

# TEACHER --- PRENEURS

**INNOVATIVE TEACHERS**  
WHO **LEAD** BUT DON'T LEAVE



BARNETT BERRY  
ANN BYRD ALAN WIEDER

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## Additional Praise for *Teacherpreneurs*

“This book gives anyone who is concerned with the education of our nation's children a great deal of hope. We should be grateful to Barnett Berry, Ann Byrd, and Alan Wieder for introducing us to these ‘teacherpreneurs,’ the incredibly dedicated and innovative teachers whose stories are featured and whose work will move you. These gifted individuals clearly have the ability to inspire, encourage, motivate, influence, and educate other teachers.”

—Anthony S. Bryk, president,  
Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

“Why do I think *Teacherpreneurs* is an exceptionally inspiring book? It offers authentic teacher voices that speak volumes of truth. This book talks less about shortcomings of teachers or teaching and more about solutions that innovative teachers offer to make teaching one of the noble professions. A must-read for anyone who cares about how our schools will look in the future.”

—Pasi Sahlberg, director general of CIMO (Centre for International Mobility and Cooperation) in Finland and  
author of *Finnish Lessons*

“*Teacherpreneurs* will be a turning point for the field. It offers ‘existence proofs’ of the book's central concept while bringing the concept to life. It makes the case in an easy-to-read manner. West Point trains cadets to be 2nd lieutenants but educates them to be generals. Schools of education should similarly prepare strong candidates to be effective classroom teachers and potential teacherpreneurs. While no college program can fully

prepare teachers for leadership, it can shape how they think about their careers. *Teacherpreneurs* presents a vision of a career in which effective teachers shape the policies that determine the classroom environment in which they and their colleagues teach. Education professors and teacher candidates will learn how they can revolutionize teaching for the betterment of students.”

—Arthur E. Wise, CTQ board chair, and president emeritus,  
National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education

“The real-life stories of *Teacherpreneurs* show us the power of this hybrid model—a teacher who leads her or his colleagues without leaving the classroom, who is engaged in both pedagogy and policy, and who constantly seeks solutions. What better way to support peers and navigate the challenges confronting public schools and our students today.”

—Randi Weingarten, president, American Federation of  
Teachers

“Strong leaders are critical in transforming schools, but too many teachers believe they must leave the classroom to make an impact. *Teacherpreneurs* profiles transformative teacher leaders who are revolutionizing teaching and learning and leading in their professions. By acknowledging that the teacher is the key element in authentic school improvement, *Teacherpreneurs* offers a roadmap for much-needed change, pointing out the institutional and cultural barriers that often stifle teacher-leadership and offering systemic measures necessary to shift the culture of school leadership.”

—Dennis Van Roekel, president,  
National Education Association

“Barnett Berry and colleagues have written a powerful book—offering us a powerful, new way to think about the teaching profession, now and in the future.

*Teacherpreneurs* describes how eight extraordinary teachers became leaders without leaving the classroom, and provides insight into their inspiring and important work. Filled with rich narratives and research, this book is a must-read for teachers, administrators, and researchers, as well as education policy leaders who must invest in teaching to build the profession-wide expertise that our students need and deserve.”

—Linda Darling-Hammond, Charles Ducommun Professor of  
Education,  
Stanford University School of Education, California

“Hillsborough County Public Schools believes that ‘teacherpreneurs,’ as identified in this new book, are essential elements of a successful career ladder plan. Our best teachers want to remain teachers, but they also want to help develop colleagues, write curriculum, and have a voice in shaping educational policy at the local, state, and national level. Empowering our most effective teachers to take on broader roles should be a goal of every district seeking reform.”

—MaryEllen Elia, superintendent,  
Hillsborough County Public Schools, Florida



# How to Use This Book

This book tells the stories of extraordinary teachers who have found pathways to transformative professional leadership without leaving their classroom and students. The days of having to move out of the classroom to “move up” in your career are fading, and the teacher leaders you'll meet in these pages are proof. It is also a guidebook for other teachers, perhaps like you, who are still seeking their own leadership path.

Starting your journey is the biggest challenge. More than any other teacher leaders, teacherpreneurs must know how to connect with and create new opportunities, ready themselves with the competencies needed to lead well, and lead work among colleagues of all kinds collaboratively rather than being perpetually “out in front.” Activities at the end of each chapter help you apply the big ideas you've just read about, take action, and share with others—either in your school or as a part of the Center for Teaching Quality Collaboratory, a national virtual community of teacher leaders that we invite you to join. By the time you've worked through this book, you'll have a strategic plan to prepare for and build your own future teacherpreneurial role.

Your leadership is the sequel to *Teacherpreneurs*. Let's get started.

Unlock additional content for *Teacherpreneurs* with your smartphone or tablet. Throughout the print version of this book you'll find Quick Response (QR) codes that link to video, audio, and other online content to complement your reading experience. If you don't have a smart device, you can still access content by visiting the accompanying links.

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# TEACHERPRENEURS

Innovative Teachers Who Lead but  
Don't Leave

Barnett Berry  
Ann Byrd  
Alan Wieder

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# About the Center for Teaching Quality

The Center for Teaching Quality (CTQ) is a national nonprofit that is transforming the teaching profession through the bold ideas and expert practices of teachers. CTQ cultivates opportunities for teachers to connect, learn, and lead—for the benefit of all students.

Driving CTQ's work is the knowledge that teachers stand on the front lines of implementation for every education innovation. Because of this, they are uniquely well positioned to create practical, sustainable strategies to improve our public schools and teach and reach all students to prepare them for the global society in which they live.

Since its founding in 1999, CTQ has transitioned from a think tank to an action tank. Currently more than 20 percent of CTQ's network members are compensated to develop and use their leadership to advance the teaching profession and student learning by serving as virtual community organizers, online mentors, assessment experts, policy liaisons, writers, and speakers.

CTQ serves as one of our nation's most important thought leaders in advancing teaching as a twenty-first-century profession. At the heart of its work is the Collaboratory, a virtual community for incubating and executing educators' ideas. The Collaboratory welcomes forward-thinking administrators, policymakers, parents, and others who value teachers as leaders.

For more information, and to join the movement, please visit: [teachingquality.org](http://teachingquality.org).

# About the Authors

## **Barnett Berry**

Barnett Berry is founder and CEO of the Center for Teaching Quality (CTQ), based in Carrboro, North Carolina.

A former high school teacher of three years, Barnett has worked as a social scientist at the RAND Corporation, served as a senior executive with the South Carolina Department of Education, and directed an education policy center while he was a professor at the University of South Carolina. In the mid-1990s he worked with Linda Darling-Hammond, then executive director of the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future (NCTAF), in developing its seminal report, *What Matters Most*. In leading NCTAF's state policy reform efforts, Barnett launched CTQ.

Barnett has authored more than eighty peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters and published many other academic reports and articles for the popular education press. He blogs at *Advancing the Teaching Profession*, addressing today's most pressing education issues.

He frequently serves in an advisory capacity to education associations, nonprofits, and school reform organizations committed to teaching quality, equity, and social justice in America's schools. Barnett's areas of expertise include policies to advance the teaching profession, spanning from such areas as teacher recruitment and preparation to how teacher effectiveness is evaluated and rewarded.

At the core of Barnett's work is a simple and powerful conviction: our public schools will not realize their promise without drawing on the many excellent teachers we have



right now. Today's expert teachers have the potential to lead the transformation of teaching and learning.

*Teacherpreneurs* builds on *Teaching 2030* (Teachers College Press, 2011), a book Barnett coauthored with twelve expert teachers. *Teaching 2030* depicts a provocative and hopeful future for the profession that transcends much of the current debates about teaching.

Barnett is married to Meredith, a dedicated special education teacher who just retired after thirty-five years of highly accomplished teaching. She has kept him grounded in the daily realities of public education. Barnett and Meredith are the parents of Joseph (age thirty-one), a political organizer and law student, and Evan (age twenty-six), an organic farmer, baker, and activist for sustainable community agriculture. Barnett and Meredith are very proud that both their children are dedicated to building a better world.

## **Ann Byrd**

Ann Byrd serves as the chief operating officer and a partner at CTQ, where she leads organizational strategy, vision, and management efforts so that teachers can transform education. Her work at CTQ—and throughout her career—has been sparked and shaped by her thirteen years teaching high school English and journalism in Lancaster, South Carolina. Ann served as an instructor with the Teacher Cadet Program—run by Winthrop University's Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Advancement (CERRA)—for seven years while maintaining her primary role in the classroom—an experience that gave her firsthand insight into the challenges and rewards of a teacherpreneurial role. In her work with the Teacher Cadet Program, Ann sought to recruit high school seniors into education. She also served in various positions with CERRA as teacher in residence;

program director; and executive director, a role she held for six years.

Ann holds a BA in English in secondary education from the University of South Carolina, an MEd in English education from Winthrop University, and an EdD in curriculum and instruction from the University of South Carolina.

She earned National Board Certification in English Language Arts for Adolescents and Young Adults in November 2000 and renewed her certification in November 2010. She also served for six years as a member of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards board of directors. Ann continues to be energized by her efforts to ensure that teacher leaders can find ways to lead their profession without having to leave their students.

## **Alan Wieder**

Alan Wieder is a Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of South Carolina who currently works as a senior research consultant with CTQ. He has also taught at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa. Besides serving twice as a Fulbright Scholar, he currently holds an appointment as Extraordinary Professor at Stellenbosch University in South Africa. His past research includes oral histories on race and education in the United States as well as on South African teachers who fought apartheid. His current book, on South African freedom fighters, is titled *Ruth First and Joe Slovo in the War Against Apartheid*, published in June 2013 by Monthly Review Books in the United States and by Jacana Media in South Africa.

# Acknowledgments

So many teachers, with their pedagogical expertise and commitment to teaching, inspired us to write *Teacherpreneurs* and make the case for a bold brand of teacher leadership. The more than two thousand teachers in the Center for Teaching Quality (CTQ) Collaboratory keep us grounded (as much as we can be from a distance) in the daily realities—good and bad—they face in their respective classrooms, schools, districts, and states. They inspired us in countless ways. Most important, they have taught us that the number one problem in regard to teaching quality reforms of today is the lack of demand for the leadership that many, many expert teachers who currently teach could provide to transform public education. Of course, we are especially indebted to Shannon C'de Baca, Jessica Keigan, Stephen Lazar, Renee Moore, Lori Nazareno, Ariel Sacks, José Vilson, and Noah Zeichner (as well as Megan Allen, Jessica Cuthbertson, Sarah Henchey, and Ryan Kinser)—who are profiled in this book—for teaching us so much about how they developed their teacherpreneurial skills and characteristics. In telling the stories of their journeys as *innovative leaders who lead but don't leave*, we learned a lot about the soul of the teaching profession. They have taught us how to cultivate and support many teacher leaders who can do what they have done. They have motivated us even more to find ways to connect, ready, and mobilize six hundred thousand teacherpreneurs by the year 2030.

We are especially grateful to the philanthropies—the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, MetLife Foundation, the Rose Community Foundation, and the Stuart Foundation—whose financial support has made it possible for us to activate

growing numbers of teacherpreneurs. We also appreciate the guidance and enthusiastic backing of our editor at Jossey-Bass, Kate Gagnon, who from the start saw the value of our experiences with these talented teachers and the power of sharing their stories.

Running a nonprofit and publishing a book do not always go hand in glove. Our efforts to document the leadership stories of these terrific teachers and write *Teacherpreneurs* would not have been successful without our colleagues at CTQ—Kate Albrecht, Alesha Daughtrey, Teresa Durn, Eva Hardy, Ali Kliegman, Kris Kohl, Meredith Kohl, Leanne Link, Melissa Raspberry, Keshi Satterwhite, Cynthia Sharpe, Braden Welborn, Skye Wilson, and Tim Wilson. And special thanks go to Emily Liebttag, whose internship came at just the right time to keep us all (almost) sane and organized in preparing the words that follow. Every one of our board members (including Shannon and José, who are profiled herein) have been essential to the development of our organization and the advancement of teacherpreneurs—but none have been of greater importance than our chair, Arthur E. Wise, whose deep knowledge, sharp intellect, and steadfast focus on professionalizing teaching constantly frame our hopes and actions.

**From Alan:** I thank my wife and partner, Joanie Krug, who never wavers in her support of my work for social justice in the United States and throughout the world, and who, like Meredith Berry, is in her third decade as an educator in America's public schools.

**From Ann:** I thank Bobby and Shirley, my parents, and my first two teachers. Bobby showed me the value of maintaining high expectations for my students, my colleagues, and myself. And Shirley passed on a passion for reading that opened up my education and that of others in ways that would not otherwise have been possible. I am where I am because of who they are.

**From Barnett:** And then there is Meredith, my wife of thirty-six years, just retired from over thirty-five years of expert teaching. She shows me every day of our wonderful life together how important it is for students to have teachers who teach for a career.

# Prologue: Why We Wrote This Book

## **It Begins With Renee's Story**

Walking into Renee Moore's classroom in Drew, Mississippi, a town of 2,500 that has had its better days, served as a pivotal moment in putting together this book on a new, bold brand of teacher leadership. We had traveled the 110 miles from the Memphis airport, driving past cotton and soybean fields as well as cinderblock penitentiaries and brazen entrances to casino compounds in the Mississippi Delta. Renee is a veteran, award-winning teacher who has deep knowledge of world literature, language, and writing. She also has an abiding faith in God, grounded beautifully in her devotion to her religion, and an unwavering commitment to the students and families of the Deep South whom she and her husband have served for over twenty-five years. Her story helped us frame what it would mean to be a *teacherpreneur*—a classroom expert who still teaches while finding time, space, and (ideally) much-deserved reward for spreading both sound pedagogical practices and policy ideas. As we watched her teach, we realized that Renee's narrative tells us much about the many innovative teachers *who lead in bold ways but do not leave their classroom*. And as we began to understand how Renee learned to lead, we realized that her story must be told if our nation's public education system is ever going to capitalize on the talents and ideas of so many teachers like her.

In her Composition I class at Mississippi Delta Community College, we watched Renee teach by responding to her students with sublime ease, similar to experts in other professions who have an intuitive grasp of complex

situations. Renee, like other seasoned and accomplished teachers, “can anticipate, plan, and improvise” and “engage students in learning” while developing her “self-regulation and self-efficacy.”<sup>1</sup> But most of all, she guided her fifteen students, ages seventeen to forty-eight, with the enormous patience and care that we soon discovered was rooted in her deep knowledge of how they learn as well as what would inspire yet *not* intimidate them.

**Figure P.1** Renee Moore, left, works with a student at Mississippi Delta Community College in Drew, Mississippi. Photo courtesy of Renee Moore.



Renee had taught these students for only three classes, and they were already producing, with pride, their first two-page, polished essays, using academic as well as critical thinking and collaborative work skills that will serve them well in their future careers in nursing and palliative care, early childhood education, the military, and engineering. We watched Renee embrace the cultures her students brought to class and listened as she prepared them to code-switch—that is, to use different cultural and language patterns depending on the given situation—in the world outside of Drew.

Successful student learning should be the basic entry requirement for anyone who leads in education.

—Renee Moore

Later, in a world literature class, we watched her gently remind her students of what was expected, drawing on well-developed scoring guidelines that clearly specified how and why her students would be assessed. She expected a great deal of them—but not too much more than she determined any given student could handle at any one time. She was expert in scaffolding their knowledge at a pace appropriate to their developing sophistication and limited world experiences as she opened their eyes to literacy and literature as well as hope and resolve.

As we sat down and observed her teaching, one student whispered to us, “She helps us so much; she makes everything understandable.”

We saw no flashy teaching, but we did see a teacher who had intense pedagogical knowledge about which only the most rare of policymakers or policy pundits has an understanding. We saw a teacher who was patient and methodical, focused and strategic. We saw her lead a Socratic seminar, guiding her students—some of whom had never traveled the 122 miles on US-49S to Jackson, Mississippi—on a journey to ancient times through the epic poem of India *The Ramayana*, helping learners connect its philosophical and devotional elements to their lives and relationships with their own family. Renee's teaching style is not one of a drill sergeant making students march to orders, but more like that of a maestro of jazz music, with all its tightly connected polyrhythms and syncopation, born of African American culture in the South.

As we reflected on what we witnessed in our visit to Mississippi, we considered the distance between the efforts of today's education reformers to ratchet up teaching



quality and what Renee does and means for this rural Delta community, which is beset by severe poverty and overt racial discrimination and in which public schools still are segregated tightly and teachers are expected to deliver a narrow curriculum defined by those who know too little about the students and their academic, social, and emotional needs.

In our visit to Renee, after observing her teach one evening, she offered up one poignant point after another. This one stood out:

No one is arguing that a few children do escape poverty through education, but why should poor students have to go to poor schools; and why should their teachers have to go through so many unnecessary obstacles to help the neediest students achieve that escape? If we are so convinced that education is the way out of poverty, then why do we make the way so cluttered and so hard?

Amid the wars between school reformers who say “no more excuses about poverty” and teacher union leaders who call for “better working conditions,” in *Teacherpreneurs* we profile Renee and seven other innovative teachers who lead but do not leave—Shannon C'de Baca, Jessica Keigan, Stephen Lazar, Lori Nazareno, Ariel Sacks, José Vilson, and Noah Zeichner. Their work stands in stark contrast to conventional wisdom about teaching quality today that says our schools will improve if we recruit brighter people to teaching who work harder. The eight we profile and so many more are “brighter people” who already are teaching and having tremendous impact in and out of their classroom. Their teaching and leadership skills—and those of many others—offer new ways to think about and act on school reform.

Richard Elmore made the compelling case that many education policies and practices often wither—primarily because reformers fail to “develop organizational structures

that intensify and focus” on the new reforms, which are supported by too few “intentional processes for [the] reproduction of successes.”<sup>2</sup> His research pointed out that reform is about learning—and for humans to learn they must have “encouragement and support, access to special knowledge, time to focus on the requirements of the new task, [and] time to observe others doing it,”<sup>3</sup> but these conditions rarely are in place.

## The Power and Promise of Teacher Leadership

Ariel, Jessica, José, Lori, Noah, Renee, Shannon, and Stephen are eight of the over two thousand teacher leaders who are part of our **Collaboratory** at the Center for Teaching Quality (CTQ),<sup>\*</sup> a virtual community of classroom experts who seek to remain in teaching while transforming public education far beyond the reaches of their school, district, state, and nation. They work to change teaching and learning for their students and many others; they take advantage of circumstances that come their way as well as those they create. And although American policymakers continue to divide the worlds of teachers and reformers, these eight teachers (and so many others) do much of what Peter Drucker attributed to entrepreneurs many decades ago: they “search for change, respond to it, and exploit it as an opportunity.”<sup>4</sup>

We offer a simple proposition: these eight teachers are exceptional—but they are not the exception. There are many, many others like them who want to lead without leaving the classroom. A 2013 MetLife study found that 23 percent of American teachers are “extremely” or “very” interested in serving in a hybrid role as a teacher and

leader. (And the vast majority of them—84 percent—are “not very” or “not at all” interested in becoming a principal.)<sup>5</sup> So the space between what they want and what they don't want is just waiting to be filled by the teacherpreneurial role.

However, this book is not just about that 23 percent; it is for all teachers—those who want to lead now as well as those who may want to lead later. And it is for educators and others who want to support them in realizing their potential to lead. Our public schools, and the students and families served by them, deserve more of their leadership, grounded in classroom realities.

This book has everything to do with the challenges facing our public schools in the second decade of the twenty-first century and how to address them. And it has everything to do with building demand for those who teach to continue to do so regularly *and* have the time and space to lead reforms and incubate and execute bold new ideas (while being rewarded for doing so).

Renee put it bluntly:

Anyone who can't teach well has no business setting education policy, designing curriculum, or training teachers—at least not having the predominant say in those activities. Successful student learning should be the basic entry requirement for anyone who leads in education.

When we talk about the teacher leadership we want to see, we are not referring to the kind that is often represented by teachers' unions, which in our estimation have had to fight oppressive working conditions of the past (that in some cases are still present today). But we are also not talking about the leadership often represented by technology and textbook companies, and by well-heeled advocacy groups who seek to control teachers (and their costs) in efforts to influence who gets taught what and by

whom, and then get their hands on the potential profits that can be found in the \$600 billion public education enterprise.

Instead we are talking about leadership from teachers in at least three contexts.

First, we are talking about teacher leaders who work with parents in creating deeper learning opportunities for their students and who are “innovation ready,”<sup>6</sup> while making their own school a place of democratic deliberation and authentic connectivity, as well as stability and inspiration.

Second, we are talking about teacher leaders who take advantage of emerging technology tools to lead the personalization of learning, using digital files to rapidly spread pedagogical expertise worldwide, and who will soon be using ubiquitous smartphones to keep track of their students' progress and transform accountability systems.

And finally, we are talking about teacher leaders who would have kept us, the authors of this book, in the classroom. Like so many others of both yesterday and today, we should not have been forced to make a choice between teaching and leading.

# This Book is Personal

For Barnett it began in 1980, his second year of teaching, when he was struggling to figure out how to engage 167 high school students, many of them reading far below grade level, and educate them on a vast array of social studies content, including U.S. history, consumer economics, civics, and “freshman seminar.”

I sought help from both my department chair and principal, but to no avail. Then one day they walked into my third-period economics class, with a university professor, to assign a student teacher to me—because, as they told me, “I was doing the best job of anyone in my department.” I then realized that if American education policy leaders had tried to create the most dysfunctional system of teacher development, then they could not have done a better job.

During my graduate school years, the heyday of *A Nation at Risk*, I immersed myself in what scholars Howard Becker, Dan Lortie, and Amitai Etzioni concluded about teaching and professionalism. I learned how teaching lacked a codified body of knowledge that was developed, spread, and enforced by teachers themselves. Then my deep ethnographic studies of teaching began to surface how distant the expertise, careers, and ideas of teachers are from those of the individuals who make the rules and regulations that govern teachers' work. Over the last three decades, as my career shifted from think tank researcher to top-level state education agency bureaucrat to professor and now advocate, I have seen little closing of the gap between policy and practice. And I have seen the stakes get higher and higher for the kids while the reform rhetoric about teachers increasingly becomes more

negative and divisive. I can think of so many examples, but following are three touchstones.

**Figure P.2** Barnett Berry in 1979, in front of the blackboard at Eau Claire High School, Columbia, South Carolina, tries to teach his students how to write a coherent essay.



First, in 2004, just a year after we at CTQ launched our virtual community of teacher leaders, Rod Paige, then secretary of education for President George W. Bush, made the case (later recanted) that the National Education Association, the nation's largest teachers' union, was a “terrorist organization.”<sup>7</sup>

Second, after releasing CTQ's inaugural TeacherSolutions report on performance pay in 2007, the eighteen classroom experts who penned the white paper were rebuked for their provocative and “third-rail” ideas in separate venues by two very different camps: (1) a group of union leaders criticized the report because the teachers were “getting ahead of them” and using a term (*performance pay*) they did not like; and (2) a well-