



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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November, 2008

I. Teachers and Teaching

[A Plan to Hire the Best Teachers](#)

November 27, 2008 from The New York Times

New York City and its teachers' union took an important step when they agreed to abandon a rule that allowed senior teachers to transfer into any school they wished, often bumping younger teachers from their jobs. The new policy, which allows principals to reject unwanted applicants, has put an end to disruptive transfers and made it easier for schools to build coherent teams.

[Students shortchanged in math teaching](#)

November 26, 2008 from Washington Times

Math can be hard enough, but imagine the difficulty when a teacher is just one chapter ahead of the students. It happens, and it happens more often to poor and minority students. Those children are about twice as likely to have math teachers who don't know their subject, according to a report by the Education Trust, a children's advocacy group. Studies show the connection between teachers' knowledge and student achievement is particularly strong in math.

[Doctors, teachers under new graft interpretation](#)

November 25, 2008 from China Daily

Doctors and teachers may now face bribery charges if they receive monetary and other forms of reward in exchange for favors made through their work, the Supreme People's Court (SPC) and the Supreme People's Procuratorate (SPP) said in a new judicial interpretation issued Monday. Under the interpretation, medical staff face being charged with commercial bribery if they receive bribes from sales agents of pharmaceutical companies and suppliers of medical equipment, or if they help promote pharmaceutical products through their prescriptions for the benefits.

II. Learners and Learning

[Study Abroad Flourishes, With China a Hot Spot](#)

November 17, 2008 from the New York Times

Record numbers of American students are studying abroad, with especially strong growth in educational exchanges with China, the annual report by the Institute on International Education found. The number of Americans studying in China increased by 25 percent, and the number of Chinese students studying at American universities increased by 20 percent last year, according to the report "Open Doors 2008." While the traditional study-abroad sites for Americans — Britain, Italy, Spain and France — still attract more students from the United States, the report found that China is now the fifth-most-popular destination.

[Going Off to College for Less \(Passport Required\)](#)

November 30, 2008 from The New York Times

More American students are heading overseas not just for a semester abroad, but for their full degree program. With higher education fast becoming a global commodity, universities worldwide — many of them in Canada and England — are competing for the same pool of affluent, well-qualified students, and more American students are heading overseas not just for a semester abroad, but for their full degree program.

III. Leaders and Leadership

[Plan to Centralize Choice of Kindergarten Is Ended](#)

November 13, 2008 from The New York Times

In an unusual about-face, the city (New York) is abandoning its plan to centralize the often nerve-racking process in which parents sign their children up for kindergarten in public schools. But it is imposing a plan that requires all schools to follow the same admissions rules. The reversal, which was expected to be sent to principals by e-mail, came on the heels of a newly centralized pre-kindergarten application process that was marred by snags, prompting parents to protest in front of the Education Department's headquarters.

[China opens nationwide job fairs for graduates amid global financial crisis](#)

November 17, 2008 from www.chinaview.cn

China's Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security started a weeklong job-hunting service campaign on Sunday to help university graduates get employed amid the global financial crisis. Nationwide job fairs and online recruitments will offer more than 520,000 job vacancies for the graduates. Statistics showed that about six million students will graduate from universities and colleges next year and some 800,000 of this year's graduates are still awaiting job offers. Si Yilei, director of the ministry's National Center for Human Resources, said besides the job fairs, the ministry would also provide consultations on job-hunting, give guidance and training to the graduates who choose to start their own business, and establish a database of unemployed graduates.

IV. Curriculum

[Teaching the lost art of sewing in Needham and West Roxbury](#)

November 30, 2008 from Boston Globe

Classes start at 3:15 p.m., but children's noses press up against the glass of the Needham storefront long before the door is unlocked. Here, six days a week, the nearly lost art of sewing is revered and creativity is unleashed. Laurèn Johnston says she has taught over 8,000 students since launching Sew Easy 13 years ago. Last week she opened a second branch in West Roxbury, where she hopes to further disseminate an old-fashioned skill that is still indispensable in this high-tech age.

[No consensus reached on language teachings](#)

November 22, 2008 from China Daily

The announcement of details regarding the adjustment of the mother-tongue teaching policy has been postponed because educators have not reached a consensus on the issue, Secretary for Education Michael Suen said Friday. The controversial teaching-medium policy has been implemented since Hong Kong's handover in 1997, and it allows only about 100 secondary schools to teach junior classes in English. But the policy looks to be changed following objections by community members about the falling English standards of graduates and the "labeling effect" on Chinese schools' students. The government had planned to announce the details of the adjustment this month, but Suen, speaking after the graduation ceremony of Shue Yan University, said it will not be announced this year.

V. Family and Community

[Women Gain in Education but Not Power, Study Finds](#)

November 12, 2008 from The New York Times

Women still lag far behind men in top political and decision-making roles, though their access to education and health care is nearly equal, the World Economic Forum said Wednesday. In its 2008 Global Gender Gap report, the forum, a Swiss research organization, ranked Norway, Finland and Sweden as the countries that have the most equality of the sexes, and Saudi Arabia, Chad and Yemen as having the least. Using United Nations data, the report found that girls and women around the world had generally reached near-parity with their male peers in literacy, access to education and health and survival. But in terms of economics and politics, including relative access to executive government and corporate posts, the gap between the sexes remains large.

[Promise of college for all Californians shrinking](#)

November 29, 2008 from Los Angeles Daily News

In 1959, as California enjoyed the fruits of more than a decade of post-World War II prosperity, state leaders created the Higher Education Master Plan to make sure every Californian had access to college. The plan guaranteed admission to the University of California system for the top 12 1/2 percent of the state's high school graduates, the top third could get seats in what became the California State University system, and everyone could enroll in community colleges. Over the past five decades, the master plan has weathered financial crises that have slowly chipped away at its goals. Now, amid the worst economic crisis in decades, some question whether the state's ambitious higher-education promise can be sustained, and others say it's already history.

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