



"*Hot Topics in US-China Education*" is a free, bi-weekly 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 topics covered in this service include 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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**March 18, 2005**

## **I. Teachers and Teaching**

### 1. [TestPrepReview.com](http://TestPrepReview.com)

This website was created to provide free practice test questions for students in a variety of career situations. The site contains a modular approach to learning the content on these exams, including information that will help you get maximum value from your testing experience.

### 2. [Chinese Schoolteachers will Integrate Science Fiction into Language Teaching](#)

It is believed that reading science fiction will help children develop their love for science, rationality, and creativity as well as their language proficiency. Beijing Normal University has established the first masters program in science fiction and trains future teachers to integrate science fiction into language teaching.

## **II. Learners and Learning**

### 1. [Phonemic Awareness: What Does it Mean? A 2003 update](#)

Over the past two decades, but particularly in the last 10 years, there has been a burgeoning consensus about the critical importance of phonemic awareness to beginning reading success, and about its role in specific reading disability or dyslexia.

### 2. [How Are the Kids?](#)

"Forget the reformers and statistics that clutter today's education beat. Reporters need to look inside the classroom. We have no dropouts!" Robert Kimball declared in a sarcastic e-mail to his boss, the principal of Houston's Sharpstown High School, in November 2002. Sharpstown had just reported that none of its 1,650 students had left without graduating or transferring elsewhere, and the assistant principal could not believe the math. "Amazing! We go from 1,000 freshmen to less than 300 seniors with no dropouts."

### 3. [Less Interest in Extracurricular Reading among Students in Higher Grades](#)

According to a survey in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, many primary school students love reading books outside of class, especially canons. Results indicate that 56.1% of the third graders like extracurricular reading compared to the 46% of the fifth graders. It was concluded that students are challenged with more course work in higher grades and parents also tend to reduce their extracurricular readings.

## III. Leaders and Leadership

### 1. [The New School Spirit](#)

If the past two decades have been an era of religious revival in America--what some observers have called the fourth Great Awakening in the nation's history--the predominantly secular world of U.S. higher education seems at first glance to have been remarkably untouched by the spirit of the times.

### 2. [Education Investment becomes the Central Concern on the C.P.P.P.C](#)

On March 6th, at the meeting of Education Commission of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, education investment became the central concern for the commission members. They suggested government support to enhance the financial input on basic education.

### 3. [About 40,000 Primary Schools and Middle Schools were Closed in 2004](#)

In 2004, 31,700 primary schools and 973 middle schools were closed. Closing was primarily the result of reduced population of children of school age. According to the Ministry of Education, there were 394,200 primary schools and 63,800 middle schools in China in 2004.

## IV. Curriculum

### 1. [Languages expand learning](#)

Despite budget cuts, Dearborn Schools continues to offer foreign languages so students can better compete in the college admissions process. For the past two years, Dearborn Schools have surveyed parents of fifth-grade students to determine their support for the district's foreign language offerings.

### 2. [Textbooks Published in Other Countries are not Allowed to be Used in the Curriculum Development at the Stage of Compulsory Schooling](#)

The Chinese Ministry of Education requires every school to choose textbooks that are listed in the published "Index of Textbooks in Compulsory Education in 2005." The Ministry of Education updates and publishes this index every year. Textbooks published in other countries are not allowed in the new curriculum.

## V. Family and Community

### 1. [The Easy Child System: Special Software for the ADD/ADHD Child by Leland Ancier](#)

Raising children in today's high-stress world is a challenging endeavor, to say the least. Parents face difficult situations every day, and many have spent hours actively looking for training, experience, or tools to help become more effective parents.

## 2. Teach Your Children To Love To Read

There is a theory that adults who have become lifelong readers probably began by reading series of books when they were children. With a self-set goal to "read every book in an entire series," a child gifts himself or herself with reading practice – practice that encourages the brain's transition from processing only at the word-word-word level to processing that flows, enabling the imagination to create scene, characters, plot, without conscious attempts to focus and find meaning.

## 3. Parents and Their Children can Encourage Each Other

It is suggested that parents learn from their children and try to establish positive modeling experiences for their children.

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