



education review // reseñas educativas

editors: gene v glass gustavo e. fischman melissa cast-brede

a multi-lingual journal of book reviews

April 21, 2012

ISSN 1094-5296

Education Review/Reseñas Educativas is a project of the National Education Policy Center <http://nepc.colorado.edu>

Follow Education Review on Facebook



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.

Pp. 272 + xx

ISBN 978-0-80977-5154-1

Reviewed by Molly Bullock
Stanford University

The authors present a revolutionary vision of public education just 18 years in the future:

In 2030, interactive media environments and immersive learning games have long since created students with a new profile of cognitive skills.... Virtual tools and networking, just coming of age in the early years of the century, have now opened borderless learning territories for students of all ages, anytime, anywhere.... Empowered well-prepared teachers routinely synthesize a multitude of Internet tools for teaching and learning-co-mingling text, images, audio, video, simulations, and games.... Indeed, in the year 2030, we can see America's teaching

Citation: Bullock, Molly. (2012 April 21) Review of *Teaching 2030: What We Must Do for Our Students and Public Schools Now and in the Future* by Berry, Barnett & Teachersolutions 2030 Team. *Education Review*, 15. Retrieved [Date] from <http://www.edrev.info/reviews/rev1164.pdf>

profession has fully arrived, and the once-beleaguered public schools are reaping the benefits of all students having access to talented, well-prepared, and highly supported educators. (p. 5)

Teaching 2030: What We Must Do for Our Students and Public Schools Now and in the Future is a provocative text that seeks to transcend 20th century reform debates about teaching and learning by providing a thorough exploration of a well-defined alternative. Written by Barnett Berry and a team of twelve accomplished teachers, *Teaching 2030* leaves no aspect of the current US public education system untouched by either renovation or redefinition.

Despite his prolific publication history, with nearly 150 publications to date (including several co-authored with school reform experts such as Linda Darling-Hammond), *Teaching 2030* stands as evidence that Berry has not lost his connection to those who truly matter in education: teachers and students. Berry's roots in education extend as far back as 1978, his own time as teacher in a high school social studies classroom in South Carolina. In 2003, Berry founded the Center for Teaching Quality (CTQ), a small non-profit dedicated to authentically defining and advocating for the teaching profession. Soon after, CTQ launched the Teacher Leaders Network (TLN), an ongoing initiative dedicated to providing a digital space for teacher leaders to collaborate and access cutting-edge resources.

The need for this groundbreaking text became increasingly evident to Berry through his work with TLN, but he understood that in order to redefine the future of public education, he must collaborate with teachers. The twelve selected to coauthor this book work across all grade levels in urban, suburban, and rural schools and are sampled from every generation and all regions nationwide. At the onset of the project, this team set out to synthesize up-to-date research with voices of teacher experience for those in the policy community who were ready to diverge from the deep-rooted 19th century school structures and obstinate 20th century debates. Quickly though, the authors realized that in order to deeply transform the ingrained conception of teaching and learning, they must strive to engage a much larger audience including not only

parents and school leaders but also schools of education, community leaders, and business people.

The book begins with the notion that “We Cannot Create What We Cannot Imagine” and so after the initial year of reviewing research and policy, the team set out to identify the current and future trends that play a role in achieving a “fully realized, results-oriented teaching profession”. In the opening quote above, readers might notice the approach the authors call *imagineering*, a way of describing the future as if it were already here.

Stylistically, this serves to engross the reader by painting a clear and coherent picture of a public education system; a system that is so divergent from the traditional experience of doing school that before finishing chapter one any reader will urgently question: *how exactly could schools get **there** in under 20 years?*

Before Berry et. al assuages the skeptic reader, they first illustrate that the structures and functions in modern schools, due to a complicated history and a seemingly never-ending pendulum of reforms, are rooted in cyclical and often obsolete arguments. The brief history of teaching in US public schools provides context for the neophyte and expert alike, describing the players and setting the stage for what comes next. In a sense, the authors have guided their readers along a path stopping suddenly at a wide river, to the north is glimpse of the future; and in the south, a road that began with Thorndike and Dewey and forged through history to the present.

Both in this metaphor and in *Teaching 2030*, the choice presented is clear: Americans can either turn back towards our tumultuous history or build a bridge to the future. The tipping point is now, not just for each solitary reader but also for a united America.

The authors’ propose that America is uniquely ready to push forward and the remainder of this book helps the reader to envision that bridge from past to future. In this sense, *Teaching 2030* is a blueprint clearly outlining materials we already have, how to combine them, and how to modify them; these are referred to as the *four emergent realities*. This is followed by *six levers for change*, a set of guidelines for creating conditions needed to assemble all these materials properly. While this metaphor is simple, providing the blueprint for this bridge is a heroic

task. Yet the authors face the challenge, integrating evidence from over 350 sources while also supplementing the research-based theories with real experiences of teachers, a point of view that is too often left out of the national education conversation. Additionally, these teachers offer visions for the future, again imagineering in a way that both captivates the reader and illuminates what education might be in the future. This unique combination of current research, teacher narratives, and imagineering demonstrates an unusual potential for inspiring unified national change and the authors make it clear that this is precisely what they intend to accomplish. Alongside the release of this book, TLN released a free 15-page graphic summary of *Teaching 2030* as well as a similar you-tube video; like the book each implies a call to action for the audience.

Emergent Realities: Thus, *Teaching 2030* strives to provide an accessible shared vision for the future, carefully designed by tracing the paths of numerous well-vetted national and international best practices documented in modern schools. This vision, summarized into four emergent realities, includes “a transformed learning ecology”, seamless connection within and between virtual learning and brick and mortar classrooms, “differentiated career pathways for educators”, and the integration of teacherpreneurs. Teacherpreneur is a new title used to describe the growing body of teacher-leaders in America, those who teach part-time but also serve in any a number of leadership roles. The other emergent realities depend on selection and training of roughly 600,000 teacherpreneurs by 2030; in the new ecology they will be co-teaching alongside varying levels of educators on teams of six to eight teachers. Utilizing technology, these teams also collaborate with classrooms around the globe as well as content specific cyber-teachers to increase personalized learning not just for students but also for teachers. Barnett et. al dedicate a separate chapter to each emergent reality while also demonstrating that all are explicitly linked and none are independent. In this way, the combination of the four emergent realities, like the construction of a bridge, is intended to be far greater than the sum of its parts.

Levers for Change: Remember though, the final product is dependent on six levers for change. While these are of

equal if not greater importance than the emergent realities, they are given significantly less coverage from authors. In fact, all six are covered in one single stark chapter, void of teacher experiences or imagineering. Several of these levers for change are highly politicized largely debated issues including new goals for teachers unions, new definitions for teacher preparation, and new frames for accountability. The authors provide the historical context and rationale for including each, followed by examples of early innovators. While these examples justify some optimism, they lack the tangible and diverse details that were frequent in earlier chapters.

After the refreshing innovation portrayed in the emergent realities, the scope and complexity of each lever for change is sobering. The lack of elaboration here, while in some regards disheartening, could also be interpreted as an intentional structure employed by the authors to promote optimism. Currently, the national conversation is pessimistic, fraught with blame, bias, and distorted evidence. Yet *Teaching 2030* broaches each controversial issue with empathy and objectivity, presenting a vision for change that would enable every stakeholder to be a productive contributor in the future of teaching, regardless of their past or present stigmas. While this brief guide to change may leave readers feeling somewhat crestfallen at first, an understated power emerges from the simple objective descriptions such highly politicized issues.

Teaching 2030, is a must read for policy makers, practitioners, and even parents interested in the future of teaching and learning in American schools. Berry and the twelve teacher authors challenge readers to re-conceptualize almost every aspect of the current school system while providing both concrete evidence in favor of emerging trajectories and powerful accessible narratives that breath life into visions of a brighter future for America's students and teachers. By giving the nation a shared vision and common language, *Teaching 2030* sets the stage for America to break the bounds of 19th and 20th century structures, and proceed with intention towards truly modern innovation.

About the Reviewer

Molly Bullock is a doctoral student at Stanford University, studying Learning Sciences and Technology Design with a cross-specialization in Curriculum Studies. She is interested in the long-term impact of Design Thinking on K-12 education- for administrators, teachers, and students alike. Molly is passionate about the role of Design Thinking in curriculum and school redesign, specifically how the use of human-centered, empathy driven protocols can revolutionize traditional problem solving and collaboration. As a former elementary and middle school teacher, she has first-hand experience with the positive student transformations resulting from design-based curriculum. She embraces rich integration of diverse technology tools in and out of K-12 schools as they contribute to the growth of personalized learning trajectories and global collaboration.

Copyright is retained by the first or sole author, who grants right of first publication to the *Education Review*.

Education Review/Reseñas Educativas is a project of the National Education Policy Center <http://nepc.colorado.edu>



Editors

Gene V Glass

glass@edrev.info

Gustavo Fischman

fischman@edrev.info

Melissa Cast-Brede

cast-brede@edrev.info
