

Review of Reigeluth, C.M., & Karnopp, J.R. (2020). *Vision and Action: Reinventing Schools through Personalized Competency-Based Education*. Bloomington, IN: Marzano Resources

Ali Carr-Chellman¹ · Raymond Dixon¹

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The area of personalized competency-based education (PCBE) has captured much interest across the k-12 spectrum. As this text points out, there are many potential reasons why one might approach the promise of PCBE to truly transform schools today including better learning, student empowerment, flexibility, lower cost, equity, reducing bureaucracy and even the potential to improve teacher's lives. With all this evidence encouraging PBCE, this book serves as a guide for bringing PBCE to the task of transforming schools through a systems lens.

Authors Charles M. Reigeluth and Jennifer R. Karnopp certainly are experts in the systemic application of innovation to public schools. As author of several other related texts, Dr. Reigeluth has advance knowledge and hands-on experience with significant, system-wide paradigm change of the Decatur Township Schools in Indianapolis. Jennifer Karnopp also shares front level school system change as a former founding principal of a New Hampshire charter school with a focus on personalized, competency-based learning.

For the purposes of this text, PBCE is centered or supported on six (6) core ideals (p. 10) encapsulated and referred to by the authors as Vision in Part I, followed by two exemplar cases of PBCE in the United States. The six core ideals are:

- Competency-based education
- Learner-centered instruction
- Restructured curriculum
- New roles

- A nurturing culture and
- New organizational structures

Each chapter in Part I of the text is organized around these six core ideals, which are all integral to the overall effective and systemic application of PCBE. They describe the principles related to PCBE within a research/learning sciences framework followed by detailed guidance to implement PCBE. It is of note that the authors avoided being overly prescriptive but presented these principles as broad frameworks or paradigms that is facilitative of various types of models towards the systemic implementation of PCBE. Chapters 1–6 are written in an accessible style focused on how change agents can approach the system-wide shifting of their own school paradigm toward the PCBE outcomes. For example, the chapters offer guidance in a very effective question-and-answer format to aid those who are in classrooms to better imagine how to implement the PCBE approach. Chapter 7 focused on two cases, The Minnesota New Country School and Linsday Unified School District, and how they actionized the six paradigms in their use of PCBE. As such, the book is an excellent resource for front-line teachers, administrators, curriculum leaders, school board members, parents, even students who want to help imagine new ways of approaching school and learning.

The second part of the text (Part II) is focused on “Action” or the specifics of the change process itself to enable the reader to understand how to implement PCBE. Chapter 8 lays out an overview of the guidance system that is similar to earlier iterations that Banathy, Carr, Nelson and Jenlink were involved in explicating. The essential framework includes a careful examination of values, principles for change (including changing mental models), stakeholder involvement, processes, consensus building, leadership, culture, and idealized design. The principles also are divided into sequential activities as delineated in

✉ Ali Carr-Chellman
alicarrchellman@uidaho.edu

Raymond Dixon
rdixon@uidaho.edu

¹ University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho, USA

earlier works by Reigeluth and Duffy, and continuous activities as earlier developed by Jenlink, Reigeluth, Carr, and Nelson.

Chapter 9 focuses on how to approach change at the district level. Some of this will be familiar to those who have followed Dr. Reigeluth's past work on district level guidance systems. This is well grounded in 11 years of work by Indiana University's research team in a small Indianapolis school district. The guidance system is not only clearly explained and detailed but updated to focus on the PCBE implementation specifically within the guidance system. Chapter 10, likewise contrasts the change approach to advance PCBE within districts to consider how to approach this kind of change within independent schools. This is similarly well-grounded in the experiences of Ms. Karnopp as she led a small independent charter school through similar processes.

An epilogue and appendices extend the work to include instruments and resources as well as curriculum ideas and connections with organizations that can assist with this kind of transformation. There's even a list of possible field trips to innovative schools that would be highly informative to those about to embark on the exciting journey toward PCBE based systemic change.

We have very few criticisms of this work. There are a few pieces that might enhance the overall effect of the text, of particular importance is including more in the area of learner engagement which is clearly at epidemic proportions according to a recent Gallup Poll (Busteed 2013) where more than 50% of high schoolers feel that they have learned "nothing of interest" in the past week. Shocking as that may be, it is certainly possible that PCBE could engage learners in passion-based learning models that will revolutionize their personal learning experiences but will certainly overturn much of what is expected in terms of accreditation and accountability among teachers. While the authors talk about the need of interdisciplinary projects, omitted is the importance of career and technical education, engineering and technology standards, and competencies identified by regional industry and business stakeholders' roles in determining general and personalized learning targets. This is especially important at developmental levels that are closer to college and work (grades 9–12). The field of Career and Technical Education has been using

competency-based learning and projects (individual and team) that are interdisciplinary from a period that preceded the implementation of PCBE in charter schools. Also, the notion of nurturing environments and student's motivation in PCBE provide an ideal backdrop for the integration of Culturally Responsive Teaching and Universal Design Learning.

The book is right on target as they point out the declining positivity among teachers, the shorter terms of tenure for too many teachers who leave the profession, and the overall lack of professionalism that results from these high levels of accountability. However, there is not sufficient discussion of the basic coercive model of education (Kohl 1995) that the system of schooling is based on. Understanding the coercive nature alongside lack of engagement would further strengthen the overall effect of the text. Other than this small lack of connection, the text is an amazing contribution. The text would serve well as a resource on any teacher's desk. It should have a place on every leaders' or change agents' bookshelf. It will be highly beneficial to community members who wish to enact systemic change in schools. It also would be highly useful to students at either the upper undergraduate or lower level graduate studies in terms of better understanding systemic change. As such, the text could be useful across various kinds of institutions that have teacher preparation undergraduate or graduate programs.

We highly recommend this text and find it to be an excellent resource for significant strides toward PCBE and overall systemic transformation of schools.

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