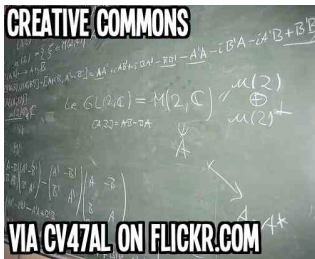


## Chinese maths teachers to help UK schools

14th March, 2014



The British government is looking to China to try to improve the standard of maths in British schools. Students in the Chinese city of Shanghai have the highest international test results according to a global testing agency.

There is a huge difference in numeracy levels between the UK and China. Britain's Times newspaper reports that: "The children of cleaners in Shanghai outperform those of UK doctors and lawyers in global maths tests." To attempt to rectify this situation, the UK government will hire 60 of Shanghai's best maths teachers. It is part of a new initiative called the National Numeracy Challenge, which aims at improving the mathematics ability of one million British students.

The UK government said it was shocked that Britain lagged far behind many countries in maths. It warned that poor numeracy is costing the country's economy up to \$30 billion a year. Britain's education minister Elizabeth Truss, who recently returned from a fact-finding mission in China, stated: "We have some brilliant maths teachers in this country but what I saw in Shanghai and other Chinese cities has only strengthened my belief that we can learn from them." She added: "They have a can-do attitude to maths and I want us to match that, and their performance." She said: "Good maths qualifications have the greatest earnings potential and provide the strongest protection against unemployment."

Sources: BBC / Telegraph / TES.com

## Writing

Compare and contrast maths and English in terms of career prospects.

## Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

improve / standard / test results / numeracy / outperform / rectify / initiative / ability / shocked / lagged far behind / economy / fact-finding mission / brilliant / protection

## True / False

- Shanghai students are the world's best at maths. T / F
- Britain is just behind China in international test score tables. T / F
- Chinese children do better at maths than British doctors and lawyers. T / F
- The UK wants to employ 600 maths teachers from China. T / F
- Poor competence in maths costs the UK economy up to \$30bn a year. T / F
- Britain's education minister said Chinese maths teachers were the best. T / F
- The minister said Chinese students have a never-say-die attitude. T / F
- Good maths qualifications greatly help employment opportunities. T / F

## Synonym Match

- |               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| 1. improve    | a. trailed   |
| 2. standard   | b. do better |
| 3. huge       | c. cautioned |
| 4. outperform | d. quality   |
| 5. initiative | e. gifted    |
| 6. lagged     | f. income    |
| 7. warned     | g. better    |
| 8. brilliant  | h. equal     |
| 9. match      | i. enormous  |
| 10. earnings  | j. scheme    |

## Discussion – Student A

- Is maths less important now we have computers?
- How would a better ability in maths improve your life?
- Do you calculate in your head or on your mobile phone?
- What were your maths teachers like?
- What do you have a can-do attitude for?
- Do maths qualifications help you get better jobs?
- What's the most difficult thing about maths?
- What questions would you like to ask a maths expert?

## Phrase Match

- |                               |                               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. improve the                | a. in numeracy levels         |
| 2. according                  | b. numeracy                   |
| 3. There is a huge difference | c. initiative                 |
| 4. outperform those           | d. belief                     |
| 5. It is part of a new        | e. to a global testing agency |
| 6. Britain lagged             | f. finding mission            |
| 7. poor                       | g. potential                  |
| 8. a fact-                    | h. standard of maths          |
| 9. strengthened my            | i. far behind                 |
| 10. the greatest earnings     | j. of UK doctors              |

## Discussion – Student B

- Did you like studying maths at school?
- How important is it to be good at maths?
- What are you good at and not so good at in maths?
- What do you think of Britain hiring Chinese maths teachers?
- How are you at mental arithmetic?
- Why are Chinese students so good at maths?
- Is maths more important than English?
- Describe a time you really needed maths to do something.

## Spelling

- improve the rdaasdtn of maths
- igdcocnar to a global testing agency
- UK doctors and ealrwys
- ifrtocy this situation
- part of a new eitainvti
- the ahtmescatmi ability
- Britain lgeadg far behind
- returned from a fact-finding nssiimo
- They have a can-do uatidtte
- Good maths gtiuisniafcoal
- have the greatest signaren potential
- protection against ynpemnumoetl

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. d	3. i	4. b	5. j
6. a	7. c	8. e	9. h	10. f

## Role Play

### Role A – Maths

You think maths is the best qualification to have when job-hunting. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them about potential problems with their qualifications. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): English, computer coding or engineering.

### Role B – English

You think English is the best qualification to have when job-hunting. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them about potential problems with their qualifications. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): maths, computer coding or engineering.

### Role C – Computer coding

You think computer coding is the best qualification to have when job-hunting. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them about potential problems with their qualifications. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): English, maths or engineering.

### Role D – Engineering

You think engineering is the best qualification to have when job-hunting. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them about potential problems with their qualifications. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): English, computer coding or maths.

## Speaking – Careers

Rank these with your partner. Put the ones that will best help people find a job at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                   |               |
|-------------------|---------------|
| • maths           | • history     |
| • English         | • engineering |
| • computer coding | • art         |
| • physics         | • woodwork    |

### Answers – True False

a	T	b	F	c	T	d	F	e	T	f	F	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.