

A notebook of short but worthy items

Learning deeply

Deeper learning entails a kind of education that most parents have not experienced and that many might not value — one that teaches students how to question assumptions, think independently, and ask hard questions about social, political, and ethical issues. Thus, at the most fundamental level, “deeper learning for all” is a challenge that has not been attempted in this country. At a time of vast and growing income and wealth inequality, coupled with unprecedented levels of residential and educational segregation and an increasingly polarized electorate, an equity agenda becomes all the more important. . . . [A]dvocates will have to be especially steadfast in their commitment to providing all children, and not just the privileged few, with meaningful opportunities to learn deeply.

— Jal Mehta and Sarah Fine, “How we got here: The imperative for deeper learning.” In R. Heller, R.E. Wolfe, & A. Steinberg (Eds.), *Rethinking Readiness: Deeper Learning for College, Work, and Life*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2017, p. 34.

Too many leaders

Everybody, it seems, wants leaders. But Susan Cain, author of *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*, cautions that organizations, colleges, and society writ large actually need more followers.

College admission officers routinely field applicants who have worked hard to assemble as many leadership positions as they reasonably can while still maintaining a sound academic record. “So now we have high school students vying to be president of as many clubs as they can. It’s no longer enough to be a member of the student council; now you have to run the school,” Cain observed.

Her worry is that this “outsize glorification of leadership” tends to attract “those motivated by the spotlight rather than by the ideas and people they serve.”

Cain points to the work of Robert Kelley, who defined “followership” in a 1988 *Harvard Business Review* article: Good followers are committed to “a purpose, principle, or person outside themselves” and are “courageous, honest, and credible.”

The lust for leadership overlooks the value of being a follower, which really means the value of contributing to a team. Cain points to soccer, “the beautiful game,” as a showcase for demonstrating the importance and the elegance of following: “the intricate ballet of patterns and passes, of each player anticipating the other’s strengths and needs, each shining for the brief instant that he has the ball before passing it to a teammate or losing it to an opponent.”

If “we seek a society of caring, creative, and committed people, and leaders who feel called to service rather than to stature, then we need to do a better job of making that clear,” she said.

Source: Cain, S. (2017, March 24). Not leadership material? Good. The world needs followers. *The New York Times*.



Weakened tenure

No Louisiana teachers have permanent job protection, according to the authors of a new study that looks at the effect of legislation that weakened tenure laws in the state.

In 2012, the Louisiana legislature decreed that teachers could only earn tenure if they were rated “highly effective” on their evaluations for five of six consecutive years. A single “ineffective” rating would revoke the grant of tenure.

Up to 1,700 public school teachers left their jobs in the two years after the change in the law. Schools with the lowest test scores experienced the highest teacher loss; the number of teachers leaving the top schools did not change. Researchers could not determine whether the leavers were effective or not.

In the 2015 PDK Poll on the Public’s Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, 59% of respondents opposed the granting of tenure versus 26% who favored it.

Source: Iasevoli, B. (2017, March 1). Study: When tenure is taken away, teachers leave. *Education Week*. http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/teacherbeat/2017/03/in_2012_the_louisiana_legislat.html

No more bullying!



The Harvard Graduate School of Education has a new initiative — One and All — and a toolkit with strategies to protect students, help them reject bullying, and build communities in which everyone thrives. One and All is part of the larger Usable Knowledge web site that HGSE launched in 2015.

As part of this initiative, One and All is posting strategies and guidance that respond to a series of questions: **What can we do to protect students who are particularly vulnerable to bullying and harassment, especially now?** How can we create a learning climate that is respectful of all viewpoints and that firmly protects the rights and dignity of every person? What can we do to encourage conversation across barriers of gender, race, identity, political views, and across difficult topics?

www.gse.harvard.edu/uk/one-and-all

Saving kids, saving teachers

“There’s a teacher right now in urban America who’s going to teach for exactly two years and he’s going to leave believing that these young people can’t be saved. So he’s going to find another career as a lawyer, get a job in the Department of Education or start a charter school network, all based on a notion about these urban youth that is flawed. And we’re going to end up in the same cycle of dysfunction that we have right now. Something’s got to give.”

— Christopher Emdin, author of *For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood . . . and the Rest of Y’all Too: Reality Pedagogy and Urban Education* (Beacon Press, 2016)

