



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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## October, 2007

### I. Teachers and Teaching

#### 1. [In the Classroom, Blazing a Path From Fidgeting to Focus](#)

*October 3, 2007 from the New York Times*

After for years trying traditional strategies to deal with focus issues of children in the classroom, teacher in New York City now begin to try some technology-based ways to help children realize and tackle their problem of concentration in a collaborative and constructive manner.

#### 2. [Teacher Shortage Looms](#)

*October 10, 2007 from The Charleston Gazette News*

Up to 6,000 West Virginia teachers can retire next year, a trend that will accelerate in coming years — and state Board of Education members are looking for ways to fill the gap. Board members agreed Tuesday to form a group to look for innovative ways to handle the daunting teacher shortage in the coming years.

### II. Learners and Learning

#### 1. [In Some Schools, iPods Are Required Listening](#)

*October 9, 2007 from the New York Times*

But even as students have been told to leave their iPods at home, the school here in Hudson County has been handing out the portable digital players to help bilingual students with limited English ability sharpen their vocabulary and grammar by singing along to popular songs.

2. **[Schools Embrace Environment and Sow Debate](#)**

*October 25, 2007 from the New York Times*

A growing school-based environmental movement has moved far beyond recycling programs and Earth Day celebrations. Since 2004, dozens of public and private schools in Westchester and New York City and on Long Island have adopted no-idling zones, switched to plant-based cleaners in their buildings and, to a lesser extent, banned pesticides from playgrounds and playing fields, according to Grassroots Environmental Education, a nonprofit group that began a campaign this month promoting all three measures.

3. **[Classroom of the Future Is Virtually Anywhere](#)**

*October 31, 2007 from The New York Times*

The trend of learning and teaching online is already a reality in many places. Represented here is in Penn State University Dr. Duck's MBA classroom, which embraces students from different corners of the world with fascinating personal background. The virtual classroom everywhere is the future. Nearly 3.5 million college or graduate students, one of every five, took at least one online course last fall, double the figures of five years earlier, according to a survey of 2,500 campuses published last week in collaboration among the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the College Board and a Babson College research group.

4. **[25 million students at university in China](#)**

*October 17, 2007 from [www.chinaview.cn](http://www.chinaview.cn)*

The number of students studying in Chinese universities has reached 25 million, a five-fold increase in only nine years, said Zhou Ji, Chinese Education Minister. "In only a few years, Chinese higher education has transformed from an education for the elite to one for the public, a process commonly taking several decades to accomplish in many countries," said Zhou at a press conference. He added: "It is a marvelous development." Since 1999 China has expanded enrollment in higher educational institutions and this year about 5.4 million freshmen students enrolled in universities and colleges, statistics from the Ministry of Education show.

III. **Leaders and Leadership**

1. **[Team Forms to Analyze City Schools](#)**

*October 3, 2007 from The New York Times*

A group of academics is preparing to gather reams of data on New York City's public schools, analyzing the numbers to figure out what works, and what does not, in schools.

2. **[Hinojosa recruits leadership team from diverse fields in push to improve schools](#)**

*October 7, 2007 from The Dallas Morning News*

Hinojosa recruits leadership team from diverse fields in push to improve schools. Superintendent Michael Hinojosa has just completed a major piece of his plan for reforming Dallas schools – assembling a group of top administrators he says has the mix of experience necessary to turn the district around.

3. **[China to review quality of doctorate education](#)**

*October 8, 2007 from [www.chinaview.cn](http://www.chinaview.cn)*

China's education authorities are to carry out a nationwide review of doctoral studies in order to improve post-graduate education. The survey, launched by the Academic Degree Committee of the State Council, the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Personnel, requires all institutions of higher learning to submit appraisal reports before Nov. 30.

4. **[China to build 190 special schools for disabled over 3 years](#)**

*October 18, 2007 from [www.chinaview.cn](http://www.chinaview.cn)*

China's central government is to invest 600 million yuan (about 78.9 million U.S. dollars) over the next three years to build and expand 190 special schools for the handicapped, according to a program issued by the Chinese authorities. The program said the schools will be built mainly in China's less prosperous central and west areas, where more than 80 percent of the cities and counties don't have educational access for disabled people.

5. **[The first official regulation on homework load for students in compulsory education issued in Hubei Province, China](#)**

*October 25, 2007 from [www.edu.china.com](http://www.edu.china.com)*

Hubei province of China recently issued the first official regulation on the quantity of homework assigned to students of compulsory education. It is stipulated that during primary school year, students can not be assign with homework in subjects of Chinese and math, the daily quantity of which must be what students can finish with class time, without extracurricular homework. The price of text and exercise books are also regulated.

IV. **Curriculum**

1. **[Evolution's role in class set to grow](#)**

*October 20, 2007 from [orlandosentinel.com](http://orlandosentinel.com)*

Florida has written new standards for teaching science that for the first time say public-school students need to learn about evolution. The proposed science standards, released Friday, call evolution one of the "big ideas" that must be taught as part of in-depth, hands-on learning. Florida's plan is part of a larger push to improve science education but could set off a battle over beliefs.

2. **[Students confronting with difficulties in using new college English textbook](#)**

*October 24, 2007 from [www.edu.china.com](http://www.edu.china.com)*

A recent survey reveals that the newly initialized English textbook of college level found difficulty in being popularized among students. The curriculum

content this time has shifted to a more comprehensive level, particularly emphasizing the abilities of listening and speaking. However, interviews with students shows the gap between using the language to real communication and the traditional grammar and vocabulary-orientated learning style—with the latter more accepted and familiar among students.

**V. Family and Community**

**1. [Spreading Homework Out So Even Parents Have Some](#)**

*October 4, 2007 from the New York Times*

Mr. Frye, an English teacher at Montclair High School, An English teacher at a high school in New Jersey has asked parents to complete assignments based on their children's work as a way to increase parental involvement. Studies have shown that parental involvement improves the quality of the education a student receives, but teenagers seldom invite that involvement. So, Mr. Frye said, he decided to help out. This approach did receive positive feedbacks from majority of parents, students, and school leaders.

**2. [Diversity as Normal as Speaking Chinese](#)**

*October 7, 2007 from The New York Times*

Parents are sending their children to language schools to help them understand an increasingly multicultural world. As more and more parents hold the view to let their children feel diversity is normal, and recognize the diverse environment they are now living in, they are sending children to quality schools in diversity districts, attending foreign language classes, as Chinese, even though the costs of bilingual education are much higher.

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