

Marshall Memo 463

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

December 3, 2012

In This Issue:

1. [How to unleash creativity](#)
2. [Five myths about the common core ELA standards](#)
3. [What should “close reading” look like in elementary classrooms?](#)
4. [A Pennsylvania district’s literacy priorities](#)
5. [Leveling the reading-writing playing field for boys](#)
6. [Learning a rich English vocabulary in Japan](#)
7. [What works best for elementary-school ELLs?](#)
8. [Five ways to waste the potential of classroom iPads](#)
9. [How to make wise resource-allocation decisions](#)
10. [David Brooks on changing bad behavior](#)

Quotes of the Week

“If the scribbling, singing, dancing kindergartner symbolizes unfettered creative expression, the awkward teenager represents the opposite: someone who cares – *deeply* – about what other people think. It takes only a few years to develop that fear of judgment, but it stays with us throughout our adult lives, often constraining our careers.”

Tom Kelley and David Kelley (see item #1)

“Teachers at every level, in every discipline, should stress that all good writing is creative: it creates understanding in the reader, and it may create goodwill or, in the case of an application letter, a positive introduction to a person who would make an excellent employee.”

Phillip Hey in a letter to *The Atlantic* (December 2012, Vol. 310, #5, p. 15) responding to Peg Tyre’s article in the October *Atlantic* (summarized in Marshall Memo 454)

“Remember that class? I hated you. But now I totally get what you were doing, and you were right! Thank you!”

jmco in a letter to *The Atlantic* (December 2012, Vol. 310, #5, p. 16) quoting a student who was critical at the time but later formed a different opinion, in response to Amanda Ripley’s article in the October *Atlantic* on student surveys (summarized in Memo 453)

“Decades of research have shown that when teachers have access to new technologies, their instinct is to use new technologies to extend existing practices.”

Tom Daccord (see item #8)

“Quality of instruction is more important than language of instruction.”

Alan Cheung and Robert Slavin (see item #7)

1. How to Unleash Creativity

“Most people are born creative,” say Tom Kelley (University of California/Berkeley and University of Tokyo) and David Kelley (Stanford University) in this thoughtful *Harvard Business Review* article. “As children, we revel in imaginary play, ask outlandish questions, draw blobs and call them dinosaurs.” But as the years pass, formal education takes its toll and many people no longer see themselves as creative.

Kelley and Kelley believe creativity is vital to getting results, and they’re in the business of helping people rediscover their creative confidence, defined as their “natural ability to come up with new ideas and the courage to try them out.” They use “guided mastery” to help people get past fears that inhibit creativity:

- *Fear of the messy unknown* – One’s office is cozy and predictable, say Kelley and Kelley: “Out in the world, it’s more chaotic. You have to deal with unexpected findings, with uncertainty, and with irrational people who say things you don’t want to hear. But that is where you find insights – and creative breakthroughs.” Venturing out of one’s comfort zone and treating it like an anthropological expedition is a sure way to fire up creativity.

- *Fear of being judged* – “If the scribbling, singing, dancing kindergartner symbolizes unfettered creative expression,” say Kelley and Kelley, “the awkward teenager represents the opposite: someone who cares – *deeply* – about what other people think. It takes only a few years to develop that fear of judgment, but it stays with us throughout our adult lives, often constraining our careers.” People self-censor ideas for fear they won’t be acceptable to peers or superiors, constantly undermining the creative process. Kelley and Kelley recommend keeping an idea notebook or whiteboard and scribbling ideas – good, bad, indifferent – with abandon. It’s amazing how much good stuff is written down by the end of each week. They also suggest scheduling “white space” time when the only task is to think and daydream – perhaps while taking a walk. It’s also important to reach an agreement with colleagues to use more supportive language in response to wild and crazy ideas, shifting from “That will never work” to “I wish...” or “This is just my opinion and I want to help.”

- *Fear of the first step* – “Creative efforts are hardest at the beginning,” say Kelley and Kelley. “The writer faces the blank page; the teacher, the start of school; businesspeople, the first day of a new project... To overcome this inertia, good ideas are not enough. You need to stop planning and just get started – and the best way to do that is to stop focusing on the huge overall task and find a small piece you can tackle right away.” Anne Lamott once wrote about a boy who procrastinated on a school report on birds till the night before it was due and was saved by some great advice from his father: “Bird by bird, buddy. Just take it bird by bird.”

- *Fear of losing control* – Many people think they have to solve problems or come up with answers by themselves. Kelley and Kelley say that when we're stuck, we need to let go and reach out for help. "Confidence doesn't simply mean believing your ideas are good," they write. "It means having the humility to let go of ideas that aren't working and to accept good ideas from other people." Call a meeting of people who are fresh to the topic and brainstorm. Let the most junior person in the room lead the meeting. Look for opportunities to let go and leverage different perspectives.

"Reclaim Your Creative Confidence" by Tom Kelley and David Kelley in *Harvard Business Review*, December 2012 (Vol. 90, #12, p. 115-118), no e-link available

[Back to page one](#)

2. Five Myths About the Common Core ELA Standards

(Originally titled "The Common Core Ate My Baby and Other Urban Legends")

In this important *Educational Leadership* article, literacy expert Timothy Shanahan (University of Illinois/Chicago) debunks five myths about the common core literacy standards:

- *Myth #1: The new standards prohibit teachers from setting purposes for reading or discussing prior knowledge.* True, the original publishers' criteria written by lead authors David Coleman and Susan Pimentel in 2011 suggested deemphasizing the common practice of spending time building up students' background knowledge, establishing the purpose for reading a passage, and asking for students' predictions. Facing a storm of protest, Coleman and Pimentel retreated and issued an April 2012 revision that eliminated admonitions against pre-teaching.

"So to clarify, there simply is no ban on pre-reading in the Common Core State Standards," says Shanahan. But there are significant changes – close reading and re-reading – which suggest that it's a good idea to get students to plunge into texts without a lot of prior teaching. "The benefit of the pre-reading controversy," says Shanahan, "is that it's getting educators to take a hard look at how best to send students into a book – and this rethinking can help us clear up our pre-reading act... Preparing students to read a text... should be brief and should focus on providing students with the tools they need to make sense of the text on their own."

- *Myth #2: Teachers are no longer required to teach phonological awareness, phonics, or fluency.* Not true, says Shanahan. The common-core standards are strong on phonological awareness K-1, phonics K-3, and fluency K-5. So how did this myth get started? Perhaps because the new literacy standards began with comprehension, which is the reverse of the sequence in many previous standards documents.

- *Myth #3: English teachers can no longer teach literature in literature classes.* Nonsense, says Shanahan. What the new standards do is give informational texts equal billing with novels, stories, poems, and plays in the elementary grades and 30 percent of classroom time in the upper grades – but that includes science and social studies. English teachers can continue to teach literature, as they have always done.

• *Myth #4: Teachers must teach students at frustration levels.* It's true that the common-core standards call for students to work with more-challenging material at each grade level than has been typical in basal readers in recent years. This is based on research showing that students make less progress when they read easier texts – and the urgent need to prepare students for the literacy demands of college and the workplace. But the higher reading levels in the new standards should not lead primary-grade teachers to push students beyond what is required by the common-core (which is similar to previous expectations) in order to prepare them for more-demanding grade 2 standards. And all teachers should give their students a mix of reading material – more-demanding material for close reading and direct instruction, easier material for fun reading.

• *Myth #5: Most schools are already teaching to the new standards.* Baloney, says Shanahan: “We *are* going to have to make some real changes in our practices.” These include (a) less emphasis on pre-reading and more on close reading, re-reading, and follow-up; (b) building students’ skills and motivation to tackle difficult texts without telling them what the texts say; (c) an increase in critical analysis and synthesis of information from multiple texts; (d) a greater emphasis on informational texts in upper-grade social studies and science classes; and (e) more student writing about the ideas from texts than personal thoughts.

“Each one of these changes is considerable and will require better and more appropriate professional development, instructional materials, and supervision,” says Shanahan. “Educators who shrug off these changes will face a harsh reality.” The fact is that 40 percent of students who currently meet state standards need remediation when they get to college and many fail to graduate. The new standards are in line with what students need to know and be able to do to succeed in college and careers. Shanahan believes they will give teachers, students, and parents a much more accurate picture of where students stand, and what they need to succeed.

“The Common Core Ate My Baby and Other Urban Legends” by Timothy Shanahan in *Educational Leadership*, December 2012 (Vol. 70, #4, p. 10-16), www.ascd.org; Shanahan can be reached at shanahan@uic.edu.

[Back to page one](#)

3. What Should “Close Reading” Look Like in Elementary Classrooms?

In this article in *The Reading Teacher*, Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey (San Diego State University) report on what struck a group of elementary teachers as they observed close reading in secondary English, social studies, and science classrooms. The elementary teachers found that six features differed from the way they taught reading:

- *Short passages* – The texts that secondary teachers used for close reading ranged from three paragraphs to two pages. One high-school English teacher said, “My students read longer pieces on their own. When we really dig into a text, I use a shorter piece so that I can teach them skills for interrogating the ideas of the text.”
- *Complex texts* – Secondary teachers had students do close reading with passages above their independent reading level.

- *Limited frontloading* – The secondary teachers rarely commented on the passages before asking students to dive in and read.
- *Repeated readings* – Students often read the same text more than once, each time with a purpose or question in mind. Often teachers had students read the passage aloud the first time and subsequently read it aloud themselves with special emphasis.
- *Text-dependent questions* – Students were asked to provide evidence from the passage to answer their teachers’ questions. There were very few questions linking the passages to students’ personal experiences.
- *Annotation* – Secondary students often underlined, circled, wrote in the margins, or used sticky notes as they did close reading.

The elementary teachers then identified ways they believe close reading needs to be modified in elementary classrooms:

- *More reading aloud by the teacher* – This is particularly important in the lower grades to help students get the overall picture before getting into close reading.

- *Judicious frontloading* – The elementary teachers agreed that not all passages needed vocabulary and concepts explained before students started reading – only when it couldn’t be figured out while reading the text. One teacher said, “I think we have to get the students to do the heavy lifting now and part of that is to make sure that students are thinking about the text each time they read it.” Elementary teachers also agreed that they shouldn’t ask questions about students’ personal experiences until they had read closely and gained a firm foundation of new knowledge.

- *Text-dependent questions* – The elementary teachers realized that many of the questions they asked about a book or passage drew out students’ personal experiences and could be answered without reading the text. They came up with types of questions that would get students to pay close attention to the words on the page:

- Main idea and arguments
- Key details
- Vocabulary and text structure
- Author’s purpose
- Inference
- Opinion and inter-textual

- *Teaching annotation* – Having students “read with a pencil” worried many of the elementary teachers; they didn’t want students to get in the habit of writing in classroom books. After much discussion, they agreed on how to phase in annotation, starting with wiki sticks to underline key ideas in big books to underlining major points and circling key words and phrases on a photocopy of a page in third grade to using arrows to make connections in sixth grade.

“Close Reading in Elementary Schools” by Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey in *The Reading Teacher*, November 2012 (Vol. 66, #3, p. 179-188), <http://bit.ly/SBPs7l>; Fisher can be reached at dfisher@mail.sdsu.edu, Frey at nfrey@mail.sdsu.edu.

[Back to page one](#)

4. A Pennsylvania District's Priorities on Literacy

This *District Management Journal* article includes a sidebar listing the Lancaster, PA school district's ten non-negotiables for elementary literacy:

- Common materials and resources;
- Common interim assessments;
- Broad understanding and support for “how we teach reading” – “Teaching reading really is rocket science,” says the document. “The materials become less of the focus; teaching our children to read is the goal.”
- A map of what the 90-minute literacy block should contain;
- An appropriately supported and supplemented core – Tier one instruction for 80-85 percent of students, and the right materials, guidelines, and practices for all classes;
- Incorporating all strands of literacy – reading, writing, speaking, listening, handwriting/ keyboarding, so students can analyze, experience, and understand the world around them;
- Integration of common-core literacy standards, especially in social studies and science;
- Observational look-fors that principals and coaches use when observing classrooms;
- Fifty hours of embedded, ongoing professional development – coaching, videos, meetings, peer observations, webinars, and workshops;
- Support and accountability for principals without judgment – open dialogues about strengths, weaknesses, and realities.

“Teamwork Transforms the School District of Lancaster: Elementary Literacy's 10 Non-Negotiables” in *The District Management Journal*, Fall 2012 (Vol. 12, p. 27), www.dmcouncil.org

[Back to page one](#)

5. Leveling the Reading-Writing Playing Field for Boys

In this article in *The Reading Teacher*, Illinois first-grade teacher Nicole Senn says that all too often, boys are “Turned off. Checked out. Disengaged. Disenfranchised” when it comes to reading and writing – and this is true around the world. What's going on? Senn lists some research findings:

- Boys generally take longer than girls learning to read.
- Boys generally think less of their reading ability than girls.
- Most boys read less than girls.
- Boys are often less enthusiastic about reading than girls.
- By high school, half of boys consider themselves “nonreaders.”

Why? There are some key differences:

- *Brain and biology* – Brain research is showing differences in neurological development between boys and girls that manifest themselves in literacy. Beginning in preschool and kindergarten, boys often express their emotions through actions while girls use words, and as they get older, boys tend to focus on action and exploration while girls attend

more to relationships and communication. Boys show less empathy and have shorter attention spans than girls. Girls begin reading sooner and read more.

- *Confidence* – “Much of boys’ lack of motivation to read and write can be attributed to the limited confidence they frequently have in their abilities,” says Senn. This leads them to read less, which creates a negative ability-confidence-motivation spiral.

- *Attitude* – Boys often view reading as “for girls” (something that is not helped by the fact that elementary teachers are overwhelmingly female), a “compulsory activity controlled by adult-given instructions”, and feel “school just forces you to do things.” Boys may not be able to accept criticism of their reading and writing without harm to their confidence.

- *Lack of interest* – Elementary readalouds are most often fiction, and the topics that most interest boys – sports, comics, action, horror, or humor – are generally not well represented.

What can teachers do to improve boys’ motivation and achievement in reading and writing? Senn suggests the following:

- Show boys that men read too by inviting male role models (family members, friends, other staff members) into the classroom, getting male authors and illustrators to visit, and setting up writing mentors
- Make sure readaloud selections are often appealing to boys, with a mix of fiction and nonfiction.
- Make sure the classroom library has plenty of nonfiction on a wide variety of topics, has fiction titles with male characters, contains series that will hook reluctant readers, and is visually appealing (covers, easy-to-read text, frequent illustrations, and magazines, newspapers, comics, and graphic novels).
- Allow all students to choose what they read.
- Encourage students to read with their peers.
- Provide time to share, collaborate on, and celebrate writing.
- Incorporate technology wherever possible.
- Remember that boys need to move.
- Accept and incorporate boys’ humor. “Let them be funny, and enjoy it yourself,” urges Senn.

“Effective Approaches to Motivate and Engage Reluctant Boys in Literacy” by Nicole Senn in *The Reading Teacher*, November 2012 (Vol. 66, #3, p. 211-220), <http://1.usa.gov/11sCIU4>; Senn can be reached at nicolesenn@u-46.org.

[Back to page one](#)

6. Learning a Rich English Vocabulary in Japan

In this article in *The Reading Teacher*, Yokohama international school third-grade teacher Greg Feezell describes how he incorporates robust vocabulary instruction into his daily readers’ workshop block. He lets students choose the challenging words they will learn each week and encourages them write each word and the sentence in which they encountered it on a slip of paper, write their name on the back, and put it into the class’s Word Box. At the end of

the week, Feezell chooses words from the box, focusing on tier two words – those that “offer more precise or mature ways of referring to ideas they already know about” (Beck et al.) – and avoiding obscure tier three words. Here’s one week’s list:

Anonymous
Confidential
Contagious
Extravagance
Orchard
Refused
Spiral

Words that don’t make it onto the next week’s list provide fodder for individual conferences with students; Feezell also works with students who aren’t submitting words. Here’s the weekly routine with the new words:

- *Monday* – Feezell spends 10-15 minutes introducing the words one by one (“Here’s an interesting word that Anna found”). He reads the student’s sentence, sometimes shows a picture, and has the class discuss possible meanings based on the context before reading the definition he’s written on a card. He then puts the word cards on the class word wall and students are responsible for learning them.

- *Tuesday* – The class, seated in front of an easel, collectively writes sentences for the new words, with some think-pair-share activity to generate more ideas. A sentence that started out “He is contagious” ended up “He washed his hands to avoid getting a contagious disease.”

- *Wednesday and Thursday* – Students engage in a variety of activities in which they use and become more familiar with all the words on the word wall, not just that week’s. They might choose a word to illustrate and have classmates identify the word from their drawing, play a word tic-tac-toe, or play a movement game choosing between words with similar meanings (for example, *resemblance* and *mimic*).

- *Friday* – One student is in the spotlight but the whole class is being assessed. Feezell reads ten questions aloud for the spotlighted student to answer. The rest of the class raises green, red, or yellow cards to show if they agree, disagree, or aren’t sure of each answer. This way, Feezell can see how well the whole class knows the words.

When words seem solidly in students’ vocabularies, he takes the card down from the word wall but keeps them all on his desk. How does he know when words are mastered? Here’s one example: One day, the principal of the secondary school in Feezell’s complex paid an unexpected visit to the classroom. One girl whose native language is Japanese said, “Will you stay and watch our play? I beseech you!”

“Robust Vocabulary Instruction in a Readers’ Workshop” by Greg Feezell in *The Reading Teacher*, November 2012 (Vol. 66, #3, p. 233-237), <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/TRTR.01087/abstract>; Feezell can be reached at gfezell@gmail.com.

[Back to page one](#)

7. What Works Best for Elementary-School ELLs?

In this 44-page article in *Review of Educational Research*, Alan Cheung (The Chinese University of Hong Kong) and Robert Slavin (Johns Hopkins University and The University of York) synthesize recent research on effective elementary reading programs for Spanish-dominant ELLs. They considered not only bilingual and English-immersion programs but also various interventions aimed at improving the reading achievement of English language learners.

The conclusion: “Quality of instruction is more important than language of instruction.” These are the components and precursors of quality instruction that make the biggest difference: (a) strong schoolwide literacy programs; (b) cooperative learning, which appears to be especially helpful to ELLs because it provides language learners “extensive, daily opportunities to use their developing language skills in meaningful contexts,” building confidence in using school-specific English; (c) small-group and one-on-one tutoring for ELLs having difficulty in reading; and (d) extensive professional development for teachers. “Effective programs provide explicit manuals, videos, and simulations to start teachers off in the right direction and then have experienced coaches visit teachers using new strategies to offer feedback and support,” say Cheung and Slavin.

“Language of instruction remains an important question,” conclude the authors, “if for no other reason than that building on students’ home language gives them skills in that language sure to be important in their lives. However, when English reading is the goal, different approaches may work equally well, bilingual as well as structured English immersion. We now have many approaches that can be used in either bilingual or English-only settings with evidence of effectiveness from rigorous evaluation.”

“Effective Reading Programs for Spanish-Dominant English Language Learners (ELLs) in the Elementary Grades: A Synthesis of Research” by Alan Cheung and Robert Slavin in *Review of Educational Research*, December 2012 (Vol. 82, #4, p. 351-395),
http://www.bestevidence.org/word/ell_read_Mar_19_2012.pdf

[Back to page one](#)

8. Five Ways to Waste the Potential of Classroom iPads

In this helpful article in *Edudemic*, tech consultant and former high-school history teacher Tom Daccord lists mistakes he’s seen schools making with iPads in classrooms and points the way to more-effective use:

- *Focusing only on content apps* – Some teachers think iPads are useless if apps in their subject area aren’t available. But a Latin class, for example, could use apps like VoiceThread to record students speaking Latin or having a collaborative discussion about Cicero. Students could use Animoto for a lively student presentation on Latin vocabulary, or the Socrative app for a Latin quiz, or Explain Everything to create a grammar tutorial. Daccord says there are limitless possibilities across subject areas using four basic types of apps: annotation, screencasting, audio creation, and video creation.

- *Unprepared teachers* – To ensure that tablet computers are used effectively, teachers need some serious PD, says Daccord: “Decades of research has shown that when teachers have access to new technologies, their instinct is to use new technologies to extend existing practices. Without guidance, iPads become expensive notebooks used by students in very traditionally structured stand-and-deliver classrooms.” And giving teachers their own iPads to play with outside school is poor preparation for effective classroom use. They need training on workflow issues like cloud computing, the interaction of different apps and file types, file format compatibility, file conversion tools, all-in-one management solutions, and translating these concepts so students can use them.

- *Treating iPads like computers or laptops* – “iPads are devices meant to complement computers, not replace them,” says Daccord. iPads simply don’t have equivalent functionality. They are best for helping students (especially young students) kinesthetically connect with their work by zooming, rotating, pinching, or swiping. iPads can also be used to take pictures, record audio, and shoot video. Students can use them to tell multimedia stories, screencast the solution to math problems, create public service announcements, and simulate tours of ancient cities. “Active consumption, curation, and creativity suit the device,” says Daccord. “Stand-and-deliver teaching does not.”

- *Having multiple students use an iPad at the same time* – “Carts that rotate through several classrooms force teachers to take time away from learning, create a nightmare of student accounts, and often focus attention on workflow systems rather than learning,” says Daccord. If funding shortages make one-on-one iPad allocation impossible, he recommends putting full class sets into a few pilot classrooms for an entire year – and pick classrooms whose teachers will use the iPads to their fullest extent.

- *Not explaining why we bought all those iPads* – “Letting the purchase speak for itself isn’t enough,” says Daccord. “Districts need to explain why they’ve invested in these devices.” Their use has to be in service of teaching students essential skills, taking advantage of “the incredibly immersive and active learning environment the iPad engenders and the unprecedented opportunities to develop personalized, student-centered learning.” School leaders should make the case that with these devices, students literally have the world at their fingertips – “and the only limitation to what students might do in this vast space is the vision of educators.”

“5 Critical Mistakes Schools Make With iPads (and How to Correct Them)” by Tom Daccord in *Edudemic*, Sept. 27, 2012; Daccord can be reached at tom@edtechteacher.org; the article is at <http://edudemic.com/2012/09/5-critical-mistakes-schools-ipads-and-correct-them/>

[*Back to page one*](#)

9. How to Make Wise Resource-Allocation Decisions

In a sidebar in this *District Management Journal* article, Nathan Levenson and Bridget McNamara list ten mistakes superintendents should avoid when they make difficult resource-allocation decisions:

- *Don't make tough decisions alone.* “When only a small group of leaders make decisions, those who were not involved often fail to support the decision,” say Levenson and McNamara.

- *Don't ignore unstated values.* Beyond the core values of Children First are other competing values, for example, loyalty to staff and appreciation of seniority.

- *Don't forget that making the wise choice isn't sufficient.* “How decisions are made matters as much as the decision itself,” say the authors. “Be sure to involve deep influencers in the decision-making process.”

- *Don't assume others know the facts.* People may not know about a program's disappointing results or the high costs per student served. If they're part of the fact-finding process, they're more likely to support the decision.

- *Don't frame choices as “good” or “bad.”* This personalizes decisions and increases the chances of strong pushback. Better to talk in terms of alignment (or non-alignment) with the district's strategic vision.

- *Don't forget to involve principals.* They are the key communication link to teachers and parents.

- *Don't advocate for half measures.* “Be careful not to undermine the integrity of the proposal,” advise Levenson and McNamara. “Half measures will cause support to dissipate.”

- *But don't be stubborn.* There's a time to incorporate feedback and bend to ensure support and success, say the authors.

- *Don't assume central-office support.* Even those closest to the superintendent may have conflicting loyalties and need to be part of the process and understand decisions.

- *Don't despair.* If district leaders attend to the “adaptive” as well as the technical challenges, budgets can be managed well.

“10 Mistakes to Avoid: Making Difficult Resource Allocation Decisions” by Nathan Levenson and Bridget McNamara in *The District Management Journal*, Fall 2012 (Vol. 12, p. 22-23), www.dmcouncil.org

[Back to page one](#)

10. David Brooks on Changing Bad Behavior

In this *New York Times* column, David Brooks tells the story of a scorching e-mail that Nick Crews, a British father of three grown children, sent his offspring last February. It's come to be known as the “Crews Missile” in Great Britain because of its hectoring language toward the hapless children. It concluded, “I want to hear no more from any of you until, if you feel inclined, you have a success or an achievement or a REALISTIC plan for the support and happiness of your children to tell me about. I am bitterly, bitterly disappointed. Dad.” The e-mail has made Crews a folk hero among many Brits, who are delighted that he had the moxie to tell off his over-privileged slacker children.

Brooks demurs: “The problem, of course, is that no matter how emotionally satisfying these tirades may be, they don't really work... People don't behave badly because they lack

information about their shortcomings. They behave badly because they've fallen into patterns of destructive behavior from which they're unable to escape."

So what does work? Brooks cites research indicating that a less direct approach is more effective. "Human behavior flows from hidden springs and calls for constant and crafty prodding more than blunt hectoring," he says. "The way to get someone out of a negative cascade is... to go on offense and try to maximize some alternative good behavior... It's better to pick one area of life at a time (most people don't have the willpower to change their whole lives at once) and help a person lay down a pre-emptive set of concrete rules and rewards. Pick out a small goal and lay out measurable steps toward it... [T]ry to change superficial behavior first and hope that, if they act differently, they'll eventually think differently. Lure people toward success with the promise of admiration instead of trying to punish failure with criticism... Change the underlying context. Change the behavior triggers. Displace bad behavior with different good behavior. Be oblique. Redirect."

"How People Change" by David Brooks in *The New York Times*, Nov. 27, 2012 (p. A27)
<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/27/opinion/brooks-how-people-change.html>

[Back to page one](#)

© Copyright 2012 Marshall Memo LLC

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 62 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 the school year. Rates decline steeply for multiple readers within the same organization. See the website for these rates and information on paying by check or credit card.

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
ASCD SmartBrief
Better Evidence-Based Education
Center for Performance Assessment Newsletter
Changing Schools
District Administration
ED Magazine
Education Digest
Education Gadfly
Education Next
Education Update
Education Week
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
Newsweek
NJEA Review
PEN Weekly NewsBlast
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
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
Wharton Leadership Digest