

Rafael Heller

EXPERTISE

writing
editing
research
policy advocacy
strategic communications
and project leadership

focusing on
early education
K-12
and higher education

EDUCATION

University of Michigan
Ph.D., English & Education, 2002

Harvard Graduate School
of Education
Ed.M., Teaching & Curriculum, 1991

Oberlin College
B.A., English, 1989

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Washington, DC 20015

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Blue Pencil Consulting

President

2007- present

Writing and editing of numerous white papers, research reports, articles, communications plans, Op Ed pieces, and other materials on behalf of dozens of education policy groups and associations, often subcontracting for leading education PR and strategic communications firms such as Widmeyer/Finn, CommunicationWorks, KSA Plus, and others.

Clients have included the Annenberg Institute, New America, National Governors Association, Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Education Writers Association, Southern Regional Education Board, Brookings Institution, International Baccalaureate, American Institutes for Research, the Library of Congress, Carnegie Corporation of New York, the W.T. Grant Foundation, the Gates Foundation, and many more.

Phi Delta Kappa, International

Editor-in-Chief, *Phi Delta Kappan* magazine

2016 - 2022

Led all aspects of magazine production, from choosing issue themes to recruiting columnists, soliciting and reviewing manuscripts, editing articles, redesigning the web site, fundraising, public relations, and hiring and supervising staff. Founded in 1916, *Kappan* is one of the nation's oldest and most well-regarded professional journals, featuring many of the most influential voices in preK-12 education.

Director, PDK Poll of the Public's Attitudes toward the Public Schools

2020 - 2022

Led the production, publication, and roll-out of a prominent national opinion poll. Sought input on topics and poll questions from a broad range of education policy experts. Published annually since 1969, the PDK Poll (originally known as the PDK/Gallup Poll) is the longest continuously running public opinion poll in the U.S., and it is widely known as a trustworthy and non-partisan source of information about Americans' beliefs about public education.

Jobs for the Future

Principal Policy Analyst

2014 - 2016

Played lead roles in national research and policy initiatives focusing on secondary school improvement (in partnership with the Hewlett Foundation and the Nellie Mae Educational Foundation), the transition from high school to college (with support from the Gates Foundation), and the assessment of college and career readiness (under contract from the U.S. Department of Education). Commissioned, edited, and published a series of white papers on high school improvement (also published as a collected volume by Harvard Education Press) by some of the nation's leading education researchers.

Alliance for Excellent Education

Senior Policy Associate

2005 - 2007

Directed the Alliance's many activities focused on improving literacy instruction in the nation's secondary schools. Duties included: writing and editing major reports (on literacy in the content areas, writing instruction, and literacy instruction for English learners), advising state education leaders, writing policy briefs, planning state summits and other events, and representing the Alliance at numerous meetings.

CommunicationWorks

Senior Associate

2004 - 2005

Served as a writer, editor, and project manager for one of the nation's leading communications firms specializing in education policy advocacy. Wrote and published numerous Op Ed pieces, as well as articles, reports, speeches, and successful project proposals, on topics such as high school reform, school leadership, college access, and teacher education.

MPR Associates

Senior Research Associate

2001 - 2003

Wrote and edited policy reports, planned conferences, and managed research projects related to middle-level education, career & technical education, comprehensive school reform, and other topics.

Association of American Colleges & Universities

Editor

1998 - 2001

Associate Editor of *Liberal Education*, the nation's leading journal of teaching, learning, and curricular reform in undergraduate education, and Founding Editor of *Peer Review*, a quarterly digest of key issues in undergraduate education.

University of Michigan, Department of English & School of Education

Instructor & Research Assistant

1994 - 1998

Taught writing composition, argumentative writing, and preservice teacher education, and worked on a research study of video-use in teacher education (directed by Magdalene Lampert). Inaugural Fellow of the Sweetland Writing Center.

Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador

Professor & Chair, English Department

1992 - 1994

Directed a 15-member faculty of English language, literature, and communication, including curriculum planning, assessment, budgeting, and professional development. Taught courses in writing composition, argument, creative writing, U.S. literature, and English language.

Harvard Graduate School of Education

Consultant

1990 - 1992

Served as a writer, editor, and research assistant for HGSE faculty, including Lee Bolman (on school leadership), Gary Orfield (on school segregation), and Catherine Snow (on early literacy).

PUBLICATIONS

Heller, Rafael. (2016 - 2022). Numerous Editor's Notes in *Phi Delta Kappan* magazine (focusing on topics such as literacy instruction, community schools, special education, rural schooling, teacher recruitment, early education, extracurricular programs, school segregation, stress and learning, child development, education policy change in the states, and more).

Burdman, Pamela, Rafael Heller, and Melodie Baker. (2024). *The Limits of Calculus: Revisiting the Role of Math Education in College Admissions*. Just Equations.

Heller, Rafael. (2024). *The Relentless Improver: The U.S. Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) School System*. National Center on Education and the Economy.

Heller, Rafael. (2023). *What Should Our High School Students Study? How High School Graduation Requirements Have Evolved from A Nation at Risk to the Present*. New America.

Heller, Rafael, Rebecca Wolfe, and Adria Steinberg (Eds.). (2017). *Rethinking Readiness: Deeper Learning for College, Life, and Work*. Harvard Education Press.

Heller, Rafael and Carol Gerwin. (2016). *Advancing Deeper Learning Under ESSA: Seven Priorities*. Boston, MA: Jobs for the Future.

Heller, Rafael and Rebecca Wolfe. (2015). *Effective Schools for Deeper Learning: An Exploratory Study*. Students at the Center: Deeper Learning Research Series. Jobs for the Future.

Graham, Steve, Rafael Heller, Arthur Applebee, Carol B. Olson, and James L Collins. (2013). *Get it in Writing: Making Adolescent Writing an Immediate Priority in Texas*. Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Educational Board.

- Heller, Rafael. (2012). *What Studies Say about College Readiness: EWA Research Brief #3*. Washington, DC: Education Writers Association.
- Heller, Rafael. (2010). In praise of amateurism: A friendly critique of Moje's 'Call for Change' in secondary literacy. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy* 54 (4): 267-273.
- Heller, Rafael. (July 25, 2016). In teaching and assessment, prudence might not be a virtue. *Education Week*.
- Heller, Rafael. (April 18, 2016). Candid perspectives on teacher change. *Education Week*.
- Heller, Rafael. (Jan. 27, 2016). Deeper learning under ESSA: Seven priorities. *Education Week*.
- Ritterband, Vicki and Rafael Heller. (2015). Competency education offers promise and peril for students. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 97 (2): 27-29.
- Ritterband, Vicki and Rafael Heller. (2015). From seat time to mastery. *Harvard Education Letter*, 31 (3).
- Heller, Rafael. (Nov. 6, 2015). Deeper learning and equity. *Education Week*.
- Heller, Rafael. (Aug. 12, 2015). equitable access to deeper learning: A focus on students with disabilities. *Education Week*.
- Heller, Rafael, (May 28, 2015). A problem with 'The Problem with Grit.' *Education Week*.
- Heller, Rafael. (Dec. 12, 2014). A clear-eyed look at the promise of digital tools for learning. *Education Week*.
- Heller, Rafael. (Oct. 3, 2014). Assessing deeper learning, part 2. *Education Week*.
- Heller, Rafael. (Oct. 1, 2014). Assessing deeper learning. *Education Week*.
- Heller, Rafael. (Aug. 20, 2010). The confusion at the core of the Core Standards: Why the 'English Language Arts'? *Education Week*.
- Heller, Rafael. (2009). *Adolescent Literacy 101*. Washington, DC: AdLit.org/WETA Public Television.
- Heller, Rafael. (Sep. 25, 2008). Don't go changing. *Inside Higher Education*.
- Heller, Rafael and Cynthia Greenleaf. (2007). *Literacy Instruction in the Content Areas: Getting to the Core of Middle and High School Improvement*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- National Adolescent Literacy Coalition (Rafael Heller, lead author). (2007). *Possibilities & Pitfalls in Adolescent Literacy*. Author.
- Schneider, Elizabeth and Rafael Heller. (2005). *Improving Adolescent Literacy Instruction in Arizona: Report to the Governor's P-20 Council*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- Heller, Rafael. (2003). Questionable categories and the case for collaborative writing. *Rhetoric Review*, 22: 300-317.
- Heller, Rafael, Sarah Calderon, and Elliot Medrich. (2002). *Academic Achievement in the Middle Grades: What Does Research Tell Us?* Southern Regional Education Board.
- Heller, Rafael. (1999). Rhetoric and teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 15: 727-740.
- Bolman, Lee and Rafael Heller. (1995). Research on school leadership: the state of the art. In S. Bacharach and B. Mundell (Eds.) *Images of Schools: Structures and Roles in Organizational Behavior*. Corwin Press.

PUBLISHED INTERVIEWS

- Heller, Rafael. (2022). Taking stock of the science of reading: A conversation with Amanda Goodwin. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 103 (8), 32-36.
- Heller, Rafael. (2022). The growing movement to create full-service community schools: A conversation with Mavis Sanders and Claudia Galindo. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 103 (7), 28-32.
- Heller, Rafael. (2022). What can states do to improve special education at the local level? A conversation with Rorie Fitzpatrick. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 103 (6), 32-35.
- Heller, Rafael. (2021). Putting rural communities at the center: A conversation with Sky Marietta. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 103 (4), 31-36.
- Heller, Rafael. (2021). The grow-your-own approach to teacher preparation: A conversation with Amaya Garcia. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 103 (3), 28-33.
- Heller, Rafael. (2021). Toward policies that promote access and equity in early education: A conversation with Shantel Meek. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 103 (2), 24-27.
- Heller, Rafael. (2021). The developmental value of extracurricular programs: A conversation with Andrea Vest Ettekal. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 102 (8), 30-34.
- Heller, Rafael. (2021). Understanding propaganda: A conversation with Renee Hobbs. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 102 (5), 33-37.
- Heller, Rafael. (2020). What counts as a good school? A conversation with Larry Cuban. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 102 (3), 32-35.
- Heller, Rafael. (2020). Keeping an eye on the global education industry A conversation with Anna Hogan. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 102 (2), 32-35.
- Heller, Rafael. (2020). Why we teach: A conversation with Sonia Nieto. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 101 (8), 31-36.
- Heller, Rafael. (2020). Why Americans love educational shortcuts: A conversation with Robert Hampel. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 101 (7), 33-37.
- Heller, Rafael. (2020). Organizing schools so teachers can succeed: A conversation with Susan Moore Johnson. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 101 (6), 35-39.
- Heller, Rafael. (2020). Academic language learning: A conversation with Emily Phillips Galloway. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 101(5), 36-39.
- Heller, Rafael. (2019). Education in the nightly news: A conversation with Paul Kuttner and Kevin Coe. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 101 (4), 34-37.
- Heller, Rafael. (2019). Stress gets under your skin: A conversation with Emma K. Adam. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 101 (3), 32-36.
- Heller, Rafael. (2019). Making sense of education policy at the state level: A conversation with Sara Dahill-Brown. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 101 (2), 37-41.
- Heller, Rafael. (2019). More than one way to grow up: An interview with Annette Lareau. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 100 (7), 31-36.
- Heller, Rafael. (2019). What is English? Who decides? An interview with Lisa Scherff. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 100 (6), 45-49.

- Heller, Rafael. (2019). Telling the untold stories of school integration: An interview with Vanessa Siddle Walker. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 100 (5), 43-49.
- Heller, Rafael. (2018). What we know (and think we know) about the learning brain: An interview with Tracey Tokuhama-Espinosa. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 100 (4), 24-30.
- Heller, Rafael. (2018). Trends in adolescent sexual behavior, health, and education: A conversation with Laura Lindberg. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 100 (2), 35-39.
- Heller, Rafael. (2018). Big money and its influence on K-12 education: An interview with Sarah Reckhow. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 99 (8), 41-45.
- Heller, Rafael. (2018). What a difference a district can make: An interview with Meredith Honig. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 99 (7), 42-46.
- Heller, Rafael. (2018). The data on children's media use: An interview with Michael Robb. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 99 (6), 20-26.
- Heller, Rafael. (2017). On the goals and outcomes of arts education: An interview with Lois Hetland. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 98(7), 15-20.
- Heller, Rafael. (2017). On the science and teaching of emotional intelligence: An interview with Marc Brackett. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 98 (6), 20-24.
- Heller, Rafael. (2000). Teaching and learning in the research university: A conversation with Larry Cuban. *Peer Review, a quarterly journal of the Association of American Colleges and Universities*, 2 (4).
- Heller, Rafael. (1999). Hard times for new faculty: A conversation with Michael Berube. *Peer Review, a quarterly journal of the Association of American Colleges and Universities*, 1 (3).

GHOSTWRITING & EDITING

Numerous articles and commentary pieces appearing in *Education Week*, *Phi Delta Kappan*, *Educational Leadership*, *Inside Higher Education*, *the Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Liberal Education*, *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *Boston Globe*, *Hispanic Issues in Higher Education*, *Reading Research Quarterly*, and elsewhere.

Writing and/or major revision of high-profile reports on educational leadership, early learning, reading instruction, educational media, teacher professional development, equity and excellence in higher education, career & technical education, open educational resources, school segregation, business support for K-12 education, and other topics.

EVENTS & CONFERENCES

Planning and oversight of numerous release events, national conferences on K-12 and higher education, and state education summits in Alabama, California, New Hampshire, Ohio, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

Speaker and moderator at dozens of conferences and meetings hosted by national education advocacy groups, professional and academic associations, and state boards of education.