

McGill Journal of Education
Revue des sciences de l'éducation de McGill



Anne Lutz Fernandez & Catherine Lutz. *Schooled: Ordinary, Extraordinary Teaching in an Age of Change*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press. (2015). 147 pp. \$41.95 (paperback). (ISBN 978-0-8077-5736-9)

Teresa Anne Fowler

Volume 51, Number 3, Fall 2016

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1039640ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1039640ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Faculty of Education, McGill University

ISSN

1916-0666 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Fowler, T. A. (2016). Review of [Anne Lutz Fernandez & Catherine Lutz. *Schooled: Ordinary, Extraordinary Teaching in an Age of Change*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press. (2015). 147 pp. \$41.95 (paperback). (ISBN 978-0-8077-5736-9)]. *McGill Journal of Education / Revue des sciences de l'éducation de McGill*, 51(3), 1217–1219. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1039640ar>

ANNE LUTZ FERNANDEZ & CATHERINE LUTZ. *Schooled: Ordinary, Extraordinary Teaching in an Age of Change*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press. (2015). 147 pp. \$41.95 (paperback). (ISBN 978-0-8077-5736-9).

The gap that exists between theory and practice and between academia and Kindergarten to Grade 12 classrooms is bridged in *Schooled: Ordinary, Extraordinary Teaching in an Age of Change*. Academics, policy makers, and others that reside on the outside of classrooms and schools are well-intentioned with respect to informing pedagogy and reform movements that ought to improve outcomes for students and working conditions for teachers. However, the divide between those that reside in academic institutions or government buildings and those in the field with students continues to remain present. Anne Lutz Fernandez and Catherine Lutz provide a view from inside the field, from the side of the gap where the results of decisions and research live: the lives of teachers and their students. The portrayal of lived experiences of teachers as they breathe life into policies and pedagogies amid diverse classrooms has recently been documented by others, such as in *Worth Striking For: Why Education Policy is Every Teacher's Concern (Lessons from Chicago)* by Isabel Nuñez, Gregory Michie, and Pamela Konkoli; however, Lutz Fernandez and Lutz expand the story further and travel across the United States into very diverse corners of the terrain to uncover and reveal the larger impact felt in today's classrooms. The stories shared by teachers weave together with similar themes of gender, autonomy, learning environments, diversity of students; each demonstrates the impact of policy and pedagogy on students.

The nine stories shared by teachers in the field are as diverse as the students in their classrooms. From Minnesota to South Carolina, South Dakota to Illinois, each teacher describes how outside forces such as No Child Left Behind, merit pay, standardization, and poverty have impacted their practice and their students. Lisa Myrick describes how merit pay has impacted teacher salaries, adding to the disparity between male and female teacher wages in South Carolina. Despite research that demonstrates merit pay has little impact on student success, President Obama's Race to the Top grant considers merit pay an innovative means to attract and retain talented teachers. Myrick

believes that the ideology behind teaching regarded as a less respected and less compensated profession is due to education being a largely female profession. However, merit pay does offer a means for equal pay but to what extent? If the profession is dominated by females, do teacher salaries remain commensurable with other professions?

From South Carolina to Ohio, the shift from merit pay and gender moves towards the opt-out movement and Heather Frantz's experience with home-schooling her children. With the push in standardized assessments and a narrowly focused curriculum that teaches to the test, all in the name of accountability, children are losing out on educational opportunities to explore and challenge. To learn through doing becomes replaced with worksheets and rote memory drills. School safety, access to resources, family religious and moral choices also contribute to parents moving their children back in the home to be educated. When teachers are limited by what they teach and with what they teach, children risk exposure to a variety of opportunities to engage in learning. Parents opting-out of the formal schooling system are taking control of their child's opportunities to learn and are having a meaningful influence on the educational milieu. The stereotypical homeschool has shifted from a Christian one towards parents seeking more autonomy in their child's education and a safe environment for them to learn. A concern professionals have with respect to homeschooled children resides with parents as educators that may not be trained as teachers. Led by a movement largely dominated again by females, the idea of a co-operative is filtering into the home-schooling movement, which links parents and children together to socialize, learn, and support each other in their homeschooling journeys.

From math at the kitchen counter to a school on the Pine Ridge Reservation, the shared desire for a safe school environment emphasizes building hope. The deeply ingrained influences of poverty and racial tensions in systems and institutions are lived in the lives of students whose community does not even exist on a map. A rich cultural landscape that finds itself situated amid a brew of colonization and federal control, Glorianna Under Baggage instills hope and courage in the mix. Facing challenges that extend beyond poverty and racism including a vast geography and travel time to school, Under Baggage finds pockets of theory and pedagogies she uses to fit the needs of her students including blended learning for credit recovery. However, with the geography of the reservation being incredibly vast, most students in a blended program attend Under Baggage's class so they can access the state-approved curriculum online and maintain a relationship with peers and their teachers. Students attending this school may not have the same levels of high school completion as others, but does that make them less able to think critically or to be good citizens? A high school diploma is a credential earned – not necessarily a reflection of a good person.

Each story takes readers through lived experiences of practicing teachers, offering an intellectual link to theories and policies that may be the root of some of the disparities students are experiencing in both American and Canadian classrooms. Lutz Fernandez and Lutz address the theory and practice gap through these connections and inform those that engage in this story how what is spoken on one side is lived out on the other. Faces of teachers and stories from their classrooms demonstrate that policies and pedagogic practices are not lived out in a vacuum but within the diversity that makes up our classrooms. With similar themes shared across borders, Lutz Fernandez and Lutz offer considerations for reform movements, the notion of austerity, teacher workloads as well as a need and suggestions for teachers to become purposeful advocates for their students. In our era of standardized schooling, with little attention given to teacher and student experiences with prescribed policies and pedagogies, this work is a must read by those in the field, pre-service teachers, and those removed from the field that have an interest in education.

TERESA ANNE FOWLER *University of Calgary*

REFERENCES

Núñez, I., Michie, G., & Konkol, P. (2015). *Worth striking for: Why education policy is every teacher's concern (Lessons from Chicago)*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.