Marshall Memo 405

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
October 10, 2011

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Quotes of the Week

"For young brains to retain information, they need to apply it."

Judy Willis (see item #6)

"WALT…" – We Are Learning To…

Preamble to a lesson learning objective spotted in a New York City classroom (as contrasted to the more common SWBAT – Students Will Be Able To…)

"The old duality is simple, and it may be comforting, but it's wrong. We need to find a new, more complicated logic, and we have. It's a logic that says no amount of law enforcement will ever work, that law enforcement as we're been practicing it is part of the problem. It's a logic that says no amount of social investment will ever work. It's a logic that says, someone can be doing terrible things and still be a victim; someone can have done wrong and still deserve help; someone can have been the victim of history and neglect and it's still right to demand that they stop hurting people. Not even remotely radical ideas: a good parent says, all the time, You've broken the rules, and I'm going to do something about it, and I love you and of course I will continue to care for you and hold you close. But radical when it comes to talking about crime, where commitment to accountability seems to crowd out room for caring, and commitment to caring seems to crowd out room for accountability. It's a logic that says, especially, none of us is without sin here. We have all created this."

David Kennedy in "'God, It's Got to Stop': One Man's Quest to End Gang Violence in America" in *Newsweek*, Oct. 3, 2011

"You need a lot more than vision – you need a stubbornness, tenacity, belief and patience to stay the course."

Edwin Catmull in the *New York Times* front-page obituary for Steve Jobs, Oct. 6, 2011
http://nyti.ms/mUgrFW

1. Atul Gawande on Coaching

In this important *New Yorker* article, Atul Gawande says that his proficiency as a surgeon plateaued after eight years in the operating room. "I'd like to think it's a good thing," he says. "I've arrived at my professional peak. But mainly it seems as if I've just stopped getting better." This led him to think about the fact that professional athletes are continuously coached – and doctors aren't. "Like most work, medical practice is largely unseen by anyone who might raise one's sights," he says. "I'd had no outside eyes and ears."

Athletic coaching was an American innovation in the late 1800s, a departure from Britain's aristocratic amateur ethos in which coaching was regarded as unsporting, trying too hard. "The concept of a coach is slippery," says Gawande. "Coaches are not teachers, but they teach. They're not your boss… but they can be bossy. They don't even have to be good at the sport… Mainly, they observe, they judge, and they guide."

A coach is similar to an editor. An author once wrote of Maxwell Perkins, the renowned editor of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, and Thomas Wolfe, "Perkins has the intangible faculty of giving you confidence in yourself and the book you are writing." Another writer said, "He never tells you what to do. Instead, he suggests to you, in an extraordinarily inarticulate fashion, what you want to do yourself."

The athletic coaching model is starkly different from the traditional model of pedagogy in K-12 education, colleges, and professional schools – the idea that after a certain point you're finished with your education and can thrive by yourself. Professional sports coaching considers this model "naïve about our human capacity for self-perfection," says Gawande. "It holds that, no matter how well prepared people are in their formative years, few can achieve and maintain their best performance on their own." They need *deliberate practice* – "going from unconscious incompetence to conscious incompetence to conscious competence and finally to unconscious competence. The coach provides the outside eyes and ears, and makes you aware of where you're falling short."

Gawande asked world-class violinist Itzhak Perlman about coaching, and was surprised to learn that, unlike most instrumentalists, he'd been coached for 40 years – by his wife. Perlman said it's difficult for a violinist to hear what the audience is hearing, and his wife has provided external judgment and constant feedback that's been vital to his success. Gawande interviewed professional singers and they described their voice coaches in almost identical

terms. “What we hear as we are singing is not what the audience hears,” said soprano Renée Fleming. She relies on the “outside ears” of her coach.

Gawande’s next interview was with Jim Knight, who trains and does research on K-12 instructional coaches at the University of Kansas [see the next article]. Research has shown that teachers implement new practices only 10 percent of the time after hearing about them in workshops, 20 percent of the time after a practice session with demonstrations and personal feedback, and *90 percent* of the time with coaching. Teachers who are coached become more effective and their students’ results show it.

Knight trains coaches to give teachers feedback on several things in classrooms: Does the teacher have an effective plan for instruction? How many students are engaged in the material? Do they interact respectfully? Do they engage in high-level conversations? Do they understand how they are progressing or failing to progress? But giving teachers critical feedback is tricky. “Human beings resist exposure and critique,” says Gawande. “Our brains are well defended.”

So coaches have developed a variety of techniques, including sharing insights in seemingly casual conversations, having teachers view themselves on videotape, or getting a teacher to watch what another respected colleague does. An example of the latter: a teacher was having trouble with a very disruptive boy, and the coach suggested that she observe the boy in another classroom – where he behaved impeccably. The teacher realized that it was her teaching style that was causing the problem – she let students speak without raising their hands and go to the bathroom without asking and then got angry when things spun out of control.

But not all instructional coaches get good results – in fact, says Gawande, “bad coaching can make people worse.” So he asked Knight to show him good coaching in action. In a Virginia middle school, they observed what seemed to Gawande to be a superbly taught algebra class – but the two coaches who accompanied them saw several areas where the teacher could do better. Specifically, four of the twenty students appeared to be confused. In the cooperative learning segments of the lesson, some students struggled to have a “math conversation”, especially in the boy-girl pairs. In one such duo, not a single word was spoken.

At lunchtime, one of the coaches sat down with the teacher and began the conversation by asking, “What worked?” The teacher noted that she had been successful in getting students working independently more of the time (one of her goals), and was “breaking the pane” more often – getting out from the front of the room. She anticipated the coach’s next question and focused on some areas for improvement. One girl clearly wasn’t getting it. “How could you help her?” asked the coach. “I would need to break the concept down for her more,” said the teacher. “I’ll bring her in during the fifth block.”

The teacher said that her second class of the day had gone better, which provided an opening for the coach to bring up the unsuccessful cooperative groups during the first-period class he’d observed. “How could you help them be more verbal?” he asked. The teacher was stumped, and so was the coach. After a silence, someone suggested putting key math words on the board. The teacher liked the suggestion. For another half hour they worked through the fine points of the observation and planned what to do next.

Reflecting on the coaching session they had observed, Knight pinpointed the coach's successful practices: a low-key tone; the coach speaking with credibility; making a personal connection; not talking about himself; listening more than talking; parceling out his observations one at a time. "It's not a normal way of communicating," said Knight, "watching what your words are doing."

Afterward, Gawande asked the teacher about the coaching. "I'd exhausted everything I knew to improve," she said. "I felt isolated, too… So I grabbed a coach from the beginning… My stress level is a lot less now. The coaching has definitely changed how satisfying teaching is."

All this led Gawande to recruit a retired surgeon to be *his* coach. The first time this man observed Gawande in action, he gave him a number of detailed comments in a debrief afterward. "That one twenty-minute discussion gave me more to consider and work on than I'd had in the past five years," says Gawande. He's continued the relationship and considers it more valuable than all the high-tech operating-room gear he's procured in recent years. "Since I've taken on a coach, my complication rate has gone down… I've also begun taking time to do something I'd rarely done before – watch other colleagues operate in order to gather ideas about what I could do."

He also acknowledges that it's been difficult having the critical, judgmental eyes of his coach on him when he's made mistakes. Very few surgeons – or others – would voluntarily welcome this kind of scrutiny. "The existence of a coach requires an acknowledgment that even expert practitioners have significant room for improvement," he says. "Are we ready to confront this fact when we're in their care?"

Gawande believes that coaching professionals is a high calling with a large talent pool – the millions of recent retirees from every field. But he also says that only a few are equal to the task. "The sort of coaching that fosters effective innovation and judgment, not merely the replication of technique, may not be so easy to cultivate," he says. "Yet modern society increasingly depends on ordinary people taking responsibility for doing extraordinary things: operating inside people's bodies, teaching eighth graders algebraic concepts that Euclid would have struggled with, building a highway through a mountain, constructing a wireless computer network across a state, running a factory, reducing a city's crime rate. In the absence of guidance, how many people can do such complex tasks at the level we require? With a diploma, a few will achieve sustained mastery; with a good coach, many could. We treat guidance for professionals as a luxury – you can guess what gets cut first when school-district budgets are slashed. But coaching may prove essential to the success of modern society… Coaching done well may be the most effective intervention designed for human performance."

"Personal Best" by Atul Gawande in *The New Yorker*, Oct. 3, 2011,
http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2011/10/03/111003fa_fact_gawande

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2. The Instructional Coach As an Equal Partner

(Originally titled "What Good Coaches Do")

In this *Educational Leadership* article, University of Kansas author/researcher Jim Knight suggests that instructional coaches take a partnership approach to their work with teachers. This is the opposite of top-down coaching, where the coach does most of the talking and uses data to tell the teacher the one right way to do things. Knight lists seven principles that he and his colleagues have developed for effective coaching:

• *Equality* – "Usually, if we feel that someone who is helping us thinks that he or she is better than we are, we resist their help," says Knight. "For this reason, coaches need to be sensitive to how they communicate respect for the teachers with whom they collaborate." Effective coaches convey humility and genuinely learn from the teachers they work with.

• *Choice* – Teachers have to opt into a coaching relationship and be able to make significant choices in how it proceeds. Knight quotes the old saying, "When you insist, they will resist."

• *Voice* – "Conversation with a coach should be as open and candid as conversation with a trusted friend," says Knight. "When coaches follow the principle of voice, teachers feel free to express their enthusiasms and concerns."

• *Reflection* – One technique he recommends is videotaping a class and asking the teacher what he or she would like to work on, co-creating insights and new trajectories.

• *Dialogue* – In a real two-way interchange, the best idea wins, not my idea or yours.

• *Praxis* – This is the art of applying new knowledge and skills to a particular classroom – and deciding which knowledge and skill should not be used.

• *Reciprocity* – Knight believes that, "When one teaches, two learn" – everyone is a teacher and a learner. "Partnership is about shared learning as much as it is about shared power."

This approach results in specific actions that good coaches take, including the following:

- Enrolling teachers voluntarily in a PD option that's made available in the school;
- Identifying each teacher's goals;
- Listening well;
- Asking questions to which the answers aren't obvious;
- Explaining teaching practices and finding how (and whether) they will be helpful to the teacher.
- Providing feedback that's like side-by-side athletic coaching – a positive comment, an explanation of how to improve, and making sure the teacher knows what he or she needs to do to improve.

"What Good Coaches Do" by Jim Knight in *Educational Leadership*, October 2011 (Vol. 69, #2, p. 18-22); for purchase at http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership.aspx

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3. "Pull" Versus "Push" Feedback to Adults

In this *Wharton Leadership Digest* article, Wharton professor Katherine Klein says the commonly-held belief that feedback improves performance is largely untrue. "Typically, performance after feedback improves only modestly," she says, "and over one-third of the time, it actually gets worse. People who receive positive feedback often see no need for change, and those who receive negative feedback often react with skepticism, discouragement, and anger, dismissing the evaluation as inaccurate, unhelpful, or unfair."

So what should managers do? Klein says the problem with feedback is that it usually involves "pushing" corrective suggestions to the employee, with the implication that they're underperforming. "Pulling" is far more effective, she says – teaching, coaching, and developing people. The key elements of effective pulling are:

- Clarify and specify the behaviors, skills, and expected accomplishments of the job;
- Convey high expectations for improvement;
- Create an organizational climate that makes it safe to ask questions, make mistakes, and learn new things;
- Coach supervisors to give formative feedback that's direct but provides an opportunity to learn; that keeps the focus on the task and behavior, not the person; and that sets goals for improvement;
- Support improvement through mentors, coaching, and other learning opportunities;
- Give frequent on-the-spot feedback, such as the U.S. Army's "after-action reviews" that critique every mission, pinpoint needed improvements, and fix problems immediately.

"Pull, Don't Push: Designing Effective Feedback Systems" by Katherine Klein in *Wharton Leadership Digest*: *Nano Tools for Leaders*, September/October 2011, http://wlp.wharton.upenn.edu/LeadershipDigest/nano-tool-pull-dont-push.cfm

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4. A Minnesota Literacy Coach in Action

(Originally titled "The Life of a Literacy Coach")

In this *Educational Leadership* article, St. Paul literacy coach Liz Hanson describes the key components of her work in schools:

• *Classroom visits* – Hanson makes several 10-minute observations a day (often with the principal in tow). She sees these visits as a non-evaluative way of getting into classrooms to notice trends, see what's being implemented, and get ideas for professional development.

• *Literacy team meetings* – Small groups of classroom teachers (same-grade or mixed grades) meet at least twice a month for 45-60 minutes to discuss a literacy practice they can apply immediately, view a videotape, or discuss how specific literacy techniques are working.

• *Formal coaching* – Team meetings often produce requests for Hanson to demonstrate a technique (for example, reciprocal reading) or watch as teachers try something new and then reflect on how it went.

• *Professional learning communities* – These collaborative teacher teams set SMART goals related to an academic need and find the best approaches to improve student performance. Hanson sees herself as an observer in these groups, occasionally asking questions and procuring resources.

• *Weekly meetings with the principal* – This collaboration is crucial, says Hanson, because her work must mesh with that of the instructional leader. They look at assessment data, discuss classroom visits, and consider what coaching and PD should focus on.

"The Life of a Literacy Coach" by Liz Hanson in *Educational Leadership*, October 2011 (Vol. 69, #2, p. 78-81); purchase at http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership.aspx; Hanson can be reached at lennylab@gmail.com.

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5. Instructional Rounds

(Originally titled "Learning from Instructional Rounds")

In this *Educational Leadership* article, Harvard author/researcher Elizabeth City describes "instructional rounds", a medically-inspired protocol (similar to Lauren Resnick's "learning walks") in which a group of educators tours a school, zeroes in on strengths and weaknesses, and provides descriptive and analytic feedback. "Rounds are not about 'fixing' individual teachers," says City. "Rounds are about understanding what's happening in classrooms, how we as a system produce those effects, and how we can move closer to producing the learning we want to see. The focus on 'we' means that peers learn to hold one another accountable, individually and collectively." Here are the key steps to implementing this process:

• *Form a network*. An instructional rounds group might consist of superintendents visiting each others' schools, a district's principals, or a mixed group including teachers from within the school. The network establishes procedures, agrees on a common language, and makes a number of school visits over time.

• *Define a problem of practice*. This is "something the school cares about, feels stuck on, and wants to understand more deeply," says City. "A problem of practice focuses on instruction, is observable and actionable, connects to a broader strategy of improvement, and is high-leverage" – for example, Are students engaged in high-level tasks? Are students able to articulate their thinking? Can students transfer their learning from one content area to another? Do students understand math at a conceptual as well as a procedural level? Are students active learners or are teachers doing most of the work? Are students with special needs performing up to their potential? Are teachers implementing high-level curricula in low-level ways? Are teachers effectively checking for understanding? Are students taking responsibility for the quality of their work? How do students talk to one another about classwork?

• *Observe in classrooms*. The observers divide into groups of four and each group visits four classrooms for 20-25 minutes each, focusing on the school's problem of practice and paying particular attention to the "instructional core" – the interaction of students, teachers, and content. Observers ask themselves, *What are students doing and saying? What is the teacher*

doing and saying? What is the learning task? They check in with students to see what they're doing and thinking. The observers don't fill out a checklist but make careful observations. "They're detectives, not inspectors," says City. "They try to unlock the mystery of why the school is stuck, why this problem of practice persists, and what might help the school get unstuck."

• *Debrief*. The observers then meet and, for the first time, share impressions with each other: first low-inference, just-the-facts descriptions of what they saw in classrooms; then analysis, looking for patterns and exceptions to the patterns; then prediction, asking questions like, "If you were a student in these classes today and you did everything the teacher asked you to do, what would you know and be able to do?"

• *Identify the next level of work*. For example, a school that was concerned about a lack of higher-level student work might collect examples of teacher questions and classroom assignments and dedicate significant professional time to analyzing and strengthening the quality of classroom discourse.

"Done poorly or briefly as just another initiative, rounds, like any improvement effort, will have little effect," says City. But done well, she believes rounds can be very helpful because they:

- Focus the work on one key issue;
- Build a common understanding of effective teaching and learning;
- Provide data to inform professional development;
- Put educators in charge of their own learning;
- Reduce variability between classrooms;
- Take improvement to the next level.

"Learning from Instructional Rounds" by Elizabeth City in *Educational Leadership*, October 2011 (Vol. 69, #2, p. 36-41); for purchase at
http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership.aspx

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6. How to Teach So Skills and Information Stick

"For young brains to retain information, they need to apply it," says brain-based learning expert Judy Willis in this *Edutopia* article. "Information learned by rote memorization will not enter the sturdy long-term neural networks in the pre-frontal cortex unless students have the opportunity to actively recognize relationships to their prior knowledge and/or apply new learning to new situations… As the caretaker of your students' brains during the years of rapid prefrontal cortex development, you should consider how you can activate and guide the development of your students' greatest resources – strong executive functions." Willis suggests three ways teachers can make this happen:

• *Have students apply what they're learning to solve problems or create new products*. These experiences are most powerful when they are authentic, personally meaningful activities followed by formative assessments and ongoing feedback. When students have this kind of learning experience, says Willis, they "apply effort, collaborate successfully, ask questions,

revise hypotheses, redo work, and seek the foundational knowledge you need them to learn. And they do this because they *want* to know what you *have* to teach."

• *Orchestrate activities that develop executive function*. Students need to be explicitly taught how to learn, study, organize, prioritize, review, and participate in class. Executive function is also developed when teachers compare and contrast, give new examples of a concept, have students summarize and symbolize learning in new formats, spiral items through the curriculum, get students collaborating with peers, and hold open-ended discussions.

• *Model higher thinking skills*. Curriculum units should systematically give students opportunities to develop these skills:

- Judgment – Developing the ability to monitor the accuracy of their work and analyze the validity of information, especially on the Internet.
- Prioritizing – Separating low-relevance details from the heart of the matter, which is essential when taking notes, planning an essay, evaluating math word problems, and planning ahead.
- Setting manageable goals and monitoring progress – Until students develop this skill (which is akin to what they do in video games), their progress will be hampered.
- Activating prior knowledge and watching for transfer activities – For example, a teacher might use the rules of magnetism to help students understand how to use a compass.
- Metacognition – To encourage students to become reflective about their own learning, it's sometimes helpful for teachers to share their curriculum planning process.
- Goal-setting – This gets students to go beyond just being satisfied with getting schoolwork done.

The result of all this, says Willis, is that students take less time reviewing and cramming for tests because they've embedded the information in long-term memory as it's taught and experienced. This creates weeks of "found" time for deeper exploration of the curriculum.

"Three Brain-Based Teaching Strategies to Build Executive Function in Students" by Judy Willis in *Edutopia*, October 2011,
http://www.edutopia.org/search/apachesolr_search/Three%20brain-based%20teaching%20strategies

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7. A Study of Writing Workshop in a Washington Elementary School

In this *Elementary School Journal* article, Gary Troia, Shin-ju Cindy Lin, Steven Cohen, and Brandon Monroe report on a year-long study of six teachers in an urban school in the Seattle area as they went through rigorous training in the writing workshop model and implemented it in their classrooms.

The authors' main finding is that teachers with a high degree of self-efficacy implemented the curriculum framework quite thoroughly, while those with less confidence in their teaching, especially in the teaching of writing, implemented the framework less thoroughly. The authors also found that teachers who believed that conventions (spelling,

grammar, and syntax) were less important tended to deemphasize those parts of the framework and their students produced writing that was weak in the area of mechanics.

In short, teachers in the same school going through the same training and being scrutinized by the same group of researchers nevertheless implemented a significantly different curriculum in their classrooms and produced quite different levels of student learning.

"A Year in the Writing Workshop: Linking Writing Instruction Practices and Teachers' Epistemologies and Beliefs About Writing Instruction" by Gary Troia, Shin-ju Cindy Lin, Steven Cohen, and Brandon Monroe in *Elementary School Journal*, September 2011 (Vol. 112, #1, p. 155-182), http://www.jstor.org/pss/10.1086/660688,

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8. Understanding Literacy Research

In this article in *The Reading Teacher*, Nell Duke (Michigan State University) and Nicole Martin (University of North Carolina/Greensboro) take note of the way the phrases "research-based", "research-proven", and "scientifically based" have been misused in recent years. "In fact," they say, "we are encountering a growing number of literacy educators who are dismissing research altogether, based on the belief that research is simply a propaganda tool for those trying to push a particular approach to reading and writing instruction."

But research can be a valuable tool, say Duke and Martin, provided that we understand it well. Here are their guidelines:

• *What research can do* – It can help us avoid acting on beliefs that our gut tells us are correct but are not the best ways to teach children (for example, that looking up words in the dictionary and copying the definitions is a good way to learn vocabulary). Research can also help us identify blind spots – sometimes we don't know what we don't know (for example, for years, elementary reading texts were overwhelmingly comprised of stories, neglecting informational texts). In addition, research can show us long-term trends, take us to far-off places, and fill in gaps in our knowledge about students with rare disorders.

• *What research is* – It's the systematic collection and analysis of data to address a question and improve teaching and learning. Researchers have the same aims as classroom teachers, but communication between the two worlds is rare. That's because research follows specific protocols: a statement of the research question and/or purpose; a rationale for the study; a description of the methods used to collect data and address the question; a description of the methods used to analyze the data; results of the analysis; conclusions; implications; limitations of the study; directions for future research. Duke and Martin believe that the often-used terms *scientific research* and *scientifically based research* are redundant: all good research is scientific, they say.

• *What research is not* – Just because an article is written by a researcher or a university professor, or published in a research journal, doesn't mean it's research, and just because a program or practice is endorsed by a researcher doesn't make it research-based.

• *The difference between research-based and research-tested* – Research-tested means that one or more studies have tested the impact of a product or practice; research-based means

the product or practice has been designed to be consistent with research findings, but it hasn't been tested yet. When we hear these terms, we need to ask some skeptical questions: What exactly did the research test? What did the research find? Did the research test the practice, approach, or product against something else, and if so, what? What were the samples? How many studies were conducted?

• *Many kinds of research can help improve teaching and learning*. Duke and Martin don't think randomized, controlled trials are the "gold standard" for educational research. "We believe that this way of thinking is mistaken and misleading," they say. "Instead, many kinds of research have valuable contributions to make" – including studies of the reliability and validity of an assessment, surveys on the motivation of students, and the study of a single struggling reader over a period of years. "The educational enterprise is far too complex for one type of research to answer all of our questions or meet all of our needs," they say.

• *Different kinds of research are good for different questions*. The type of research design depends on the research question being addressed.

• *High-quality research has a logic of inquiry* – In other words, the value of research depends on the research question – for example, what do highly effective literacy teachers do during small-group reading instruction? – the research design, and conclusions that flow from the data.

• *Conclusions drawn from research are only as sound as the research itself*. "Conclusions based on a seriously flawed study may be seriously flawed," say the authors.

• *Where and how research is published or presented is vital*. Articles in *The Reading Teacher*, for example, don't go into depth on methodology, while peer-reviewed articles in *Reading Research Quarterly* don't spend as much time on implementation details. In addition, eloquent writing isn't always correlated with the quality of the research.

• *Educational research is a slow accumulation of knowledge*. We should be cautious about basing policy or practice on one study, no matter how good. We should look for what the research says over time.

"10 Things Every Literacy Educator Should Know About Research" by Nell Duke and Nicole Martin in *The Reading Teacher*, September 2011 (Vol. 65, #1, p. 9-22), no free e-link; the authors can be reached at nkduke@msu.edu and nmartin779@gmail.com.

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9. A Study of LGBTQ Youth in Wisconsin Secondary Schools

In this *Educational Researcher* article, University of Illinois/Urbana-Champaign professors Joseph Robinson and Dorothy Espelage report that students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ) are at greater risk of suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, victimization by peers, and higher levels of unexcused absences from school than students who identify as straight. Robinson and Espelage got their information from an anonymous Survey Monkey questionnaire filled out by slightly over 13,000 middle- and high-school students in Dane County, an urban/rural area of Wisconsin. Here are some details:

• *Suicidal ideation* – 5.6% of LGBTQ youth said they thought seriously about killing themselves "almost all of the time", as compared to .5% of straight youth. Bisexual and questioning youth were significantly more likely to have suicidal thoughts than lesbian, gay, and transgender youth.

• *Suicide attempts* – 6.2% of LGBTQ youth said they had attempted suicide once in the preceding year, 3% more than once, compared to 2.4% of straight youth reporting suicide attempts. Bisexual and questioning youth were slightly more likely to have attempted suicide than other LGBTQ subgroups.

• *Cyber-bullying* – 4.5% of LGBTQ youth said they had experienced cyber-bullying often or very often, compared to 2% of straight youth.

• *School belongingness* – Students were asked if they would prefer to attend a school with no gay or lesbian students, whether they felt they belonged at their school, whether graduating was important, and if there were adults at the school they could talk to if they had a problem. LGBTQ students felt somewhat less welcome and included in their schools.

• *Unexcused absences* – LGBTQ students reported skipping school significantly more than their straight peers, starting in middle school (where 22% reported skipping school), with the highest rates of unexcused absences among bisexual students.

Robinson and Espelage make the following points at the conclusion of their study:

First, the majority of LGBTQ-identified youth are *not* at risk – they're not thinking about suicide, attempting suicide, being victimized, or skipping school. It appears they are developing psychologically and academically as healthy teenagers.

Second, compared with straight youth, an unusually large percentage of LGBTQ students are at elevated risk, and they clearly need support and intervention.

Third, there's heterogeneity within the LGBTQ group, with bisexual and questioning youth almost always faring worst in the statistics.

Fourth, the risk factors for LGBTQ youth show up early, in middle school, perhaps because information and support is not in place at this level.

What should schools do? Robinson and Espelage suggest that more needs to be done in middle schools, and all schools need to create a climate that's accepting of all students and take a more aggressive stance in preventing bullying that targets LGBTQ students – especially getting teachers to intervene when homophobic remarks are made, as often as they do with racist or sexist comments.

"Inequities in Educational and Psychological Outcomes Between LGBTQ and Straight Students in Middle and High School" by Joseph Robinson and Dorothy Espelage in *Educational Researcher*, October 2011 (Vol. 40, #7, p. 315-330) http://bit.ly/qeiRy5; the authors can be reached at jpr@illinois.edu and espelage@illinois.edu.

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10. Short Items:

a. Salman Khan video – Here's a ten-minute video interview with Khan Academy's founder in which he explains his videos and curriculum and the concept of the "flipped" classroom:
http://www.edutopia.org/salman-khan-academy-flipped-classroom-video

Spotted in *Edutopia*, October 2011

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b. Literacy coaching tools – This website created by the International Reading Association – http://www.literacycoachingonline.org – has a coach self-assessment tool, full-text articles, booklists, coaching protocols, and more.

"Tools for Coaches" in *Educational Leadership*, October 2011 (Vol. 69, #2, p. 9)

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c. Math computer games – This National Council of Teachers of Mathematics website has enrichment videos: http://illuminations.nctm.org

"Tell Me About a Memorable Coaching Experience" in *Educational Leadership*, October 2011 (Vol. 69, #2, p. 90)

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Do you have feedback? Is anything missing?

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

About the Marshall Memo

Mission and focus:

This weekly memo is designed to keep principals, teachers, superintendents, and others very well-informed on current research and effective practices in K-12 education. Kim Marshall, drawing on 41 years' experience as a teacher, principal, central office administrator, and writer, lightens the load of busy educators by serving as their "designated reader."

To produce the Marshall Memo, Kim subscribes to 44 carefully-chosen publications (see list to the right), sifts through more than a hundred articles each week, and selects 5-10 that have the greatest potential to improve teaching, leadership, and learning. He then writes a brief summary of each article, pulls out several striking quotes, provides e-links to full articles when available, and e-mails the Memo to subscribers every Monday evening (with occasional breaks; there are about 50 issues a year).

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
- What readers say
- About Kim Marshall (including links to articles)
- A free sample issue

Marshall Memo subscribers have access to the Members' Area of the website, which has:

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

Publications covered

Those read this week are underlined.

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