and denying them autonomy, the CMOs may be contributing to an impoverished view of self… If independent strivings are disregarded or negated, if one's self-worth becomes contingent on living as expected by others, then it dissolves when one fails in those efforts. Alone, measuring up to external standards does not yield self-esteem, although approval is a spur to it. That approval is

most effective when directed, in part, to supporting a student's burgeoning self-identity and not exclusively focused on what one wants him or her to do and become… One can hardly be authentic, that is, true to oneself, in the absence of an articulated internalized view of the self."

Goodman asked students in several CMO schools how they felt about the restrictions and most said that without them, they would act badly: "I would break the computers… climb up the wall… knock over tables and chairs… rip books." They said that "bad" kids like them needed to be controlled. Through the tactics described above, says Goodman, "the schools subdue discordant impulses and keep students narrowly focused on the tests that are believed to be gateways for their futures. Although the CMOs may successfully deliver higher student scores, the success comes with significant costs."

Goodman's main concern is students finding "a genuine, rather than an imposed, identity; of formulating and pursuing ends other than conforming and not misbehaving; of learning to trust themselves rather than willingly relinquishing agency. Rules can indeed be protective, as the students testify, but alone, rules do not offer worthwhile ends or the means to pursue them; indeed, unrelenting stringency may quell desires and shrink aspirations. Perhaps obedience creates conditions for accepting instruction, yet it can be dangerous, as when one fails to resist negative models."

"Charter Management Organizations and the Regulated Environment: Is It Worth the Price?" by Joan Goodman in *Educational Researcher*, March 2013 (Vol. 42, #2, p. 89-96), http://edr.sagepub.com/content/early/2013/02/22/0013189X12470856; Goodman can be reached at joang@gse.upenn.edu.

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5. A New Frame of Mind: Whole-Mindedness

"Why do we teach the arts in education?" asks Jennifer Groff (Learning Games Network) in this *Harvard Educational Review* article. Many arts educators have used Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences to justify their work, arguing that the existence of spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and musical intelligences confirm the importance of visual arts, theater, dance, and music for children. But Groff believes that over time, the multiple-intelligences framework "has struggled to bear this burden." A major problem has been its misapplication in schools – for example, having students sing their times tables, applying dance and song to any classroom topic, trying to align each intelligence with a racial group, and putting students in buckets ("She's a visual learner") in ways that limit their broader development. Ongoing criticism of Gardner's theory "has ultimately left us on shaky ground," she says.

Groff believes Gardner's theory is a major contribution to the field, but she contends that findings in cognitive neuroscience have changed the playing field in the last 30 years. Brain-imaging technology has shifted our view of the mind from modular (each area performing specific functions) to networked, with cognitive functions distributed across many regions. In addition, the discovery of how malleable the brain is has refuted the idea that a

person's mind is fixed or static; in fact, it's dynamic and responsive to experiences throughout the lifespan.

Scientists have also found that people use three different processing systems to take in new information:

- Object-visual (static, pictorial images – painting, graphic design, photography);
- Spatial-visual (manipulating images – film, digital media, and simulations);
- Verbal (language-based – literature and oral communication).

"Simply put, our cognitive processing systems are the foundation for our engagement with the world," says Groff. "All are used to different extents to process, manipulate, understand, and apply to distinct problems. Each is unique and each is necessary yet together they afford the potential for powerful and insightful processing and problem solving… Helping learners develop and, more critically, understand how to *use* and *leverage* these processing systems as tools through which to engage with the world is central to healthy, rich, and balanced cognitive development."

Groff continues: "Although the cognitive processing systems work together, research shows that individuals demonstrate a preference for and strength in at least one of them." These preferences may be innate, but as children grow up, their preferences tend to be self-reinforcing, with the strong areas getting stronger and the other areas not developing as much. "While some individuals are able to make do in learning environments that lean heavily on one of these mechanisms, others cannot. That is of real concern to those interested in providing an equitable and fair education to all."

Before television, most human discourse and input was verbal, says Groff. With the introduction first of TV and then digital video media, non-verbal communication has become the dominant construct in our world. The overwhelming majority of young people are bathed in this environment, but schools have been slower to make the shift. In fact, says Groff, "we are developing a generation of visually dominant cognitive processors but immersing them and assessing them in a verbally dominant environment." Around 80 percent of people are stronger in non-verbal than verbal processing, but schools are not developing all three processing modes in a balanced way, nor are we helping them help each other.

All this leads Groff and others to propose a new approach: *whole-mindedness*. "In essence," she says, "whole-mindedness suggests that each of us possesses these three cognitive processing systems, which will manifest themselves uniquely in each individual, but that robust cognitive development comes from the opportunity to engage with and support the development of each processing system to ultimately be used in synergy." And this is where arts education comes in, providing a mix of spatial-visual and object-visual experiences. Groff says that schools should:

- Develop strengths. Teachers should assess each child's strong domain and support its development.
- Develop non-strengths. Classrooms should give students opportunities to develop their less-dominant areas starting at an early age.

- Scaffold from non-strengths. Schools should provide support, including technology, to augment and support students when they need to use a non-dominant processing system.
- Create authentic assessments. Students should have assessment experiences that allow them to use their dominant cognitive processing system.

All this is especially important because in today's digital world, everyone is being bombarded by "rapidly presented, emotionally charged visual stimuli that need to be processed holistically and quickly," says Groff (quoting Blazhenkova and Kozhevnikov).

What does a more-balanced approach look like in the classroom? Since 2004, one course at the Harvard Medical School has taken doctors-in-training on weekly visits to Boston's Museum of Fine Arts to improve their examining and diagnosis skills through observation and drawing. Professors have seen marked improvements through this blend of object-visual and verbal experiences. A parallel experience in a middle-school science classroom would be for students to closely analyze and sketch the slight differences in the moon's silhouette or various types of cells. In this kind of experience, Groff says two things happen: "First, students with a natural disposition toward a visual-object processing system are able to engage with and leverage their strength, something each of us longs and needs to do from time to time. Second, all students have the opportunity to engage and develop this processing system in parallel with the others, which may help to more fully develop cognitive capacities that are leveraged in other ways later in life."

"As we strive toward whole-mindedness," Groff concludes, "learners can be freed from their buckets – and so can the arts in education. The arts not only represent a wide spectrum of crafts and domains valued by society in so many ways, but also represent core modalities that align with cognitive constructs in the mind-brain – constructs that are critical to our development as individuals and to a society that has entered a visual revolution."

"Expanding Our 'Frames' of Mind for Education and the Arts" by Jennifer Groff in *Harvard Educational Review*, Spring 2013 (Vol. 83, #1, p. 15-39), www.harvardeducationalreview.org

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6. What Art Did for One Child

"My vivid and colorful imagination turned me into a hopeless daydreamer in elementary school," recalls award-winning New York art teacher Michele Sommer in this poignant *Harvard Educational Review* memoir. "Once, in first grade, I was so completely absorbed in a daydream that I didn't notice all the children had been dismissed. I found myself sitting completely alone at my desk, my teacher glaring at me… I was keenly aware even as a child that the adults in my life regarded my daydreaming as a defect, and so I was deeply ashamed of it. I worked hard to learn to pay attention and follow directions like everyone else. What I wouldn't give today, as an artist, to once again have that extraordinary mental capacity!"

In second grade, Sommer had difficulty with subtraction, so one day she drew vertical lines through all the subtraction signs, turning those problems into addition, which she knew

how to do. Her teacher was not fooled and put a big red *F* on her paper. On the way home, Sommer disposed of the paper under the neighbor's pine tree. "My earliest failures in school set the tone for my entire kindergarten through twelfth-grade education," she says. "The negative academic expectations were somehow passed on from grade to grade, teacher to teacher. I felt I could never be an A student."

As she went through elementary school, Sommer did well in art and was praised for her ability. But was it a gift she might lose? "I have a distinct memory of the moment of terror I experienced entering the fourth grade," she says, "wondering if I 'still had it' or if I had somehow lost my artistic ability over the summer months. What if I couldn't draw anymore? How would I get through the school year?"

In junior high school, she still felt "dumb, humiliated, and worthless" as a student. But on graduation day, she was astonished to hear her name called by Mrs. Kiester, her art teacher, to receive an award for a colored-pencil drawing she had done of a geranium. The teacher's note on the back commended her for her work – for "the satisfaction and happiness it has brought to me and others who have known, loved, and marveled at your creativity while you joined us here."

"My art teacher saved my life that day," says Sommer. "The feeling of success and the knowledge that I had a valuable skill that I could share with others did buoy me and set me on the path to my bright future… Art continues to save my life every day. I need the elements of art like I need food and water; to me these elements are the basic building blocks of life."

As an art teacher, she continues, "I often get to see another side of a student who is struggling in academic subjects. For parents and teachers of these students, having someone witness this side of them is extremely valuable in working toward a deeper understanding of a child. I have an important role in discovering how children learn and how they see and feel about themselves and the world around them. I know that every child can experience success and become excited about learning. Art education has the power to make that happen."

"The Cream Does Not Always Rise: The Plight of Visual-Spatial Learners and the Power of Art Education" by Michele Sommer in *Harvard Educational Review*, Spring 2013 (Vol. 83, #1, p. 40-42), www.harvardeducationalreview.org

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7. With a Leader's Signature, Does Size Matter?

In this intriguing *Harvard Business Review* interview, Nick Seybert (University of Maryland/College Park) describes his research on the relationship between the size of CEOs' signatures and their companies' performance. Seybert and his colleagues measured the signatures of 605 chief executive officers of major companies over a ten-year period and found that the larger the signature and the more name components were included (for example, signing William Christopher Lloyd Gunderson Jr. versus Bill Gunderson), the worse the company did in terms of sales, sales growth, and innovation. At the same time, the companies led by large-signature CEOs tended to spend more on capital goods, R&D, acquisitions, and CEO pay.

What's going on here? Seybert's theory is that a large signature is a sign of narcissism and the personality traits that accompany it, including an outsize ego, dominating discussions, ignoring criticism, belittling employees, and shifting blame for substandard performance. These correlate with overspending, lower returns on assets, and higher CEO pay compared with peers in similar companies. "Obviously, we can't say that everyone with a large signature is a narcissist and therefore a bad leader," says Seybert. But signature size seems to line up quite well with high self-esteem and narcissism in studies that look more deeply at leaders' personalities. A healthy dose of confidence and self-esteem is essential to rising through the ranks, but narcissists take confidence too far. And signature size seems to be a subconscious indicator or that.

What about Apple CEO Steve Jobs, who was notably autocratic and abusive and yet produced great results? True, says Seybert, but he "also happened to be a genius and a visionary with exceptional taste. Not every narcissist is that lucky. Most people who have grandiose ideas about their own abilities and refuse input from others make worse decisions. And even the most successful narcissists, like Jobs, leave collateral damage – frustrated employees, lost talent, damaged industry relationships – that can hurt their companies even if the financial performance looks good." (Seybert was unable to get a copy of Jobs's signature.)

So should a company [or a school district] consider signature size when hiring leaders? No, says Seybert, for two reasons. First, candidates might read about his study and downsize their signatures. Second, we need to look for red flags in the person's actual performance – in particular, signs of narcissism – that will be problems in the future.

"Size Does Matter (in Signatures)" by Nick Seybert in *Harvard Business Review*, May 2013 (Vol. 91, #5, p. 32-33), no e-link available

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8. The Wisdom of Maya Angelou

In this interview with Alison Beard in *Harvard Business Review*, author Maya Angelou talks about how she learned courage from her mother: "I realized that one isn't born with courage. One develops it by doing small courageous things – in the way that if one sets out to pick up a 100-pound bag of rice, one would be advised to start with a five-pound bag, then 10 pounds, then 20 pounds, and so forth, until one builds up enough muscle to lift the 100-pound bag. It's the same way with courage."

Angelou also talks about what she learned from watching her mother and grandmother run businesses: "That it's wise to be fair, and it's unwise to lie. That doesn't mean tell everything you know. Just make sure that what you do say is the truth. There are people who say I'm brutally frank, but one doesn't have to be brutal; one can tell the truth in such a way that the listener really welcomes it."

She shares what she does about writer's block: "I sit on the hotel bed with a deck of cards and play solitaire to give my 'little mind' something to do. I got that phrase from my grandmother, who used to say, when something surprised her, 'You know, that wasn't even on

my littlest mind.' I really thought that there was a small mind and a large mind, and if I could occupy the small one, I could get more quickly to the big one. So I play solitaire."

Finally, she's asked about what she's learned about leadership from her encounters with Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Bill Clinton, and Barack Obama: "A leader sees greatness in other people. You can't be much of a leader if all you see is yourself."

"Life's Work: Maya Angelou" an interview by Alison Beard in *Harvard Business Review*, May 2013 (Vol. 91, #5, p. 152), http://hbr.org/angelou

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9. Short Items:

a. Science website – This site created by the Office of Science Education of the National Institutes of Health http://science.education.nih.gov/home2.nsf/feature/index.htm has profiles of people in science-related careers and curriculum materials on a variety of medical and science topics, including mental health, fitness, addiction, and environmental health.

"News to Use" in *Middle Ground*, April 2013 (Vol. 16, #4, p. 6)

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b. Support for Algebra 1 – This free website has materials to support Common Core implementation of Algebra 1, including real-world examples, projects, and Web 2.0 tools: www.curriki.org/xwiki/bin/view/Coll_kathyduhl/Algebra1?bc=&viewer=info

"News to Use" in *Middle Ground*, April 2013 (Vol. 16, #4, p. 6)

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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 42 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
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 Update/Curriculum Update
Education Week
Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis
Educational Horizons
Educational Leadership
Educational Researcher
Edutopia
Elementary School Journal
Essential Teacher
Go Teach
Harvard Business Review
Harvard Education Letter
Harvard Educational Review
Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk (JESPAR)
Journal of Staff Development
Kappa Delta Pi Record
Knowledge Quest
Middle Ground
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
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