



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, 2008

I. Teachers and Teaching

[Need a tutor? YouTube videos await](#)

December 12 2008 from USA Today

When University of Central Florida junior Nicole Nissim got stumped in trigonometry, she checked out what was showing on YouTube. Nissim typically scours the video-sharing website for clips of bands and comedy skits. But this time she wasn't there to procrastinate on her homework. It turned out YouTube was also full of math videos. After watching a couple, the psychology major says, she finally understood trig equations and how to make graphs.

[1 in 3 state teachers lack math credential](#)

December 10, 2008 from San Francisco Chronicle

As a Sacramento Superior Court prepares to decide whether California public schools may require testing of all eighth-graders in algebra, a new study finds that 1 in 3 middle-school algebra teachers is unqualified to teach the subject. Those instructors, who lack math credentials, are also more likely to be teaching in the lowest-scoring schools, according to "California's Teaching Force 2008," released today by the Center for the Future of Teaching & Learning, a Santa Cruz think tank.

II. Learners and Learning

[College May Become Unaffordable for Most in U.S.](#)

December 3, 2008 from The New York Times

The rising cost of college — even before the recession — threatens to put higher education out of reach for most Americans, according to the biennial report from the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. Over all, the report found, published college tuition and fees increased 439 percent from 1982 to 2007 while median family income rose 147 percent. Student borrowing has more than doubled in the last decade, and students from lower-income families, on average, get smaller grants from the colleges they attend than students from more affluent families.

[California: Law School Lure: No Tuition](#)

December 25, 2008 from The New York Times

A law school opening next fall in Southern California is offering a big incentive to top students who might be thinking twice about the cost of a legal education during the recession: free tuition for three years. The offer is part of a strategy by Erwin Chemerinsky, a renowned constitutional law scholar and dean of the new school at the University of California, Irvine, to attract Ivy League-caliber students to the first new public law school in the state in 40 years.

III. Leaders and Leadership

[Obama's choice on education](#)

December 12, 2008 from Los Angeles Times

Which way Obama will push the nation on schools is unclear, but the priorities must be accountability, funding and learning. Education was relegated to the outskirts of the presidential campaign this year, always a fourth or fifth runner-up to such pressing matters as the economy, Iraq and healthcare. With few people asking penetrating questions on the issue, Barack Obama was able to sound as though he sided both with traditionalist teachers unions and with accountability-minded reformers.

[China to reform payment system for teachers in compulsory schools](#)

December 21, 2008 from www.chinaview.cn

China will adopt a new payment system for teachers working in compulsory education, to ensure that these teachers are paid according to their performance, while their average pay will not be lower than that of civil servants. At a recent executive meeting, the State Council approved a document on the implementation of the results-and-performance-linked payment in schools of compulsory education. Premier Wen Jiabao presided over the meeting. According to the meeting, the reform is aimed to attract and encourage excellent talents to working in the educational field for life, so as to promote the country's educational undertakings. The new policy will be launched beginning Jan. 1, 2009.

IV. Curriculum

[Chinese law scholars discuss human rights education on world Human Rights Day](#)

December 10, 2008 from www.chinaview.cn

Around 30 law scholars from China's leading universities and research institutes gathered in Beijing Monday to discuss human rights education in commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The seminar, co-organized by Renmin University of China and China University of Political Science and Law, focused on human rights education of civil servants, members of the Communist Party of China (CPC), policemen and students.

[A Lesson in Fiscal Literacy](#)

December 27, 2008 from Washington Post

As the economy spirals downward, Virginia schools are in the vanguard of a movement to teach children financial skills that might help them avoid problems their parents face. Across the state, students are learning far more than their Maryland and District counterparts about such topics as the markets, the difference between pre- and post-tax pay, and foreclosures' effects on property values. Advocates say the subject is gaining urgency.

V. Family and Community

[World Bank Competition Recognizes Grassroots Innovations](#)

December 11, 2008 from Voice of American

Each year, the World Bank sponsors a global competition for innovative grassroots projects. In this year's Development Marketplace, 22 entries among 1,800 proposals received cash awards. Among them is Nigerian Kolawole Adebayo, who has big ideas about cassava, a root crop that is a staple for millions of people around the globe. His country is the world's leading producer. With his grant money, Adebayo plans to create a business network among farmers, goat keepers and cassava processors in the southwest part of the country. He says the project would raise the standard of living for thousands of farm families in the region.

[The Parent-Teacher Talk Gains a New Participant](#)

December 27, 2008 from The New York Times

Student-led conferences are gaining ground at elementary and middle schools nationwide, in part because of the rapidly shifting demographics at public schools. Although researchers have long hailed the benefits of such conferences — anointing students as the main stakeholders in their education, accountable for their performance during the school day and responsible for their academic future — their popularity appears to be increasing in part because of the rapidly shifting demographics at public schools nationwide. The classrooms, after all, are where a community's changing cultural identity is often first glimpsed.

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