

## OF NOTE

[A Poetry Critic Stands up for the Poets](#)*Writers and Artists at Harvard*, by Helen Vendler

In this lovely little commentary, Helen Vendler, Professor of Literature and well-known poetry critic, challenges Harvard, and by extension, other reputable institutions of higher learning. She argues that the true artists and culture-builders, whose best work will outlast politicians and financiers, often possess imbalanced resumes and achievements. We all lose out by overlooking these students on the admissions end and by allowing them, on the graduate end, to be recruited by financial institutions rather than institutes that focus on building artistic or social capital. Many readers will recognize with heartache how this dilemma plays out in our college placement offices and in the chronically mixed signals we have given students in recent decades about passionate interest versus breadth of achievement. And here is the venerable Helen Vendler, admonishing Harvard to pay attention, to think again about the value placed on the well-rounded versus the angular, eccentric candidate and student. We will be inclined to give a glib thumbs up - but are we, as the old saying goes, part of the solution or part of the problem?

Peter Herzberg and Katherine Swett

The Brearley School, NY

*Harvard Magazine*, November-December 2012

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## ARTICLES, BLOGS, AND OTHER MEDIA

[Collaborating in Qatar](#)*The World Innovation Summit of Education*

The [World Innovation Summit of Education \(WISE\)](#), sponsored by the Qatar Foundation convened its fourth annual Summit last November in Doha, Qatar. Perhaps the most multi-sectored and international conversation on education, The WISE Summit brings together more than 1,000 innovators, social entrepreneurs, educators, academics, policy makers and business leaders from more than 100 countries. Although the group is in its infancy, the professional caliber of its delegates is quickly making the WISE Summit an important educational conference. One of many highlights from the well stocked WISE website is a presentation from Andreas Schleicher, Deputy Director for Education and Special Advisor on Education Policy to the OECD's Secretary-General: "[Learning in the 21st Century-Policy Lessons from Around the World](#)." Using data from OECD's PISA study, Andreas provides a sweeping and rich assessment of the current status of education globally and the characteristics of successful educational systems of the future. "The world is becoming indifferent to tradition and past reputation, unforgiving to frailty, and is ignorant to customary practice," says Schleicher, and "success is now going to those nations that are swift to adapt and open to change." He could just as well be describing where some independent schools are - and where they need to be.

Jeremy Birk, [The United Nations International School, NY](#)*World Innovation Summit for Education website*, 2012  
<http://www.wise-qatar.org/>[Warriors and Worriers](#)*Why Can Some Kids Handle Pressure While Others Fall Apart? Teaching students to manage their stress - in spite of their genes*, by Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman

Though the research cited in their article is already being challenged in the blogosphere, authors Bronson and Merryman return our attention to the ever important topic of student stress. New research proposes that encouraging students to adopt a more positive view of stress improves performance in high-pressure situations. Although there is a genetic component to our reaction to stress, individuals may have even more control over their response to pressure than studies had previously indicated. Scientists have discovered that the COMT gene is responsible for removing dopamine from the prefrontal cortex, with variations of the gene determining the speed of the removal. "Warriors" are those whose dopamine clears quickly, preparing them for an immediate response to a stressful situation such as high-stakes testing. "Worriers" clear dopamine more slowly, which allows for more complex planning - and produces more stress in response to high-pressure environments, which can result in worse performance. The good news, perhaps, is that even Worriers can remain clear-headed and calm in stressful situations, if they have experience in practicing the management of their stress.

Damaris Maclean, [Nightingale Bamford School, NY](#)*The New York Times*, February 6, 2013, Retrieved from <http://nytimes.com>.[A School that Walks the Walk](#)*A Short Intro to the Studio School*, Geoff Mulgan, TED talk

As teachers we hope that we can inspire every child in our classroom to love learning and to see it as its own reward. Unfortunately, not every student will be intrinsically, or even extrinsically, motivated to learn. How, then, do we reach these more distant students who have the potential to make contributions to society and the world? Is there something that can be done to change the way schools and classes are structured? In his "In Less Than 6 Minutes" TED talk, Geoff Mulgan explores and presents an option schools have for turning the "conventional idea of education" on its head. The Studio School is an experiential, project-based school, where students work on solving real-world problems via the curriculum. They are held to timetables of completion and guided along by teachers and coaches. The end goal, as Mulgan states, is that students work by learning and learn by working. The studio schools are currently only a United Kingdom, public education endeavor, but the implications of multi-disciplinary education for independent schools are worth considering.

The Studio School, main website: <http://www.studioschoolstrust.org/welcome>Mal Goss, Ed. M. Candidate, [The Klingenstein Center Teachers College Columbia University, NY](#)*Geoff Mulgan, TED talk, TEDGlobal 2011*[Untapped Allophilia](#)*US Plus Them*, an interview with author Todd Pittinsky

This interview with Todd Pittinsky offers a tidy way to preview ideas in his new book, *US Plus Them*, which further discusses the term *allophilia* - "the positive reaction to difference" - coined by Pittinsky. Pittinsky argues that diversity studies and mass media seem to have a vested interest in studying the negative aspects of diversity - the struggle to overcome prejudice, defamation and hatred. While nobly intended, this deficit-model approach is like studying sick patients without having enough interest in what makes them healthy. The article (and book) calls for a more scientific study of what induces and develops a predisposition and attraction to difference. It also criticizes a reliance on the notion of empathy to solve problems of "allophobia," as if this facet of EQ were the answer to all our prayers. Empathy is not enough to fill negative space with positive ions. We have to develop a more methodical, purposeful cultivation of this interest in institutions and societies where untapped *allophilia* exists. The slightly different take on diversity and political practice represents a subtle but intriguing shift of the lens.

Peter Herzberg and Jane Fried

The Brearley School, NY

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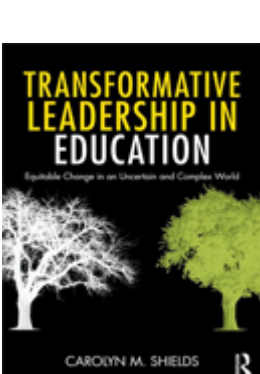
## BOOKS

[Black Sting-Ray Bikes and Pink Shirts](#)*From the Dress-Up Corner to the Senior Prom: Navigating Gender and Sexuality Diversity in PreK-12 Schools*, by Jennifer Bryan

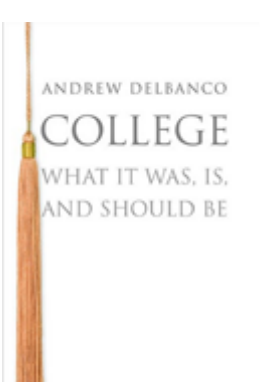
Gender and Sexuality Diversity (GSD) is more than another acronym to be learned by educators and parents. Jennifer Bryan, PhD, defines GSD as an essential "area of inquiry" for a community's understanding of Gender Identity Development (GID) and Sexual Identity Development (SID). In this inviting guide, Bryan provides insight, research, practical suggestions and thought-provoking questions. Concrete resources will empower readers to confidently and proactively initiate and guide student dialogue around topics ranging from the simple kindergarten "boy colors vs. girl colors" debate, to thornier questions surrounding media promoted gender roles, to the acceptance of peers who choose to express themselves in ways that do not conform to typically defined ideas of boy/girl constructs. The book provides a framework to help schools realize the ideal that "we are not all the same, nor are we meant to be." From that point, much important work becomes possible, including the combating of bullying, stereotyping and other problems that arise from lack of awareness of genuine diversity.

Debra Jeffreys-Glass, [Ethical Culture Fieldston School, NY](#)*Rowman & Littlefield Education*, 2012[Innovation by the Book](#)*Innovation Generation: How to Produce Creative and Useful Scientific Ideas*, by Roberta Ness, MD, MPH

In her stimulating and practical book, Dean of the University of Texas School of Public Health Roberta Ness argues that we all have the capacity for genuine innovation and that through active training and practice we can significantly increase both the quality and quantity of our creative output. Derived in part from a UT graduate course designed to boost innovative scientific thinking, the concepts and specific exercises in this book reflect both elements from existing models and entirely new approaches. Whether Ness is encouraging us to overcome our frames and biases or coaching us to become keener observers, to broaden our perspectives or even turn our perspectives on their heads, she has at the ready a bank of exercises to speed our progress and deepen our understanding. For school leaders, the promise of real innovation often proves elusive. Ness offers tools for all would-be innovators to generate more original solutions, to pose better questions and to unlock new potential for personal and organizational creativity.

Sherri Spelic, [American International School Vienna](#)*Oxford University Press*, 2012[Leadership for a Change](#)*Transformational Leadership in Education: Equitable Change in an Uncertain and Complex World*, by Carolyn M. Shields

Carolyn Shields wants to change the world, one school leader at a time. Too many of our institutions are still rooted in thinking designed to produce efficient workers for jobs that no longer exist. And too many communities compound the problem, perpetuating stereotypes and prejudices that deny equal access to a proper education. If the American education system is broken, she argues, that's because the American Dream is too, and we cannot fix one and not the other. Shields brings us powerful vignettes of educators wrestling with the volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity that characterize the problems in our schools and in the lives of students. Her stories - heroic, heart wrenching and horrifying by turns - make the case for transformative leadership. This theory of action, grounded in research, aims to change schools by reaching out to marginalized communities, replacing outdated knowledge constructs, and fighting for social justice. School leaders need to be agents of change within their communities as well as their schools. Their goal must be to educate active, engaged citizens rather than churning out personnel for the workplace.

Bill Jacob, [Brimmer and May, MA](#)*Routledge*, September, 2012[College Prep Ain't What It Used to Be](#)*College: What It Was, Is, and Should Be*, by Andrew Delbanco

This compelling read for the independent school teacher/administrator makes a case for character education, espousing the notion that our nation depends on our efforts to build and sustain "communities of learners." With record unemployment and a rapidly changing workplace, societal pressures suggest colleges should focus increasingly on job training. The emergence of for-profit institutions, like America's largest online "college", the University of Phoenix, remove the long-standing tradition of entering a college community to engage in what Delbanco calls "lateral learning" - where young people are forced to give-and-take as they clarify important questions about themselves and their world. Meanwhile, on today's college campuses, students harbor less and less reverence for the knowledge of their professors, "wondering what, in fact, is useful for what." All these shifts do not, however, mean the end of the American college. Rather, Delbanco challenges educators to refocus on the essential lessons - those of character, moral complexity, and most important, the awareness that "self-interest and public interest are not at odds, but are two names for the same thing." In light of Delbanco's discussion, the work we do in our schools is deeply significant: we must prepare students to enter meaningfully the threatened community of the American college.

David Landis, [Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School, GA](#)*Princeton University Press*: Princeton, NJ. 2012.To submit comments or suggestions, or to request that the newsletter be sent to a colleague, contact Adele Tonge, Communications Manager at [klingbrief@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:klingbrief@tc.columbia.edu).To support Klingenstein Center scholarships and program endowment, please [make your gift here](#).

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