

Marshall Memo 288

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

June 1, 2009

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Quotes of the Week

“The high-five is, like, boring.”

A San Francisco eighth grader who prefers hugs (see item #9)

“Too many students have become compliant workers who simply follow directions and finish the necessary paperwork on time.”

Alison Zmuda (see item #1)

“Differentiated instruction is student-aware teaching.”

Carol Ann Tomlinson in “The Goals of Differentiation” in *Educational Leadership*, November 2008 (Vol. 66, #3, p. 26-30), article available for purchase at http://ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/nov08/vol66/num03/toc.aspx

“If teachers are uncertain about the learning destination, their students are adrift.”

Carol Ann Tomlinson (*ibid.*)

“When the purpose of learning is muddy or students don’t buy into it or perceive its relevance, they may complete many tasks but will have zero motivation and assume no responsibility.”

Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey (see item #5)

“One becomes a better reader by writing, and one becomes a better writer by reading.”

Timothy Rasinski and Nancy Padak (see item #3)

1. Problematic Student Beliefs About School

(Originally titled “Springing into Active Learning”)

“Too many students have become compliant workers who simply follow directions and finish the necessary paperwork on time,” says consultant Alison Zmuda in this thoughtful article in *Educational Leadership*. “They function like low-level bureaucrats – they complete each allocated task to make space for an endless litany of new tasks until the day they quit or get promoted.” Zmuda believes this happens because students internalize a set of beliefs about how school works:

- *What I’m asked to do in class is based on the teacher’s personal choices, not what real-world people do.*

- *What the teacher wants me to say is more important than what I want to say.*

“Students come to believe that if they can figure out what the teacher wants, likes, and thinks, they will succeed in the class,” says Zmuda.

- *The point of an assignment is to get it done.* Many students feel they are drowning in paperwork, get stressed out, and are uncertain about how good their work is.

- *Once an assignment is finished, it’s off my to-do list.* Many students resent having to revise their work.

- *If I make a mistake, I’ll replace it with the right answer.* Figuring out what went wrong is not important.

- *I feel proud of my work only if I get a good grade.* Students with this attitude look at the grade first and only glance at teachers’ comments.

- *If I’m quick with my work, that means I’m smart. If I’m slow, it means I’m stupid.*

- *Once I get too far behind, I can never catch up. It also means I’ll get easier work, and I may be assigned to a slower class.*

- *What we do in class is for school, not for life – and school is boring. It’s what happens between the really interesting stuff with my friends.*

How can students be disabused of these beliefs? It’s all about how learning is structured in classrooms, says Zmuda. She suggests that teachers ask themselves:

- Am I encouraging “neat”, compliant behavior instead of helping students come to grips with the messiness of engaged learning?
- Am I encouraging students to focus on what I want, versus what classmates are saying?
- Are my scoring tools over-rewarding students for how their work is packaged (mechanics, neatness, and organization) and under-rewarding them for the quality of their thinking?

- Are my colleagues and I “rescuing” students from having to struggle? Are we stripping tasks of the hard parts, leaving students only with the easy stuff?
- Am I requiring students to revise their work? Revision is spurred by clear criteria up front, good scoring guides, and attention to detail by both teachers and students.
- Is the pacing guide robbing us of depth? “The frenetic attempts to cover the curriculum have prevented teachers from giving students ample time to figure things out for themselves,” says Zmuda. “When students have meaningful opportunities to understand, they are more likely to wisely use that knowledge in future tasks and situations.”

Zmuda urges us to tell students that they won’t get the right answer the first time, that there’s a certain amount of frustration inherent in learning, but that with hard work, breakthroughs are just around the corner, the right words are on the tip of their tongues, and the connections they are looking for are right before their eyes. “Such faith in one’s capacity creates the joy, tolerance, and fascination that force engaged learning environments that embrace the unexpected,” she says.

“Springing into Active Learning” by Alison Zmuda in *Educational Leadership*, November 2008 (Vol. 66, #3, p. 38-42); this article is available at http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/nov08/vol66/num03/toc.aspx; the author can be reached at Zmuda@competentclassroom.com.

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2. Enhancing Literacy and Family Involvement with One Activity

In this highly practical article in *The Reading Teacher*, Baltimore researcher Sharon Pitcher describes her efforts to involve parents in developing children’s literacy skills in ways that were enjoyable, honored parents’ limited time, accommodated parents’ varied literacy skills, and didn’t require expensive or elaborate materials. She and her colleagues finally came up with The Great Poetry Race to address all these challenges. Here’s how it works:

- The teacher chooses a poem that reinforces something that’s being taught in class – for example, sight words, short-vowel sounds, or reading with expression.
- During shared reading time, the teacher introduces the poem and gives each student a copy and a paper with lines divided into two columns, one for signatures and the other for comments.
- Students have a set amount of time (two or three days, perhaps) to read the poem to as many family and community members as possible and get them to sign the form and make comments.
- The student with the most signatures at the end of the designated time wins a prize (usually a book).

The Great Poetry Race was an immediate hit in Pitcher’s reading clinic and a few nearby schools. One boy was having dinner with his family at a neighborhood restaurant and started going from table to table reading his poem. The manager was impressed and had the boy stand on a table and read to the whole restaurant. Everyone then signed his paper and he easily won

the prize that week. Another child stood with the crossing guard at a busy intersection and read to parents and children as they waited to cross (he was also a prizewinner).

One of Pitcher's graduate students tried the Great Poetry Race with her second graders in a Baltimore City school and it didn't catch on at first. The teacher wrote in her weekly newsletter to parents about the importance of multiple readings and the research on the importance of fluency and automaticity to improving reading proficiency. The teacher also talked up the idea at back-to-school night, sent a note home explaining her choice of poem each week, and set up a display outside her room with a place for the winner of each week's contest. The idea began to take off, and students walked around the school proudly reading to the nurse, the custodians, and the secretary. Students who could barely read at the beginning of the year quickly became more proficient, and the teacher saw direct benefits in her daily instruction. Other teachers liked the idea and the Great Poetry Race quickly spread through the school.

Pitcher says the idea has been successful from kindergarten through high school. Here are some variations:

- A kindergarten teacher launched the Great Nursery Rhyme Race, with students making construction-paper books based on different nursery rhymes and reading them to as many people as possible.
- A high-school teacher had a ninth-grade nonreader dictate a story, and the student then read the story to multiple listeners and collected signatures and comments. The teacher said there were significant gains in the boy's decoding and fluency skills and self-confidence.
- A middle-school teacher used rap songs and students enthusiastically competed to share these lines of rhymes with as many people as they could.

Pitcher says the Great Poetry Race is a powerful way to build literacy skills – and it puts smiles on children's and adults' faces. It takes very little teacher time to prepare, and good poems are readily available at websites like <http://www.gigglepoetry.com>. She highly recommends this activity.

“The Great Poetry Race” by Sharon Pitcher in *The Reading Teacher*, April 2009 (Vol. 62, #7, p. 613-616), no e-link available; the author can be reached at spitcher@towson.edu.

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3. Ideas for Family Writing Activities

“One becomes a better reader by writing, and one becomes a better writer by reading,” say Kent State professors Timothy Rasinski and Nancy Padak in this article in *The Reading Teacher*. “Writing, like reading, is best learned when it occurs in authentic situations and for authentic purposes.” They make the case for working with parents exploit the power of all kinds of writing at home. Here are some ways parents can do this:

- *Lists* – Families make these all the time: shopping lists, to-do lists, invitation lists, etc. Children could be encouraged to make lists of their own: birthday wishes, chores, top-ten lists, etc.
- *Notes* – Rasinski fondly remembers the notes that his mother put in his lunch box and notes that his father put under his pillow. Kids can be encouraged to jot notes to family members and capture special moments in writing – saying goodbye to grandparents after a summer vacation, the taste of a chocolate chip ice cream cone, etc.
- *Journals and diaries* – “In the process of writing, journalers often come to deeper understanding of their lives,” say Rasinski and Padak. “Moreover, the journal becomes a precious keepsake as the journaler continues through life.”
- *Dialogue journals* – These are a written conversation between a parent and child, usually in a journal or notebook passed back and forth at different times of day. This is a way for a parent to develop a deeper relationship with a child – questions, answers, encouragements, apologies, and words of affection can be written that might never be spoken.
- *Letters and e-mails* – These can help children stay in touch with distant family members. Children get a kick out of getting a letter or e-mail back.
- *Birthday and special-event books* – These are blank books in which family members and guests at a birthday party or special event write personal notes or wishes.
- *Parodies* – Families can enjoy writing spoofs of songs, poems, advertisements, and other genres.

Rasinski and Padak close with some suggestions for home-based writing that they have picked up over the years:

- The writing must be an authentic part of everyday life; it will lose its power if it’s seen as overly instructional.
- Parents shouldn’t be overly concerned with grammar and spelling. “Pointing out children’s shortcomings will discourage them from writing,” say Rasinski and Padak.
- It’s very helpful to have writing materials on hand – pens, pencils, colored markers, paper, construction paper, staplers, etc.

“Write Soon!” by Timothy Rasinski and Nancy Padak in *The Reading Teacher*, April 2009 (Vol. 62, #7, p. 618-620), no e-link; the authors can be reached at trasinsk@kent.edu and npadak@literacy.kent.edu.

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4. Problem-Solving Conferences

(Originally titled “Solving Behavior Problems Together”)

In this *Educational Leadership* article, consultant Caltha Crowe describes how to use private, one-on-one conferences with students to solve social and academic problems. This Responsive Classroom strategy is built on the belief that students want to be successful but need to be taught *how*. “When students know how to recognize, take responsibility for, and

solve problems that interfere with learning,” she writes, “they’re much more likely to reach their full potential.”

- *Build an alliance.* Students must know that the teacher cares about and likes them. Get to know each student, give a personal greeting in the morning, ask about hobbies, share a joke, suggests Crowe.

- *Establish rapport.* Once in the conference, the student must know that the purpose is to solve the problem, not to be scolded. A good strategy is to compliment the student on things he or she does well before getting to the issue at hand.

- *Talk specifics and listen.* Crowe gives an example of a third grader who always threw a tantrum when it was time for the class to write. She showed him the blank pages in his writing journal and he said, “Well, I don’t have any ideas at writing time. I don’t know what to say or how to say it. I feel so frustrated. I don’t want to write.” He was willing to open up because she was nonjudgmental and had evidence of the problem.

- *Identify the problem and invite the student to solve it.* “Learning to be a good writer is an important part of school,” she said to him. “To learn to be a good writer, you need to practice writing... Would you like to try to figure this out with me?” Somewhat skeptical, the boy said, “OK.”

- *Explore possible causes.* The teacher suggested several ideas without getting a reaction, but then she remembered that the boy’s parents said he had trouble falling asleep at night. “Do you feel tired when it’s time to write?” she asked. He perked up a little. “I think so,” he said. “I’m so tired at writing time.”

- *Articulate a clear, specific goal.* The teacher then asked how many sentences he thought he could write if he wasn’t tired. “I bet I could write two sentences,” he said.

- *Choose a solution.* “So,” said the teacher, “when do you feel energetic?” He said first thing in the morning. They brainstormed and settled on getting his father to bring him to school early so he could get his writing done before other students arrived. This worked well for a couple of months, but when the teacher pushed him to go beyond two sentences, he dug in his heels in and they had another conference to solve that problem.

“Solving Behavior Problems Together” by Caltha Crowe in *Educational Leadership*, November 2008 (Vol. 66, #3, p. 38-42); this article is available at http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/nov08/vol66/num03/toc.aspx.

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5. Gradual Release of Responsibility

(Originally titled “Releasing Responsibility”)

Telling students to work independently on worksheets or busywork assignments does not really prepare them to work on their own, say San Diego State University literacy professors Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey in this *Educational Leadership* article. This kind of independent work is okay for students who already know the material, but unhelpful for those whose understanding is shaky. “If students are to reach the high expectations we set for them, they need to be able to marshal previously learned concepts and apply them to achieve new

understandings after they leave our schools,” say Fisher and Frey. How can teachers pull this off? By gradually and purposefully releasing responsibility, providing support every step of the way. Here are their suggested steps:

- *Learning goals* – “When the purpose of learning is muddy or students don’t buy into it or perceive its relevance, they may complete many tasks but will have zero motivation and assume no responsibility,” say the authors. Goals should include big ideas, specialized vocabulary, and skills.

- *Teacher modeling* – “Humans are hardwired to imitate other humans,” say Fisher and Frey. Teachers need to show students examples of the kind of thinking and language they’re being asked to use and *when* each should be used – for example, how to predict what’s going to happen next in a story, how to figure out unfamiliar words, how to recognize different text structures (narrative and nonfiction, for example), and how to make sense of charts, tables, figures, bold and italicized words, and headings.

- *Collaborative work* – Working with peers allows students to practice their fledgling skills with some peer support – but there’s always the danger that one student will do all the work for the group. “To be productive, groups need sufficient time to interact, time lines, clear roles for everyone in the group, and tasks that truly call for independence,” say Fisher and Frey. “Ideal collaborative learning tasks are those that cannot be accomplished just as well by one individual.” Each individual in the group needs to be accountable.

- *Guided instruction* – After checking for understanding with quick assessments, teachers know which students need help and can follow up with individual or small-group cues, prompts, or questions to scaffold all students to independence.

- *Not jumping the gun* – Many teachers make the mistake of assigning new learning tasks to students to do independently (e.g., for homework). “The likelihood of a student successfully completing newly introduced tasks alone, away from fellow learners or the teacher, is slim,” say Fisher and Frey. “Teachers should reserve independent work for review and reinforcement of concepts that have been previously taught... Well-structured independent learning tasks are the ultimate way to build self-esteem through competence.”

The essence of this is systematically moving students from being competent novices to self-sufficient experts with steadily improving skills for tackling other learning challenges.

“Releasing Responsibility” by Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey in *Educational Leadership*, November 2008 (Vol. 66, #3, p. 32-37); this article is available for purchase at http://ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/nov08/vol66/num03/toc.aspx; the authors can be reached at dfisher@mail.sdsu.edu and nfrey@mail.sdsu.edu.

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6. Three Levels of Scaffolding for Early Phonemic Awareness

In this article in *The Reading Teacher*, professors Lea McGee and Teresa Ukrainetz share a transcript of a typical preschool or kindergarten phonemic awareness lesson:

Teacher: What’s this picture? [showing a picture of a tub]

[no response]

It's a tub. You take a bath in a tub. Everyone say *tub*.

Children: Tub.

Teacher: What's the first sound in *tub*? Jessica?

Jessica: [looks at teacher]

Teacher: Listen, *tub*. [emphasis on the first sound, /t/] What's the first sound you hear in *tub*?

Jessica: [no response]

Teacher: Bobby. What's the first sound in *tub*?

Bobby: /t/

Teacher: Good. What's this? [showing a picture of toes] Destiny?

Destiny: Toes

Teacher: Good. *Toes*. What's the first sound in *toes*?

Destiny: [very quietly] Toes

Teacher: That's the word. What's the first sound in *toes*? *Toes*. It starts like *tub*.

Destiny: [silence, looks down]

Teacher: /t/ is the first sound.

A number of things went wrong here. McGee and Ukrainetz believe the most important problem is that the teacher is not giving students enough scaffolding. "Scaffolding is the intentional, strategic support that teachers provide that allows children to complete a task they could not accomplish independently," they say. For example, when the teacher asked for the first sound in the word *toes*, she didn't provide enough instruction on initial sounds. Once trained in scaffolding, the same teacher proceeded thus:

Teacher: We're going to be listening for first sounds today. Let's practice with our names. My name is Pollard. /p/p/Pollard. The first sound in Pollard is /p/. What's the first sound in Pollard?

Children: P

Teacher: That's the letter. What's the first sound in /p/p/Pollard? [points to lips and repeats /p/ sound with emphasis] Henry?

Henry: /p/

Teacher: Yes. /p/ is the first sound in *Pollard*. Let's try Kendra. What's the first sound in Kendra? [slightly stresses /k/ sound] Henrietta?

Henrietta: /k/

Teacher: Yes. /k/ is the first sound in *Kendra*. What's the first sound in *Kevin*? Ashley. Watch my lips /k/k/k/Kevin. /k/. Say /k/.

Ashley: /k/

Teacher: Yes, /k/ is the first sound in Kevin.

Children were able to isolate initial sounds with different amounts of scaffolding; some needed more than others and the teacher differentiated on the spot.

The authors have found that children need three levels of scaffolding at different points in instruction:

- *Intense* scaffolding when they are first introduced to initial consonants and with more difficult sounds like /g/ - Isolating and exaggerating the phoneme, pointing to the mouth and telling children to look, saying the correct response, and eliciting a response.
- *Moderate* scaffolding as children become more proficient – Isolating the phoneme and exaggerating it, telling children to watch the teacher’s mouth;
- *Minimum* scaffolding – Emphasizing the beginning phoneme in the word.
- *Finally, no scaffolding* – “What is the first sound in milk?”

The same principle can be applied to more challenging phonemic awareness tasks. The authors describe having students “fish” for words with a magnet and then segment the word – for example, “catching” the word *bed* and working together to count the phonemes and identify them.

“Using Scaffolding to Teach Phonemic Awareness in Preschool and Kindergarten” by Lea McGee and Teresa Ukrainetz in *The Reading Teacher*, April 2009 (Vol. 62, #7, p. 599-603), no e-link available; the authors can be reached at mcgee.148@osu.edu and tukraine@uwyo.edu.

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7. Two Views on Teaching Online College Courses

In these articles in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, two college professors express opposing views on what it’s like to teach online courses. University of Phoenix English teacher Gina Greco says she has been surprised how much she likes online teaching. “As a teacher, I feed off the energy of the crowd and thrive on exciting and entertaining my students to the point of drawing even the most resistant into attending class,” she says. Nevertheless, she has fallen in love with online teaching – the format and the wide variety of students she teaches, including military personnel.

She has found that if she is expressive in her posts and individual messages to students, including using some of the slang and emoticons they use (LOL, :), “slight sarcasm here”), she can make strong connections. She reaches out when students aren’t responding (“I haven’t seen you in the discussion forum – are you OK?”) and is super-clear with directions and assignments – “as if composing a manual for a dangerous piece of machinery,” she says. Greco empathizes with students at difficult points in the year, for example, writing “Hectic week, anyone?” the week before a holiday. The bottom line: she believes she is more connected to her students than ever, and feels needed and appreciated every day.

Veteran college teacher Elayne Clift feels differently. “I trained for it, I tried it, and I’ll never do it again,” she says. Here are her five reasons:

- *‘Virtual community’ is the ultimate oxymoron.* “I find it extraordinarily difficult to communicate with people for whom I have no face, no persona, no body language, no in-the-moment exchange.”

- *The lack of quick rapport is maddening.* “I can think of no more important place for immediate communication to occur than in a classroom where difficult subjects are being discussed and debated,” she says. “It is essential, in my view, that a teacher be able to probe, clarify, comment in the moment. That moment is lost in a virtual community.”

- *The quality of education is compromised.* Clift says class size tends to be higher and it's hard to teach at a high level: "It is simply impossible to replicate a lecture online," she says. "Nor could I adequately help them develop better writing and critical thinking skills or to foster original ideas because there simply wasn't enough time or a proper forum."

- *Show me the money.* Clift estimates that online teaching took her three times longer than conventional teaching for the same compensation.

- *Online teaching can be punishing.* "I never had a day off. Never!" she says. "I tried to confine my reading days to twice, then three times per week, but I just couldn't keep up with all the posts, replies, planning, announcements, tracking, grading, and so on unless I visited the increasingly dreaded Blackboard almost every day." Individual e-mails added to the burden, and there was an absence of connection and affection with students.

"Teaching Online: 2 Perspectives: A Reaffirmation of Why I Became an Educator, and I'll Never Do It Again" by Gina Greco and Elayne Clift in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 29, 2009 (Vol. LV, #38, p. A33), no e-link available

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8. A Community College Decides on Outcome Goals and Assessments

In this *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, Miami Dade College president Eduardo Padron describes how his faculty decided on ten essential learning outcomes for the college. They aim to have their graduates able to:

- Communicate effectively, using listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.
- Use quantitative analytical skills to evaluate and process numerical data.
- Solve problems using critical and creative thinking and scientific reasoning.
- Formulate strategies to locate, evaluate, and apply information.
- Demonstrate knowledge of diverse cultures, including global and historical perspectives.
- Create strategies that can be used to fulfill personal, civic, and social responsibilities.
- Demonstrate knowledge of ethical thinking and its application to issues in society.
- Use computer and emerging technologies effectively.
- Demonstrate an appreciation for aesthetics and creative activities.
- Describe how natural systems function and recognize the impact of humans on the environment.

The college's goal is for all 2,000 courses to reflect these ten goals and for students to be assessed using authentic tasks before graduation. Here's an example of a performance task. Students sit down in front of a computer and have 50 minutes to answer: "Imagine that you are part of a production team for a television series entitled *The Global Citizen*. From a list of possible global issues, what considerations and process would you use to identify the most pressing issue, and how would you convince your production team of the urgency of this issue?"

“How Assessment Works at One Community College” by Eduardo Padron in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 29, 2009 (Vol. LV, #38, p. A34), no e-link available

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9. Hugging Is the New “Hello”

In this front-page *New York Times* article, Sarah Kershaw reports on the evolution of hugging as an everyday greeting among U.S. secondary-school students. She catalogues a variety of hugs:

- The basic friend hug
- The bear hug
- The bear claw (a boy embraces a girl awkwardly, with his elbows poking out)
- Starting with a high-five, moving into a fist bump, then a slap on the back, then a hug
- The shake and lean
- The hug from behind
- The triple – any combination of three girls and boys hugging together
- Romantic hugs (teachers joke about “one hour” and “six hour” hugs).

It seems that students hug every day as if they had just returned from being apart for the entire summer.

Some adults are baffled. “Witnessing this interaction always makes me feel like I am a tourist in a country where I do not know the customs and cannot speak the language,” says Beth Harpaz, a New York City parent of two teenagers. “Without question, the boundaries of touch have changed in American culture,” says George Mason University sociologist Amy Best. “We display bodies more readily, there are fewer rules governing body touch and a lot more permissible access to other people’s bodies.” There’s speculation that hugging may compensate for kids spending so much time in virtual communication on Facebook and text messaging.

Some schools, worried about inappropriate touching, hallway congestion, and tardiness to classes, have banned hugging or imposed a three-second rule. “Touching and physical contact is very dangerous territory,” says Noreen Hajinlian, principal of a Hillsdale, NJ, junior high school. “It was needless hugging... It wasn’t a greeting. It was happening all day.”

But students say hugs aren’t romantic but simply the “hello” of their generation. “We like to get cozy,” says a San Francisco eighth grader. “The high-five is, like, boring.”

“For Teenagers, Hello Means ‘How About a Hug?’” by Sarah Kershaw in the *New York Times*, May 28, 2009 (p. A1, A3),

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/28/style/28hugs.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=For%20Teenagers,%20Hello%20Means%20How%20About%20a%20Hug?&st=cse

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10. Velocity: How the Medium Affects the Message

In a presentation last weekend, MIT psychology professor Sherry Turkle said that how quickly we expect to hear back from a person varies with the medium of communication we

use:

- A letter – about two weeks
- An e-mail – about 24 hours
- A text message – almost immediately

The medium we use affects the kind of message we are likely to send. If we are writing a letter, the message is likely to be more thoughtful; if we are writing a text message, it's likely to be quick and spontaneous. Turkle worries that today's young people, who communicate mostly in quick text messages (e-mail seems too slow or not accessible during the day) may do less thoughtful communicating because of the medium they are using.

Presentation by Sherry Turkle, Cambridge, MA, May 30, 2009

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11. Short Items:

a. Three-minute explanations – This website gives short, simple explanations about a variety of phenomena (e.g., borrowing money, how U.S. presidents are elected, how Twitter works), using line drawings and a voice-over: <http://www.commoncraft.com>.

Spotted in *Newsweek*, June 1, 2009 (p. 16)

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b. A new interactive programming language – The Lifelong Kindergarten Group at MIT's Media Lab has developed Scratch, a free program that brings the kindergarten learning approach to the computer screen. Children can create their own interactive stories, games, and animations and then share their creations online. There's now an active online community around Scratch, with users (most of them 8-16 years old) presenting over a thousand new projects every day. Check it out at <http://scratch.mit.edu>.

“Kindergarten for Life” by Mitchel Resnick in *Edutopia*, June/July 2009 (Vol. 5, #3, p. 10), <http://www.edutopia.org/magazine>

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c. Poetry slams – In this *Edutopia* article, Grace Rubenstein describes the process that several New York City schools have gone through to get their students writing and performing poetry. In the link below, you can read several poems and see students performing.

“Slam Dunk” by Grace Rubenstein in *Edutopia*, June/July 2009 (Vol. 5, #3, p. 44-48), <http://www.edutopia.org/poetry-slam-global-writes>

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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.marshall8@verizon.net

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 37 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).

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.

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- How to change access e-mail or password

Publications covered

Those read this week are underlined.

American Educator
American Journal of Education
American School Board Journal
ASCD, CEC SmartBriefs, Daily EdNews
Catalyst Chicago
Changing Schools (McREL)
Ed. Magazine
EDge
Education Digest
Education Gadfly
Education Next
Education Week
Educational Leadership
Educational Researcher
Edutopia
Elementary School Journal
Essential Teacher (TESOL)
Harvard Business Review
Harvard Education Letter
Harvard Educational Review
JESPAR
Journal of Staff Development
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
Teacher Magazine (online)
Teachers College Record
The Atlantic Monthly
The Language Educator
The New Yorker
The Reading Teacher
Theory Into Practice
Tools for Schools/The Learning Principal