



Education in 2020: The Nature of Teaching and Learning in the 21st Century

by **Jeanne Storm**

Sasha is a high school junior at an inner-city school who aspires to teach at the same high school she currently attends. She admires her teachers and dreams of one day being their colleague in the science department.

Aside from the smart board and computer the teacher uses and a few student laptops, the classroom looks remarkably like it did when Sasha's father was a student at the school. Much as her father did, Sasha spends five days a week, six hours a day sitting in a traditional desk in a school that houses other students her age from her neighborhood.

Although the global economy and new technologies have greatly influenced the world of business, teaching has changed very little over time. The ways teachers organize their classrooms, teach their content, and expect students to learn look very much like they did when Sasha's father and even her grandfather were in school (Berry, 2008).

Sasha is important because case studies highlight that young people who learn about the teaching profession while they are in high school and are mentored in college become outstanding young teachers. These teachers return to teach at the

same schools they attended as students, and they stay as teachers in those schools (Storm, 2008; Burbank and Dynak, 2005). That's the good news. But here's the challenge: While Sasha admires her science teachers and wants to one day teach beside them, how can we help her learn that the process of teaching and learning must change to reflect the technological and social changes in the world?

In Lortie's (1975) widely-cited *Schoolteacher* study, he coined the phrase "apprenticeship of observation" to refer to the notion that while they are students, young people spend more than 13,000 hours in direct contact with classroom teachers. If not challenged, this apprenticeship will produce the next generation of teachers who teach the way they were taught. In a rapidly-changing world, this idea of knowing how to teach by virtue of being a student must be overcome. Darling-Hammond (2006) advocates that learning to teach requires new teachers to understand teaching in ways quite different from their own experiences as students. If one of the most critical challenges facing schools this century, as Reimers (2008) cautions, is equipping students with both the skills and ethical disposi-

tions to create a future that improves human well-being in an age of globalization, then our next generation of educators must be prepared to teach in a perpetually-changing world.

Defining the Issue: Preparing Great Teachers for 2020

The Future Educators Association® (FEA), sponsored by Phi Delta Kappa International, convened a group of distinguished education leaders to discuss the nature of teaching and learning in the year 2020 (*see sidebar, page 2*). The year 2020 was selected because today's middle school students involved in FEA programs will begin teaching 11 years from now.

The group was charged with the task of drafting a framework for innovative FEA curricular materials that challenge young people considering an education career to embrace new technologies and teaching practices. The group met the challenge by brainstorming groundbreaking ideas for how to prepare tomorrow's teachers today.

In lively and animated discussions, two major themes emerged: First, our pro-

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*– John Wilson, executive director,
National Education Association*

fession should intentionally attract middle level and high school students to education careers. Further, we must strongly encourage young people who are currently underrepresented in the teaching ranks, and young people gifted in teaching hard-to-staff subjects and who want to teach in hard-to-staff schools, to consider the profession.

John Wilson, executive director of the National Education Association, captured it best when he said, “Every middle and high school student should experience the profession of teaching as it can be, as it should be, and as it will be.”

Second, we can accomplish this by providing innovative, open-source instructional materials that describe teaching and learning in a whole new light. The group firmly believed that an engaging curriculum presented in innovative ways may begin to reverse the apprenticeship of observation syndrome.

Capitalizing on the promise of today’s students and exposing them to teaching in ways that are far different from what they might be experiencing as students may be the first step in elevating the teaching profession.

While it’s difficult to summarize an entire day’s conversations, the following big ideas emerged.

It’s Not a Three-Ring Notebook

“This 2020 FEA curriculum cannot be a static manual or a series of lessons collected in a three-ring binder,” said William Bushaw, executive director of PDK International. “It must be a dynamic and continually evolving resource, and everyone who is interested in using this curriculum should have easy access to it.”

The curriculum will be housed on the FEA website at www.futureeducators.org. It will be a dynamic, interactive resource that can be updated as frequently as new technologies develop and new teaching ideas emerge.

Building from the Bottom Up Using Web 2.0

“In developing an innovative FEA curriculum, what greater resource is there than the students in today’s classrooms?” asked Christopher Emdin, assistant professor at Teachers College, Columbia University. “These students understand the power of the web as a teaching device and the importance of engaging students in meaningful work.”

New web-based applications such as wikis, discussion groups, and blogs, collectively referred to as Web 2.0, can facilitate collecting students’ sugges-

LIST OF ATTENDEES

Lois Adams-Rodgers, Deputy Executive Director, Council of Chief State School Officers Washington, D.C.

Alejandro Argüello, Program Director, Texas Association of Future Educators Austin, TX

William Bushaw, Executive Director, Phi Delta Kappa International Bloomington, IN

Ann Byrd, Chief Operating Officer, Center for Teaching Quality Hillsborough, NC

James Cibulka, President, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education Washington, D.C.

Christopher Emdin, Assistant Professor, Columbia University Bronx, NY

Susan Fisher, Principal, Center for Advanced Research and Technology Clovis, CA

Mary Futrell, Dean, George Washington University Washington, D.C.

Belinda Gimbert, Assistant Professor, The Ohio State University Columbus, OH

Amanda Graham, Program Director, Future Educators Association, Phi Delta Kappa International Bloomington, IN

Tria Grant, Program Director, Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Advancement Rock Hill, SC

Charles McCullough, Special Assistant and Counsel to the President, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Arlington, VA

Cecily McNair, Director, Mississippi Teacher Center Jackson, MS

Joan Richardson, *Kappan* Editor-in-Chief, Phi Delta Kappa International Bloomington, IN

Jody Shelton, Executive Director, American Association of School Personnel Administrators Overland Park, KS

Jeanne Storm, Associate Executive Director, Phi Delta Kappa International Bloomington, IN

John Wilson, Executive Director, National Education Association Washington, D.C.

tions. By leveraging these new powerful tools, tomorrow's teachers will contribute to their own learning by assisting in the creation of the open-source materials housed and disseminated through the Internet.

Case-Based Learning Experiences

Participants advocated building the FEA curriculum through the use of case-based learning events, much like those developed at Harvard University and successfully used in MBA programs around the world. Case study can engage the next generation of educators in real teaching situations, such as reaching unengaged students, designing meaningful assessment strategies, resolving classroom disruptions, and partnering with teachers in other countries. Our prospective educators will be placed in the role of the teacher as they collaboratively analyze situations and offer solutions.

Seamless Transitions

"The next generation of educators should move seamlessly from middle level to high school to postsecondary learning to their own classroom by building upon prior experiences," said James Cibulka, president of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

Jefferson County Public Schools in Louisville, Kentucky, is but one example of such a successful transition through its collaborative effort with the Kentucky Department of Education, the Jefferson County Public Schools, and the University of Louisville. Research has shown that nearly 20 percent of teachers in high-poverty schools have three or fewer years of teaching experience. Within Jefferson County Public Schools, 60



percent of the teachers who were members of the local FEA chapters as students have been teaching within the district for more than 10 years. One teacher in particular captured the power of the FEA program when she said, "I was the first in my family to go to college. Being a member of Future Educators helped me realize it was possible for me to achieve this." (For more information see FEA Research and Policy Brief, *A Promising Solution to Teacher Recruitment Woes*, October 2008.)

Partnerships

The participants encouraged PDK/FEA to work collaboratively with other national organizations and education experts in creating the curriculum and identifying and training the teachers who will teach it. All those attending the meeting offered personal support and the support of their organizations. Other groups will be called upon to join the initiative.

"This work must cross state boundaries and individual organizations," said Cecily McNair, director of the Mississippi Teacher Center. "It should be a cooperative endeavor."

Removing the Classroom Walls

In *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the 21st Century*, author Thomas Friedman showed us that income tax returns are completed by accountants in India, and computer programs are written by programmers in Ireland. So why can't Chinese be taught to the U.S. students by English-speaking Chinese teachers living in China? How can we use technology to bring knowledge into the classroom? Materials that prepare the next generation of educators should help them recognize the powerful technologies that can dissolve the boundaries of the classroom.

Moving Forward: Next Steps

It rests upon our profession to ensure that the next generation of educators reflects the ethnic diversity of the students they will be teaching and that the practices they use are relevant to the times in which they live.

Mary Futrell, dean at George Washington University's college of education noted, "Transforming the

system of education is a monumental challenge. But perhaps a grassroots effort from young enthusiastic teachers armed with a whole new way to teach is the first step. Teaching may be the cause today's generation is looking to take up."

Through partnerships and collaborations, the Future Educators Association® at PDK International will build upon the ideas generated during this meeting to develop innovative materials that will prepare prospective educators to become effective, adaptive 21st century educators. These resources will focus not only on pedagogical practices, which experts deem educators of the future must possess, but also on the cognitive aspect of personalized learning, the role of collaboration in solving world issues, and the specific attributes of a successful teacher.

Through the creation of resources that are tailored for the needs of the educator in a globalized world, FEA's open-source curriculum will provide precollegiate students with unparalleled learning opportunities. The curriculum will be available electronically so that it is easily accessible and can be updated as frequently as needed.

A new apprenticeship of observation will come from the future educators themselves, who each approach teaching in unique and yet collaborative ways; who make connections for students, not only with one another within a classroom but virtually with people in all corners of the world; and who use methods and techniques that will prepare their students to become productive, inventive, problem-solving citizens of the earth we all share.



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MORE ABOUT FUTURE EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION®

The Future Educators Association® (FEA), sponsored by PDK International, is a professional organization that supports more than 20,000 junior high/middle school, high school, and college students who are interested in education-related careers. The mission of FEA is to foster the recruitment and development of prospective educators worldwide through the dissemination of innovative programming and relevant research.

Through participation in an FEA chapter, students gain a realistic understanding of the nature of education and the role of the teacher. In addition to exposing students to careers in education, one of the expressed goals of FEA is to increase the number of qualified teacher candidates from diverse ethnic, racial, social, and economic backgrounds.

MORE ABOUT PDK INTERNATIONAL

PDK International is a member-based association for professional educators. The mission of Phi Delta Kappa International is to promote high-quality education, in particular publicly-supported education, as essential to the development and maintenance of a democratic way of life. This mission is accomplished through leadership, research, and service in education.



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