

TEACHERPRENEURSHIP SKILLS: THE SKILLS FOR THE 3RD MILLENNIUM TEACHERS

By Sandra Sembel

(Email: ssembel@gmail.com, Blog:
<http://sandrasembel.weebly.com>)

“What did I forget? I know I forgot something, but what is it?”

I sometimes feel like I’m missing something without being able to point out what it is. It drives me crazy but I just go on with my life.

Perhaps, you feel the same way with your work life as a teacher, or even as an experienced and expert teacher.

But because you cannot figure out what is missing, and life presses you on, you just go on, even though you feel empty, dissatisfied or even frustrated. It leaves a deep hole in your life.

Then, perhaps, this is what you are looking for to fill the hole: teacherpreneurship!

WHAT IS THE BIG IDEA?

This big idea of teacherpreneurs and teacherpreneurship is not easy to define as it has just been introduced. However, we can take a look at some definitions below.

According to Barnet Berry, et al, a teacherpreneur is a classroom expert who still teaches while still finding time, space, and (ideally) much-deserved reward for spreading both sound pedagogical practices and policy ideas.

A teacherpreneur is defined by an article posted on 21st century learning and teaching website as a teacher who teaches students regularly but has the time, space,

and reward to incubate and execute his or her own ideas.

Such teachers have similar characteristics as described in “How Teacherpreneurs Spread Good Ideas” by Suzie Boss.

- Take learning **beyond the classroom** while leading change from within the education system.
- Are always in **‘Beta’ state** – they don’t have to know everything, but always eager to learn about everything.
- Engage students to make learning **meaningful** (problem solving) – get students in the driver’s seat of learning.
- Touch lives – not just touch the mind!

So, basically, a teacherpreneur is someone who connect real world and classroom learning and make time and effort to share good ideas in useful activities and projects to improve the quality of learning and human resources to the people around him or her.

A teacherpreneur has multiple roles: a teacher, a researchers, a project manager, a social worker, and many more noble roles.

In conclusion, a teacherpreneur is a teacher (has one foot in education system) who **teaches beyond teaching** (positively connecting teaching to the real world).

MEET SOME TEACHERPRENEURS

If you look at the wonderful teachers around you, you’ll probably find many of them doing many different good works. Below is the list of teacherpreneurs.

Award-Winning Teacherpreneurs

Jessica Hubbuch and Sean Brown from Howard School develop a project-based curriculum tied into Common Core Standards and will use technology to support student research, according to a news release.

Lee Friedlander uses food and ornamental crop production at Hixson High to teach problem solving, teamwork, innovation

Our Wonderful Teacherpreneurs

I have some good friends who I admire most for their teacherpreneurial initiatives.

1. **Itje Chodidjah.** She is a teacher and will always be a teacher. In fact, she is an expert in teaching. But, she doesn't stop her initiatives in the classroom. She has become an education warrior, who always tries to find the way to improve the quality of education in Indonesia.

In her efforts to improve quality of education, Itje has done zillions of teacherpreneurial works. Below are just a few of them:

- She has shared her passion to the top notch people in the government and education field about the need to focus more on preparing students for their real work life, rather than focusing only on training them to pass the national exam.
- She has conducted countless teacher training classes sharing her skills, experiences and passion in many areas of teaching, some of them are: effective teaching and learning, lesson planning, and classroom management.

2. **Rum Hera Ria.** This wonderful teacherpreneur, harmoniously mixes her expertise in teaching and her passion for gardening. In addition to staying true to her teaching job—teaching English to college students in a number of places, she also teaches people to eat healthy and to healthily grow their food. Together with her husband, she started a hydroponic farm. They invited people to their hydroponic farm and teach visitors about hydroponic farming and healthy eating.

3. **Mathilde Tumenggung.** Another inspiring teacherpreneur is Ibu Mathilde Tumenggung. Like Itje Chodidjah and Rum Hera Ria, she is always true to her teaching job. Indeed, teaching is an inseparable part of her life. As an experienced and senior teacher, she doesn't want to let her knowledge, experience and skills go wasted. Age doesn't stop her from sharing the good things to others. She shares her passion in story writing for children to many teachers. She collaborated with other teachers to publish storybooks for children. She has also moved people to contribute good books to be distributed to village libraries all over Indonesia.

4. **Kun Herrini.** A teacherpreneur who is also a writer has published many books. Besides writing many books on her own, she has also motivated and mentored others to collaboratively write and publish books. In addition to book writing, she is also an enthusiast in handicraft. She teaches herself to make a variety of handicrafts, then she shares her new skills to others within her reach of service. These initiatives have taken her to travel to many parts of Indonesia meeting many people.

5. **Tari.** Tari is a resourceful teacherpreneur who has always set her heart to teaching English. As an experienced teacher, she is willing to share her experience, skills and knowledge to teachers in Academic Arisan – a group of teachers gathering once a month to learn from each other. Tari also spends a great deal of time teaching children in Kampung Aquarium in North Jakarta. They are children from economically challenged community, who will probably have very limited opportunity or even none to learn English and to embrace a whole new world.

The initiatives of these teacherpreneurs go beyond financial profit making. Their efforts have benefitted countless other teachers, students and communities.

I believe, there are many more teacherpreneurs out there. Perhaps you are one too.

SHARING MY TEACHERPRENEURIAL INITIATIVES

As for me, I embarked on this teacherpreneurship idea since early on in my teaching job. It was not an easy journey, but traveling through this bumpy road has taught me many valuable lessons.

I conduct my teacherpreneurial initiatives inside or within the educational system, and beyond classroom boundaries.

Inside the classroom

The idea is to make learning more down-to-earth, which means, connecting learning to the real life.

Here are some examples:

Making plans

- After my students learned to use the expressions of making plans, they were given the opportunity to use the newly-acquired expressions to discuss a project that they will do together. The class is divided into two groups. One group decided that they wanted to visit a nursing home on weekends, and conduct interesting activities with the elderly there – singing English songs with the elderly and sharing some goodies. Another group decided to collect funding to buy free lunch for the homeless. They all had wonderful time and they remembered the lesson well.

Learning about Folktales

- Another group of students had to learn about folktales. I gave them each a folktale to learn. But, instead of asking them to read, I asked them to read and perform the folktale in group. So, we ended up having a memorable folktale performance. Everybody enjoyed the lesson and remember the stories. In the end, when they had to answer

comprehension questions about the folktales, they could answer all questions well.

Learning about persuasive language

- Another interesting initiative is when I taught persuasive language to student nurses. After learning the needed expressions, I gave students the opportunity to use them in creating posters about health education. They have to use the poster to give health education related to the idea presented in the poster. Finally, they after getting feedback to improve their posters, they revised the posters and were asked to share their posters to the local community health centers to be put on the walls for the community to learn from.

Beyond the classroom

Initiatives beyond the classroom include some of the following activities.

- Curriculum development for schools, and banking industry.
- E-learning modules for Banking – collaborating with an IT company
- Teacher Training Initiatives in a number of cities in Indonesia.
- Youth Character Building and Leadership Camp, in many cities in Indonesia
- Collaborative Book Writing with teachers in Jakarta, Bojonegoro and Tuban

The bottom line of the teachepreneurial initiatives is to make learning alive, meaningful, beneficial and out-reaching.

HOW TO GET THE RESOURCES TO BACK UP OUR TEACHERPRENEURIAL PROJECTS?

Perhaps now you start thinking about the funding for these initiatives. Where do teacherpreneurs get the funding to support their teachepreneurial activities?

1. **Self-support:** Some initiatives are probably self-supporting. Projects that we do within the classroom don't really need special funding: Wall-bulletin initiative, English Club activities, Public lectures from special Guest speakers. For such initiatives, we can just use our own resources or resources available at school.
2. **School's funding:** Other initiatives can be supported by the school or education institution we are working for, for example: sharing session with our colleagues at work or any class-projects that we do with teachers and students at school or campus: tree-planting initiatives, or green school projects.
3. **Collaborative funding:** Sometimes, some teachers can collaborate to support a teacherpreneurial initiative. Such projects may include: Collaborative book writing, study trips to interesting places in the neighborhood – strawberry farms, factory visits.
4. **Sponsorship:** We can also get sponsorships for programs like financial education (get a bank to give or fund presentations about managing and saving money), health education (involve a hospital, a pharmaceutical company or a medical school to support such initiative).
5. **Third party funding:** If we have great ideas, we can write and send in proposals to an organization or company to fund our initiatives. Study the vision and mission of the Target Company or organization, if their vision and mission matches our initiative, then, there's big opportunity to get their involvement in the initiative.

The key is to search within our network of friends and acquaintances. **Share our big ideas**, get them interested in the big ideas, and finally get their participation in the big ideas.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A TEACHERPRENEURS?

Teacherpreneurs need many things to embark on their teacherpreneurial initiatives. But, if I can choose the most important ones, I list down the following points:

1. **Creative thinking:** First and foremost important is creative thinking skill. A teacherpreneur needs to be able to identify needs within the education system and creatively take it beyond the system. A problem or a need has to be identified, then with creative thinking process, this problem or need is addressed.

A teacher who teaches in a school in high-crime neighborhood invented a system to involve the police, parents, senior citizens who are still active and volunteers in the routes taken by the children when going to and coming from school. They are connected with an electronic network to monitor and maintain safety of the school children.

Amazingly, the children don't just feel safe and secure, there is also a report that indicates decrease in crime rate in the neighborhood.

2. **Communication:** Another important skill needed is communication. When we want to launch a project or initiative, the only way we can get it started the ground is by communicating the big idea to the relevant people. Lobbying, sharing concerns, inviting participations... they all need effective communication with a humble heart and good intentions.
3. **Collaboration:** United we stand, divided we fall, says a proverb. This is true when conducting a teacherpreneurial work. Collaboration is key to any teacherpreneurial initiative. Get students involve. Get the school involve. Get the community involve. Get organizations or

corporations to take part in the initiatives. In this case, the proverb "the more the merrier" applies.

4. **Caring and Sharing Heart:** Last but not least, one thing that makes teacherpreneurship a bit different from other similar endeavors is 'Caring and sharing heart'. All teacherpreneurs that I know have a big heart and big passion for whatever they take their focus on. With such heart and passion, they take their initiatives beyond expectation and reaching out to many people to benefit their programs.

FINAL MESSAGE

Are you a teacher? Do you want to make learning meaningful and fruitful? Do wish to optimize the benefits of your teaching job beyond the classroom? Do have valuable experience and skills that you can share with others? Then, be a teacherpreneur. Share your big ideas to the world and enjoy the satisfaction of a dream come true.

Sandra Sembel
ssembel@gmail.com
sandrasembel.weebly.com

Feel free to access my blog:
sandrasembel.weebly.com to get other articles in a variety of topics.

REFERENCES

Berry, Barnet, Ann Byrd, Alan Wieder, **Teacher Preneur: Innovative Teachers who Lead but don't Leave**, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 2013

Berry, Barnet, **TEACHING 2030: What We Must Do for Our Students and Our Public Schools... Now and in the Future**, <https://www.teachingquality.org/about/teaching-2030>, Teachers College Press, Amsterdam, 2010.

The Coming Age of the Teacherpreneur

<http://www.edweek.org/tsb/articles/2010/10/12/01teacherpreneur.h04.html>, accessed: March 31, 2017, 10: 00

Teachers of the Future: Using New Skills to Prepare Students, Stacey Donaldson, <http://www.advanced.org/source/teachers-future-using-new-skills-prepare-students>, accessed: March 31, 2017, 10:29

Teacherpreneur Start Up Guide: Teacherpreneur Digital Business Blueprint, Miriam Jumalon, http://miriamjumalon.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/teacherpreneur_start_up_guide.pdf, accessed: March 31, 2017, 11:00

What is a Teacherpreneur? Ask Sarah Henchey, C. Steven Bingham, Associate Professor of Education, Gardner-Webb University, <http://gardnerwebb.edu/Assets/gardnerwebb/academics/cild/teacherpreneurship-notes1.pdf>, accessed March 31, 2017, 11.30

Boss, Suzie, **How Teacherpreneurs Spread Good Ideas**, <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/how-teacherpreneurs-spread-good-ideas-suzie-boss>, accessed March 30, 2017, 10.00.