Marshall Memo 110

A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education
November 7, 2005

In This Issue:

Quotes of the Week

"Like successful athletic coaches, the best teachers recognize the importance of ongoing assessments and continual adjustments on the part of both teacher and student as the means to achieve maximum performance."

Jay McTighe and Ken O'Connor (see item #1)

"[F]eedback is the breakfast of champions."

Ibid.

"Most teachers will not be surprised to learn that young adolescent boys report the greatest school success when there is action in the lesson. Yet many schools continue to cater to the verbal learner who can sit still for long periods of time."

Mary Jackman Sullivan and Penny Bishop (see item #3)

"Every student should be acknowledged publicly at least once during the year for some academic success. All students can honestly earn academic success, but it takes the teacher to discover each student's specific needs within the classroom to facilitate and recognize that success."

Ibid.

"[T]he subject matter is taught quickly, overwhelmingly, without any concern for what young people can take in cognitively."

Carl Wieman, Nobel Prize winner, on college teaching of science (see item #5)

"Compassion doesn't mean, 'Oh, I feel so sorry for you.'
It's 'I will work with you and we will solve this.'"

Mary Catherine Swanson in *District Administration*, November 2005, p. 68

"I may be gone, but I hope I'm not forgotten. Remember me."

Gay student, Robbie Kirkland, 14, in his suicide note (see item #4)

1. Seven Practices That Improve Teaching and Learning

In this lead article in the November *Educational Leadership*, Jay McTighe and Ken O'Connor argue that students are more likely to be motivated and really try when: (a) they know what they're supposed to learn and how they'll be evaluated; (b) learning goals and assessments are meaningful and worthwhile; and (c) students believe they can be successful. In each of these areas, a lot depends on how assessments are used, and this means distinguishing among three types of assessments:

• *Summative* – These come at the end of a chunk of instruction and measure what students have learned. Examples include tests, final exams, performance tasks, culminating projects, and work portfolios. Summative assessments usually "count" – students are graded on them.

• *Diagnostic* – These pre-assessments, given before a teaching unit begins, tell the teacher about students' prior knowledge, skill levels, misconceptions, interests, and learning style preferences.

• *Formative* – These are given as instruction proceeds and tell the teacher how well students are learning. Examples: ungraded quizzes, oral questioning, teacher observations, draft work, think-alouds, student-constructed concept maps, learning logs, and review of portfolios. Diagnostic and formative assessments don't usually "count" for grades.

Summative assessments are important end-point measures of learning, say McTighe and O'Connor, but they come too late to improve teaching (at least that time around). Only diagnostic and formative assessments "provide fuel for the teaching and learning engine by offering descriptive feedback along the way… Like successful athletic coaches, the best teachers recognize the importance of ongoing assessments and continual adjustments on the part of both teacher and student as the means to achieve maximum performance."

McTighe and O'Connor suggest seven teaching practices that make maximum use of assessments to build students' motivation and support teaching and learning.

• *Practice 1: Use summative assessments to start with the end in sight*. Good end-of-unit assessments are the best evidence of whether or not students learned what was taught. By writing final assessments in advance – and telling students up front exactly how their learning will be evaluated – teachers clarify where instruction is headed and give students a clear target for their work. McTighe and O'Connor emphasize how important it is for summative assessments to go beyond simple recall of memorized facts and ask students to apply what they

have learned in a new situation that is as realistic as possible. "Authentic performance tasks provide a worthy goal and help learners see a reason for their learning," write McTighe and O'Connor, and give us another athletic analogy: "Coaches routinely conduct practice drills that both develop basic skills and purposefully point toward performance in the game… How many soccer players would practice corner kicks or run exhausting wind sprints if they weren't preparing for the upcoming game? How many competitive swimmers would log endless laps if there were not future swim meets?"

• *Practice 2: Show criteria and models.* It's very helpful for students to see rubrics and exemplars up front. Well-developed rubrics, with specific descriptions of the characteristics of student work at each point on a 4-3-2-1 scale, tell students what's important and give teachers an objective way of scoring students' writing, projects, and performances. Rubrics help students know what's important and tell them how teachers will judge their work. But rubrics are not enough: they should always be accompanied by exemplars of student work at each score point. Won't students just copy the Level 3 and 4 exemplars? McTighe and O'Connor say this rarely happens if teachers display *several* exemplars at each score point, showing students that there is more than one way to meet the criteria and giving them a chance to self-assess and internalize the differences between 1, 2, 3, and 4-level work.

• *Practice 3: Assess before teaching.* At the beginning of a teaching unit, there is always a wide range of knowledge and skill in a classroom. "Diagnostic assessment," say McTighe and O'Connor, "is as important to teaching as a physical exam is to prescribing an appropriate medical regimen." Assessing up front (perhaps using new technology like hand-held clickers that allow a teacher to get an instant reading of what an entire class knows) helps teachers learn about students' misconceptions about the content – or about themselves (for example, I can't draw and won't ever be able to learn). "Armed with this diagnostic information," write the authors, "a teacher gains greater insight into *what to teach*, by knowing what skill gaps to address or by skipping material previously mastered; into *how to teach*, by using grouping options and initiating activities based on preferred learning styles and interests; and into *how to connect* the content to students' interests and talents."

• *Practice 4: Offer appropriate choices.* It's sometimes wise for teachers to give students choices in how they demonstrate their skills and knowledge. For example, fourth graders in a history and geography unit might have the option of creating a "museum" display, writing a newspaper article, making a concept web, presenting a PowerPoint to the class, drawing a comparison chart, or doing a simulated radio interview with an expert. McTighe and O'Connor offer three cautions on this practice: (a) Teachers should stay focused on goals and standards and not offer a "cool" menu of assessment choices that strays from the central purpose of the unit; (b) the options offered to students should be worth the time and energy required to complete them ("With performance assessments, the juice must be worth the squeeze."); and (c) there are times when a single assessment is fine; there are only so many hours in the day.

• *Practice 5: Provide feedback early and often.* "It is often said that feedback is the breakfast of champions," say McTighe and O'Connor. "Ironically, the quality of feedback

necessary to enhance learning is limited or nonexistent in many classrooms." For all students to learn at high levels, feedback needs to be:

- *Timely* – Feedback needs to be prompt for the learner to improve. "Waiting three weeks to find out how you did on a test will not help your learning," note the authors.
- *Specific* – "Pinning a letter (B-) or a number (82%) on a student's work is no more helpful than such comments as 'Nice job' or 'You can do better.' Although good grades and positive remarks may feel good, they do not advance learning." They don't help a student understand what's good and what needs to improve. Here's an example of more specific feedback: "Your research paper is generally well organized and contains a great deal of information on your topic. You used multiple sources and documented them correctly. However, your paper lacks a clear conclusion, and you never really answered your basic research question."
- *Understandable to the student* – Our feedback should tell students specifically what they have done well and what they could do next time to improve. It's also important to write rubrics in "kid language;" for example, instead of saying "Document your reasoning process," the rubric might say, "Show your work in a step-by-step manner so the reader can see what you were thinking."
- *A chance for adjustment by the student* – Students need a chance to act on the feedback – to refine, revise, practice, and retry. The best models for ongoing feedback are in areas that involve performance: art, music, physical education, band, and athletics.

• *Practice 6: Encourage self-assessment and goal setting*. Rubrics help students look honestly at their work-in-progress, fix things that aren't right, and set goals for improvement. But most students need help before they can do this on their own. Teachers can spur self-assessment with prompting questions like:

- What aspect of your work was most effective?
- What aspect of your work was least effective?
- What specific action or actions will improve your performance?
- What will you do differently next time?

"Over time," note McTighe and O'Connnor, "teacher and student judgments tend to align. In fact, it is not unusual for students to be harder on themselves than the teacher is."

• *Practice 7: Allow new evidence of achievement to replace old evidence*. Driving tests provide a good analogy: if a 16-year-old fails his driving test, practices (perhaps it was parallel parking that tripped him up), and passes the test the second time, the state trooper doesn't average the first performance with the second, nor does the boy's license say "passed on the second attempt." He passed, and that's what counts. If teachers average students' grades for unsuccessful first attempts and final demonstrations of mastery, they are giving students the wrong signal. It's better to reward *how well*, not *when*, the student mastered the material. But two worries arise: (a) if students know they'll have a second chance, will they not do their best work the first time? and (b) will giving multiple opportunities for mastery be too much work for teachers? McTighe and O'Connor suggest that teachers require students to show some

evidence of the corrective action they will take – for example, peer coaching, revising their report, or practicing the skill in a particular way.

"Seven Practices for Effective Learning" by Jay McTighe and Ken O'Connor in *Educational Leadership*, November 2005 (Vol. 63, #3, p. 10-17), no e-link available

2. Keys to Success for English Language Learners

In this article in the November *Middle School Journal*, Northern Illinois University professor Karen Carrier identifies three key issues in teaching ELL students in academic classrooms:

• *The amount of time required for second language acquisition* – It takes students one to three years to master conversational English, but ELLs need five to seven years to develop the level of academic English they need to master reading, writing, speaking, and listening in content-area classes. Many people dispute the five-to-seven-year figure because they hear ELLs chattering with their peers using reasonably accurate English and assume that they are proficient in English. But there is much more to academic English than conversation; it involves a bigger vocabulary, different sentence structure, and skills like analyzing, predicting, explaining, and justifying. Carrier believes that to learn academic English, ELLs need a rigorous, demanding curriculum in mainstream classrooms – and that such a curriculum will also benefit native English-speaking students who may be struggling with reading and writing.

• *The double challenge of English Language Learners* – ELLs have to do two jobs at the same time: learn a new language and learn new academic content. It's easy for ELLs to get discouraged when they compare themselves to their native-speaking classmates. It's therefore very important for content-area teachers to work closely with ESL teachers so the latter can provide students with main ideas, content-specific vocabulary, and the sentence structures needed to understand upcoming curriculum units. Carrier warns about a common trap: "[C]reating lessons for ELLs with low-level, ostensibly 'easy' concepts and language or simple worksheets results in watered-down content and denies them access to the grade-level curriculum. The negative effects of a watered-down curriculum for ELLs multiply as ELLs are promoted through the grade levels without the basic foundational knowledge they need." Carrier believes that educators need to identify the major concepts and processes that students must learn and teach this on-level curriculum in ESL and content-area classes.

• *Using multiple modes of input and output* – The third key to success for ELLs is crafting units and lessons that use manipulatives, realia, pictures, videos, demonstrations, movement, gestures, drama, graphic organizers (showing cause and effect, processes, contrasts, etc.), multimedia, and activities that are experiential and hands-on. These alternative means of instruction and expression help ELLs grasp the key concepts while making progress every day learning academic English.

"Key Issues for Teaching English Language Learners in Academic Classrooms" by Karen Carrier in *Middle School Journal*, November 2005 (Vol. 37, #2, p. 4-9), no e-link available

3. What Troubled Boys Need to Succeed in Middle School

In this *Middle School Journal* article, University of Vermont researchers Mary Jackman Sullivan and Penny Bishop report on a study of ten troubled middle-school boys in a rural school. The boys were disengaged from in-school and extracurricular activities, had trouble getting along with their peers, were failing one or more classes, and were frequently in trouble. After observing the boys for a year and a half, Sullivan and Bishop identified five needs that they all shared:

• *A need for friendship* – Despite their problems with peer relationships, all the boys cared deeply about friendships. They sometimes had odd attachments to peers who were not very nice to them. One boy said, "Do you know Ed? A big guy, he's in my science class. He sits next to Glenn. I'm scared of him. He's my friend."

• *A need for "good grades"* – Without exception, the boys viewed high grades as indicators of success and cared deeply about the grades they received. Being on the honor roll was the ultimate (but seemingly unattainable) accomplishment.

• *A need for creation* – The boys weren't often successful in the classroom, but when they were, it was usually in a "hands-on" activity that allowed physical movement, required particular skills, and gave them immediate feedback. The setting least likely to lead to success was a class in which students were passive. One boys described such a class: "I don't like that class… he just gives a bunch of notes in usually every class. He reads and then talks, and talks, and talks."

• *A need for caring teachers* – Boys described the teachers who made school successful for them in these terms: "nice," "friendly," "caring," and "helpful." Boys liked it when teachers paid attention to them, did goofy things, and showed their personal side by having photos of family members at their desks. Relationships with these teachers were keys to success.

• *A need for choice* – The boys were most often successful when they were able to choose activities they were good at. One boy designed websites; another trained dogs; another excelled as an artist; one studied law; and another was an accomplished skateboarder. Teachers who managed to work these activities into the curriculum hit a home run.

These five needs led Sullivan and Bishop to make the following recommendations for middle-schools who want to increase the success of disaffiliated boys:

- *Understand the developmental needs of students.* Teachers who, through training or intuition, "get" middle school boys are much more likely to be successful with them.
- *Build bridges between students*. Small advisory groups are an excellent venue for doing this.
- *Analyze classroom movement and talk*. "Most teachers will not be surprised to learn that young adolescent boys report the greatest school success when there is action in the lesson," write Sullivan and Bishop. "Yet many schools continue to cater to the verbal learner who can sit still for long periods of time." Teachers should look at the ratio of "teacher talk" to "student talk" and how often students are allowed to move from their desks.

- *Enhance student ownership in lesson and unit design*. Sullivan and Bishop suggest a "rule of three" to divide up the curriculum: (a) classes and projects being offered by teachers; (b) classes based on the students' personal assessment of what they need to learn from a range of teacher-guided options; and (c) topics and concepts in which the students want to develop expertise.
- *Help students find relevance*. One way to do this is to incorporate service learning, which can be a rich and rigorous way for middle-school students to get connected to the real world.
- *Recognize <u>all</u> students for academic accomplishments*. Sullivan and Bishop believe that following the suggestions above will result in disaffiliated boys earning better grades, perhaps even the honor roll. They also suggest praising effort and incremental gains. "Every student should be acknowledged publicly at least once during the year for some academic success," they write. "All students can honestly earn academic success, but it takes the teacher to discover each student's specific needs within the classroom to facilitate and recognize that success."

"Disaffiliated Boys: Perspectives On Friendship and School Success" by Mary Jackman Sullivan and Penny Bishop in *Middle School Journal*, November 2005 (Vol. 37, #2, p. 22-30), no e-link available

4. Meeting the Needs of Gay and Lesbian Middle-School Students

On January 2, 1997, Robbie Kirkland, 14, committed suicide. For four years he had struggled to come to terms with his homosexuality. His family accepted and supported him, but every day in school, he contended with name-calling, taunting, pushing, tripping, and exclusion. His suicide note said, "I may be gone, but I hope I'm not forgotten. Remember me."

In this *Middle School Journal* article, Central Michigan University professor Norma Bailey writes about what middle school can be like for students like Robbie: "The shame of ridicule and the fear of a verbal or physical attack make school a fearful place, resulting in frequent absences and, too often, academic failure. These youth spend an inordinate amount of energy determining how to get safely to and from school, how to avoid the hallways when other students are present so they can avoid verbal and physical harassment, figuring out where they might be safe in the lunchroom or the locker room, and which restroom they can use and when. There is often little energy left to learn."

Only a small number of adults in schools join in harassing gay and lesbian students, but it's quite common, Bailey reports, for staff members to stand by and make no effort to intervene when they hear anti-gay name-calling or jokes. "When teachers do not intervene," writes Bailey, "they give tacit assent to the perpetrators that it is OK to do what they are doing, and they give tacit messages to the gay, lesbian, or 'different' youth that they are not worth very much. Thus begins the erosion of self-worth that so often leads young gay and lesbian youth to engage in self-destructive behaviors, including alcohol and other substance abuse, self-mutilation, suicide attempts, and skipping school."

Bailey has the following recommendations for middle schools to change the kind of climate that led to Robbie Kirkland's suicide:

• Provide training to all school faculty and staff to learn about and understand the needs of gay and lesbian youth and develop the skills to meet those needs.

• Ensure that school policies on name-calling and harassment explicitly include sexual orientation.

• Require staff to intervene whenever name-calling or harassment of any kind occurs, be it "faggot" or "fatso" or "spic" or "retard" or "That's so gay." And it's not enough to just say, "Don't say that," or "That's not nice." Students need to hear a stronger and more inclusive message, something like, "We don't hurt each other this way in our caring community."

• Ensure that there is a well-trained "safe person" (a counselor, faculty member, or someone from outside the school) to whom students can turn to get accurate information about sexual orientation or gender identity.

• Support a Gay-Straight Alliance, a club to discuss ways to counter homophobia in the school and community (there are 1,900 GSAs in American schools today, including several dozen in middle-level schools).

• Examine the curriculum and school library to find ways to appropriately include gay and lesbian history, literature, and role models. "Seeing themselves in the curriculum," writes Bailey, "gives a message of hope to gay and lesbian young adolescents that they too can live productive, successful lives."

Bailey concludes: "Gay and lesbian students are no more special than any other students, but they are no less special either. In a middle level school that is truly student-centered, school personnel will work to ensure that their needs are addressed and that there is a safe and equitable school environment for youth of every sexual orientation or gender identity."

"Let Us Not Forget to Support LGBT Youth in the Middle School Years" by Norma Bailey in *Middle School Journal*, November 2005 (Vol. 37, #2, p. 31-36), no e-link available

5. Improving the Way Science Is Taught

Carl Wieman, a physics professor at the University of Colorado, won a Nobel Prize in 2001 and promptly donated all of his $250,000 in prize money to improving the way physics is taught. "I've long thought that undergraduate science is poorly taught," he said in an interview in last Tuesday's *New York Times*. "Undergraduates think of science usually as something they have to 'go through,' a class where they memorize a bunch of disconnected facts and formulas. It has no connection to anything around them. They learn it in the same way they might learn Latin – by rote. Moreover, the subject matter is taught quickly, overwhelmingly, without any concern for what young people can take in cognitively. After a while you have them thinking, This is what science is! And then you get them graduating and sometimes becoming K-12 teachers themselves. They then repeat this, believing, This is how science *should* be taught, because this is how I was taught."

Wieman's main concern is the pace of instruction. "A lot of why science is so frightening to many," he says, "is that teachers present material at several times the pace any reasonable person can absorb." In his own classroom, he issues students infrared "clickers" and pauses periodically to pose "clicker questions" to see how well students are understanding his lecture material. Students break up into three-person groups, discuss the question, reach consensus, and beam their answer to Wieman's laptop, which displays a graph of the whole class's results on a large screen. Wieman calls on students, asking them to explain their reasoning; if there are a lot of incorrect responses, he slows down and re-teaches.

Wieman also believes strongly that students need to see the relevance of science to everyday life. "When I'm teaching," he says, "I try to show how physics concepts work in everyday life. Microwave ovens? Everyone uses them. I show the physics principles involved. This morning, I talked about how atoms and electrons behave and how that can have all kinds of useful applications in making better lighting. This is not part of any quantum mechanics course they'll be able to find elsewhere."

"Physics Laureate Hopes to Help Students Over the Science Blahs" by Claudia Dreifus in the *New York Times*, Nov. 1, 2005

6. Middle-School Ideas from Arizona

Vicki Coash and Karen Watkins co-taught in a Phoenix, Arizona middle school that had students loop with the same two-person teacher teams through sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. In an article in the October *Middle Ground*, Coash and Watkins deal less with looping than with several other initiatives that they believe were successful, among them:

• *Home Court* – Teachers conducted a ten-minute lesson with each homeroom. What contributes to a sports team's home-court advantage, they asked. Students made suggestions: familiarity, support of local fans, and comfort in taking risks. Teachers then said that the classroom should be "Home Court" for students: they should feel comfortable, all students should support one another (even when mistakes were made), there would be no put-downs, and everyone should feel safe about taking risks. Finally, teachers acknowledged that people might forget and break one of the rules, for example, putting down another person. If this happened, the signal was saying, "Home Court." Coash and Watkins report that this proved to be a powerful tool. In the past, students who felt put down might have tolerated it, or responded in kind. Home Court gave them a safe alternative.

• *The Yet Lab* – Staying after school had a negative connotation, said Coach and Watkins, and they wanted extra-help sessions to have a more positive feel. So they established the "Yet Lab" for students who hadn't finished or didn't understand "yet." After-school became more positive – even more so when they added snacks and drinks.

• *Student-led conferences* – Students compiled a portfolio for parent conferences, including examples of successes and strengths, weekly progress, goals for academic improvement, behavior, and behavioral goals for the next quarter. Students looked over the

data and prepared and rehearsed their presentation with a peer. This process dramatically improved parent attendance at conferences.

• *The Opportunity Plan* – Mindful of research on how unhelpful retention is, the staff decided to offer an alternative to the 14 sixth graders who failed the year. Students were offered a chance to move to seventh grade if they and their parents signed an agreement to:

- Commit to a parent/student compact;
- Develop individualized contracts;
- Have weekly progress reports;
- Have quarterly conferences;
- Attend the "Yet Lab" each week;
- Stay with the looping team.

Three parents chose not to accept the plan. All eleven of the students who did sign on successfully completed seventh grade.

"Looping for Long-Term Success" by Vicki Coash and Karen Watkins in *Middle Ground*, October 2005 (Vol. 9, #2, p. 16-18), no e-link available

7. How to Turn Stress to Your Advantage

In this *Harvard Business Review* interview, Herbert Benson, a professor at Harvard Medical School and founder of the Mind/Body Medical Institute, talks about good stress and bad stress. By using simple techniques for dealing with stress, he claims, people can increase their performance and productivity and avoid burnout.

"Stress," explains Benson, "is a physiological response to any change, whether good or bad, that alerts the adaptive fight-or-flight response in the brain and the body." The good kind of stress (called eustress) gives us energy to strive and produce. It's characterized by clear thinking, focus, alertness, efficiency, and creative insight. The bad kind of stress is what many of us deal with all the time. It's brought on by difficult employees, negative events at work, family problems, and nagging worries about taxes, traffic jams, hurricanes, politics, child abductions, wars, terrorist attacks, environmental devastation, and so forth.

Benson's research has confirmed the "Yerkes-Dodson curve," a 1908 finding that when people are subjected to stress or anxiety, their performance and efficiency improves at first, but then rapidly deteriorates (picture a graph that looks like an upside-down bowl). What's happening is that our bodies are flooded with stress hormones (epinephrine, norepinephrine, and cortisol), which cause blood pressure, heart rate, and brain activity to increase, all of which, over time, wreak havoc with our health.

What is to be done? Benson says that we need to monitor our stress level, and when we reach the high point of the Yerkes-Dodson curve, pull the rug out from under stress by turning to a quieting, rejuvenating activity that counteracts the negative effects of the stress hormones. Molecular studies have shown that the "relaxation response" releases nitric oxide, which trigger endorphins and dopamine, which calm us down – and also lead to "a focused increase in activity" that's associated with improved attention and decision-making. Many people report

having sudden creative insights during relaxation – the solution to the problem suddenly becomes apparent. "Thereafter," says Benson, describing these experiments, "the subjects enter a state of sustained improved performance, which we call the 'new-normal' state, because the breakthrough effect can be remembered indefinitely."

"We find this to be an intriguing phenomenon," continues Benson. "By bringing the brain to the height of activity and then suddenly moving it into a passive, relaxed state, it's possible to stimulate much higher neurological performance than would otherwise be the case. Over time, subjects who learn to do this as a matter of course perform at consistently higher levels. The effect is particularly noticeable in athletes and creative artists, but we have also seen it among businesspeople we work with."

Benson recommends the following sequence when we are confronted with a challenging situation:

• Work hard at it, "lean into the problem," and get yourself to the top of the Yerkes-Dodson curve.

• When you go over the top of the curve, you'll know it because you'll start feeling anxious, fearful, angry, bored, and you'll have the urge to procrastinate; you may also get a headache, a knot in your stomach, or sweaty palms.

• At this point, walk away from the problem and do something utterly different that produces the relaxation response. This might be a ten-minute meditation routine, jogging, petting a furry animal, looking at beautiful paintings, listening to lovely music, taking a sauna or a hot shower, having a nap, eating a meal with friends, doing needlepoint, etc. "All these things," says Benson, "bring about the mental rearrangement that is the foundation for new insights, solutions, and creativity. The key is to stop analyzing, surrender control, and completely detach yourself from the stress-producing thoughts."

• Benson calls the next stage the "breakout." People who reach this stage experience "flow… a sense of well-being and relaxation that brings with it an unexpected insight or a higher level of performance. And it's all the result of a simple biological mechanism that we can tap into at will."

• The final stage is returning to the "new-normal state in which the sense of self-confidence continues."

"Are You Working Too Hard? A Conversation with Mind/Body Researcher Herbert Benson" by Bronwyn Fryer in *Harvard Business Review*, November 2005 (Vol. 83, #11, p. 53-58), no e-link available

8. Hiring with Three Different Kinds of Intelligence in Mind

In this thoughtful *Harvard Business Review* article, New York corporate consultant Justin Menkes suggests that managers should be hired by assessing three kinds of intelligence: how well people accomplish tasks, how well they work with people, and how well they judge themselves. Here are the mental qualities in each area:

• *Regarding tasks, intelligent leaders:*
  - Appropriately define a problem and differentiate essential objectives from less-relevant concerns.
  - Anticipate obstacles to achieving their objectives and identify sensible means to circumvent them.
  - Critically examine the accuracy of underling assumptions.
  - Articulate the strengths and weaknesses of suggestions or arguments posed.
  - Recognize what is known about an issue, what more needs to be known, and how best to obtain the relevant and accurate information needed.
  - Use multiple perspectives to identify probably unintended consequences of various action plans.

• *Regarding people, intelligent leaders:*
  - Recognize the conclusions that can be drawn from a particular exchange.
  - Recognize the underlying agendas and motivations of individuals and groups involved in a situation.
  - Anticipate the probable reactions of individuals to actions or communications.
  - Accurately identify the core issues and perspectives that are central to a conflict.
  - Appropriately consider the probable effects and possible unintended consequences that may result from taking a particular course of action.
  - Acknowledge and balance the different needs of all relevant stakeholders.

• *Regarding themselves, intelligent leaders:*
  - Pursue feedback that may reveal errors in their judgment and make appropriate adjustments.
  - Recognize their personal biases or limitations in perspective and use this understanding to improve their thinking and their action plans.
  - Recognize when serious flaws in their ideas or actions require swift public acknowledgement of mistakes and a dramatic change in direction.
  - Appropriately articulate the essential flaws in others' arguments and reiterate the strengths in their own positions.
  - Recognize when it is appropriate to resist others' objections and remain committed to a sound course of action.

"Hiring for Smarts" by Justin Menkes in *Harvard Business Review*, November 2005 (Vol. 83, #11, p. 100-109), no e-link available

9. Short Items:

a. The academic and social benefits of recess – A study by University of Minnesota researchers Anthony Pellegrini and Catherine Bohn says that students concentrate better on their schoolwork after recess. Recess is more beneficial when it comes after shorter periods of classroom time, and boys benefit more than girls. Indoor and outdoor recess are equally helpful to students' attentiveness in class. Pelligrini and Bohn also believe that recess has important

social benefits: "Children are more likely to disagree with each other than they are to disagree with adults. When peers disagree, they are confronted with points of view other than their own, and, if they want interaction to continue, they must accommodate to their peers' points of view. These sorts of social interactions often occur on playgrounds at recess… Unstructured peer interaction affords opportunities to learn and develop new social and cognitive skills… The ability to interact cooperatively with peers, inhibit antisocial behavior, and form close relationships, such as friendships, are important developmental tasks for children as they first enter primary school." Noting that students nowadays have fewer chances to interact with their peers outside of school, Pellegrini and Bohn argue for a longer school day and year – with more recess time within the longer school day.

"Research: The Cognitive Power of Monkey Bars" by Gerald Bracey in *Phi Delta Kappan*, November 2005 (Vol. 87, #3, p. 254), no e-link available

b. Ideas for advisories– The School Redesign Network offers numerous resources for setting up a middle-school advisory system at its website: http://www.schoolredesign.net/srn/server.php?idx=861

Spotted in *Middle Ground*, November, 2005 (Vol. 9, #2, p. 11)

c. Teacher movies – Here's a listing of ten great movies about teachers: http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin156.shtml

Spotted in *Middle Ground*, November, 2005 (Vol. 9, #2, p. 11)

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 36 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 42 carefully-chosen publications (see list to the right), sifts through scores of 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 (with occasional breaks; there were 50 issues in 2004-05).

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
- Why the Marshall Memo?
- Focus topics
- 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 password

Publications covered:

(those read this week are underlined)

American Educational Research Journal
American Educator
American School Board Journal
ASCD SmartBrief
Atlantic Monthly
Bay State Banner
Boston Globe
CommonWealth Magazine
District Administration
Ed. Magazine (Harvard School of Education)
Education Digest
Education Gadfly
Education Next
Education Update (ASCD)
Education Week
Educational Leadership
Educational Researcher
Edutopia
Elementary School Journal
Harper's
Harvard Business Review
Harvard Education Letter
Harvard Educational Review
Journal of Staff Development
Middle Ground
Middle School Journal
NABE News
NASSP Bulletin
New York Times
New Yorker
Newsweek
PEN Weekly NewsBlast
Phi Delta Kappan
Principal Magazine
Principal Leadership
Psychology Today
Reading Research Quarterly
Reading Today
Rethinking Schools
Review of Educational Research
Teacher Magazine
Teachers College Record
Theory Into Practice

E-links will be provided whenever possible.