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—*New York Times Book Review*

“Davidson is one of the most thoughtful voices from within academia calling for a more student-centered university. *The New Education* is a welcome collection of stories detailing how professors, administrators and students are designing paths through higher education that are relevant to our changing culture and society... At her best, Davidson writes in the tradition of Du Bois and Dewey, a pragmatist tradition that puts inquiry first and sees learning through the potential of the full, complex human beings students can become.”

—*Washington Post*

NEW IN PAPERBACK

THE NEW EDUCATION

How to Revolutionize the University to Prepare Students for a World in Flux

CATHY N. DAVIDSON

At 17 years and 364 days old, your parents can tell you what to do. When you wake up the next morning, they, legally, cannot. You have crossed over. In individual and social terms, the consequences of that crossing are so vast that they are constantly debated. How old do you have to be to drink? To be tried as an adult? To go to war? Sometimes it's 18, sometimes 21, and there are arguments about which age is more just. Because it matters. And not only to you, but also to your society. How you are prepared to join and perhaps lead a community, a generation, a world, matters to those who have gone before you and those who will come after. It's a pivotal moment. You are on your own.

Cathy N. Davidson has witnessed this transformation thousands of times over her long career as a college professor. Parents witness the transformation too. The child who goes off in September is not the adult who returns for Thanksgiving. As they always have, institutions of higher education are helping young people transform themselves, helping them move from dependence to independence, from childhood to adulthood. College is good at that. But as Davidson argues in **THE NEW EDUCATION: How to Revolutionize the University to Prepare Students for a World in Flux (Basic Books; new in paperback on May 10, 2022)**, college is no longer good at equipping graduates to succeed in an ever more complex and bewildering world. In this paperback edition, Davidson provides a **new introduction** that addresses the COVID-19 pandemic and remote learning, as well as an additional chapter that offers deep insight into ways educators and students can transform their institutions following the events of 2020-2022. Davidson further discusses the diversity of students today, including students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, of different gender and sexual identities, and returning students of every age, and how we can learn to collaborate across these differences.

The modern American university is over 150 years old. The infrastructure, curriculums, and assessment methods we have now were developed between 1860 and 1925 when an ambitious cadre of educators led by Charles Eliot, the energetic and forward-thinking young president of Harvard at the time, redesigned the Puritan college for an unfolding age of industrialization and urbanization that required managers, not ministers. They defined academic disciplines, fortifying and separating departments and divisions, majors and minors. They founded ranking and accreditation organizations that systematized and enshrined their values. They developed the educational measurements we use today: grades, bell curves, admissions exams, timed and standardized tests, etc.

As was the age of industrialization, the internet era has been marked by complex and far-reaching social, political, and economic changes wrought not by steam power and assembly line mechanization but by digitization and algorithm-based global redistribution of ideas, capital, goods, labor, and services. This is not just new technology but a new way of being that has so fully transformed the world that it's hard to grasp how much we have changed. Yet for students born after 1993, there is no "before" and "after." It's difficult for them to even comprehend what came before this technological age.

As Davidson argues, just as Eliot and others wholly remade the Puritan college, so too do we need to redesign higher education systemically and systematically, from the classroom to the board of trustees, from the fundamentals of how we teach and learn to how we measure outcomes, select, credential, and accredit in this hyper connected, precarious time. Redesigning higher education demands institutional restructuring, a revolution in every classroom, curriculum, and assessment system. It means refocusing away from the passive student to the whole person learning new ways of thinking through problems with no easy solutions. It shifts the goal of college from fulfilling requirements to learning for success in the world after college. It means testing learning in serious and thoughtful ways, so that students take charge of what and how they know, how they collaborate, how they respond to feedback, and how they grow. It teaches them how to understand and lead productively in the changing world in which they live.

From the Ivy League to community colleges, Davidson profiles innovators who are remaking college for the 21st century. We meet anthropology students at Kansas State University who have moved out of their dorms and into a retirement community to study aging. At Georgetown University, students, faculty, and even the college President are building a curriculum that breaks down the boundaries between fields and creates new ones that map to challenges students will face after graduation. And at the City University of New York, a groundbreaking program trains top doctoral students to teach at community colleges like LaGuardia Community College, where 125 first languages are spoken, preparing them for the increasing diversity of American society.

An essential, urgent book, **THE NEW EDUCATION** ultimately reveals how we can educate students not only to survive but to thrive amid the challenges to come.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Cathy N. Davidson directs the Futures Initiative at CUNY. She is the author of many books, including *Now You See It*, and has written for the *Wall Street Journal* and *Fast Company*, among others. Davidson lives in New York City.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

THE NEW EDUCATION

How to Revolutionize the University to Prepare Students for a World in Flux

By Cathy N. Davidson

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Praise for THE NEW EDUCATION

(Basic Books; new in paperback on 5/10/22)

“A visionary book.”

—**Critical Inquiry**

“The fact that Davidson is able to bridge her narrative on the history and future of higher education across a popular and academic audience is a testimony to her skills as a scholar, an educator, and a writer. Davidson knows her stuff, has something to say, and has clearly worked very hard in crafting a book that should be discussed by everyone who cares about higher education... Powerfully argued, beautifully written, and doggedly grounded in research and examples.”

—**Technology & Learning, Inside Higher Education**

“Davidson is one of the most thoughtful voices from within academia calling for a more student-centered university. *The New Education* is a welcome collection of stories detailing how professors, administrators and students are designing paths through higher education that are relevant to our changing culture and society... At her best, Davidson writes in the tradition of Du Bois and Dewey, a pragmatist tradition that puts inquiry first and sees learning through the potential of the full, complex human beings students can become.”

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—**New York Times Book Review**

“An engaging, anecdotal, wide-ranging look at educational innovation... a persuasive plea for creative learning.”

—**Kirkus Reviews**

“*The New Education* is an inspiring, well-researched, and compellingly written manifesto for a revolution in learning and teaching. It is a book for everyone who wants to understand why and how universities need to be reimagined for the 21st century—those who have been ‘educated’ and those who aspire to be. It is the most important book I have read in many years.”

—**Tony Wagner, Harvard University i-lab Expert in Residence, author of *The Global Achievement Gap and Creating Innovators***

“*The New Education* offers valuable reflections on ways educators can reexamine approaches to preparing young women and men for a rapidly evolving modern world. Grounded in decades of classroom experience and scholarly inquiry, Cathy Davidson makes a compelling case for educators to interrogate traditional structures in higher education, and help students seek, in her words, ‘a sustained and productive life.’”

—**John J. DeGioia, President of Georgetown University**

“*The New Education* compels us to equip our students with creative new tactics for navigating the volatile present. Grounded in a deep understanding of both historical and current crises in education, Davidson challenges us to reinvigorate and reconsider our approach to reform.”

—**Danah Boyd, author of *It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens***

“Cathy Davidson offers us an inspiring and lucid explanation of how we got the educational system we have and how to build the one our students and our country needs and deserves. A must read for those interested in higher education.”

—**Diana Taylor, President, Modern Language Association, and University Professor, New York University**

“*The New Education* takes a good hard look at the old education, and finds it sorely wanting. Are colleges and universities failing an entire generation of young people? Yes, argues Cathy Davidson, a renowned literary scholar and a leader in

higher education reform. This is an important, illuminating, and urgent book whose argument is driven by a deep knowledge of the past and an even deeper commitment to the future.”

—**Jill Lepore, David Woods Kemper '41 Professor of American History, Harvard University**