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## EDITORIAL

**Christopher H. Tienken, Editor**  
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### By The Numbers

Many educators probably spend a fair amount of time reading. There are a seemingly endless number of memos from state education bureaucrats, the daily inflow of work related emails, and the host of armchair edu-journals. I have been trying to enlarge my literature choices during the past few years and the summer months always seem like a good time to add another selection to an already overcrowded night stand.

Several years ago I started reading *Foreign Policy*, *Foreign Affairs*, anything from the Center for Economic and Policy Research, Nouriel Roubini's *Econmonitor* blog, *Harvard Business Review*, *Entrepreneur* magazine, and *Harpers* magazine. The foreign policy and economics literature is especially helpful to understand the macro-economic environment and how that environment is pushing market/corporate reforms into education. With all due respect to those that think education achievement on international or national assessments has a direct impact on the largest economies in the world, they really need to read more about industrial policy. That is what makes economies move, not your students' state or international test scores.

The *Harvard Business Review* and *Entrepreneur* magazine drive home the point that a one-size fits all, static national curriculum enforced with a national test is not going to engender innovation, creativity, socially conscious problem solving, resilience, persistence, motivation, empathy, and drive to succeed. *Harpers* magazine covers a wide range of topics from the economy to the arts, but it is the *Harpers Index* that I like most. The monthly feature presents interesting data-bytes that always make me think. So to pay homage to one of my favorite reads I put together an index of not-so-random statistics to perhaps jumpstart some more summer reading.

### Stats

1. United States ranking on the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) of 142 countries during the last 17 years (World Economic Forum, 1995-2012):

- |             |                                |
|-------------|--------------------------------|
| ○ 2011-12 5 | ○ 2002-03 2                    |
| ○ 2010-11 4 | ○ 2001-02 1                    |
| ○ 2009-10 2 | ○ 2000-01 2                    |
| ○ 2008-09 1 | ○ 1999-00 2                    |
| ○ 2007-08 1 | ○ 1998-99 2                    |
| ○ 2006-07 6 | ○ 1997-98 3                    |
| ○ 2005-06 1 | ○ 1996-97 3                    |
| ○ 2004-05 2 | ○ 1995-96 4                    |
| ○ 2003-04 2 | ○ Average rank: 2.4 out of 142 |

2. US rank of researchers per 1,000 employed: 4<sup>th</sup> behind Sweden, Japan, and Singapore (Atkinson & Andes, 2009). China ranked 19<sup>th</sup> behind countries such as Poland and Ireland.
3. US rank of the world's share of scientific and technical publications: 2<sup>nd</sup> behind Sweden. China ranked 21<sup>st</sup> (Atkinson & Andes, 2009).
4. US 2011 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) ranking: 1<sup>st</sup>
  - China: 2<sup>nd</sup>
  - India: 3<sup>rd</sup>
  - Japan: 4<sup>th</sup>
  - Germany: 5<sup>th</sup>
  - Russia: 6<sup>th</sup>
  - Brazil: 7<sup>th</sup>

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA, 2012)
5. US per capita (per person) GDP rank: 12<sup>th</sup>, \$48,100  
China: 120<sup>th</sup> 8,400 (CIA, 2012)
6. US GDP per working age adult ages 25-64 rank: 1<sup>st</sup>, \$89,422 (Atkinson & Andes, 2009)
7. Number one reason given for nationalizing and centralizing the curriculum and assessment of US public schools via the unproven Common Core State Standards and national testing: Global competitiveness. Really?
8. Poverty line threshold for a family of three in the continental United States and District of Columbia: \$19,090 (USDHHS, 2012)
9. Poverty line threshold for a family of four in the continental United States and District of Columbia: \$23,050 (USDHHS, 2012)
10. Percentage of American children under age six living at or below the poverty level: 25.8 (USCB, 2012)
11. Percentage of American children under age 18, in a single parent household headed by a female living at or below the poverty level: 45.6 (USCB, 2012)
12. Percentage of Americans ages 18-24, with no high school diploma, living in poverty: 35.3 (USCB, 2012)
13. US average life expectancy international ranking: 50<sup>th</sup> / 221 countries at 78.49 years. Monaco: 1<sup>st</sup>, 89.68 years, and Italy: 10<sup>th</sup>, 81.86 years (CIA, 2012)
14. US spending on Health Care: 2<sup>nd</sup> / 189 countries. Monaco: 145<sup>th</sup>, Italy: 135<sup>th</sup> (CIA, 2012)

15. US death rate ranking: 143<sup>rd</sup> /230 countries with 8.38 people per 1,000. Cuba 116<sup>th</sup> /230 with 7.52 people per 1,000 (CIA, 2012)
16. US infant mortality international ranking: 48<sup>th</sup>/222 countries with 5.98 infants per 1,000. Cuba 39<sup>th</sup> / 222 countries with 4.83 infants per 1,000 (CIA, 2012)
17. US ranking of education spending: 44 / 163, 5.5% of GDP. Finland: 33<sup>rd</sup>. Cuba: 2<sup>nd</sup>. Countries that spend a similar percentage of GDP (5.6%-5-3%) on education: France, Ethiopia, Great Britain, Vietnam, Ghana, South Africa, Mongolia, Saudi Arabia (CIA, 2012)
18. US ranking on the GINI Coefficient: (Distribution of income / gap in income between the richest and poorest citizens. Lower ranking means a more equitable distribution of income a smaller gap between the richest and poorest citizens).
  - Sweden: 1
  - Finland: 11
  - USA: 94
  - Countries comparable to USA: Cameroon, Iran, Bulgaria, Jamaica, Uruguay, Guyana, and Cambodia (CIA, 2012)
19. US unemployment rate rank: 103 /200: Closer to #1 is desirable (CIA, 2012)
20. US oil production rank: 3<sup>rd</sup> behind Saudi Arabia and Russia (CIA, 2012)
21. US worldwide oil exports rank: 11<sup>th</sup>(CIA, 2012)
22. US domestic natural gas production international rank: 1<sup>st</sup> (CIA, 2012)
23. US worldwide exports rank: 2<sup>nd</sup> behind China. Overall imports: 1st, China is 2<sup>nd</sup>(CIA, 2012)
24. US illicit drug import/consumption: Number one consumer of cocaine, heroin, and marijuana (CIA, 2012)

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