



## education review // reseñas educativas

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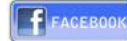
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Berry, Barnett & TeacherSolutions 2030 Team. (2011)  
*Teaching 2030: What We Must Do for Our Students and Our  
Public Schools—Now and in the Future*. NY: Teachers College  
Press.

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Reviewed by Kenneth J. Bernstein

In all of the public discourse of what we need to do to fix public schools and educate our young people for the future, one set of voices has until now been conspicuously absent. It is the voices of teachers.

This new book, put together under the auspices of the Center for Teaching Quality established by lead author Barnett Berry, and with generous funding from the MetLife Foundation, is an important attempt to include the voices of teachers in helping frame the discussion of how we address our educational needs.

Those of us in classrooms, unless we choose to be oblivious, recognize that our profession needs to be

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redefined. We lose too many good teachers from classrooms because too often the only path for professional and financial advancement is through administration. In the meantime, we see the students arriving in our classrooms changing as society changes. Often we are prevented from changing what we do in order to meet them where they are. We know this has to change.

This book is the product of an extensive discussion among professional educators. Much of it was conducted online. The final product list 12 authors besides Berry, all themselves notable classroom teachers. They are the ones who sat down with him to put together the book as we have it. But that final product also included material offered by others in online discussions through the various arms of the Center for Teaching Quality, especially its Teacher Leaders Network, of which I am member. Thus while I was not part of the actual author group, I appear 3 times in the work. I do not think that disqualifies me from examining the work and encouraging others to read it.

The teachers participating in this endeavor collective bring a diverse set of experiences to it. Renee Moore taught English high school students in the Mississippi Delta, where she now teaches at a community college. Ariel Sacks and Jose Vilson teach in New York City middle schools. Laurie Wasserman has almost 30 years as a teacher of special education. After a distinguished career in a classroom, Shannon C'de Baca has spent a number of years doing online education. Jennifer Barnett now functions as school-based technology integration specialist in rural Alabama. Kilian Betlach is a Teach for America alumnus who was well-known as a blogger and is now an elementary school assistant principal. Carrie Kamm is a mentor-resident coach for an urban teacher residency program in Chicago. Among these and others in authoring group are winners of State Teacher of the Year (including one finalist for National Teacher of the Year), Milken award winners, Lilly Award winners, and so on. All have experience in trying to improve the teaching profession beyond the reach of their own classrooms. One finds a similar range of diversity and an equal amount of accomplishment in the 33 teachers who are also thanked for their contributions in the online discussions in which we took part.

In addition, those functioning as authors were able to participate in webinars with a number of outstanding experts from across the nation, including on expert from Australia.

The result is a book rich in insight, analysis, and suggestions for the future, one that has already received praise from many notables associated with education and teaching. Of greater importance, it is a book that will speak to a wide range of audiences: those who prepare our new teachers, those who administer our schools, those who make policy, and most of all, to those of us who teach now or may teach in the future.

In his Prologue, Barnett Berry makes a couple of key points that help a reader understand the thrust of the book. The authors

...have come together, in harmony if not always in lock-step, about an expanded vision for student learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and for the teaching profession that will, in myriad ways, continue to accelerate that learning. (p. xiii)

They get to this point by examining what works now in order to describe what will likely work and be needed in the schooling of the future. The vision “emerges from a student centered vision” that takes advantage of new tools, organizations and ideas. It is based on four “emergent realities”:

1. a transformed learning ecology for students and teacher
2. seamless connections in and out of cyberspace
3. differentiated paths and careers
4. “teacherpreneurs” who will foster innovation locally and globally

These rely on six levers for changes:

1. engaging the public in provocative ways
2. overhauling school finance systems
3. creating transformative systems of preparation and licensure
4. ensuring school working conditions that they know promote effective teaching
5. reframing accountability for transformative results

6. continuing to evolve teacher unions into professional guilds

Each of these levers and each of the realities could be a separate volume. Thus the authors cannot fully explore the dimensions of each, yet they provide more than enough to lay out a vision that is clearly possible. In part that is because of the experience they collectively bring to the task, and what they have absorb from the webinars and from the exchanges with each other and with those who participated in online discussion.

The aforementioned Prologue is titled “We Cannot Create What We Cannot Imagine.” It is followed by two chapters that can be considered introductory:

1. The Teachers of 2030 and a Hopeful Vision
2. A Very Brief History of Teaching in America.

The next four chapters explore the four Emergent Realities, each in some specificity. For example, Chapter 5 explores the 3<sup>rd</sup> of these Emergent Realities, Differentiated Pathways and Careers for a 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Profession. In just over 30 pages the authors explore four subthemes:

1. Outgrowing a One-Size-Fits-All Professions
2. Redefining the Professions for Results-Oriented Teaching
3. Teacher Education for a Differentiated, Results-Oriented Profession
4. Professional Compensation for Differentiated Profession

After these four chapters the book spends almost 40 pages exploring the six policy levers of change before concluding with Taking Action for a Hopeful Future, with a subsection on “What You Can Do to Build a 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Teaching Profession.”

Perhaps the power of the book can best be understood through the notion of “Teacherpreneurism” as it is explored in Chapter 6. The term first appears near the beginning, with the idea of teacher entrepreneurs serving in hybrid positions that don’t easily fit the normal way we classify teachers. Allow me to offer the paragraph from p. 7 which first presents the idea in some detail, after setting the stage by reminding us how already teachers, many

National Board Certified and comfortable with using the tools of the web, are de-isolating teaching and offering cost-effective ways of propagating exemplary teaching practices:

The fruits of those labors have been realized in 2030. About 15% of the nation's teachers - more than 600,000 - have been prepared in customized residency programs designed to fully train them in the cognitive science of teaching and to also equip them for new leadership roles. Most now serve in hybrid positions as teacherpreneuers, teaching students part of the day or week, and also have dedicated time lead as student support specialists, teacher educators, community organizers, and virtual mentors in teacher networks. Some spend some of their nonteaching time working closely university- and think tank-based researchers on studies of teaching and learning - or conducting policy analyses that are grounded in their everyday pedagogical experiences. In some school district, teachers in these hybrid roles earn salaries comparable to, if not higher than, the highest paid administrators.

Lest one think that a pie in the sky belief about the future, several members of the team that wrote this book - and several of those who like me served as additional resources - already partially function in this fashion. The book posits a day where such teachers would not only be known to wider audiences of parents, community and business leaders and policy makers, but would be respected and listened to. Some of those participating in this process already have that kind of respect, for example, Renee Moore, who has served on the boards of both the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and as the first educator on the board of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (California). John Holland has served as a classroom teacher, a blogger for the Pew Charitable Trust blog Inside Pre-K and moderates an online community of accomplished teachers. Others have similar experiences of attempting to create hybrid roles where they can leverage their expertise and knowledge while remaining at least partially classroom based. They use their experience to project to the future

they envision. The process has begun already, but the authors are talking about something more than selling one's good lesson plans on E-bay. As John Holland notes in Chapter 6,

The combination of self-publishing and the use of the internet as a platform for communication has already given rise to the "communities of practice" around topics ranging from lessons in how to teach fractions to using brain research to perform the teaching act at the highest levels. Teacherpreneurs will increasingly be leaders in these communities, which will stretch far beyond the confines of their school or district - a virtual domain where they are able to impact the profession on a large scale. (p. 143)

As more teacherpreneurs appear they will serve as primary agents in developing connected learning. As we get more teachers who have greater facility in using the power of the web, not only will teachers be less isolated, but the nature of teaching will begin to change, and radically, as Emily Vickers notes

Teachers will, in fact, be orchestrators of learning - a concept we talk about today, but one that will force itself upon most everyone who expects to be a teacher in 2030. (p. 145)

In part this will be because students will be accustomed to different ways of obtaining information. We are already seeing this among our current students. They know how to quickly obtain information, although we may still have to guide them in how to evaluate the information they obtain. They are comfortable building websites and increasingly also putting together wikis. It is incumbent upon the educational professionals to adapt what we do not only to meet our students where they are now, but also to anticipate how much this will change the nature of what we do. Teacherpreneurs will be key to a successful transition to a new approach to education.

We still have a way to travel to even come close to such a radical rethinking of the teaching profession. The book points out how much we already know, and how we can begin to move in such a direction, even if the path may

change over the next several decades from what even the most imaginative of our current teachers can foresee. A key to this is that others with whom teachers interact will need to rethink how they do their jobs. Administrators will need to spend more time in classrooms, even teaching, and most certainly embrace the idea of teacher leadership. Unions will need to rethink how they serve the teachers who are their members, being more open to diverse roles and with those diverse roles different models of compensation. Policy makers will have to be willing to support and invest in the development of the kinds of hybrid roles necessary to implement the kind of teaching we will need. University-based teacher education will have to change, being more connected with what is happening in classrooms, and working together with community-based organizations, as education moves to be more firmly integrated in the communities in which are schools are located.

There are the first five points listed in the concluding chapter. By themselves they represent a major rethinking of how we have been approaching education and teaching. There are examples of these kinds of changes. I teach in a school that serves as a professional development school for a local state university, and we have had an increasingly close relationship between those who serve as mentor teachers and the university faculty. The next step is for more of those who are skilled mentors moving into a hybrid role where they not only mentor within their own classroom, but perhaps serve as adjunct instructors in the university environment, overcoming the artificial divide between learning about teaching and learning how to teach.

For this to work requires three additional points, also covered in the final chapter. The communities must become more involved, helping encourage the new roles of teacher-leaders even as administrations and unions have to redefine their relationship with one another. Parents and students must be willing to advocate on behalf of the effective teachers, providing the support that will enable teacher leaders to help redefine the conversation about teaching.

Most of all, teachers will have to step out of the isolation of their individual classrooms. They will

... need to band together to *document their professional practice* and assemble both empirical evidence and compelling stories about what works in their classrooms and their communities - and, therefore what matters most for public policy. (p. 210)

The book is intended as a starting point for ongoing conversations. The authors do not presume that they have imagined every possibility. They want to encourage further discussion. They encourage people to visit them at either of two websites, that of the *Teaching 2030* social networking site ([www.teaching2030.org](http://www.teaching2030.org)) and by connecting with other teachers from the Center for Teaching Quality's New Millennium Institute ([www.teachingquality.org](http://www.teachingquality.org)).

I am as I write this in my 16<sup>th</sup> year of teaching. I have been a participant in the discussions of the Teacher Leaders Network for the past few years. I have gotten to know electronically a number of the authors of this book, and have been fortunate enough to meet both Barnett Berry and John Holland. I know how seriously all of the authors take the profession of teaching, and how much they already give of themselves to try to make the teaching profession a more effective way of serving our students, which is ultimately the goal.

For too long the voices of teachers have been systematically excluded from the public discourse about education. In part this book serves as an important corrective, or at least the start of one.

I am not only a teacher, but also one who engages in policy. Like the authors, I wear several hats besides that of classroom teacher. Here you encounter me as one who regularly writes about books on education in order to encourage others to read them. Like many of those who authored the book, I regular write online about education. We are bloggers; it is part of how we connect with one another.

Our expert teachers are a resource that we should value beyond what they accomplish in the classroom, as

important as that is. We need to tap their expertise and insight, we need to hear their voices.

If you read this book, you should get a sense of not only how important the teacher voice is, but also how much we all gain from including it in the discussions.

What the authors have proposed is in some ways radical. It has the promise of moving us in a far more productive direction in how we approach the future of teaching. Since I am in my mid 60s, it is unlikely I will still be teaching in 2030. Several of the authors will be. They are helping reshape the profession to which they are dedicating their lives.

I feel as if I should end with the voice of one of the authors. Each offers some closing words at the end of the final chapter. The last are offered by Renee Moore, whose work I greatly respect. It seems appropriate to end this review as the book ends, with the words she offers on p. 214:

We stand on the cusp of a great opportunity to end generations of educational discrimination and inequity, finally to fulfill the promises of our democratic republic. I believe the noblest teachers, students, and leaders of 2030 will be remembered by future generations as those who surged over the barriers to true public education and a fully realized teaching profession - while myopic former gatekeepers staggered to the sidelines of history.

I too am dedicated to improving the teaching profession for the benefit of the students entrusted to our care. It is because I am that I fervently hope Renee Moore is right. Read this book.

## About the Reviewer

Kenneth J. Bernstein is a National Board Certified Social Studies teacher. He holds degrees in music from Haverford, Religions from St. Charles Seminary, and teaching from Johns Hopkins University. He did extensive doctoral studies in educational administration and policy studies at The Catholic University of America, and additional studies in reading education at the University of Virginia. He has served as a peer reviewer for a number of professional publications, including *Current Issues in Education* and *Teachers College Record*. He is coauthor of Rotberg, I; Bernstein, K. J. & Ritter, S. B. (2001). *No Child Left Behind: Views about the potential impact of the Bush administration's education proposals*. Washington, DC: Institute for Education Policy Studies. He was recently named 2010 *Washington Post* Agnes Meyer Outstanding Teacher.



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