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A Lesson from the London Riots: Support New Teachers

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When one takes a close look at the faces behind the riots and civil unrest wreaking havoc on the United Kingdom, one sees the young, the angry, and the idle. An 11-year-old accompanied by his mother to court, a 15-year old orphan, countless teens fueled by discontent. They are the faces of a generation that society has failed.

While many attribute this mass pandemonium to class struggle, it is a lack of education that deserves a place at the top of the list. Just last year, 36 local councils (regional governing bodies) in the UK received the maximum budget cuts of 8.9 percent, with a 4.4 percent average across 350 councils. The effects of these cuts run deep and impact living standards across the board, from social programs to education. Without the values and individual empowerment that result from a quality education, any society is lost.

In the US, we will face a similar fate if we don't make education of our youth a top priority. Education reform starts with recruiting, supporting and retaining quality teachers. No investment is more worthwhile than this; we cannot lose sight of it as politicians quarrel over balancing budgets, and global share prices continue to plunge.

While there are no quick answers, we must retain our newly trained teachers. The attrition rate for new math and science teachers in the US is over 20 percent per year. That loss is not necessary.

Resources for New Teachers

There are numerous resources available for new teachers, including the following:

- [NTchat](#) a chat on Twitter each Wednesday at 8pm Eastern/5pm Pacific.
- [Center for Teaching Quality](#) dedicated to advancing the teaching profession
- [The Educators PLN](#) a community of forward-thinking educators

- [Edutopia's New Teacher Boot Camp](#) a five-week series on learning Web 2.0 tools
- [Knowles Science Teaching Foundation](#) for new science teachers (full disclosure: I am the founder).

Please add more of your favorite resources in the comments area of this page. The results of a well-educated youth are economic growth, social stability, and personally enriched lives. If our nation fails here, our society is lost.

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