Hot topics

GERM: Global Education Reform Movement
Including high stakes testing


“The authors persuasively argue that the present cascade of reforms to public education is a consequence of a larger intention to shrink government.” – Publisher website.


“Contributors … explore the unintended effects of the charter school experiment over the past two decades, and conclude that charter schools are entering a new phase of their development, beginning to serve purposes significantly different from those originally set out for them.” – Back cover.


“This essential introduction includes a detailed history of the charter movement, an analysis of the politics and economics driving the movement, documentation of actual student outcomes, and alternative images of transforming public education to serve all children.” – Publisher website.

Children of the core by Kris L Nielsen. USA: Kris L Nielsen, 2013. 371.26 NIE

“The Common Core State Standards have been lauded as one of the most revolutionary ways to close the achievement gaps in reading and math, make our country competitive in the world economy, and equalize the playing field for all our students in public K-12 schools. The reality is much different from the promises.” – Back cover.


“Corporate reform is not reform at all. Instead, it is the systematic destruction of the foundational American institution of public education … This book investigates and exposes the handful of people and institutions that are often working together to become the driving force behind destroying the community public school.” – Back cover.


Contents: A short history of high-stakes testing – The prevalence and many forms of cheating -- Excluding students from education by design and by neglect -- States cheat too! -- What happens to validity when indicators are distorted and corrupted -- How high-stakes testing undermines public education and the teaching profession -- We conclude that high-stakes testing provides perfect conditions for Campbell's Law to operate.


“EdSpeak is my attempt to explain in everyday language the esoteric terms, expressions, and buzzwords used in U.S. education today.” – Publisher website.


“A conservative, bipartisan consensus dominates the discussion about what's wrong with our schools and how to fix them. It offers 'solutions' that scapegoat teachers, vilify unions, and impose a market mentality. But in each case, students lose. This book written by teacher-activists, speaks back to that elite consensus and offers an alternative vision of learning for liberation.” – Back cover.


“This book examines American society's shift away from democratic public values, the ensuing move toward a market-driven mode of education, and the last decade's growing social disinvestment in youth.” – Back cover.

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**GERM**


“In Education by numbers, Warwick Mansell scrutinises the whole testing regime in detail and exposes the truth of exam-driven schooling, which is corrupting our education system and leaving a generation of pupils less willing and able to think for themselves.” – Book jacket.


“Education in Britain has been transformed over the last 50 years. State education systems have expanded hugely, and levels of achievement and participation have continuously risen... This book seeks to describe and explain the patterning of change and continuity in British education, and to account for the persistence of the controversies which have accompanied it.” – Publisher website.

**Education under siege: why there is a better alternative** by Peter Mortimore. Bristol: Policy Press, 2013. 370.942 MOR

“At a time when education is considered crucial to a country’s economic success, recent UK governments have insisted their reforms are the only way to make England’s system world class. Yet pupils are tested rather than educated, teachers bullied rather than trusted and parents cast as winners or losers in a gamble for school places.” – Publisher website.


The author shows how, rather than relying on competition, choice, and external testing of students, education reforms in Finland focus on professionalizing teachers’ work, developing instructional leadership in schools, and enhancing trust in teachers and schools.

**The flat world and education: how America’s commitment to equity will determine our future** by Linda Darling-Hammond. New York: Teachers College, 2010. 379.2 DAR

“Linda Darling-Hammond brings clarity to complexity, thoughtful analysis to politically charged issues, and sound policy recommendations to the hysteria of what to do to save America’s public schools.” – Back cover.


This issue of Professional voice covers a wide range of issues related to the Global Education Reform Movement – or ‘GERM’. With an editorial overview of the GERM agenda, stories include a look at NAPLAN and assessment, collaborative teaching, class sizes and the models of reform being pursued in America and the UK.


Stephen Ball “explores the policy activities of edu-businesses, neo-liberal advocacy networks and policy entrepreneurs, and of social enterprises and ‘new’ philanthropy ... addresses the ways in which education and education policy itself are now being exported and bought and sold as profitable commodities and how entrenched problems of educational development and educational quality and access are now being addressed through ‘market solutions’. That is, by the involvement of private providers in the delivery of educational services, both independently and on behalf of the state.” – Back cover.


“This book fills a gap in the literature by focusing on globalization with regard to the rescaling of educational accountabilities, linked to international and national testing regimes and their impact. In particular, this book examines the impact and effects of this global framework in two illustrative nations: Australia and Canada.” – Publisher website.

**Go public DVD directed by James W. O’Keeffe. USA: Blue Field Productions, 2014. 90 min. DVD GOP**

Go public: a day in the life of an American school district includes “a film and interactive website about the students, teachers, staff and volunteers of the Pasadena Unified School District.” – Promotional flyer.

**If we forget history: the thirty year war against public education** by Maurie Mulheron. Revised ed. Sydney: NSWTF, 2014. 379.1 MUL

“Why is it that our public school systems in this country have been subjected to seemingly perpetual criticism and radical experimentation? What follows is a sketch, a not-too-complete history, of some of the significant milestones along this path over the last thirty to forty years. This paper attempts to put the current educational policies into an historical context.” – p. 8-9. Maurie Mulheron is President of the NSW Teachers Federation. (Eric Pearson study report)

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Ill fares the land: a treatise on our present discontents by Tony Judt. London: Penguin, 2011. 909.8 JUD

In Ill fares the land Tony Judt, one of our leading historians and thinkers, reveals how we have arrived at our present dangerously confused moment and offers the language we need to address our common needs.


“In Left back, education historian Diane Ravitch describes this ongoing battle of ideas and explains why school reform has so often disappointed. She recounts grandiose efforts to use the schools for social engineering, even while those efforts diminished the schools’ ability to provide a high-quality education for all children. By illuminating the history of education in the twentieth century, Left back points the way to reviving American schools today.” – Publisher website.


“Just as American educators, parents, and policymakers reconsider the No Child Left Behind Act and its heavy emphasis on standardized testing, Todd Farley’s Making the grades raises questions about the validity of large-scale educational assessments. His behind-the-scenes account of the for-profit testing industry is provocative, hilarious, and instructive.” – Back cover.

More than a score: the new uprising against high-stakes testing edited by Jesse Hagopian; foreword by Diane Ravitch; introduction by Alfie Kohn; afterward by Wayne Au. Chicago, ILL: Haymarket Books, 2014. 371.26 MOR

“The myths of standardized tests: why they don’t tell you what you think they do Phillip Harris, Bruce M Smith and Joan Harris. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011. 371.26 HAR

“In friendly, accessible prose, the authors examine – and explode – each of the assumptions that underlies standardized testing. The more you learn about the tests themselves, as well as how the results are interpreted and used, the more skeptical you become.” – Alfie Kohn (Back cover).


“This book, written from an Australian perspective, explores previous outside policy interest in the Nordic nations and outlines some lessons which the English-speaking world, in particular, can learn now from the achievements of the four main Nordic European nations.” – Publisher website.


“Passed on gives us an honest portrayal of what teachers and students are up against in poor, failing American schools today, and provides a much-needed front-line perspective in the current school reform debates.” – Publisher website.

Passing the test: the false promises of standardized testing edited by Marita Moll. Ottowa, Ont: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2004. 371.2 PAS

“In recent years, and without much public scrutiny, large-scale testing projects have become firmly established in Canada and around the world. These tests are now self-perpetuating industries.” – Back cover.


“This powerful collection from the groundbreaking Rethinking schools magazine takes high-stakes standardized tests to task.” – Back cover.


“The book raises the question of whether PISA’s dominance in the global educational discourse runs the risk of engendering an unprecedented process of worldwide educational standardisation for the sake of hitching schools more tightly to the bandwagon of economic efficiency, while sacrificing their role to prepare students for independent thinking and civic participation.” – Publisher website.

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"In Politics, policies and pedagogies in education Bob Lingard provides critical sociological engagement with the politics of education. The focus is education policy and the impact of globalization." – Back cover.


"In this book, I show that the schools are in crisis because of persistent, orchestrated attacks on them and their teachers and principals, and attacks on the very principle of public responsibility for public education." – Introduction.

Setting the record straight: responses to misconceptions about public education in the U.S. by Gerald W Bracey. 2nd ed. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2004. 371.01 BRA

The teacher wars: a history of America’s most embattled profession by Dana Goldstein. New York: Doubleday, 2014. 370.973 GOL

"In her groundbreaking history of 175 years of American education, Dana Goldstein finds answers in the past to the controversies that plague our public schools today." – Publisher website.


“… the country’s magic educational ingredients … include a highly motivated cohort of well-trained teachers, a recognition of the vital importance of early years education and nurture, functional and inviting learning environments, and a rejection of pedagogical dogma in favour of developing methodologies that produce results at the same time as fostering students’ confidence and collegiality.” – Publisher website.


“In 2008, all students in [years 3, 5, 7 and 9] have been subjected to hastily developed standardised tests, which are educationally problematic. Globally, standardised tests in education have become high stakes. Standardised tests perform an accountability function of serving the neo-liberal aims of shrinking the allocation from the public purse to education whilst consolidating centralised control of curriculum and pedagogy.” – Introduction, p. 5. (Eric Pearson study report)


“This is the definitive and compelling story of New Zealand school self-management over more than two decades. Cathy Wylie explores the paths taken and the growing tensions of a system that left too much to chance.” – Back cover.

Who’s afraid of the big bad dragon?: why China has the best (and worst) education system in the world by Yong Zhao. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2014. 370.951 ZHA

“Born and raised in China’s Sichuan province and a teacher in China for many years, Zhao has a unique perspective on Chinese culture and education. He explains in vivid detail how China turns out the world’s highest-achieving students in reading, math, and science – yet by all accounts Chinese educators, parents and political leaders hate the system and long to send their kids to western schools.” – Dust jacket.

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