

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION NEWS ROUNDUP

Volume 3 Number 1, March 2009

- **CANADA:** Oakville parents claim French immersion bias
- **EUROPE:** Public debate on the future of education in Europe
- **GERMANY:** School sheriffs keep eye on problem pupils in Berlin
- **INDIA:** (2 items)
- **ISRAEL:** Teachers hold one-hour strike to protest high school violence
- **NETHERLANDS:** A parents' guide to education in the Netherlands
- **NEW ZEALAND:** (3 items)
- **SINGAPORE:** Why Singapore is another model for teaching excellence
- **SPAIN:** Teaching English in Spain
- **SWEDEN:** Swedish study shows fish may be brain food for teenage boys
- **UNITED KINGDOM:** (7 items)
- **UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:** (11 items)
- **VIETNAM:** Kindergarten kids learn gender equality

CANADA

Oakville parents claim French immersion bias

Kristin Rushowy, parentcentral.ca, 23 March 2009

The handful of Oakville schools that only offer French immersion are driving students out of their neighbourhood in search of an English program and are also leading to "segregation" based on gender and ability, a group of parents charge.

Despite voicing their concerns and making many presentations to the Halton District School Board, the parents say their worries have not been addressed, and earlier this month filed a claim of discrimination.

The French immersion schools typically have a higher population of girls and fewer special needs students.

Read more at <http://www.parentcentral.ca/parent/article/606543>

[< top >](#)

EUROPE

Public debate on the future of education in Europe

The future of education in Europe will be in the spotlight on Monday, 30 March in the second Brussels Debate organised in the framework of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009.

The debate entitled "Beyond chalk and talk: Creativity in the classroom" is organised with European Policy Centre (EPC). It will take place at 17.00h in the Residence Palace and will be opened by Odile Quintin, Director General for Education and Culture, European Commission.

How can schools and universities foster the creative and innovative capacity of pupils and students, helping them to develop and use it throughout their life and in the future labour market? Today's new jobs, not to mention those of tomorrow, call for new skills. New social needs call for new solutions.

Odile Quintin, Director General for Education and Culture of the European Commission will focus on the challenges facing Europe's education systems in meeting the skill needs of tomorrow and on the action the EU is taking to help young people develop their creative potential.

Read more at http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/news1282_en.htm

[< top >](#)

GERMANY

School sheriffs keep eye on problem pupils in Berlin

Expatica.com, 10 March 2009

Many like the idea but others say it helps promote negative images of schools.

It did not take the children long to get used to the unfamiliar sight of security guards taking up position outside their schools in one of Berlin's problem areas.

"Have you got a pistol with you," little Hussein asked the two men wearing dark blue uniforms who stood guard outside his school in the immigrant-dominated suburb of Neukoelln.

The older of the two shook his head, eliciting a smile from the youngster as he quickly walked passed the men to join his friends waiting for him inside the schoolyard.

Since December, 20 "school sheriffs" employed by a private security firm have been keeping an eye on children at 13 Neukoelln schools in the first project of its kind in Germany.

Their task is to stop non-pupils from entering the school grounds and causing trouble, following 56 violent incidents in the suburb's 76 schools during the school year that ended in July.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/dat9ur>

[< top >](#)

INDIA

US seeks applications from Indian teachers to study English

Aussie Indo Lanka, 25 March 2009

The US-India Education Foundation is seeking applications from young Indians, currently teaching English at college level or training to be English teachers, to train them in the US universities.

In return, they would be required to teach one of four Indian languages.

Grants will be offered in the coming academic year starting August or September 2009, a statement from the US embassy said here Tuesday.

Under the foundation's Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Program, Indians teaching English, aged 21 to 29, would be recruited to teach either Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi or Urdu at colleges, universities and high school for nine months "while refining their skills and English proficiency and enhancing their knowledge of the US society and culture".

Read more at <http://www.aussieindolanka.com/news/india/education/>

[< top >](#)

Class 8-9 students caught answering under-graduate exam

Aussie Indo Lanka, 17 March 2009

Education officials in Uttar Pradesh were in for a shock when they found students of Class 8 and 9 answering question papers at an under-graduate exam in Azamgarh district, officials said Tuesday.

The school students were caught solving the paper with the help of invigilators Monday when officials of the administration and education department raided two private colleges in Azamgarh following a tip-off. The paper was for BA first year students of Social Science.

"We received information that students of K.L. Singh Degree College and M.N. Inter College were solving questions papers of the under-graduate examinations of the Poorvanchal University. We raided the two centres and nabbed the children," K.R. Sharma, sub divisional magistrate of Sagari division, told IANS over phone.

The students were, however, let off after questioning and the raiding team seized over 80 answer sheets and question papers.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/d9rlgw>

[< top >](#)

ISRAEL

Teachers hold one-hour strike to protest high school violence

Jerusalem Post, 24 March 2009

Teachers in junior high schools and high schools will strike for one hour at the beginning of Tuesday's school day.

Children will begin to study at 9am. The strike is a collective protest against violence directed at teachers.

On Monday, a schoolmaster in a religious school in Kiryat Gat was allegedly attacked by the father of a girl who had been requested by the schoolmaster to change her skirt to a longer one, on the grounds of modesty.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/cp8o98>

[< top >](#)

NETHERLANDS

A parents' guide to education in the Netherlands

Expatica.com, 24 March 2009

Willemijn L. van Oppen-Stuyt gives the essentials on education in the Netherlands, from primary, secondary schooling, through higher education to teaching in the Netherlands with foreign credentials.

Compulsory education under Dutch law applies to children of all nationalities from five to eighteen years who are resident in the Netherlands.

International schools can be a good choice for the children of foreign parents who are staying temporarily in the Netherlands.

In the Netherlands, the majority of international schools are partly subsidised by the Dutch Ministry of Education and are thus bound by ministry rules, while others are privately operated.

The subsidy provided by the Dutch Ministry of Education makes it possible for these schools to offer English language education to the global standard of international schools for a reasonable fee.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/czuum6>

[< top >](#)

NEW ZEALAND

School system fails in its approach to reading

Massey University, 26 March 2009

School system fails in its own approach to teaching children to read

A significant number of children start school without the language experiences they need to be able to learn to read, says the head of the University's College of Education, Professor James Chapman.

"These children have little knowledge of books, of the alphabet, or of the sounds that make up words in spoken language," Professor Chapman says. "We call this a lack of 'literate cultural capital'. Home background and pre-school experiences play an important role in language development, which is necessary for a child to be able to learn to read.

"We have an approach to reading instruction in New Zealand junior school classrooms that tends to favour children from middle-class families. These children typically have the language skills necessary for benefiting from the type of instructional approach to beginning reading, known as whole language.

Read more at <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/ED0903/S00088.htm>

[< top >](#)

Released reports confirm school funding woes

NZ School Trustees Association, 23 March 2009

New Zealand School Trustees Association is welcoming reports that back up what it has been saying to the Government for a number of years – schools need more money.

The reports, "Review of Schools Operations funding: Non teaching Staff Workforce" undertaken by the Ministry and sector groups including NZSTA and the "Pilot Survey of School Finances" undertaken independent consultant Polson Higgs, have just been released by the Minister of Education.

President Lorraine Kerr says the reports confirm that boards operational funding is inadequate and that this inadequacy is currently being "propped up" by locally raised funds.

Key issues from the advisory group involved in the teaching staff workforce report included:

- Schools were underfunded during the 1990s and therefore had to make compromises in the area of non teaching staff. Schools require catch-up funding to compensate for this historical shortfall
- Additional resourcing is required to meet increased costs driven by the growth of, and shifts in, the nature of the non teaching staff workforce and implementation of collective agreements, and
- The majority of members of the group recommend that the way schools are funded be revisited.

Read more at <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/ED0903/S00078.htm>

[< top >](#)

Behaviour Summit Overlooks Bullying

AIDS Foundation, 19 March 2009

The Behaviour Summit held in Wellington on 16-17 March needed to focus more on bullying and intolerance. Instead the agenda was dominated by what to do with students with behaviour disorders

Expert presentations at the Summit focussed on interventions aimed at the 5% of students with severe behaviour problems and the challenges they pose to teachers and to themselves. However, a major international report released in December last year ranked New Zealand second worst among 37 countries for bullying in primary schools with rates more than 50 percent above the international average.

Nathan Brown, from the New Zealand AIDS Foundation (NZAF) and Programme Leader of OUT THERE! a queer youth development project, was a participant at the Summit. Brown says "the Summit's organisers seemed to medicalise the causes of bullying by blurring behaviour disorders and bullying together. If they had allowed young

people on the receiving end of bullying, such as students who are perceived to be gay or lesbian, to participate in the Summit there might have been more discussion about how to actually make schools safer for them."

Read more at <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/ED0903/S00069.htm>

[< top >](#)

SINGAPORE

Why Singapore is another model for teaching excellence

Stacy Teicher Khadaroo, Christian Science Monitor, March 24, 2009

Steven Paine, superintendent of West Virginia's schools was in Singapore with other education leaders to see what makes schooling in the city-state so successful, particularly in math and science.

When he asked a Singapore official about the basis of their math curriculum, she cited a standards framework put out by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics – in the United States. West Virginia's curriculum takes guidance from the same source, Mr. Paine says. "So the question remains, why is it that they lead the world in student achievement? I think it's because of their teacher quality," he says.

Only the top third of secondary-school graduates in Singapore can apply for teacher training. The National Institute of Education winnows that field down more and pays a living stipend while they learn to teach. Each year, teachers take an additional 100 hours of paid professional development. And they spend substantial time outside the classroom to plan with colleagues.

Not only is teaching an honored profession in Singapore, but it's also paid as well as science and engineering careers.

Read entire article at: <http://www.csmonitor.com/2009/0324/p12s01-ussc.html>

[< top >](#)

SPAIN

Teaching English in Spain

Expatica.com, 24 March 2009

Our starters guide for new teachers in Madrid, highlights some facts you need to know before making a career switch.

Type in "Teach English Jobs" on a search engine and you will find tons of website advising you to take the TESOL (Teach English to Speaker of Other Language) or TEFL (Teach English as a Foreign Language) or CELTA as that is the key to a teaching English job not just in Spain but everywhere else in the world where English is hardly spoken.

Despite the economic downturn, the demand for Clase Particular de Ingles (private English class usually conducted at a student's place) in Madrid, has not seemed to shrink.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/crrhle>

[< top >](#)

SWEDEN

Swedish study shows fish may be brain food for teenage boys

Reuters Health News, Mar 16, 2009

Teenage boys who regularly eat fish may be doing their brains some good, a new study suggests.

Swedish researchers found that among nearly 5,000 15-year-old boys whom they surveyed, those who ate fish more than once per week tended to score higher on intelligence tests three years later.

The findings, published in the journal *Acta Paediatrica* (March 2009), add to evidence that fish may indeed be brain food.

Researchers believe that the omega-3 fats found in fish -- particularly oily fish like salmon, mackerel and, to a lesser extent, albacore tuna -- are important to early brain development and to maintaining healthy brain function throughout life.

Article: <http://tinyurl.com/dzl25r>

[< top >](#)

UNITED KINGDOM

Schools may try to boycott Sats

BBC News, 26 March 2009

Head teachers and teachers in England are threatening to boycott next year's national Sats tests in primary schools.

The National Association of Head Teachers and the NUT teaching union say the tests taken by seven and 11-year-olds damage children and schools.

They want assessments by teachers instead, and an end to league tables based on the 11-year-olds' results.

The government in England says the tests are important to parents and that a boycott would be "irresponsible".

Read more at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/education/7964005.stm

[< top >](#)

You don't need to teach the little ones to tweet

Ceri Radford, Daily Telegraph, 26 March 2009

Everyone knows that if you want to find out how to program the video or use a new website, you should ask an eight-year-old.

Everyone, that is, except Sir Jim Rose. In a novel reversal of the usual format (perplexed adult, know-it-all child oozing condescension), his review of primary education suggests, according to the leaked draft, that teachers will one day instruct children on "blogging, podcasts, Wikipedia and Twitter".

I can almost see the look of fear on poor, technophobic Miss Jones's face as class 3A steadily ignore her because they're too busy updating their MySpace pages on their mobiles.

Well-meaning as the proposal may be, it raises several problems. The first is that by the time the lumbering, flat-tyred juggernaut of Government education policy has unloaded these half-baked ideas on to the curriculum, the nimble motorbike of online fashion will have zipped off elsewhere.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/c4quom>

[< top >](#)

Exit Winston Churchill, enter Twitter ... Yes, it's the new primary school curriculum

Tamara Cohen, Daily Mail, 25 March 2009

Primary schools could ditch traditional lessons in favour of teaching children how to use social networking sites such as Twitter, it emerged yesterday.

In the biggest education shake-up for 20 years, pupils would no longer have to learn about the Romans, Vikings, Tudors, Victorians or the Second World War.

Instead, under the blueprint for a new primary curriculum – which was drawn up by former Ofsted chief Sir Jim Rose following a request from Children's Secretary Ed Balls – they would have to be able to master websites such as Wikipedia, as well as blogging and podcasting.

Compulsory sex education will start from five and children as young as nine will be taught to make 'informed decisions' about taking drugs and drinking alcohol.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/cj3xkx>

[< top >](#)

Pupils to study Twitter and blogs in primary schools shake-up

Polly Curtis, The Guardian, 25 March 2009

Children will no longer have to study the Victorians or the second world war under proposals to overhaul the primary school curriculum, the Guardian has learned.

However, the draft plans will require children to master Twitter and Wikipedia and give teachers far more freedom to decide what youngsters should be concentrating on in classes.

The proposed curriculum, which would mark the biggest change to primary schooling in a decade, strips away hundreds of specifications about the scientific, geographical and historical knowledge pupils must accumulate before they are 11 to allow schools greater flexibility in what they teach.

It emphasises traditional areas of learning - including phonics, the chronology of history and mental arithmetic - but includes more modern media and web-based skills as well as a greater focus on environmental education.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/dg2syq>

[< top >](#)

Parents feel excluded by children

BBC News, 23 March 2009

Many parents feel "excluded" by their children's reluctance to tell them anything about their time spent at school, suggests a survey.

The survey from the government's educational technology agency, Becta, suggests children do not like to be "hassled" by parental inquiries.

It found that 82% of parents wished they had more information about their children's school life.

Only 16% of children volunteered information about their day at school.

The involvement of parents has been highlighted as an important element of children's achievement at school.

Read more at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/education/7956017.stm

[< top >](#)

Lack of male role models a primary concern

Richard Gerver, Daily Telegraph, 22 March 2009

It was only a twist of fate that saw me teaching drama to a class of ten year olds during my undergraduate days as a favour for my girlfriend, a trainee teacher, that changed my career path and led to me spending nearly twenty years of my life working with children under the age of eleven.

It was rare for men to choose a career as a primary school teacher then and it appears that nothing has changed.

I remember telling my friends that I was thinking of a career in teaching; they all assumed I was going to teach English or PE in a secondary school. My response led to many, many raised eyebrows.

Even now when I talk to people about my career I am asked about how I had managed working with so many women. I remember in my early days in the classroom being treated strangely by some of the fathers and if it hadn't have been for the fact that my wife had worked in the same school, I am sure that some would have questioned my sexuality at least.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/d7pq2t>

[< top >](#)

The class divide is simply thriving in education

Vicki Woods, Daily Telegraph, 21 March 2009

The social engineering didn't work, did it? Nearly 12 years after that Michael Sheen lookalike was cheered into No 10 on the promise of the class war being over and every child mattering, the gap between haves and have-nots keeps widening.

I used to half-believe Tony Blair's promises – once I'd worked out that he only promised what Gordon Brown would consent to deliver. Education, education, education – surely, with a bunch of money flung around, better state schools might be one of the things they could manage?

Sadly, no. Blair delivered a Fabian Lecture in 2004 in which he boasted about how well Labour was working, educationally. He asked the audience to think back to when Britain, year after year, was always grinding along the bottom of the international league tables.

"Now our 10-year-olds are ranked third in the world in the recent assessment of reading standards," he said cheerily. "Only Sweden [is] significantly better."

Ha! In 2007, when he left office, the UK ranked 17th in literacy.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/ctborj>

[< top >](#)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

School sports & extra-curriculars on chopping block

Sean Cavanagh, Education Week, 23 March 2009

Faced with steep declines in state funding and local tax revenues, many school districts are discarding sports programs or considering painful cuts, despite the broad popularity of those activities among parents and students.

To save money—and spare individual sports from outright elimination—some districts are raising student fees, a common strategy when the economy, and school budgets, go south. Others are paring back the number of games and events, which in turn reduces travel and other expenses.

One indication of the depth of cuts can be found in the results of a new nationwide survey of school leaders by the American Association of School Administrators.

While the survey did not ask about reductions to sports specifically, 10 percent of school leaders reported having scrapped some kind of extra-curricular activities in the 2008-09 academic year. But nearly triple the number, 28 percent, say they have considered cuts to extra-curriculars for next academic year.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/cjffts>

[< top >](#)

Comparing other countries' efforts to develop and support teachers

Stacy Teicher Khadaroo, Christian Science Monitor, March 24, 2009

A recent study of the professional development of teachers identified four key areas in which nations with high student achievement tend to have an advantage over the United States:

- Support for new teachers

Many countries mandate mentoring or other support for beginning teachers. In New Zealand, new teachers spend 20 percent of their time being coached. In Norway, each new teacher is paired with a teacher trained as a mentor. In Switzerland, novices meet with practice groups from other schools for peer evaluation.

- Teaching versus planning time

In most European and Asian countries, about half of a teacher's workweek, 15 to 20 hours, is spent outside the classroom – preparing lessons, meeting with students and parents, and working with colleagues. In South Korea, teachers spend up to 65 percent of their working time outside the classroom. In Japan, teachers study one another's best lessons in groups and analyze the strengths and weaknesses.

- Participation in decisions

In countries such as Finland, Sweden, and Switzerland, national curriculum is a broad framework, and school leaders and teachers work together on the details of instruction. Teachers in many nations regularly help decide on budgets and design major tests. In Hong Kong, Australia, and Singapore, teams of teachers research improvements for the curriculum and solutions to classroom problems.

- Lifelong learning

Many nations invest significantly in the ongoing improvement of teachers. In Singapore, Sweden, and the Netherlands, teachers have at least 100 hours of professional development each year. In England, teacher training has been credited with raising the portion of students meeting literacy standards from 63 percent to 75 percent over three years. In Sweden, the government pays for one university course for any teacher. For some, it also pays for a substantial portion of postgraduate education.

Read more at: <http://www.csmonitor.com/2009/0324/p11s01-ussc.html>

[< top >](#)

Learning lessons from most successful schools abroad

Stacy Teicher Khadaroo, Christian Science Monitor, March 24, 2009

Education trends from other nations are gaining cachet as political and educational leaders strive to bring American schools in line with the demands of the 21st-century global economy.

FINLAND: what underlies an education system that boasts some of the highest scores among countries on PISA – a test of reading, math, and science literacy for 15-year-olds?

No single factor can explain the students' strong showing. They grow up in a highly literate, bilingual society (Finnish and Swedish, with most learning English as well). Finns also enjoy strong governmental supports for parental leave, day care, and healthcare (in exchange for high taxes), which means that problems associated with poverty don't show up at the schoolhouse door nearly as often as in the US.

One essential element, though, is the high calibre of Finland's teaching corps, education leaders say. "We trust our teachers," says Reijo Laukkanen, head of international relations at the Finnish National Board of Education in Helsinki. "That is very important, and it's not easy to realize in all countries – the culture of trust we have in Finland."

Read article at: <http://www.csmonitor.com/2009/0324/p01s02-ussc.html>

[< top >](#)

Texas School Board Set to Vote on Challenge to Evolution

Stephanie Simon, Wall Street Journal, 23 March 2009

The Texas Board of Education will vote this week on a new science curriculum designed to challenge the guiding principle of evolution, a step that could influence what is taught in biology classes across the nation.

The proposed curriculum change would prompt teachers to raise doubts that all life on Earth is descended from common ancestry. Texas is such a huge textbook market that many publishers write to the state's standards, and then market those books nationwide.

"This is the most specific assault I've seen against evolution and modern science," said Steven Newton, a project director at the National Center for Science Education, which promotes teaching of evolution.

Read entire article: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123777413372910705.html>

[< top >](#)

Overly-involved parents can be counter-productive

Linda K. Wertheimer, Boston Globe, March 22, 2009

As the competition for college grows stiffer and the job market gets tighter, some parents are going further than in past decades to give their children an edge.

And science fairs are often the place where teachers and others see the handiwork of well-meaning yet far-too-involved parents.

In response, many schools are trying to lessen the competition, particularly in the earlier grades, and are emphasizing learning rather than a blue ribbon as the prize.

Some schools also have begun to require children to do more projects in the classroom rather than at home to eliminate the possibility of having their parents do the work.

Read article: <http://tinyurl.com/c6yb5j>

[< top >](#)

Schools Battle Student Stress with Creative Strategies: Mind-body relaxation techniques to help kids fight anxiety

Eddy Ramírez, US News, March 20, 2009

Concerned about the myriad pressures on students, more schools are training children and teenagers to cope with stress through yoga, tai chi, and other increasingly popular anxiety-fighting methods.

Besides offering relaxation training, some schools have eliminated class rankings, taken away midyear exams, imposed limits on how much homework teachers can assign, and allow students to take a "personal wellness day" off from school.

Experts say that schools are turning to relaxation training as more families experience financial hardship, which is causing students to stress out more. "People are more stressed than ever," says Marilyn Wilcher, senior director of

the Benson-Henry Institute for Mind and Body Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital. "A lot of it has been precipitated by the economic meltdown."

Read article: <http://www.usnews.com/articles/education/2009/03/20/schools-battle-student-stress-with-creative-strategies.html>

< top >

Special math classes helping kids amount to something

Steven Rosenberg, Boston Globe, March 19, 2009

It's 11 o'clock on a Sunday morning. In a storefront at a Marblehead strip mall, six students aged 10 to 12 sit at folding tables and stare at math equations handed to them moments before by their teacher. For the next two hours, they will puzzle out dozens of math problems with little assistance.

The students are among the first 35 pupils at the newest satellite branch of the Russian School of Mathematics. The school, which teaches algebra to kids as young as 5, began in founder Inessa Rifkin's Newton kitchen 12 years ago.

"We teach them to think; we don't want to explain anything," said Rifkin, who traces the school's teaching methodology to the Russian development psychologist Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky.

While teachers assess each student's learning level, students mostly work unassisted, solving problems that integrate two key branches of math - algebra and geometry. Teachers do not sit during class but move from student to student to check their progress. If a student is stuck, the teacher is allowed to give hints until they solve the problem. Students frequently stand at the board and explain their answers to the rest of the class.

Read article: <http://tinyurl.com/d2gwkj>

< top >

Obama pushes to reward great teachers

Stacy Teicher Khadaroo, Christian Science Monitor, March 18, 2009

In a major speech on education last week, President Obama echoed a call he'd made many times on the campaign trail: Reward excellent teaching with extra pay.

More pay that's based on how well they do, rather than how long they've been in the classroom, is one path he sees to improving American education. He's also called for boosting the preparation that teachers receive, creating incentives for getting good teachers into hard-to-staff schools and subjects, and finding better ways to remove ineffective teachers.

Teachers should be treated "like the professionals they are while also [being held] more accountable," Mr. Obama said. "Good teachers will be rewarded with more money for improved student achievement, and asked to accept more responsibilities for lifting up their schools."

Read article: <http://www.csmonitor.com/2009/0318/p13s01-ussc.html>

< top >

In Education, a Chance for Change

Gerald F. Seib, Wall Street Journal, 17 March 2009

Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner may be the Obama cabinet member facing the biggest crisis -- the economic one -- but Education Secretary Arne Duncan may be the one holding the biggest opportunity.

It is this: He inherits the best chance in a generation to really shake up an American education system that is uneven and underperforming. And he knows it.

"I see this as an extraordinary opportunity," Mr. Duncan said in an interview. "We have a couple of things going in our direction that create what I call the perfect storm for reform."

If the economy ever heals, and if Afghanistan doesn't blow up, this quest to change the way Americans educate their kids may emerge as one of the biggest dramas of the Obama term.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/clcqcn>

[< top >](#)

Educator Loss in Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths the real issue: Overall Shortage Disputed

Debra Viadero, Education Week, 11 March 2009

Two University of Pennsylvania researchers are questioning a basic tenet of national efforts to enhance U.S. economic competitiveness: the idea that colleges and universities are producing too few mathematics and science teachers to meet the demand in the nation's classrooms.

"I admit I'm being heretical," said Richard M. Ingersoll, a professor of education and sociology at the university. "But it's not that we're producing too few math and science teachers. It's that we're losing too many."

Mr. Ingersoll and his research partner, David Perda, calculate that colleges and universities are producing 2½ times more math and science teachers than schools require to replace those who are retiring.

Dissatisfaction topped the list of reasons for leaving their jobs that teachers gave on federal surveys that were examined in a recent study.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/clwf33>

[< top >](#)

Plagiarism in the Internet Age

Rebecca Moore Howard and Laura J. Davies, Educational Leadership, March edition 2009

Many teachers see plagiarism as a simple, black-and-white issue. Teachers often bring up the topic at the beginning of a research paper unit, discuss it in one classroom period, and never say the word plagiarism again unless students are caught copying, when this term is dragged out once more to accuse and punish the guilty.

Teachers warn students not to copy—or else—and present them with citation guides and the trinity of techniques to write using others' research without plagiarizing: quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing.

The onus then falls on the students, who are expected to use these techniques well, assuming that they know how to do so.

In an age when students gravitate to online sources for research—and when tremendous amounts of both reputable and questionable information are available online—many have come to regard the Internet itself as a culprit in students' plagiarism. Some teachers go so far as to forbid students from researching online, in the mistaken assumption that if students are working from hard-copy sources only, the problem will disappear.

Read entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/c57vqb>

[< top >](#)

VIETNAM

Kindergarten kids learn gender equality

VietNamNet Bridge, 24 March 2009

Five-year-old Yen is pretending to be a traffic policewoman, directing her classmates in imaginary cars through an intersection, while in another corner of the kindergarten in Me town a boy plays with plastic dishes and a toy stove.

Le Thi Nuong, the teacher at the school in Gia Vien District in Ninh Binh Province, tells the class that Yen is a capable traffic officer, despite the job being traditionally associated with men rather than women.

The kindergarten teacher has been trained through a programme on gender equality launched early last year in the province. It is actually the second phase of an older project run by the Institute for Reproductive and Family Health (RaFH) and funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC).

Activities for children aged 4 and 5 have been organised in 14 communes. The teachers integrate gender equality into their daily classes. Toys have also been provided for the children that are useful in exploring gender stereotypes.

Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/d5eemz>

< top >



ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

- Australian Education Digest : <http://www.acsso.org.au/aed.htm> (weekly)
- International News Roundup : <http://www.acsso.org.au/roundup.htm> (monthly)
- Values Education : <http://www.valuesineducation.org.au/news.htm> (monthly)
- Languages Education : <http://www.languageseducation.com/news.htm> (monthly)
- Ensemble - Music Education : <http://www.ensemble.org.au/news.htm> (monthly)
- Public Education Voice : <http://www.acsso.org.au/pev.htm> (quarterly)
- Family School Partners : http://www.familyschool.org.au/?page_id=6 (quarterly)

Do you know of an event or resource that schools should know about? Email us at letters@acsso.org.au

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