



The "*Hot Topics in US-China Education*" is a free, monthly email service that watches for "what is hot" in K-12 US and Chinese education. This service targets educators, administrators, researchers, and parents interested in issues of excellence in education in the US and China. The articles presented in this listserv are organized according to the following five dimensions of education: 1) Teachers and Teaching, 2) Learners and Learning, 3) Leaders and Leadership, 4) Curriculum, and 5) Family and Community. Under each category, you can access the full story by clicking on the story title.

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December, 2007

I. Teachers and Teaching

1. [Report Finds Better Scores in New Crop of Teachers](#)

December 12, 2007 from the New York Times

Teaching is attracting better-qualified people than it did just a few years ago, according to a report released Tuesday by the Educational Testing Service. Prospective teachers who took state teacher licensing exams from 2002 to 2005 scored higher on SATs in high school and earned higher grades in college than their counterparts who took the exams in the mid-1990s, the report said. On the other hand, the report found that those attracted to the profession continued to make up a strikingly homogeneous group — prospective teachers were overwhelmingly white and female — at a time when the proportion of public school students nationwide who are black, Hispanic or other minorities was nearly half and rising.

2. [Foundation Hopes to Lure Top Students to Teaching](#)

December 20, 2007 from The New York Times

The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation in Princeton is creating a fellowship program that it hopes will lure top students into teaching and transforming teacher education in the United States. The Woodrow Wilson program will offer about 33 national Leonore Annenberg Teaching Fellowships a year, with \$30,000 stipends, for students to attend graduate education programs at Stanford, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Virginia and the University of Washington. Another part of the program will provide fellowships in selected states, beginning with Indiana, at universities that agree to remake their graduate education programs along certain lines.

II. Learners and Learning

1. [Survey: More than 80% Chinese university students want to study abroad](#)

December 7, 2007 from www.chinaview.cn

More than 80 percent of university students in China want to study abroad, according to a new online survey. The survey, conducted by the China Youth Daily and involving 2,400 university students, revealed that 42 percent of respondents believe an overseas education will be beneficial to their future career development. It also showed 66 percent felt students with an education background overseas were more competitive than graduates from domestic universities when it came to job hunting.

2. [China issues first Chinese language proficiency benchmarks for foreigners](#)

December 12, 2007 from www.chinaview.cn

China's top language promotion institute issued the first Chinese language proficiency benchmarks for foreigners here on Wednesday. The Chinese Language Proficiency Scales for Speakers of Other Languages is the first reference standard to assess the fluency of foreign learners of Chinese. The system features a five-step, comprehensive measure of the ability to communicate, Xu Lin, director of the Office of Chinese Language Council International (OCLCI), told the Confucius Institute Conference. The OCLCI has promoted the global development of the institute over the past three years. The basic framework of the scales has three parts: writing, speaking and listening ability. Each of these areas breaks down into five bands.

III. Leaders and Leadership

1. [Free compulsory education to spread to urban children](#)

December 24, 2007 from www.chinaview.cn

China will continue to spend more on education next year and spread the free nine-year compulsory education to urban children, said finance minister Xie Xuren. The government would continue to improve the funding system to guarantee free nine-year compulsory education currently enjoyed by 150 million rural children, while spreading it to their urban counterparts next year, Xie told an annual conference of the Ministry of Finance in Beijing. Starting from the spring term, China would increase the funding for free textbooks used for the national compulsory courses, and the local governments would provide more money for free textbooks for local compulsory courses.

2. **Weighing Expansion as More Top Students Clamor at Ivy Gates**

December 26, 2007 from The New York Times

With ever more students pressing at their gates, admissions officers at selective colleges find themselves having to reject what Anthony W. Marx, Amherst's president, calls "astonishing applicants." The most elite institutions are accepting historic lows of 10 percent of applicants, and next year the sieve should become excruciatingly finer with applications from baby boomers' offspring expected to crest. At least four of the nation's most exclusive institutions — Princeton, Yale, Stanford and Amherst — are either modestly expanding enrollments for the first time since the late 1960s (when some began admitting women) or have task forces studying the matter. Some universities face particular challenges to expansion. Harvard and Columbia have exhausted campus space, and expanding into surrounding neighborhoods has been a treacherous political odyssey.

IV. **Curriculum**

1. **EMBA tuition fees rise against background of nation's booming economy**

December 12, 2007 from www.chinaview.cn

China's most prestigious management schools have announced increased tuition fees for their lucrative executive master's of business administration (EMBA) programs while the two stock exchanges saw the fastest annual growth in market values. The Shanghai-based China Europe International Business School (CEIBS), ranked by the Financial Times as among one of the world's top ten business schools, led the price rise by increasing tuitions of its two-year EMBA program from 308,000 yuan (41,000 U.S. dollars) to 338,000 yuan. Fudan University Management School in the same city later announced a 13.4 percent price increase for its EMBA program. A joint EMBA program between Fudan and the University of Washington is even more expensive, with a 19 percent price hike to 435,000 yuan for the 18-month program. The programs cultivated by the best Chinese business schools are priced much lower than global brands, whose EMBA programs are charged from 60,000 to 120,000 U.S. dollars.

2. **Innovative Education**

December 13, 2007 from CBSDETROIT.COM

Both Michigan State University and the University of Michigan are offering programs geared toward future success in the Chinese marketplace. Children preschool age and beyond can utilize resources to learn a foreign language and become familiar with Chinese culture. MSU Confucius Institute (CI-MSU) is working on three major projects: podcast of existent video-based Chinese learning materials and daily news, online Chinese courses for K-12 students and adults, and Chinese instructor training program. On the other hand, the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (LSA) with the University of Michigan's Center for Chinese Studies (CCS) is launching a year-long exploration of the culture and society of contemporary China and its place in the world. The Theme Year offers a core academic program of lectures, classes, and symposia while also fostering campus community outreach programs to engage both the public and scholarly audiences.

3. [Superman Finds New Fans Among Reading Instructors](#)

December 26, 2007 from The New York Times

A recent interest in comics as a literacy tool comes as graphic novels have cemented their status as sophisticated works of literature, and as teachers nationwide are struggling to boost reading scores. In Maryland, the State Education Department is expanding a new comics-based literacy curriculum, after a small pilot program yielded promising results. In New York City, a group of educators applied to open a new small high school that would be based around a comics theme and named after the creators of Superman; their application was rejected but they plan to try again next year. And the Comic Book Project, a program run out of Teachers College at Columbia University that has children create their own comic strips as an “alternative pathway to literacy,” is catching on. Six years after it started in one Queens elementary school, it has expanded to 860 schools across the country.

V. **Family and Community**

1. [On Facebook, Scholars Link Up With Data](#)

December 17, 2007 from The New York Times

To study how personal tastes, habits and values affect the formation of social relationships (and how social relationships affect tastes, habits and values), a team of researchers from Harvard and the University of California, Los Angeles, are monitoring the Facebook profiles of an entire class of students at one college, which they declined to name because it could compromise the integrity of their research. Facebook’s network of 58 million active users and its status as the sixth-most-trafficked Web site in the United States have made it an irresistible subject for many types of academic research.

2. [A Threat So Big, Academics Try Collaboration](#)

December 25, 2007 from The New York Times

The political landscape of academia, combined with the fight for grant money, has always fostered competition far more than collaboration. But the threat of global warming may just change all that. Take what’s happening at the Rochester Institute of Technology. In September the school established the Golisano Institute for Sustainability, aimed at getting students and professors from different disciplines to collaborate in studying the environmental ramifications of production and consumption. More universities are setting up stand-alone centers that offer neutral ground on which engineering students can work on alternative fuels while business students calculate the economics of those fuels and political science majors figure how to make the fuels palatable to governments in both developing nations and America’s states.

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