

EDUCATION

Updates

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ASIA & PACIFIC

Singapore: Education should reflect real world—Singapore Minister [Today Singapore]. Singapore's education system should, as far as possible, reflect the real world that our children are going to grow up and live in, Education Minister Ong Ye Kung said, adding that is why the Government is making changes to take the emphasis away from just academic grades. The Minister said academic grades cannot be the be-all and end-all of education, which is why the authorities are make changes to the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) scoring system.

Indonesia: Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education launches e-learning system to provide higher learning opportunities [GESS Indonesia]. The Online Learning System (SPADA) would allow Indonesians all over the country access to education. An announcement made by the Ministry highlighted its Online Learning System (SPADA) to provide Indonesians access to higher education all over the country. SPADA Indonesia has a total of 4,829 online and open course modules are available online. Additionally, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Cultures Directorate for Teacher and Education Staffers, SPADA has developed 1,268 modules for 53 e-learning or hybrid courses for the Teachers' Profession course (PPG).

Australia: Boys need domestic abuse education [Education HQ Australia]. Serena Williams says the conversation about stopping domestic abuse shouldn't just centre around women, but men as well. Education about domestic abuse should start when men are young boys. "I think expanding the conversation to men and expanding the conversation to young boys, it's so important. This is a human rights issue. We should all be treated the same. We should be treated equal. With domestic abuse, it doesn't care what colour you are and what background you're from". The 23-time Grand Slam singles champion is the ambassador for Allstate's Purple Purse foundation, which aims to help stop domestic abuse and what it calls the financial abuse that can accompany such relationships.

Australia: Review of smartphone use in NSW schools [Education HQ Australia]. Technology has been touted as the future of New South Wales classrooms but some parents and teachers are concerned it's distracting students and leading to a rise in cyberbullying. NSW Education Minister Rob Stokes on Thursday ordered a review of the use of smartphones in schools following concerns from parents. "While smartphones connect us to the world in ways never imagined just a decade ago, they raise issues that previous generations have not had to deal with," Stokes said in a statement. Former St Paul's Catholic College principal Mark Baker, who banned the use of mobile phones in the Manly school's classrooms, insists the review needs to go further and look at the impact and appropriateness of technology in schools.

AFRICA & MIDDLE-EAST

Egypt: An end to Old Open Education program in Egypt [Egypt Today]. Only two years left for all students to graduate from the Old Open Education program in Egypt after the decision of the Supreme Super Council to abolish the old system. The Old Open Education program faced many problems before it was removed as a result of numerous objections raised by trade unions and society, as well as the Higher Council of Universities' study; the latter had stressed the need to solve the old system and to start the new system.

AMERICAS

United States of America: Boys' Interest in STEM Careers Declining [US News]. Twenty-four percent of boys want a STEM career, down from 36 percent last year, indicating a more general trend of declining interest in STEM. The Junior Achievement USA and Ernst & Young survey of 13-to-17-year-old students highlights how teens' career choices, educational priorities and economic outlook shifted over a year and how they vary by gender. According to the survey, while boys' interest in STEM dropped by 12 percentage points, girls' interest remained unchanged at 11 percent both years. 52 percent said the main reason young people don't pursue STEM college degrees is because they believe those fields are "too hard."

EUROPE

Germany: BiBB Congress: Learning for the Future. VET of Tomorrow— Expertise Innovations.

Dr Hazri bin Haji Kifle, Director, Department of Planning, Development and Research, and Dr Chin Wei Keh, Director & Chief Executive Officer at the Institute of Brunei Technical Education attended the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BiBB) Congress 2018 in Berlin, Germany on 7—8 June 2018. High on the VET agenda worldwide is the promotion of work-based learning. This seems to represent a silver bullet for quite a number of educational and economic challenges, such as the transition of young people from school to the world of work. The issue of vocational education and training as an investment and the question as to how VET can be financed in a sustainable way are extremely relevant. Research outcomes regarding the cost benefit ratios of company-based training are an area of interest. Within German context, these provide a good explanation of why German companies are motivated to offer apprenticeships. In other national contexts, these tried-and-tested models and instruments need further adaptation. Digitalization, epitomized in terms such as Industry 4.0 or smart factory, is changing the world of work and the qualification requirements for skilled labor. IT competence plays a key role in virtually all areas of employment. Therefore, it might be the right moment to question whether it is still appropriate to differentiate between “blue collar” and “white collar” workers. As technical requirements become more demanding, a considerable degree of significance is being attached to further vocational training within the scope of lifelong learning. Learning will be increasingly IT-supported, and new didactic concepts and pedagogical approaches are possible. However, there is a demand for teachers and company-based trainers who have the necessary expertise to instigate successful digitalized learning environment at schools and firms. Lastly, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) will need additional support in developing and implementing their own strategies towards digitalization.

Finland: Eight reasons Finland’s education system puts the US model to shame [Independent UK].

Nordic country’s repeated success in national education rankings means there are at least a few lessons others can learn: 1. Competition isn’t as important as cooperation; 2. Teaching is one of the most-respected

professions; 3. Finland listens to the research; 4. Finland isn’t afraid to experiment; 5. Playtime is sacred; 6. Kids have very little homework; 7. Preschool is high-quality and universal and 8. College tuition is free.

United Kingdom: Private schools that misrepresent disability enrolments could face fraud charges [Guardian UK].

Private schools that misrepresent disability enrolments could face fraud charges, the deputy head of the education department has warned. The government’s allocation of per-student disability funding came under fire from the Catholic school sector this week, with the Victorian director of the Catholic Education Commission, Stephen Elder, claiming independent schools were “raking in millions” from the scheme because of “subjective teacher assessments” of students.

UNESCO

Forty percent don’t access education in a language they understand [UNESCO].

A new paper by UNESCO’s Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM Report) reports that 40% of the global population does not access education in a language they understand. The policy paper argues that being taught in a language other than their own can negatively impact children’s learning, especially for those living in poverty. Learning improves in countries that have invested in bilingual programmes. In Guatemala, students in bilingual schools have lower repetition and dropout rates. They also have higher scores in all subject areas. Children in Ethiopia who participated in bilingual programmes for eight years improved their learning in subjects across the curriculum. The paper has key recommendations to ensure that children are taught in a language they understand: 1. At least six years of mother tongue instruction is needed so that gains from teaching in mother tongue in the early years are sustained; 2. Education policies should recognize the importance of mother tongue learning; and 3. Teachers need to be trained to teach in two languages and to understand the needs of second-language learners.

Sources:

- Education HQ Australia
- Egypt Today
- Dr Hazri Kifle
- Independent UK
- Dr Chin Wei Keh
- Guardian UK
- Today Singapore
- UNESCO
- GESS Indonesia