

Synopsis of Courses regarding Present Education Trends

1. Reflections on USA education

Overview: Determinants of decline of USA with particular reference and examination of education system. Evaluation of recent international reports (OECD Pisa Study 2007 and UNICEF Child Poverty in Perspective 2007). Ingredients for improving education in USA - description of the problem, includes comparative student achievement ratings, dropout rates; underlying causes, includes closed bureaucracies, ineffective standardized student testing, ill-spent education spending, treatment of teachers, insipid and ineffective curriculum, ignoring research; consequences, includes low production of scientists and engineers, waning economic competitiveness, teacher wastage. Downward trends in the USA with respect to its global share of science, technology, engineering and mathematics expertise. USA share of expertise decreasing significantly, both at the bachelor's and at the PhD levels. Indications of the types of practices that need to be implemented. For example: a) teachers need to be empowered; b) education to become a cooperative venture between parent and teacher; c) schools become community based; d) the elimination of tests particularly for pre-high school students; e) remove school districts and layers of bureaucracy; f) invest in music and art.

Syllabus: Introduction, OECD - Pisa Study 2007, Bad news - USA students' scores worsen and USA down in global table, USA – General, UNICEF Child poverty in perspective (2007), The interview that will not be published!, Improving education in California, USA Industrial Leadership.

2. Reflections on UK education

Overview: Determinants of decline of UK with particular reference and examination of education system. "The Independent" leading article, "An oppressive system that is failing our children." Evaluation of recent international reports (OECD Pisa Study 2007 and UNICEF Child Poverty in Perspective 2007). Responsibility of administrators. UK – Stressed out young children. Ignoring ministers is secret of a primary school's success. Ingredients for improving education in UK - description of the problem, includes comparative student achievement ratings, dropout rates; underlying causes, includes closed bureaucracies, ineffective standardized student testing, ill-spent education spending, treatment of teachers, insipid and ineffective curriculum, ignoring research; consequences, includes low production of scientists and engineers, waning economic competitiveness, teacher wastage. Indications of the types of practices that need to be implemented. For example: a) teachers need to be empowered; b) education to become a cooperative venture between parent and teacher; c) schools become community based; d) the elimination of tests particularly for pre-high school students; e) remove school districts and layers of bureaucracy; f) invest in music and art. How Europe compares – France, Italy, Germany, Finland: and other countries New Zealand, Venezuela.

Syllabus: "The Independent" Leading article, Comments, OECD - Pisa Study 2007, UNICEF Child poverty in perspective (2007), UK Education worsens, UK – Stressed out young children, Ignoring ministers is secret of a primary school's success, Improving UK education, Personal Note, How Europe compares.

3. Evaluation of education achievement in developed countries

Overview: Examination and evaluation of two recent comprehensive international studies provide valuable information as ways in which to optimize students' wellbeing and learning. Indications of ingredients of successful outcomes, and otherwise, of different education policies. Countries that succeed and countries that fail. Detailed descriptions of administrative structures of Finland and New Zealand. Comparisons of some of the main countries in Europe – France, Italy and Germany. Examination of possible solutions for improving education in countries (for example UK and USA) that are failing their children. Are there phases and stages of development that are universal? Examination of strategies for optimizing students' wellbeing and learning. Optimizing relationship between content, methodology and stages of growth.

Syllabus: Two Recent Comprehensive Studies, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), UNICEF Report (Report Card 7) 2007. Solutions for improving education. Descriptions of administrative structures.

4. Future of USA Industrial Leadership

Overview: Downward trends in the USA with respect to its global share of science, technology, engineering and mathematics expertise. USA share of expertise decreasing significantly, both at the bachelor's and at the PhD levels. Examples - Engineering & Science Degrees as % of all Bachelor Degrees, Student Achievement in Math & Science - USA Relative Rank (percentile) v Other Countries, Arnold Toynbee, Implementing policies for successful outcomes, Indications of the types of practices that need to be implemented. For example: a) teachers need to be empowered; b) education to become a cooperative venture between parent and teacher; c) schools become community based; d) the elimination of tests particularly for pre-high school students; e) remove school districts and layers of bureaucracy; f) invest in music and art.

Syllabus: USA share of this expertise is decreasing significantly, both at the bachelor's and at the PhD levels, USA Students; Math & Science Proficiency, Comments, public at large realize that there is a crisis, What needs to be done?

5. Evaluation of OECD Pisa Study 2007 (November)

Overview: International study is produced by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), published every three years. PISA rankings, based on tests taken by 400,000 students in 57 countries, attempt to measure the attainment of pupils in different education systems. First administered in 2000 to cover reading, math and science, each study focuses in depth on one of these subjects. The 2006 study emphasised science covering concepts in physics, chemistry, biology and earth and space science. UK schools down in global table, USA students' scores worsen and USA down in global table,

Syllabus: detailed examination of report. UK schools down in global table, USA students' scores worsen and USA down in global table, Comments.

6. Evaluation of UNICEF "Child poverty in perspective" 2007

Overview: Child wellbeing in rich countries. Comprehensive assessment of the lives and wellbeing of children and adolescents in the economically advanced nations. True measure of a nation's standing is how well it attends to its children - their health and safety, their material security, their education and socialization, and their sense of being loved, valued, and included in the families and societies into which they are born. Measures and compares child well-being under six different headings or dimensions: material well-being, health and safety, education, peer and family relationships, behaviours and risks, and young people's own subjective sense of well-being - draws upon 40 separate indicators relevant to children's lives and children's rights. Evaluation of UK and USA rankings.

Syllabus: Categories - Overview, Comments - Overview, Students speak, UK Education - present correspondence.

7. Neurotransmitters, music and all that stuff

Overview: Research indicating importance of music with regard to child development. Involvement of brain circuits, current scientific imaging techniques, amusical individuals, nerve pathways requiring neurotransmitter called dopamine, music involvement and IQ scores, relationship of music and intelligence, music education in Finland, academic success of Finnish students in international league tables, El Sistema in Venezuela, measurable economic returns from music education.

Syllabus: Life without music for some, Pleasures heard in Xanadu, Neurotransmitters deliver both the music and the high, WER Viewpoint, Finland and Music, Organic Composition, 'Good for the Brain', Music Education in Finland, Music in Venezuela.