

School Management in Transition

Schooling on the edge

Dale E. Shuttleworth

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School Management in Transition examines the impact of the neo-conservative political agendas which still hold sway in education. It describes the transition that has occurred in the school leader's role from teacher/administrator to quality control supervisor and how some schools have developed strategies to deal with the resulting issues.

Based on a study carried out by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the book analyses issues such as decentralisation, testing, external assessment and privatisation in the education systems of nine of the world's most industrialised countries: the USA, UK, Japan, Mexico, Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden, Greece and Hungary. It contrasts different school management models in these countries and goes on to identify innovation and best practice designed to tackle such concerns as declining professional morale, premature retirements and teacher shortages.

School Management in Transition provides a unique insight into what is really happening in school leadership and management, and will be of great interest to school leaders, academics, researchers and policy makers.

Dr Dale E. Shuttleworth is currently executive director of the Training Renewal Foundation in Toronto and has over 40 years' experience as a community educator, previously holding posts as a teacher, principal, superintendent of schools and university lecturer. He is also author of *Enterprise Learning in Action* (Routledge 1993).

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Preface

As industrial societies struggle with the demands of the twenty-first century, public schooling finds itself in a rather dysfunctional state striving to satisfy the diverse needs of an ever-changing social, political and economic milieu. Born in the nineteenth century and universalised in the twentieth century, public education has emerged 'on the cutting edge of a new age' shrouded in a cloak of crisis and contradiction. During the twentieth century the administration of the public service sector, including primary and secondary schooling, has been radically transformed. The one room/one teacher rural schoolhouse of the agrarian age has spawned the creation of large multi-classroom institutions in our industrial cities and consolidated rural areas. The role of the school administrator has also dramatically changed. Once, a practising teacher with added supervisory skills in plant operations, discipline and record keeping was in charge of the building, the teachers and their students. In the twenty-first century a full professional manager responsible for financial, instructional, human resources and facilities leadership is demanded.

School governance has also changed. Central authorities with control of legislation, funding and curriculum and programme standards are increasingly downloading some of these responsibilities to local municipalities or individual schools. This process of decentralisation and deregulation has had a profound impact on the role of the school manager. The movement to a more market-driven economy and the advent of new information and communication technologies have strongly affected all forms of public service, including schooling. Political and media forces are demanding more quality and accountability from our service delivery systems. The publishing of student test scores, teacher testing and curriculum and programme reform have often resulted in a public perception that teachers may be incompetent and schools poorly managed. Many professional educators are suffering from employment insecurity, stress-burnout, decreasing job satisfaction and low self-esteem. As we continue to embrace a lifelong, learner-focused economy, the need to strengthen this area of human capital has never been more apparent. This is of particular concern as the teachers and principals of the post-war baby boom reach retirement age. Who will

engender the learning organisations, social skills, moral values, civility and childcare which parents expect of schools in our new information-driven society?

What is the future role of the student, the parent, the teacher, the principal and the school in this ever-changing social, political and economic environment? Early in the twentieth century, educational philosopher John Dewey saw the future of schools as either ‘preservers of the status quo’ or ‘anticipators of the future’. It is the latter role that most educators are striving to pursue.

In the year 2000, I was lead author and expert consultant for a study of innovations in school management conducted by the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in Paris. The membership of the OECD includes the 30 most industrialised nations in the world. Nine member countries chose to be part of the study: Belgium (Flanders); Greece; Hungary; Japan; Mexico; the Netherlands; Sweden; the United Kingdom (England) and the United States of America (OECD 2001c). The following chapters are derived partially from insights and data gained from participating in the study, my own research in the field and personal experience over 35 years as a teacher, principal and school superintendent. They will trace the evolution of school administration from the nineteenth-century agrarian economy, through the industrial age of the twentieth century to the emerging knowledge economy as we enter the twenty-first century.

Factors which are currently transforming the nature of public education management include the ongoing debate as to whether ‘reform’ or ‘renewal’ is the best means to improve school performance. This involves the struggle between ‘top-down versus bottom-up’ styles of school leadership in a neo-conservative political environment.

The impact of such issues as decentralisation and deregulation; academic testing; external assessment; self-evaluation; performance incentives; privatisation; community involvement; resource development; the politicisation of the school environment, safety and security; information communication technology; and knowledge management are delineated. Finally, experiences gained from preparing school leaders among the nine OECD countries and beyond are compared and contrasted. The book concludes with a survey of the innovations and ‘best practices’ which seem to be making a difference as school management training comes of age, while our social, political and economic forces continue to struggle to understand the nature of leadership in a society where ‘the only constant is change’.

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1 Crisis in the classroom

A provocative series by Louise Brown in the *Toronto Star* newspaper dealt with the ‘crisis in the classroom’. She provided the following ‘sample want ad’ for a prospective school principal in the year 2000.

WANTED – Experienced manager; someone who can influence client groups of all ages, boost staff morale, hold spending under budget, juggle union contracts, referee arguments, defuse violence, schmooze politicians, grasp new legislation and spell it out for others, who can be discreet yet speak out when needed and who, in any spare time, can charm the larger community into donating items for which there is no longer any budget.

WARNING – The hours are long, job security is weak and you will bear the brunt of public reaction to every change to hit the school system.

Louise Brown’s job description captures a feeling for the sense of crisis and despair which school leaders face as educational managers in a new social, political and economic age.

Schooling for an industrial age

The emergence of schooling as an essential public service has most often mirrored economic and societal trends. In an agricultural economy, work-related apprenticeship and problem-solving skills were the learning mode with limited need for literacy and numeracy. Children contributed to the wealth and well being of the family through their labour – tending the flocks, tilling the soil or weeding the garden. There was a job and a sense of identity for everyone as valued members of the economic unit. That all began to change, as farming became more automated and improved literacy and numeracy skills were needed to support commerce in agricultural goods and services.

The industrial revolution, particularly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the United Kingdom and the United States, defined and accelerated the need for literacy, numeracy and scientific skills. Public

2 *Crisis in the classroom*

schooling blossomed as society became increasingly urbanised, providing a workforce for the burgeoning manufacturing and resource harvesting industries. The size of the family, once a source of rural pride and economic strength, now became a liability in the crowded cities and mill towns. As academic and vocational training became essential to fill the employment needs of the industrial age, the strength and well-being of the family was continually threatened. More parents were drawn onto the production lines allowing less time for nurturing and value mentoring. Schools not only met the need for a skilled and literate workforce, but they also became agents of socialisation, morality and citizenship, as well as providing safety and security for children in an increasingly complex and threatening urban environment.

Schools have also reflected their times both physically and organisationally. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, their architecture had much in common with the utilitarian and functionalism associated with the housing of assembly lines. As organisations, they often assumed the supervisory style of a manufacturing enterprise feeding its branch plants. The principal, as branch manager, was responsible for providing services according to a predetermined common set of standards, and anticipated outcomes, called the curriculum and programme. It was very much a hierarchical managerial model with principals directing teachers, who supervised and instructed children, in response to the needs of parents and employers. By the latter part of the nineteenth century, national (and state) governments mandated formal systems of education, with a set curriculum and provision for teacher training and certification, to ensure loyal, productive and socially contented citizens. State schooling signalled the advent of mass education and the spread of popular literacy throughout the United Kingdom, the United States, continental Europe and beyond.

In the 1880s the American efficiency expert, Frederick Winslow Taylor, introduced a technique, later to be known as 'time and motion studies', to the steel industry. He applied objective scientific data and management to increase output by 'working smarter'. Scientific management believes that every act of every worker can be reduced to a mechanical principle and then made more efficient (Stein 2001). Productivity exploded as machines created greater capacity and Taylorism was applied to the industrial process.

The self-esteem of workers suffered however as individual craftsmanship and problem-solving skills were sacrificed in an ever-spiralling quest for increased production. What they gained was an increase in wages and lower prices for consumer goods, but the relationship of workers to the workplace changed dramatically.

After World War I, the success of American industrial production made scientific management influential throughout the world. It was not long before the lessons gained from the American (and British) workplace jumped from the factory floor to the classroom. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching led the way by espousing the organisation

of schools along more modern, national, scientific and bureaucratic lines – ‘the factory school was born’ (Abbott and Ryan 2000).

The key to worker success in the scientifically managed factory was the ability to read and comprehend shop manuals and do basic mathematical calculations. All workers then needed the ‘3Rs’ to survive in the modern industrial workplace. Schools met the challenge very successfully, and in several decades literacy and numeracy rates soared from single digits to the eightieth and ninetieth percentiles.

Schools were also given the task of ‘sorting’ individuals to suit the needs of an increasingly specialised labour market. A system of ‘meritocracy’ evolved to decide which students should receive advanced education and training to assume managerial and leadership positions and which should be relegated to toil on the factory floor. It was a system that operated under the premise that 10 per cent would lead and 90 per cent would follow. To quote Charles Eliot, president of Harvard University in 1897:

The duty of democratic education, in addition to preparing a whole literate populace, was to cultivate the natural aristocracy, so that the whole community could benefit from the fulfilment of its ablest citizens ... and so that educational resources would not be wasted on those unable to employ them profitably.

(Boorstin 1973)

This process of ‘educational sorting’ and meritocracy was seen by governments of the day as a just way to reward intelligence and avoid discriminating on the basis of class, race or gender. To promote good government and avoid corruption, professional administrators became enamoured with the creed of scientific management to improve organisational performance and efficiency.

The factory system of education was not unique to the United States and soon gained a world following. To quote the English historian David Wardle concerning British schools:

It was the factory put into the educational setting ... Every characteristic was there, minute division of labour ... a complicated system of incentives to do good work, an impressive system of inspection and finally an attention to cost efficiency and the economic use of plant.

(Wardle 1976)

Schooling for a new economy

Schools of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries helped governments, business and industry to cope with a traumatic shift from an agrarian society of small, dispersed communities, to an industrial factory-based economy of large impersonal cities and workplaces. Schools were also

4 *Crisis in the classroom*

organised efficiently to provide safety and security to the children (and adolescents) of working adults unable to impart the skills, values and attitudes to ensure survival in a mass industrial society.

The later part of the twentieth century however began a revolutionary restructuring of our social, cultural and economic environment. Our massive, entrenched system of education, designed for a different time, is now struggling to cope with a radically transforming post-industrial age. To quote Harvard's Howard Gardner:

It would not be an exaggeration to maintain that schools have not changed in a hundred years. Both in the United States and abroad, there are new topics (such as ecology), new tools (personal computers, VCRs), and at least some new practices – universal kindergarten, special education for those with learning problems, efforts to 'mainstream' students who have physical or emotional problems. Still apart from a few relatively superficial changes, human beings miraculously transported from 1900 would recognise much of what goes on in today's classrooms – the prevalent lecturing, the emphasis on drill, the decontextualised materials and activities ranging from basal readers to weekly spelling tests. With the possible exception of the Church, few institutions have changed as little in fundamental ways as those charged with the formal education of the next generation.

(Gardner 1999)

There has also been a dramatic change in the way we produce and distribute goods and services; organise companies; workplaces, and indeed the overall economy. In the former economy, 'vertical integration' was a basic principle in organising a company so that it could control as much in-house as possible. The new economy encourages outsourcing and even 'virtual companies' made possible by new information and communication technologies and the Internet. It is estimated that by 2004, these 'e-commerce' systems will generate U.S. \$6.8 trillion compared to \$80 billion in 1998. Companies are faced with the challenge to move to the new economy in order to be at the forefront of new opportunities that emerge in this new industrial revolution. Traditional limits to economic expansion are no longer relevant (Crane 2000a).

Where does this leave schooling and our traditional educational service systems? The increased globalisation of trade and the influence of information technology have led to a period of prolonged prosperity among the world's richest, most industrialised countries. For the average worker in these countries, however, the new economy has often meant employment instability due to plant closures, restructuring of workforces and global outsourcing (the end of the 'job for life'). But in the United States and Britain, workers actually put in more hours on the job (or more than one job) than their counterparts in other industrialised nations. Greater earning power

and easier credit has fuelled a boom in prosperity and consumer spending, but at what cost?

An increasing number of women have joined the labour force to sustain the economy and life style of the family unit (especially lone-parent families) or to enlarge their purchasing power. As a result, fewer children are being born in developed countries, especially to parents with more than high school education. When adults do have a family, there is an increasing trend to 'outsource' the raising of their children to child care and educational professionals. School personnel are being asked to do more and more to pick up the deficit in the parenting role. To quote Abbott and Ryan (2000): 'Kids are being born into more affluence, but they get less and less time with adults who love them.'

Schooling in the industrial age was very much shaped by the science of behaviourism, which defined educational success as:

- mastery of basic skills;
- largely solitary study;
- generally uninterrupted work;
- concentration on a single subject;
- much written work;
- higher analytical ability.

Today's social and economic environment argues for a different model of learning:

- mastery of basic skills;
- ability to work with others;
- being able to deal with constant distractions;
- working at different levels across different disciplines;
- improving of verbal skills;
- problem solving and decision making.

These are the kinds of competencies which employers often quote as basic characteristics of the post-industrial age employee. It is interesting to note that 'basic skills' is the only common element between the two ages. Could it be that schools, which focus on the first (nineteenth- and twentieth-century) list, are creating 'disabilities' among students destined for living and learning in the new economic age (Abbott and Ryan 2000)?

Rise of neo-conservatism

After World War II, industrialised nations, particularly the United States and the United Kingdom, experienced a growing disillusionment with big business, big labour and big government. Building on the free market theories of F. A. Hayek and Milton Friedman, social security and the welfare state were

under attack (Hayek 1944; Friedman and Friedman 1979). In the 1970s these theories became a movement, led by Margaret Thatcher and Keith Joseph in the U.K., which embraced the idea of an economy that offered greater risks and greater rewards to achieve a higher standard of living and prosperity for all. They wished ‘to liberate the economy from what they saw as the negative influences of government ownership, union domination and regulation in order to release the drive and ambition of individual entrepreneurs’ (Abbott and Ryan 2000).

They blamed big government for stripping citizens of their individual rights by seizing control of essential services such as schools, welfare, roads and even garbage collection. Ronald Reagan in the U.S. soon picked up the chant in 1984, when he argued that government had ‘pre-empted the family, neighbourhood, church and school organisations that act as a buffer and a bridge between the individual and the naked power of the state’ (Coleman 1987).

Thus the neo-conservative revolution was born with Thatcherism and Reaganomics demanding and securing a downsizing of government spending, particularly on essential human services, such as health and education. As a result, the call for lower taxes, a balanced budget and debt reduction became the pathway to political power across the western world. These policies have been championed by successive governments at both national and state levels. While the result in the 1990s has been unparalleled economic growth and increased prosperity for some, it has also led to massive socio-economic inequalities in both U.S. and the U.K. To quote the Economic Policy Institute in Washington, D.C.:

The United States had the highest overall poverty rate among 16 advanced economies in the late 1980s and 1990s. High-income families (those in the ninetieth percentile of family income) in the United States earn almost 6 times more than their low-income counterparts (those in the 10th percentile). The average ratio for other advanced economies is under four with only the United Kingdom (with a ratio of about five) anywhere near the United States level.

In fact, U.S. inequality is so severe that low-income families in the United States are worse off than low-income families in the 12 other advanced economies for which comparable data exist, despite the higher average income level in the United States. (The United Kingdom is the only country where low-income families are worse off than in the United States). Inequality in the United States (along with the United Kingdom) has also shown a strong tendency to rise over the last two decades, even as inequality was relatively stable or declining in most of the rest of the advanced economies (Mishel *et al.* 1999). Today’s policies of decentralisation, deregulation, privatisation and school reform are among the legacies of the neo-conservative political movement.

The result for students, teachers, parents and school managers has been a sense of confusion as to what their role should be as we move from the twentieth to the twenty-first century – from the industrial to the post-industrial age. Is learning and schooling compatible with the demands of scientific management from the industrial age seeking ‘one best system’ of standardisation and homogenisation? This ‘cult of efficiency’ demands that schools be more effective when there is no understanding of what makes a school effective in a post-industrial economy which stresses innovation, differentiation and flexibility rather than top-down command and control.

While neo-conservatism has applied the rigid industrial principles of scientific management and cost effectiveness to schooling and other public services in its quest for political domination, the needs of the emerging post-industrial economy are not being met. Schools find themselves struggling to survive on the cutting edge of a social, political and economic revolution.

Reflections

It has been said that the educational reform movement that is sweeping the world was born out of an industrial age neo-conservative political ideology formulated in the United States and the United Kingdom. The language of educational reform would have been familiar in the Tayloresque industrial boardrooms of the early part of the twentieth century. Concern is expressed about ‘improving performance’ (through standardised testing?); increasing standards across the system (national or state-mandated curricula?) or making management more accountable (to company directors and other shareholders?).

This is ironic in 2003 considering the Arthur Andersen accounting scandals and stock market failures of such industry giants as Enron, WorldCom and Vivendi causing investors the loss of billions of dollars. In the United States the business dealings of CEOs and other senior executives of some energy, communications and ‘dot.com’ companies are being investigated for fraud, stock manipulation and insider trading with criminal charges pending. At the same time, thousands of their former workers are without jobs or pension protection. Are these the managerial role models the neo-conservative leaders would have our schools emulate?

Education as an essential public service is not synonymous with a twentieth-century production system for the manufacturing of automobiles. This disfunction, in both language and managerial behaviour, would seem to be a product of a ‘back to the future’ ideology which is out of touch with prevailing social and economic realities. Teachers and other educational leaders seem to be caught in a ‘time warp’ of divergent expectations.

2 Leadership in transition

As discussed in the previous chapter, the nature of public education is experiencing a rather radical transformation. This is no more apparent than in the area of school leadership. The terminology for school leader may range from such titles as principal, headmaster, head teacher, school manager, site manager, school director or administrator, depending upon the country. In each instance, however, we are speaking of the person appointed by a district school board, governing body, local or central government authority to be responsible for the day-to-day administrative and managerial duties concerning a school facility, its staff and students.

In the top-down industrial age, the job may have been more technical in nature with the principal enforcing a strict set of operating procedures, courses of study and programme specifications mandated from above. These responsibilities would most often be in addition to regular teaching duties. During the latter part of the twentieth century, the role began to change from an administrative technician, implementing policies mandated by central authority, to a semi-autonomous manager/instructional leader and developer of human resources. The change in job description has reflected the different social, cultural, economic, political and technological environment in which we find ourselves, as we begin a new millennium. This chapter will examine some of the policy changes which have brought about this transformation.

Safety and security

One outcome from the merging of industrial/economic and educational/schooling outcomes during the mid to late twentieth century has been the evolving role of the school as an alternative source of child care. The introduction of both parents into the workforce and the increase in the number of single-parent families has transformed the nature of the public school. Teachers and school administrators are expected to contribute to the safety, security and nurturing of students during the school day. With the decline of the influence of religious institutions, educators are required to impart social skills and moral values to their pupils.

Parents in their busy economic struggle to put food on the table, while making mortgage or rent payments, have less time to devote to the care and nurturing of their children. As the predominant socialising institution in society, schools have grudgingly taken on this extended role, further complicating the life of teachers and school leaders. Additions to the curricula have included courses and programmes in life and social skills, anger and conflict management. The school day has often been extended from early morning to early evening to care for children of working parents. In this regard, schools have often assumed a custodial function for children whose family life is in a state of crisis due to marital break-down, lack of parental supervision and economic insecurity.

The increase in the incidence of violent acts involving bullying, weapons, assault and even murder has resulted in a cry for more safety and security by parents, politicians and other taxpayers. The Columbine High School massacre in the United States (and more recently in Erfut, Germany: ABC News 2002) has increased the use of metal detectors and security patrols in schools further expanding the responsibilities of the teacher and school manager. Indeed, the 11 September 2001 attack on the World Trade Center and incidents of bioterrorism are magnifying the insecurity, fear, and even hysteria, currently felt by parents and teachers.

Another area of concern has been in the increased incidence of violence directed toward teachers by students. This has become of particular concern in England where the National Union of Teachers reports an average of one occurrence per day of violent attacks by pupils against teachers. To quote the general secretary of the National Association of Headmasters: 'Teachers are expected to put up with the type of behaviour that if it happened anywhere else would be treated as a criminal act ... a reflection of the increasing number of dysfunctional families and dysfunctional parents' (BBC News 2002a).

Concerns about safety and security in the United States have resulted in new laws and policies being enacted to deal with student offenders. Often referred to as 'zero tolerance', in a growing number of jurisdictions, those committing offences such as weapon possession; assault; possession or dealing drugs; or even the use of offensive language, can be expelled indefinitely. Such offenders might also be confined to so-called strict discipline or boot camp facilities operated by the private sector.

In the United Kingdom, the government decided that the battle against drugs needed 'shock tactics' and encouraged head teachers to adopt a 'one strike and you're out' approach. The result has been a dramatic rise in the number of students being permanently expelled. This is in spite of the fact that a 1988 government study found that such 'shock tactics' seldom work (BBC News 2002d).

Rural/urban consolidation

As previously stated, the movement of families from an agrarian to an industrial-based economy has had a profound influence on the nature of schooling. The small, often one-room rural schools of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, to which pupils could walk from their farm homes, have been consolidated into large, multi-class institutions. Today's rural students may spend up to three hours per day on school buses to gain an education.

Of greater impact has been the automation of agriculture with a small fraction of the previous workforce required to achieve the same level of production. Those displaced from the rural areas migrated to the towns and cities in search of work in the factories and mills of the industrial heartland. The same architects who designed such structures were often assigned the task of building schools to house the children of these workers. Thus the same sense of efficiency by design and scientific management was to be found in both settings. The behaviour of students, teachers and school managers in both rural and urban areas was profoundly affected by these demographic changes.

Knowledge economy

The later part of the twentieth century saw the advent of the computer driven knowledge-based economy. Manufacturing, service and natural resources have been virtually integrated. The new economy has shifted from a top-down vertical system of scientific management to a style of leadership driven by information and communication technologies such as the Internet. Knowledge management is an essential source of innovation in confronting problems of competitiveness facing organisations in the new economy. It may be defined as 'any process or practice of creating, acquiring, capturing, sharing and using knowledge, wherever it resides, to enhance learning and performance in organisations' (Scarborough *et al.* 1999).

Primary and secondary schools have traditionally been defined as 'a place or establishment where instruction is given' (*New Webster's Dictionary* 1981). But schools are also places where learning takes place – 'a highly personal and reflective activity that enables the individual to draw upon previous experience to understand and evaluate the present, so as to shape future action and formulate new knowledge' (Abbott and Ryan 2000).

Schools are no longer being viewed as simply an efficient means to prepare workers for the industrial economy. They are seen rather as a means of preparation for lifelong learning which 'involves people learning in a variety of places – leisure, work, home – not just formal educational organisations, which requires a fundamental shift in how people define education, take personal control of it, and shape it to their goals and lives' (OECD 2000e).

Schools of the twenty-first century are therefore being seen as learning organisations ‘where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together’ (Senge 1990).

A contradiction arises, however, when school managers are expected to enforce a top-down-mandated curriculum, compete with other schools in improving standardised test scores, and operate a safe, secure and disciplined environment. Peter Senge’s description of the ‘learning organisation’ would seem to be in conflict with the scientific management agenda advocated by the neo-conservatives.

Reform versus renewal

The former part-time teacher/administrator of the nineteenth to mid-twentieth century must now become the full-time principal/manager strengthening social and human capital in a learning organisation. The ‘school reform’ movement as applied across the developed world has been most often shaped by the scientific management methodology of the industrial age. It refers to the top-down restructuring of the educational curriculum and programme by advocating clearly defined academic standards and student testing procedures, while holding educational personnel strictly accountable for improving their levels of productivity (student achievement). The disparity between scientific management with its ‘school as factory’ industrial efficiency and the learning organisation envisioned by the knowledge economy has left teachers and principals frustrated and confused as to their role in society.

Another approach to educational improvement has been ‘school renewal’ – a bottom-up process whereby people in and around schools improve their practice by developing the collaborative mechanisms necessary to improve the quality of their schools relatively free of the linearity of specialised ends, means and outcomes.

Kenneth Sirotnik in his article ‘Making sense of educational renewal’ contrasts educational reform versus educational renewal:

Reform is about whatever is politically fashionable, pendulum-like in popularity and usually underfunded, lacking in professional development and short-lived. Renewal is about the process of individual and organisational change, about nurturing the spiritual, affective and intellectual connections in the lives of educators working together to understand and improve their practice... it is about continuous, critical inquiry into current practices and principled innovation that might improve education.

(Sirotnik 1999)

12 *Leadership in transition*

John Gardner believes educational renewal begins with 'self-renewal'. In living a renewing life people are apt to:

- 1 recognise and break out of ruts or patterns;
- 2 reflect on and carry out an ongoing process of self-inquiry;
- 3 see education as a lifelong process;
- 4 embrace failure as one of the best of all learning experiences;
- 5 be capable of mutually respectful, just and caring relationships with others.

(Gardner 1963)

These are seen as being consistent with the moral dimensions which should guide those who would be educators in a democratic society.

Renewal is about collaboration and its leaders need to acquire five critical skills to improve the educational environment:

- 1 to establish a shared mission;
- 2 to work as change agents;
- 3 to collaborate with colleagues;
- 4 to think inclusively about all constituents;
- 5 to perceive and make explicit the connections between theory and practice.

(Smith 1999)

School renewal appears to be a process which complements the ideals of the knowledge economy and the learning organisation. However, today's teachers and school leaders too often seem victims of a cult of efficiency, which demands accountability to a managerial system which is no longer relevant. The fact that education is vulnerable to cost cutting as part of a neo-conservative political agenda further complicates and threatens the future role of schools in a post-industrial society (Stein 2001).

3 Loosening the ties

Decentralisation involves the downloading of decision-making tasks, including financial, personnel and facilities management to a lower level. Deregulation consists of a devolving of decision-making powers in the belief that the central authority is too remote from the action to be held accountable to the local recipients of service.

The combination of senior government decentralisation and deregulation may create a loose/tight conundrum for educators. Both policies are steeped in the ideology of neo-conservatism. Down loading financial responsibilities to the local school or school district allows the senior level of government to reduce spending and introduce tax cuts at the national or state level. As the costs of schooling and health care are often the most expensive lines in the budget, any reduction in taxation could gain votes for the senior government in the next election.

Schools and school districts are then left with the problem of avoiding a reduction of services, by seeking compensatory funds through either an increase in taxes to local ratepayers or through other kinds of revenue generation (e.g. fees, facility rentals or fundraising). The burden of parental and student discontent then falls on locally-elected trustees or school governors. More senior levels of government remain insulated from the impact of service reduction or voter discontent. The downloading of fiscal responsibility without a comparable transfer of the financial resources continues to be a major concern in the governance and management of schools.

In the educational context, the central (or state) government may continue to control the content of what is taught through a 'national curriculum' enforced by external standardised testing. The programme of the school and the performance of principals and teachers may also be regularly scrutinised through personnel assessment or inspectorial visits by central authorities or their delegates. Results of academic achievement testing and the assessment of school performance may be released to area news media to justify central and local political policies such as spending cuts, privatisation of services and school closures. This 'do better with less' ideology has been extremely successful as a political strategy to 'bash the teachers and trash the schools'. If the public sees the schools as 'broken institutions in need of repair' and

teachers and principals as 'lazy and incompetent' they become more vulnerable to political manipulation and personal disillusionment. Examples of the effects of decentralisation and deregulation are to be found among the following nations comprising this study.

Flanders

Since 1970, Belgium has been a federal state with three communities: Flemish; French; and German-speaking. Each community is responsible for its own education policy, but the federal government retains jurisdiction over pensions, compulsory education and diploma-granting provisions. The Flemish community, however, has moved towards a more decentralised system by giving greater autonomy to local school councils as opposed to the two school networks of subsidised private schools and provincial or municipal schools. More resources, therefore, now go directly to individual schools with fewer responsibilities vested in the 'umbrella' organisations. This implies more autonomy, more participation of the stakeholders and encouragement of the process of local self-evaluation.

England

School reforms in England since 1988 have delegated organisational decision making to the school level and divided curricular decision making between central government (content) and schools (pedagogy). Parents have been encouraged to choose schools on the basis of their examination results. School funding in turn is dependent upon per pupil grants, meaning they must improve their recruitment strategies to survive.

This market-driven form of competition among schools also has a process known as 'target setting'. The governing body of a school is required to publish a target value for test performance for a cohort of students in advance of studying for their exams. Targets are to be negotiated with the local education authority dependent upon one element: 'the past achievements of the best of similar schools'. Thus instead of just bettering their previous test performance schools must now compete with the past achievements of the best of similar schools. Brian Fidler in a 1998 article in *School Leadership and Management* poses the question: 'If competition is to be used as a major source of pressure on schools to improve, what evidence is there from the commercial sector that market forces do actually spur organisations to improve?'

The corporate commercial sector maintains market driven competition is the way to improve schools. But what have recent developments in the market-driven economy demonstrated to public schooling? In little more than one year, Marconi plc, the once high-flying British telecom company, has crashed to earth. Its shares, worth \$18 each in 2000 have now been reduced to a couple of pennies in value. The new millennium has seen the collapse of

the telecommunications sector, leaving thousands of workers without jobs and millions of small shareholders with almost worthless paper (McBride 2002).

The Education Reform Act of 1988 has had a profound influence on the management of schools in England and Wales. Prior to the Act, local education authorities (LEAs) were responsible for the provision of schools in their areas. While the central government controlled overall spending levels, LEAs set funding and staffing rates for each of their schools, student catchment areas and most curriculum policies.

The 1988 Act changed all of that. The central government assumed responsibility for a national curriculum and school operating budgets. It encouraged competition between schools and the privatisation of services traditionally offered by the LEAs. Budgets were delegated to the individual schools according to numbers and ages of students enrolled. While LEAs continued to set the formula used to calculate specific allocations, they were no longer able to control budgets for individual schools or staffing levels. Control of the budget was delegated to school governors appointed by the government to oversee the day-to-day operations of the school. As a result, principals were required to be influential over such decisions as the number and level of staff employed by the school. Therefore, schools were able to hire their own teachers rather than just deploy staff allocated by the LEAs. In addition, school governors were responsible for appointing head teachers with limited input from the LEAs.

United States

According to the United States constitution, the responsibility for public education is divested to the states. Each of the 50 states has its own department of education, which delegates the actual operation of schools from kindergarten to grade 12 to a number of local public school districts. The current national concern for school reform has meant that virtually every state has set standards of accountability for curriculum content and academic performance for students at each grade level and for each subject area. These results are typically made public, with comparison data across districts so that communities can assess their district's performance in relation to other districts. Public opinion, fuelled by electronic and print media commentary, has translated into political policies designed to ensure school performance and local accountability.

In the United States, states and school districts are exploring ways to give schools more autonomy. Proponents of decentralisation quote examples of corporate restructuring in the private sector where decentralised and simplified administration has increased efficiency. They point to research studies that link school effectiveness to school-level decision making. Those ultimately responsible for school success – teachers, students and parents – need to participate in key school-level decisions (CPRE 1990).

School-based management (SBM) in the United States promotes improvement by decentralising control from central district offices to individual school sites. Administrators, teachers, parents and other community members are to gain more authority over budget, personnel and curriculum in individual schools. In order to achieve performance improvement through SBM, control of four resources needs to be decentralised throughout the organisation:

- power to make decisions that influence school practices, policies and directions;
- knowledge that enables staff to understand and contribute to school performance, including technical knowledge to provide the service, interpersonal skills and managerial knowledge and expertise;
- information about the school's performance including revenues, expenditures, student achievement, progress towards meeting its goals and how parents and other citizens perceive its services;
- rewards that are based on school performance and the contributions of individuals.

(Wohlstetter and Mohrman 1993)

Seattle public schools in the United States allocate financial resources to their schools to enhance SBM. The district has developed and adopted a decentralised financial management strategy. Resources are allocated to schools based on a weighted student enrolment formula in which students with greater learning resource needs generate a larger allocation of funds to the school site. Principals act as chief executive officers for their schools and have broad authority to allocate resources to school-determined priorities. The district has developed a web-based budget development and management system to enable schools successfully to carry out the formula budgeting policy.

But, in fact, there is mixed evidence that schools get better just because decisions are made by those closer to the classroom. The Consortium for Policy Research in Education conducted an in-depth study of 27 schools in three U.S. school districts, one Canadian province and one Australian state that had been involved in school-based management for at least four years. Slightly more than half of the schools studied could be characterised as 'actively restructuring' in that reform efforts had produced changes in curriculum and instruction. The other half were going through the motions of SBM but little change had occurred.

The study concluded that 'the decentralisation of power is most likely to lead to performance improvement if accompanied by organisational changes that enhance the information, knowledge and skills of local participants, and that align the reward system with clearly articulated desired outcomes' (Wohlstetter and Mohrman 1994).

Research indicates that school-based management 'can help foster an improved school culture and higher quality decisions'. It is a potentially

valuable tool for engaging more talents and enthusiasm among stakeholders than traditional, top-down governance systems. There is a concern, however, that principals receive improved pre-service and in-service training to be better school-based-managers.

Mexico

In Mexico the federal Ministry of Public Education (SEP) has traditionally directed a centralised bureaucratic education system devoted to school administrative procedures rather than managerial responsibilities. Teachers, principals and supervisors became preoccupied with political issues concerning working conditions, with education worker unions being very influential. School technical councils, established to provide academic planning, spent most of their time on administrative details rather than academic instruction and assessment and school improvement. Parental involvement was practically non-existent and teachers, principals and supervisors were poorly trained and lacked clearly defined tenure and retirement provisions.

In 1992, however, the Ministry of Public Education joined with the governments of 31 states and the National Union of Educational Workers (SNTE) to create the 'National Agreement for the Modernisation of Basic Education'. As a result the responsibility for basic educational services, previously provided by the federal government, was transferred to each individual state. This included the management of all pre-school, elementary and lower secondary schools as well as teacher education services. Funding was allocated to ensure the quality of these services.

While funds were transferred to state governments to identify needs and provide educational services to meet these needs, the federal government retained the responsibility for the provision of study plans, educational materials (e.g. primary school texts) and instructional resources for teachers.

In 1995 the federal government proclaimed the '1995–2000 Educational Development Programme'. Strategies and actions undertaken by SEP have included:

- public spending for education was increased with 4.5 per cent of the GDP (1997) assigned to improve access to schooling for students at the basic, upper secondary and post-secondary levels;
- state governments were given the right to manage 10 per cent of the federal budget to include personnel training, construction, maintenance and the equipping of schools;
- the Programme for Education, Health and Nutrition (PROGESA) was created to serve disadvantaged populations including indigenous peoples, farm and migratory workers, marginalised communities and special needs children;
- curricular reform at the basic level was introduced to improve literacy, numeracy and mathematical problem solving.

Pre-service and in-service teacher training was enhanced through the National Programme for the Permanent Modernisation of Basic Education Teachers (PRONAP) and the Teacher Career Programme. In 1996 the 'Programme for the Transformation and Academic Reinforcement of Initial Education Institutions' encouraged teacher education institutions to undertake curricular and infrastructure reform. About 500 teacher centres were established, equipped with satellite receivers, television, libraries and other facilities (OECD 2001c).

The Netherlands

The Ministry of Education in the Netherlands has a stated policy to decentralise and deregulate its educational services. Seventy per cent of schools are operated by the private non-profit sector (e.g. denominational schools) while 30 per cent are administered by local municipalities (state schools). This 'right of choice' allows parental, religious or cultural groups to establish, maintain and independently manage schools, which are financially supported by the Dutch government.

The Ministry of Education, however, continues to govern from a distance through a series of laws and regulations, which ensure ongoing financial, curricular and school monitoring policies to maintain 'quality control' at the local school level. A 'basic education' curriculum during the first three years of secondary school is regulated through final exams providing 'benchmarks' for levels and skills to be achieved. Intensive school monitoring by the inspectorates in primary and secondary education enforces normative standards of achievement.

A formula budget based on enrolment is allocated to each local school and its governing board. This consists of both 'lump sum' grants at the secondary level and the 'job budget' for staff allocation at the primary level providing local school autonomy in areas of financial, facility and personnel management. The outcome is a 'loose/tight' deregulation versus regulation conflict. Schools are expected to be more autonomous in their day-to-day financial, building and personnel areas while the national government continues to tighten controls on curriculum content, student achievement and school management, often resulting in a complex and contradictory environment.

In the Netherlands, school directors (principals) are responsible for the quality of their schools. They have their own budget, which is barely adequate and often has to be subsidised by money from sponsors. They are free, however, to spend the part of the budget known as the 'lump sum'. But if building repairs are necessary and there are no financial reserves, funds must be taken from other budgetary reserves such as the salary account (which amounts to 80 per cent of total expenditures). The school director also has responsibility for all personnel matters including hiring and firing, staff appraisals and union negotiations (Karstanje 1999).

Hungary

Emerging from the Soviet era, Hungary has gone through a process of democratisation and decentralisation with particular emphasis on the growth of the private sector. During the early 1990s, the country faced economic restructuring and a loss of export markets, which seriously affected the standard of living. Recession, unemployment, poverty and disparities among regions and social groups resulted in the introduction of a more market-driven stabilisation programme in the mid-1990s to encourage economic recovery. Restrictions on public spending, however, have seriously affected the provision of government services, including education.

A serious shortage of financial resources has led to low teacher salaries, which have not kept par with inflation. As a result, many teachers (the majority of them women) have had to take a second job to survive. Many leave the profession to seek better salaries in the private sector. Another concern is an overall decline in the number of young people aged 15 to 19. From about 850,000 in the late 1960s, the youth population has declined to about 650,000 in 2000. Schools and classes have traditionally been smaller. More than 800 schools out of a total of about 3,700 have fewer than 100 students. The average pupil/teacher ratio stands at about 12 in primary schools and 10 at the secondary level.

School financing has been based on a distribution of funds on a per student basis from the state to local self-governments who set the school budgets in their areas. Enrolment decreases may result in school closures and the merging of smaller schools. To attract students, schools must compete by advertising academic achievements, better working conditions for teachers and more attractive programmes.

Local self-governments or 'maintainers' consist of municipalities for public schools and churches and other groups for private schools. The Ministry of Finance allocates the same level of grants (based on the number of students, grade level, type of programme, etc.) to the municipalities and the private maintainers. In addition to per capita grants, maintainers may apply for special project funding to encourage innovation. Some schools also raise additional funds through the rental of facilities and special fee-paying courses. Vocational schools may receive up to 25 per cent of their budget from employers.

A national core curriculum was established in 1995 with guidelines for courses of study up to grade 10. It emphasises broad areas of knowledge and attainment targets for each grade level. Each school, however, is free to set the level of education and the type of programme to be provided.

In 1998 the newly elected government decided that schools needed more specific guidelines. It is currently introducing a so-called 'frame curriculum' which determines the number of lessons to be taught and the targets to be attained for each grade. This move to more centralisation promises to limit school autonomy and flexibility. A school has three options in adopting curriculum:

- develop its own;
- adopt one of those offered by a national data bank of 700 curricula developed by the National Institute of Public Education in 1996–97;
- modify the above to meet their own requirements.

(OECD 2001c)

Sweden

Sweden has adopted a policy of greater decentralisation and deregulation including the devolution of responsibility for curricula, teacher salaries and financial powers to the local municipalities. Educational management has evolved from one based on central rules and regulations to goal-based result management. It is the responsibility of the government to set the overall goals but local municipalities may follow different approaches to reach these goals. Local politicians, management staff and teachers are responsible for transferring national goals to a local curriculum known as the ‘working plan’. The municipality must ensure that the working plan is implemented, monitored and evaluated. The emphasis shifts from traditional top-down teaching to the creation of a ‘learning environment’ (OECD 2001c).

Greece

Greece has had a long tradition of highly centralised, tightly regulated public education with legislation determining the organisation of schools including the national curriculum; teaching methods; texts; exams; funding; and staffing. More recently the government has sought to encourage innovation by decentralising and deregulating public administration including schooling. Difficulties have been experienced, however, in delegating duties from the Ministry of Education to the prefectures and between the prefectures and individual schools.

In 1985 a new framework allowed representatives from teachers’ unions and parental organisations to participate in decision-making processes. Funds and responsibilities were transferred to prefectures while the ownership and management of schools was to be transferred to public bodies. Parents and teachers’ unions were encouraged to participate in the management, planning and control of schools.

While welcomed by the media and various stakeholders, the legislation has proved difficult to implement. Centralised structures have remained resistant to change with parents, teachers and local communities having extremely limited influence. The role of the school administrator has continued to lack authority.

Because of difficulties in the transfer of funds from prefectures to local schools, the Minister of Education in 2000 decided to abandon the prefectural level and provide direct financial support to local schools. Some

schools are also gaining experience in handling school budgets through funding for national and transnational projects supported by the central government and the European Union (OECD 2001c).

Japan

Thatcher/Reagan economic policies continue to sweep the world. In 1997 the former Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa had these comments:

The end of the long Cold War has led to the defeat of centralised systems of bureaucratic control, one of which is Japan's system of bureaucracy-led co-operative administration. Today, with the nation plagued by economic stagnation, political indecision, lack of individuality and creativity and a host of other problems, many Japanese have become acutely aware of the defects of the Japanese-style system of social and economic management and of the need for radical reform. In a world-wide trend, radical administrative and fiscal reform, from centralised to decentralised systems, is coming to be seen as the most effective way to break out of such an economic and social impasse and bring renewed vitality. An important means of decentralising administrative and fiscal systems is the complete abolition of restrictive regulations.

(Miyazawa 1998)

Traditionally, centralised administration has been strong in Japan. In recent years, however, the national government has introduced deregulation and decentralisation policies to the public sector including education. For example, in 1998 the Japanese Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture (Monbusho) published two reports, one from the Committee for the Promotion of Decentralisation and a second from the Central Council for Education entitled 'Modalities for Local Educational Administration'. In 1999 Monbusho enacted the 'Package of Decentralisation Bills' which included reviews for school administration; qualifications of principals; the co-operation and advising of school staff meetings; the introduction of a school adviser system and more flexibility in class structures and the placement of teaching personnel.

Until 2000 principals and vice principals were required to hold teaching certificates. An amendment to the School Education Law (January 2000) allows persons without certification to assume positions as principals or vice principals. A school adviser drawn from the local community is nominated by the principal and appointed by the local municipal board of education as part of a move to create more 'open schools'.

Another area of reform is 'freedom of choice of schools'. In 1997 Monbusho allowed boards of education to enrol students from outside their traditional catchment areas. This freedom of choice at the compulsory

education level is seen by some as introducing principles of free market competition to public school education. Principals have limited scope in budgetary and staffing matters but more discretion in interpreting the curriculum. The boards of education are able to formulate their own curricula within the educational framework (OECD 2001c).

Reflections

In surveying the nations comprising this study, both decentralisation and deregulation turn out to be very appropriate strategies for a neo-conservative government bent on reducing public spending and shifting accountability to a more grass roots level. As spending for a service (such as schooling) is diminished, the consumers (parents and students) of the service will tend to vent their dissatisfaction and frustration at the local level. More senior levels of government, which hold the purse strings, are then buffered and protected from the wrath of the electorate.

Although some politicians may laud decentralisation and deregulation policies as a means of bringing ‘accountability to the people’, this is often not what has occurred. These policies have been used as an excuse to reduce funding and download services to introduce tax breaks. When financial support diminishes, principals and teachers may be blamed for a decline in programmes, such as special education, literacy, second-language and remedial instruction. As dissatisfaction rises at the local level, neo-conservative ideologues are eager to portray school personnel as lazy and incompetent. The combination of fewer resources, increasing class sizes, deteriorating facilities and plunging morale among school personnel is sure to be detrimental to student performance. It is, indeed, a self-fulfilling prophecy.

4 Test-score Olympics

There is a current political agenda in the United States and the United Kingdom, which is also to be found in most of the other countries in the industrialised world. During the past decade 41 countries have participated in three rounds of testing in mathematics and science (TIMSS). Virtually every American state has mandated ‘standards of accountability for academic content with standardised testing to assess the performance of students at different grade levels or in subject areas’. Comparative results are typically published in the press as so-called ‘league tables’ as part of a worldwide ‘test-score Olympics’ which contrasts the mathematics, science and reading test scores (OECD 2001b). Another example of the power of top-down academic assessment is to be found in the Canadian province of Ontario. The decision as to whether a student graduates is no longer left to the local school but now must be shared with the government. ‘Beginning in 2002, secondary school students in Ontario who fail the compulsory literacy test will not be allowed to graduate’ (Stein 2001).

While the test development agencies have been enriched by this industrial age quality control mechanism, there is a growing disagreement as to whether the procedure has really improved performance. The other concern raised has to do with measurement. What is being assessed – content or learning skills? If it turns out to be an exercise in ‘teaching to the test’ what has really been accomplished?

Philosopher John Dewey spoke out for an educational system which develops the full potential of each individual student. He argues that:

A common error is the assumption that there is one set of subject matter and skills to be presented to the young, only requiring to be presented and learned by the child, whose failure to meet the material supplied is attributed to his own incapacity or wilfulness, not the failure of the educator to understand what needs are stirring him.

(Dewey 1938)

The educational reform movement has gained considerable political momentum through a media frenzy of ‘teacher bashing’ based on test-score

performance. This is the ‘carrot and the stick’ with the stick (poor public image) eliciting insecurity and lowered self-esteem among education practitioners. Not a good motivational tool in the modern business environment which espouses investment in human capital – co-operation and teamwork – to improve productivity.

In 1989 the then U.S. President George Bush convened the first education summit of state governors to set educational goals for the year 2000, including:

- making the nation’s schools the world’s highest achievers in maths and science;
- wiping out adult illiteracy;
- raising high school graduation rates to 90 per cent.

After ten years of increased investment and political posturing, the *Washington Post* reported in 1999: ‘With 2000 a few months away, President Clinton and half the nation’s governors gathered for a third education summit with none of the education goals set in 1989 yet within reach. Despite a decade of reforms, efforts to meet these goals have generally failed’ (Cooper 1999).

National education policies have traditionally been impacted by such phenomena as international economic developments, wars, conflicts, terrorism and technological advances (e.g. Sputnik). Various political factions in the United States zeroed in on ‘reforming education’ as the best means to improve the nation’s visibility, economic productivity and viability as a world power (Blasé and Blasé 1999).

Strong, competing, ideological forces and changing political/social factors have fuelled a continuous debate concerning five fundamental questions.

- 1 Who should go to school?
- 2 What should be the purposes of schooling?
- 3 What should children be taught?
- 4 Who should decide issues of school direction and policy?
- 5 Who should pay for schools?

(Stout 1994)

While there is no consensus on these issues a politically oriented cast of characters struggling for power and control has seen reform as an influential agenda with voters. To quote the *Economist* (2000): ‘This election year may finally bring Americans face to face with the failure of their system of public education. The confrontation will be painful: 30 years of decline cannot be easily reversed. But if the right lessons are drawn, they could make American schools models for the world once again.’ In fact a Harris poll conducted across the United States in May 2000 saw 19 per cent of Americans list

concerns about 'education' as their major focus for the 2000 election year. This was the most important issue, followed by health care at 16 per cent and crime/violence at 13 per cent (*USA Today* 2000). The newly elected President, George W. Bush, responded in 2002 by signing the most far-reaching legislation in four decades. U.S. \$26 billion will be spent to broaden academic testing, triple spending for literacy programmes and help children escape America's worst public schools (Doland 2002).

President Bush's 'no child left behind' slogan certainly has not worked for Baltimore. In 2002, nearly 30 per cent of public elementary and middle school students began a new school year in the grades attended the year before. Many performed poorly on national standardised tests and did not attend summer school. But many of these under-achieving students fit a pattern. They are African American in high-poverty school districts. A report by The Education Trust, a non-profit organisation to boost student achievement, lays the blame on inner-city teachers who lack minimal academic qualifications (Wickham 2002).

However, efforts to improve school curriculum and programme by invoking industrial scientific managerial instruments to evaluate learning are not new in the United States. There have been repeated policy movements such as the use of standardised testing for college admissions, the National Defense Education Act and the 'back to basics' movement of the 1970s. Assessment driven reform as a political agenda is not even a new idea. In an article on the historical and policy foundations for assessment Madaus and O'Dwyer recount how in 1845 Horace Mann and his confidant Samuel Gidley Hower 'recognised that school by school test results would give them political leverage over recalcitrant headmasters' (Madaus and O'Dwyer 1999).

The underlying assumptions that drive the standards and assessment reform movement are disturbing:

- students are unmotivated and need more immediate consequences tied to their learning;
- teachers are either inadequately skilled or lack the motivation to inspire students to higher levels of learning;
- local communities, school board members and superintendents do not know what their students should be learning or to what degree they should be learning it;
- accountability through testing will pressure the system to improve.

(Ramirez 1999)

It has apparently been determined that state governors' summits and corporate chief executive officers through their national lobby 'Achieve Inc.' are best able to determine education policy. But they are not the only ones. Among the local political and interest groups encouraging school reform and more stringent educational accountability are:

- parent groups concerned with quality programmes for children;
- students concerned with curricular offerings, dress codes, behaviour and freedom of expression;
- teachers concerned with professional and employment issues;
- administrators concerned with channelling the energy of interest groups into quality educational programmes;
- taxpayers concerned with finance and equity;
- federal authorities concerned with legal mandates and court orders;
- minorities and women concerned with using research for improving schools;
- business and industry concerned with the knowledge and skills of the graduates they might eventually hire.

(Parkay and Stanford 1995)

A sampling of national performance testing experience is also to be found in the following nations participating in the OECD study of 2001(c).

United Kingdom

Almost two decades ago Margaret Thatcher introduced educational reform to the English-speaking world. She believed standardised testing, curriculum reform and the ranking of schools would boost student performance. Pupils now receive standardised performance testing at ages 7, 11, 14, 16, 17 and 18. English students have more public exams than any other country in the developed world.

The United Kingdom has adopted a policy of ranking schools according to student achievement. This information is published in the media as 'league tables' to inform parents and the school's community concerning student results, initially in standardised secondary school examinations at the 16-plus and 18-plus levels. Information is also provided on school attendance and the destinations of school leavers. However, a variety of factors influence these results, including the following:

- Is the school selective in the admission process?
- What is the average ability of students entering the school?
- What is the socio-economic status of students?
- What is the education level of their parents?

It is not surprising that schools from relatively affluent areas tend to rank highest on the league tables. Schools may be performing well considering the socio-economic background of their students but remain low in the rankings as compared to their more advantaged counterparts. It may be that a school from an affluent area which carefully accepts students according to ability, while ranking high on the tables, may in fact be performing poorly in not reaching their overall potential. Schools high in the rankings are seen as

‘successful schools’ thus attracting more enrolment and generating more financial resources. Schools from poorer areas must compete for students, staffing and funding, resulting in a debilitating effect on teacher and parental morale.

Next the government began publishing the results from national curriculum achievement tests at the ages of 7 and 11. Primary school parents are now scrutinising performance scores in search of the ‘successful school’ willing to admit their sons and daughters. The result has been a further stratification of schooling according to socio-economic status and intellectual ability. After 15 years of ‘naming and shaming’ underachieving schools, 53 per cent of 11-year-olds still failed to meet the national standards for literacy (Ash 2002).

In September 2002, the Education Secretary fired the Chairman of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) after head teachers called for an official inquiry to address charges that A-level examination results had been downgraded. It was reported that exam boards had a perception that they were being pressured by the QCA chairman to lower pass rates. The Education Secretary said she removed the chairman because there was ‘a loss of confidence in the QCA which needs to be resolved to give young people and their parents confidence in reliable A-level results this year and in future years’.

The subsequent inquiry resulted in the re-grading of an unknown number of A-level papers in 12 subjects including geography, French, German, Spanish, history, government and politics. As a result of the downgrading, many students were in danger of losing places at colleges and university. There was a concern, however, that students who were unfairly marked would not be re-offered their places. Some might have to change schools and not be able to transfer for at least a year if demand is too high.

The inquiry cleared the Education Secretary of pressuring the QCA to lower grade levels. However, the official opposition charged the Secretary with incompetence in that the rush to implement a new curriculum resulted in examining bodies and teachers having ‘no clear consistent view’ about standards required (BBC 2002j).

The Secretary responded by calling for extra training and guidance to examiners and teachers and promising consultation on a new system of qualification for 16- to 18-year-olds. However, one month later the Prime Minister appointed a new Education Secretary whose first priority was to restore faith in the A-level system. The results of 2,000 students had been upgraded but many students felt aggrieved and cheated (BBC News 2002j).

The Netherlands

Secondary schooling in the Netherlands focuses on a ‘basic education’ curriculum. A compulsory programme is mandated in the first three years followed by a mandatory central achievement test. The results of the test influence the selection of the students’ further education career. However, a division still exists between pre-vocational less privileged students and the more privileged senior secondary and pre-university education.

Japan

Japanese students have been known to perform well on international testing for academic achievement. However, an increase in the rates of juvenile delinquency, truancy, dropouts and bullying has been a cause of concern for the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture (Monbusho). Too much competition among students in the entrance exams, a lack of life experience in the natural environment, and excessive uniformity are seen as causes for violence against students and teachers. The suicide rate among young people has risen as a result of bullying.

Many students in Japan prepare for standardised tests by studying after school at privately owned instructional centres known as *juku*. Attendance depends upon the region of the country where the student lives, the size of the city and the student's grade level. Attendance is greatest in large cities during the last year of junior high school. Students enrol in remedial courses to review or enrich their school work or prepare themselves for high school entrance exams. Obviously, only students whose parents can afford to pay the tuition benefit from these programmes. In addition to *juku*, junior high school and high school students attend *hoshu* – extra remedial classes organised by teachers as a seventh period in the school day (Stevenson 1998).

To respond to these concerns, attempts have been made to alleviate pressure from school examinations through a reduction in the amount of content in the new courses of study and shortening of the school week from five and one-half to five days. Students are now encouraged to express their individuality through more involvement in the life of the community and through the teaching of cross-curricular themes including international understanding and environmental education.

Reflections

Across the nations, critics of standardised performance testing see such assessment as systematically favouring students from homogeneous cultural and socio-economic backgrounds (e.g. middle-class). Low-income students who do not quickly grasp school culture and the dominant mode of teaching and learning would not do well on these kinds of tests. Consequently, a revolt against standardised testing as a single measure of effectiveness and accountability is growing. Parents dispute the amount of classroom time taken to prepare students to take the test. This protest is not being led by parents and teachers from schools performing poorly but by those in affluent neighbourhoods where students generally do very well (Stein 2001).

But the performance testing juggernaut is not limited to students. Teacher performance is also coming under the scientific management microscope. To quote Alfie Kohn, one of the foremost critics of standardised testing:

I think we're living through a very dark period in American education where testing of students, testing of teachers, and top-down state standards all reflect a desire on the part of powerful interest groups to show how tough they can get with the people in schools. Virtually all of the criticisms levelled against testing in schools also apply to the quick and dirty attempt to demand accountability in testing teachers. Timed tests given to children are really evaluating speed rather than thoughtfulness and the same is true when they're given to adults. Multiple-choice tests and contrived open-response items are not meaningful ways of assessing how much students understand and neither are they particularly effective in telling us how well educators can educate.

(Appleman and Thompson 2000)

A study undertaken by Dylan William of King's College London for the Association of Teachers and Lecturers maintains that 'over-concentration on tests can lead to children not being prepared for jobs in the twenty-first century ... rising test scores demonstrate little more than teachers' abilities to teach to the tests, and the power of high stakes tests to distort the curriculum' (BBC News 2001b).

Another study, by the RAND organisation, was based on the analysis of National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests given to students between 1990 and 1996 in 44 U.S. states. They found that achievement scores could jump significantly in states with large percentages of minority and disadvantaged students if increased funding is invested in:

- lowering pupil/teacher ratios, which translates into smaller class sizes;
- making pre-kindergarten more widely available;
- allocating adequate resources to support the learning process.

Spending money in these three areas was seen as more important than teacher aides and higher teacher qualifications, experience and salaries. To quote David Grissmer, a key author of the study:

Our results certainly challenge the traditional view of public education as 'unreformable'. The achievement of disadvantaged students is still substantially affected by inadequate resources. Stronger federal compensatory programmes are required to address this inequity ... efforts to increase the quality of teachers in the long run are important, but significant productivity gains can be obtained with the current teaching force if working conditions are improved.

(Henry 2000)

Test scores became an issue in the 2000 presidential race as Texas Governor George W. Bush used the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills results as

part of his election platform. Huge increases in scores posted by state administered tests were not evident in national testing of students from the state. RAND concluded that ‘schools pressured by policies that reward or punish them for the scores could be devoting a great deal of class time to test preparation’ (McQueen 2000).

Schools under intense pressure to improve test scores often sacrifice vital areas of traditional schooling such as:

- programmes in the arts;
- life skills activities (to promote social and moral learning);
- electives for high school students;
- discussions about current events (not relevant to test material);
- use of literature in the early grades;
- entire subject areas such as science (if tests focus on language, arts or maths).

To quote Alfie Kohn:

Most of us have pet projects, favourite causes, practices and policies about which we care deeply. These include such issues as multiple intelligence, multi-age classrooms, or multicultural curricula; co-operative learning, character education, or the creation of caring communities in schools; teaching for understanding, developmentally appropriate practice, or alternative assessment; the integration of writing or the arts into the curriculum; project- or problem-based learning, discovery-oriented science, or whole language; giving teachers or students more autonomy, or working with administrators to help them make lasting change. But every one of these priorities is gravely threatened by the top-down, heavy-handed, corporate-style, standardised version of school reform that is driven by testing. That is why all of us, despite our disparate agendas, need to make common cause. We must make the fight against standardised tests our top priority because, until we have chased this monster from the schools, it will be difficult, perhaps even impossible, to pursue the kinds of reforms that can truly improve teaching and learning.

(Kohn 2002)

As previously stated, most countries have a standardised testing procedure in place to assess student achievement at fixed grade levels according to standards mandated in a national (or state) curriculum. Test results are often published in the media. Controversy continues to be expressed as to the content and methodology used in test administration. The question of whether minority language and cultural backgrounds among students provide a fair assessment of ability is also an issue. The fact that this procedure

is seen to be derived mainly from the industrial age scientific management movement, as opposed to comparative indicators of information age learning and employability skills, remains a concern. Finally, the impact that such a procedure may have on classroom practice (e.g. teach to the test) and the morale and self-esteem of teachers, parents and students continues to be questioned.

5 Top-down reform

A concern has been raised that the restructure/reform movement is not really about reform or restructuring at all. It rather represents a return to and strengthening of the traditional assessment-driven, top-down, highly centralised, bureaucratic system imposed on schools early in the twentieth century. This resulted from the perceived success of Frederick Taylor's efficiency/productivity model of scientific industrial management as described in Chapter 1.

When applied to public education it created a rigidly organised, inflexible factory system where everyone was treated 'as an interchangeable cog in an educational production machine'. Teachers and administrators responded in the same fashion as their industrial counterparts. They formed adversarial unions to provide some degree of job protection to the 'workers' through negotiated wages, hours and working conditions. This led the unions to impose strictly enforced rules and regulations concerning the behaviour of their members, which placed further limitations on school autonomy and the freedom to innovate (Clinchy 1998).

The neo-conservative political movement and its corporate supporters within the private sector found considerable mileage in portraying schools to be in a 'sorry state of disrepair'. Beginning in 1983 with the U.S. Presidential National Commission on Excellence in Education report *A Nation at Risk* (as well as similar studies and policy documents across many of the other eight countries) schools and school districts were feeling enormous pressures to 'reform' and 'restructure' themselves. To quote Evans Clinchy in a 1998 article in the *Phi Delta Kappan*:

A Nation at Risk advocated a major effort on the part of local school districts, state governments and the federal education establishment to dramatically improve the academic achievement of all American students and to raise the academic standards they must meet. This enormous task, the report said, was to involve the establishment of a new set of 'world-class' but purely 'voluntary' academic standards in the 'core' academic disciplines. These 'higher' standards were to be

accompanied by equally challenging national (and international) tests to make sure the standards were met.’

(Clinchy 1988)

It made no matter that respected researchers questioned the interpretations of the test data as a focus for assessment-driven reform. They suggested that American students actually scored quite well when strictly compared with similar students in other industrialised nations (Berliner and Biddle 1996). Not all nations practise mass education but many focus their schooling and testing efforts on the ‘the brightest and the best’. Nevertheless, the notion of a ‘test-score Olympics’ was born whereby the academic test results of nations around the world are contrasted to see who is the most ‘academically fit’ in such subjects as maths, science and reading. Considerable prestige and even economic benefit may follow in an age when universal access to information has become a global commodity.

United States

An example of the possible impact of such assessment-driven reform may be found in some of the school redesign policies implemented in the Cincinnati public schools in the United States. When a school’s test scores indicate their academic performance targets have not been met, the superintendent establishes a district level school redesign team consisting of lead teachers, school building leaders and senior district leaders. The school is then placed in the School Assistance and Redesign Plan (SARP), subject to assignment to the following categories:

- 1 *School improvement* – the school staff, leadership facilitator and deputy superintendent review the school’s performance plan and may recommend changes.
- 2 *School intervention* – an external review team is convened, co-chaired by a lead teacher (appointed by the Cincinnati Teachers’ Federation) and a principal (appointed by the superintendent). Two or three other external members are appointed by the school redesign team. The external review team (ERT) will assess the school’s effectiveness through a review of performance data; classroom visits; parental involvement; extra-curricular activities and interviews with all stakeholders (e.g. teachers, administrators, parents, students and community members). The ERT then makes recommendations to the school redesign team who may take action as follows:
 - mandate professional development activities for all staff;
 - require that the school select a comprehensive reform model from an approved list (e.g. American’s choice, direct instruction, expeditionary learning, etc.);
 - modify the school’s plan;

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- make changes in the budget consistent with the revised plan;
 - change the daily schedule.
- 3 *School redesign* – a school placed in the redesign category will be closed at the end of the school year. All teachers, administrators and other staff are declared surplus. The deputy superintendent convenes an interim local school decision-making committee with representatives from parent and community groups plus teachers and other staff (appointed by the bargaining units) to interview and recommend a principal to the superintendent. The school redesign team then recommends a specific reform model to be used in a school under redesign. The new principal recommends four lead teachers to the school redesign team for approval. The lead teachers and principal form an interview panel to fill the other teaching vacancies. Teachers displaced by the school redesign have the right to apply for the vacancies, if they have the necessary qualifications. (It is of interest that Cincinnati is now recruiting principals from redundant executives in business, industry and the military. The fact that these recruits have no teaching qualifications or school experience is of no concern.)

In 1986 the Carnegie Corporation's Task Force on Teaching as a Profession resulted in the establishment of a professional standards movement – the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). This standards system has identified the knowledge, skills and abilities of expert teachers with an assessment process to certify them. The NBPTS has achieved high levels of acceptance from both the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers and has influenced state policies. In 1999 4,800 teachers were certified with another 6,800 applying to participate. Many states and school districts provide salary bonuses and other incentives for NBPTS-certified teachers (Kelley 2000).

United Kingdom

The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) in the U.K. has introduced a national system of school inspection. The system guarantees that every school will be inspected within a four-year cycle. External inspections are conducted by teams (often of non-educators), who have received special training using procedures and criteria to be found in a manual of inspection. Quality of teaching and learning is reviewed in each subject of the curriculum as well as management procedures. Classroom practice of all teachers is observed and lessons graded according to published criteria. Parents and students are also consulted in preparing a formal report, which is posted on the OFSTED web site.

Copies of the manual of inspection with sample forms and lists of criteria are publicly available so teachers and parents can be aware of how school performance will be assessed. A summary of the formal report must also be circulated to all parents. School governors have 40 days to respond

to recommendations from the report with an 'action plan' available to all interested parties in the inspection process.

The Labour Government's 1997 white paper entitled 'Excellence in Schools' has introduced target setting to the assessment process. National academic attainment targets are established for 11- and 16- year olds. These targets are set for LEAs who then devolve them to schools in their areas. Target setting is promoted as a means to improve school effectiveness and student achievement as part of a process of 'school review, planning and action'.

The reaction of schools and teachers to this external top-down inspection has generally not been favourable, with concerns expressed about confidentiality and an invasion of the 'professional domain'. While they find the procedures intrusive and disruptive, the major concern seems to focus on OFSTED's privatisation of the assessment process.

In April 2000 the Chief Inspector of Schools was accused of contributing to the suicide of a primary teacher by allowing OFSTED inspectors to put too much pressure on staff during classroom visits. The general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, while not blaming OFSTED for the teacher's death, said that the visit from the inspectors may have triggered it. In a handwritten suicide note the teacher said: 'I am now finding the stress of the job too much. The pace of work and the long days are more than I can do' (Carvel 2000).

In a survey conducted in 2002 by the *Times Educational Supplement*, 82 per cent of teachers surveyed reported that work had been more pressured in the past year. Only 60 per cent thought they would still be teaching in five years' time. The government has acknowledged that schools are headed for a 40,000 teacher shortfall by 2006 (BBC News 2002a).

The Labour Government in the U.K. has also introduced a performance management scheme for teachers, which represents a major challenge for school managers. A 'performance threshold' has been proposed to establish new salary levels for teachers who reach the threshold. Line managers would be required to set performance objectives with progress reviewed regularly. Governing bodies also would review the performance of head teachers and deputy heads with the assistance of a trained 'external adviser'. The government would fund the scheme with training and support for its implementation. The purpose of the proposal is to improve the quality of student learning, to ensure that quality standards are met and that teachers and school managers are appropriately rewarded.

But merit pay has not been popular with teacher unions. The National Union of Teachers (NUT) has questioned who defines and assesses exceptional performance in a learning environment. They challenged the performance-related pay policy in the British High Court. In 2000 the Court ruled that the Education Secretary has 'no powers to introduce thresholds to determine different rates of salaries'. The NUT had maintained that it was against the law for the government to introduce rules allowing heads to enlist staff to decide who would get salary bonuses.

Teacher unions claim that the system would be 'unfair, divisive and bad for morale' (Hennessy and Leapman 2000).

This is at a time when the U.K. is facing a serious shortage of teachers. NUT research conducted in 2001 indicates that of every 100 final year teacher training students, at least 40 do not go into classrooms. Another 18 per cent leave within three years of becoming teachers. NUT has urged urgent action on at least four fronts: workload; pupil behaviour; constant and imposed change; and salaries (BBC News 2001a).

Flanders

In 1991 the Flemish community introduced a new system of school assessment. Previously, individual teachers had been supervised by government inspectors. The new emphasis has been on 'schools as organisations'. Teams of three or four inspectors visit schools for one week to conduct a comprehensive survey. This process involves an analysis of the 'context', the 'input', the 'process', and the 'output'. Curricular objectives are matched to the school work plan through a series of informal meetings with teachers, parents, pupils and local pedagogical advisers appointed by the umbrella organisations.

The inspectoral team promotes self-evaluation as a starting point for their own external evaluation. Their report is discussed with the principal and teachers as a basis for improvement by the school and the umbrella organisations. The results are made public and parents take them into consideration in choosing a school for their children. A synthesis of inspectoral reports is published each year providing an overview of the entire educational system.

Greece

In Greece, the central government retains direct responsibility for reform by controlling all aspects of school staffing. Principals are appointed, by contract for a period of four years, at the prefecture level. But these appointments must be approved by the central Ministry based on qualifications, teaching performance and experience. Most candidates for the prefectural list of potential principals have experience as vice principals but there is no requirement for formal, professional training.

Duties of both principals and vice principals are specified by law to ensure that the following requirements are met:

- co-ordinating various activities in the school;
- checking the legitimacy of these activities;
- representing the staff (at local or regional level);
- keeping the records of both students and staff;
- managing the site (campus, facilities and equipment);
- managing the budget of the school.

(OECD 2001c)

The Netherlands

The government of the Netherlands imposes a series of normative standards or 'quality instruments', which include a school monitoring programme undertaken by the Inspectorate in Primary Education and 'quality cards' for each school at the secondary level. Schools are required to provide a 'school handbook', which supplies parents with information on the school programme and its effectiveness. The Inspectorate in Secondary Education is also introducing intensive evaluative visits to record achievement at that level. School rankings are published by national newspapers as league tables.

The Organisation for Religious Education in Maastricht is but one advocate in a growing movement to provide salary differentiation on the basis of merit. The Organisation, serving 4,000 students, has introduced a system of premium and extra increment pay for its staff of 250. This new management innovation has been implemented through existing central government policy and after consultation with professional unions. Teachers demonstrating exceptional performance are rewarded through salary premiums, extra increments on a half-year basis or other benefits such as professional visits or conferences. Principals receive training in assessment procedures to select the personnel to receive these awards (OECD 2001c).

Japan

The Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture (Monbusho) Programme for Educational Reform has three broad goals:

- to enhance emotional education from infancy;
- to realise a school system that helps children develop their individuality and gives them diverse choices;
- to reorganise schools out of respect for an individual school's autonomy.

The actual focus for Monbusho's reform agenda, however, has tended to involve the decentralisation of educational administration; increasing the discretionary authority of individual schools and improving the leadership of principals, and parental choice of schools. The Package of Decentralisation Bills, enacted in 1999, called for reviews of school administration regulation; review of employment qualifications for school principals; review of modalities for the systems of co-ordinating and advising teacher and staff meetings; introduction of the School Adviser System; increased flexibility of class structures and improvement of the placement of teaching personnel; careful selection of research statistics; and the abolition/reduction of guidance notifications.

A second reform initiative, calling for an expansion of the discretionary authority of schools and improving the leadership of principals, was

introduced in 2000. Persons without certification can be appointed as principal or vice principal. School staff meetings are now seen as advisory, rather than decision-making bodies, to support the execution of the principal's duties. To create more 'open schools', school advisers drawn from the local community and nominated by the principal are appointed by the local board of education.

In the third policy initiative, freedom of choice of schools, Monbusho directed boards of education to adopt more flexible attendance regulations so that students could enrol in schools outside their school catchment area. This direction has been criticised for introducing the principles of market competition into public school education. For principals, freedom of choice introduces issues related to school-based self-evaluation and the promotion of the individuality of schools (OECD 2001c).

Sweden

In Sweden the national government, with the agreement of teacher unions, has adopted a policy of individualised teacher salaries. Raises are no longer automatic but are awarded according to a set of criteria including a commitment to improve the quality of student learning. School leaders may be 'head-hunted' to change schools in return for higher pay. The introduction of market forces in the 1990s has meant the state no longer enters into direct salary negotiations, which are now decided on an individual basis by teacher unions and the local municipality.

The individualisation of teachers' salaries however poses a problem, particularly for local leaders of small municipalities who must recommend the next year's salary structure. Raises must be justified on the basis of the school plans for the improvement of the learning experience for students. Therefore, school heads must join with their staff members to present realistic plans for improvement. This often requires a change in the culture of the school with students taking more responsibility for their own learning. A team approach is encouraged to break down old assumptions and traditions. While teamwork in school development is stressed in a new agreement between unions and the government, the quality of leadership is very important. School leaders need to strongly articulate their educational philosophy, values and vision, while implementing an evaluation system to ensure goals are being met (OECD 2001c).

Hungary

In 1999 the Hungarian Parliament amended the Act on Public Education to focus on programme quality and the improvement of education standards. The Comenius 2000 Quality Development Programme is based on the assumption that quality concepts, widely used in industry, could be transferred into the field of education. The Ministry of Education, assisted by experts

from different backgrounds, developed a methodology contained in a 'manual of quality development'.

After examining a variety of approaches, Comenius 2000 adopted a three-stage progressive process for education quality. The first stage focuses on an assessment of local needs to form a school community partnership for timetable development. The second stage involves the introduction of a total quality management (TQM) system for continuous improvement involving the following elements: focus on partners; process control; and development of an organisational structure. The third stage disseminates the programme throughout the whole system using outside consultants, selected by tender, to assist in the implementation of the programme in 400 pilot schools.

The specially trained consultants are expected to be experienced in dealing with 'quality issues' in industry but also to be knowledgeable about schooling. Most of the consultants are part-time teachers employed by private firms. The Ministry of Education enters into an agreement with each participating school and its consultant, which provides a given number of consultancy days at a fixed rate. Schools may choose an accredited consultant from the Ministry's 'expert databank' containing specially selected and trained candidates. The industrial model of TQM is seen as a major innovation to improve the quality of education in Hungary.

The National Centre for Evaluation and Assessment was established in 1999 to assess quality in public education. Its methodology includes three elements: measuring the resources of the school; assessing the learning process; and measuring the results according to the satisfaction of stakeholders and labour market needs. It would seem that the Centre strongly supports the industrial age principles of scientific management.

But transferring industrial concepts and outside experts to the field of education raises concerns about cultural and terminology differences between the two worlds. In general, Hungarian teachers are poorly paid and the huge differences in income between school personnel and the outside consultants have not tended to build a sense of trust, rapport and openness between institutional schooling and market forces (OECD 2001c).

Mexico

In 1995 the Federal Government introduced an external evaluation of educational achievement. A sample of 500,000 students was tested each year to establish national standards for different subjects and grades (e.g. reading, comprehension and mathematics) at both the primary and lower secondary levels. In 1997 it enacted the 'School Management in Elementary Education Project' to determine factors limiting the achievement of education goals, including study plans, programmes and performance of teachers; and principals and school area supervisors.

Article 31 of the Constitution was amended in 1993 requiring compulsory education at both elementary and lower secondary levels. Powers of the Federal Government were defined through the General Education Law. The Ministry of Public Education (SEP) has the responsibility for raising the national quality of basic education and ensuring equal access to educational services. The law also requires SEP to regulate a national system of teacher education, in-service training and professional standards for teaching staff.

SEP is responsible for the promotion of upper secondary education, higher education; and adult education and training provided by both public and private institutions. As more young people pursue studies beyond the lower secondary level, it is anticipated that the educational attainment of those aged 15 or older will increase from 6.5 grades in 1990 to an average of 9 grades by 2010 (OECD 2001c).

Reflections

Among the surveyed nations the basic tenets of scientific management are seen as the underpinnings of a neo-conservative drive for assessment-driven reform. Student test scores became the basis for ranking schools and encouraging free market competition for students. Top-down external evaluation teams, often staffed by business personnel as opposed to educators, are inspecting schools and publishing results. More teachers are subject to standardised testing or external review not only to qualify for merit pay but in some instances to retain their certification. The result has been an increase in on-the-job stress and declining self-esteem at a time when most countries face a teacher shortage caused by early retirements and difficulties in recruiting new, quality candidates to the profession.

6 Outsourcing the service

In order to create a risk-taking entrepreneurial society in the U.K., Margaret Thatcher and Keith Joseph envisioned a ‘Thatcherite agenda entailing nothing less than the death of what she herself termed “socialism” and what others termed “social democracy” as the price of a national economic revival. The assault was to be directed at both the institutions and the culture, which was held to sustain them’ (Kingdom 1992).

Thus began an attack on the government ownership of assets and service delivery systems and the transferral of responsibility and accountability to the private for-profit and not-for-profit sectors. State-owned industries such as British Telecom, British Gas, the airports, the railways, water and electricity utilities were sold off and privatised. Trade unions were attacked and brought to their knees (e.g. 1984–5 miners’ strike). While the education industry was not at first targeted, it contained all the elements that Thatcher defined. Soon, a variety of central government education agencies and services were devolved to the private sector, with some schools soon to follow (Abbott and Ryan 2000).

The Education Reform Act of 1988 redefined the role of the Local Education Authorities (LEAs). With budgeting and staffing responsibilities devolved to the local school, LEAs were left the provision of peripheral support services such as supply teachers, advisory assistance and in-service training. Even these services, however, have become market-driven, as schools now have the funds to purchase their own training programmes or specialist advice on the open market.

The new financial climate has also encouraged schools to increase revenue by attracting more students. Increased enrolment has meant more books, equipment and additional teachers for the school. Competition between schools for students has increased, especially with schools no longer restrained by LEA admission policies. ‘Successful’ schools are able to attract more students to boost revenue while ‘less successful’ schools lose students and suffer a reduction in income.

Competition was further encouraged through the creation of a new category of schools known as ‘grant-maintained’ (GM). GM schools effectively choose to opt out of LEA control altogether and receive funding

directly from a government agency. As well as securing student-related funding, GM schools could receive a percentage of the total education budget retained to fund the work of the LEA. This allowed GM schools to compete more successfully with regular schools for staff by offering additional salary and resource incentives to attract the best teachers. Therefore, middle-class parents and those with children of higher ability gravitated toward GM schools. Regular schools were often left with lower enrolments, decreased revenues and a higher proportion of students with educational and behavioural problems. The Labour Government has tried to address this issue through their 'Fair Funding' initiative, putting all schools back on the same financial basis. However, the old LEA-school relationship seems to be gone forever.

Another outcome of placing spending power in the hands of the schools has been the replacement of LEA-controlled services by a range of alternative providers. For example the preparation of school meals has been contracted out to the private sector. Staff development and training has often been awarded to outside 'consultants' or training agencies. The provision of supply teachers has also been privatised. Former LEA employees and ex-teachers have established new entrepreneurial enterprises to compete for service contracts tendered by local school governors and head teachers.

In the U.K., OFSTED lists schools to be inspected and qualified groups may tender for the contract. Local Education Authorities must bid to inspect schools in their own areas. Smaller LEAs are often not able to compete as their restricted funding means they cannot afford appropriate personnel to form inspection teams. Private enterprise, employing inspectors who are not professional educators, may win the contracts. This process, introduced by the Conservatives and supported by subsequent Labour governments, is seen as a significant force in school improvement.

Another policy of the Labour Government has been the introduction of 'Beacon schools' in 1998. The Department of Education and Employment provides additional funding to 75 schools selected as having exemplary programmes according to the OFSTED inspection process. Beacon schools are seen as having particular strengths (e.g. classroom practice) which other schools could emulate. They tend to emphasise self-evaluation to identify strengths as well as weaknesses to be corrected. Teachers are expected to work in partnership with colleagues inside and outside the school while sharing practices and experiences with other schools. The government hopes to have 1,000 Beacon schools in place by 2002 (OECD 2001c).

The Netherlands

Privatisation of the educational service is really nothing new in the Netherlands. The Dutch have long had a system of local schooling based on 'the right of choice'. The great majority of schools (up to 70 per cent) are

operated by the private sector – mostly religious and cultural groups. Central government funding is allocated to all schools on the basis of enrolment and special learning needs. In the Netherlands, parents and other interest groups have the constitutional right to establish and manage local schools. These ‘schools of choice’ have demonstrated that they can manage themselves effectively. Their success has been dependent upon central government policy, which facilitates their establishment, and financial support, provided they meet national standards.

For example, in Rotterdam Islamic parents from different Muslim religious and cultural traditions have come together to form their own secondary school. Because their religious and cultural experience is quite different from the Dutch norm, many Islamic parents feel unwelcome in existing denominational or state schools. Such issues as head covering for girls, accommodation for prayers, ritual bathing, dietary laws, flexible schedules and gender separation may be in conflict with the practice in regular schools. The new school will address these concerns and involve more parents and religious elders in the education process through participation on the governing board and as school volunteers. A non-Muslim school manager has been chosen as rector for the new school to mediate the potential of opposing factions within the Muslim community (OECD 2001c).

Belgium

The constitution of the Belgian State includes the principles of free choice of schools and educational freedom. In 1959 the School Pact Law organised all educational establishments to be grant-aided by the state. A federal system consists of three communities – Dutch-, German- and French-speaking. The Dutch-speaking Flemish community comprises 58 per cent of the almost six million total inhabitants. Flanders has a complex social and institutional environment, particularly between large cities and rural areas.

The freedom of choice means that schools can be established without approval of state authorities. To grant recognised diplomas and receive financial subsidies they must comply with state and community legal and statutory regulations. Schools are grouped in three networks: community (former state) schools (14 per cent); provincial and local schools (17 per cent) and grant-aided free schools comprising 69 per cent of pupils. The latter network plays a dominant role while balancing legal obligations related to funding, duration of compulsory education, the granting of diplomas and the provisions of teacher pensions. Such school autonomy, however, has resulted in a multiplicity of levels of decision making, regulations and procedures, which further complicate the role of principals and administrators.

While decentralising and deregulating, the state is increasingly using its financial authority to demand accountability from the overall school system and individual schools. They are required to demonstrate their efficiency and quality to obtain financial resources. This is seen by some researchers

as a way to reduce educational funding while encouraging competition among schools for students. The free schools network (almost all Catholic) has had, until recently, the right to refuse students. This has left the other two public networks with the responsibility to educate socially and culturally different groups (OECD 2001c).

United States

A relatively new movement in the United States is the creation of charter schools – non-sectarian tuition free public schools that are funded through a performance contract with either a state agency or a local school board. The school's charter gives autonomy over its operation and frees the school from regulations that other public schools must follow. The charter states how student performance will be measured and what levels of achievement the school will attain. If the school fails to attract students, achieve performance objectives, or violates conditions of the contract (by breaking remaining laws or regulations) it can be closed. By the year 2000, 39 states had passed charter school legislation and 1,700 charter schools enrolled 10 per cent of the overall public school population (U.S. Department of Education 2000).

In 1994, the United States Congress established the Public Charter School Program (PCSP) as part of Title X of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Since then the United States Department of Education has played a role in the development of the charter school movement. As part of the Charter School Expansion Act of 1998, Congress authorised 'dissemination grants for charter schools with three years of experience and demonstrated success'. This provides each state with between \$50,000 and \$700,000 to support partnerships between high quality charter schools and non-chartered public schools (U.S. Department of Education 2000).

But are charter schools the answer for failing neighbourhood schools? Researchers at the Brookings Institution have reviewed test scores in reading and mathematics from 376 charter schools in ten states. They found that charter school students were 'anywhere from a half year to a full year behind their public school peers'. Fifty-nine per cent of students at traditional public schools scored better than charter school students during the research period.

Charter schools are generally operated by non-profit groups, churches, universities, community centres, parents, groups of teachers and school districts themselves. An independent board oversees budgets, hiring and purchasing. Many charter schools focus on the learning needs of inner-city students with smaller enrolments and different teaching strategies than their public school counterparts.

Critics, including teachers' unions, charge that charter schools hire unlicensed, inexperienced teachers. Because charter schools' finances are not always closely monitored, they may be subject to mismanagement, resulting in closure after only a few years of operation.

Advocates, on the other hand, maintain that more research is needed regarding how much students learn after a few years in a charter school. To quote the Centre for Education Reform: 'They're the kids who were much more likely to fall through the cracks before anyone else. That's who tends to leave their school and join up at a charter school first' (CBS News 2002).

Another privatisation initiative has been the voucher system. The OECD report titled *Voucher Programmes and their Role in Distributing Public Services* defined vouchers as 'systems of distribution in which individuals receive entitlements to goods or services which they may "cash in" at some specified set of suppliers, which then redeem them for cash or the equivalent from a funding body' (OECD 1999d).

The case for education vouchers was made in 1955 by Milton Friedman who said that publicly funded education did not necessarily have to be publicly provided. As primary and secondary schools are highly beneficial to the public, Friedman proposed that vouchers be issued to defray the costs of education to parents of limited means. This would increase competition, promote efficiency and innovative practice among education service providers (Friedman 1962).

The school voucher system has operated in Milwaukee, Wisconsin since 1990. Eligible students from low-income families are entitled to 'choose' to opt out of the normal public school system and attend private schools in the city which must satisfy certain criteria related to standards and the absence of religious affiliation. In 1996–7 the private schools received \$4,373 for each 'choice' student – an amount equal to the state aid per student in the public system (OECD 1999d). An evaluation, conducted by Witte in 1996, found a not statistically significant difference between the achievement of choice students and a matched sample of other similar students. But school attendance was better, and parent contact and satisfaction levels were higher than in the Milwaukee public schools.

In Florida, Governor Jeb Bush has made vouchers his highest priority, providing alternatives for children who 'are trapped in schools that are failing them'. In 2002 about \$60 million may be poured into the state's voucher system. But what are these dollars buying?

On 27 June 2002 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a landmark decision that the voucher programme can be extended across the United States as long as parents can choose among a range of secular and religious schools. President George W. Bush and his neo-conservative allies have hailed the decision as a resounding victory (Stout 2002).

Another example of service outsourcing is the Privatisation Project – a comprehensive, school-wide reform model launched by the United States media entrepreneur Chris Wittle. Privatisation Project, a for-profit organisation, contracts with local school districts to run all aspects of selected schools including staffing, curricula and professional development. A longer school day and year is mandated with extensive use of computers and software (Fashola and Slavin 1998).

Hungary

In 1996 the Hungarian government amended the Public Education Act to provide 3 per cent of the budget for in-service training of teachers (INSET). Teachers are now obliged to take at least 120 hours of training over seven years.

The purpose of INSET was to promote quality, oppose conservatism and revitalise the traditional system by bringing in new sources of training. Universities and teacher training colleges were traditional service providers, but it was decided to give funds directly to the schools rather than these institutions. It was also decreed that anyone could enter the training market, including private firms and individuals.

The National Accreditation Commission was established to comment on the methodology of each training course but schools decide the relevance of contents. Competition is keen among universities, pedagogical institutes, private firms and consultants to market their courseware to the schools. As a result, teacher demand has changed from traditional subject courses to new teaching methods, teamwork and other forms of innovation.

The advent of the INSET policy has also resulted in a new Dutch–Hungarian programme for the pre-service training of principals leading to a recognised degree and international accreditation. Emphasis is given to communication, group work and problem solving with participants required to evaluate the programme regularly (OECD 2001c).

Reflections

Contracting out has become a pattern among neo-conservative regimes bent on reducing public expenditures in such areas as education and health services. While the purpose of these cutbacks could be deficit reduction or a balanced budget, they are often seeking to create a surplus in order to reduce taxes and garner more political support from voters in the next election.

The results of these outsourcing agendas have often impacted dramatically on the quality of education in several ways:

- existing labour groups, including teaching and support staff, may withdraw service (strike);
- unqualified and inexperienced workers may be hired as teachers and school managers at significantly lower wages;
- special education, early childhood and remedial programmes, second-language instruction and student services may be among the first to be sacrificed;
- schools are no longer properly maintained as custodial staff is reduced or its services contracted out;
- visual and performing arts may be curtailed as an expensive frill;

- outdoor education and environment studies may be removed from the curriculum;
- support staff such as school secretaries, teacher aides, social workers, psychologists and school/community personnel may be declared surplus to budgetary needs.

The outcome may leave teachers and principals struggling just to serve their pupils while their morale and self-esteem plummet. Schools cease to be positive, nurturing learning environments. Education becomes just a cost, not an investment in our future.

7 Bottom-up renewal

A different approach to school improvement is known as ‘renewal’. This is more of a ‘bottom-up’ process with the people in and around schools improving their practice and developing the collaborative mechanisms necessary to improve the quality of their schools relatively free of the linearity of specified ends, means and outcomes. It advances such fundamental issues as social justice, racism, sexism and economic inequality to equip citizens for a productive life in a democratic society.

According to Wilma Smith (1999) the renewal of schools, and the teacher education required to sustain it, requires a redefinition of roles. Five critical skills are required for leaders of renewal: to establish a shared mission; to work as change agents; to collaborate with colleagues; to think inclusively about all constituents and to perceive and make explicit the connections between theory and practice.

John Goodlad (1994) speaks of simultaneous renewal in which a college of education prepares prospective teachers with a ‘clear and compelling mission’ – schooling as a democratic society. The National Network for Educational Renewal further defines the mission by asking such questions as:

- What does it mean for us to en-culture the young in a democracy?
- How do we ensure equal access to education for all students?
- Are we engaging in a nurturing pedagogy?
- Do we serve as stewards of the schools?

Michael Fullan (1993) sees ‘moral purpose’ as the driving force behind the role of change agent. Change agency, therefore, is dependent on moral purpose to avoid aimlessness and fragmentation.

Active change agents may work with a network of schools – sharing information, obtaining resources, and encouraging feedback among departments, schools and constituents. They provide a support mechanism to assist people to be accountable to their shared mission (Smith 1999). The following are examples of educational renewal in action.

United States

One example of educational improvement through bottom-up renewal is to be found in a rural area in the state of Wisconsin. Several school districts have formed a partnership in a geographically isolated and economically depressed area of north western Wisconsin about 200 miles north of Madison, the state capital. Employment for area residents centres on farming, logging, tourism, small business enterprises and limited manufacturing. The unemployment levels are the highest in the state with family income 32 per cent below the state average. Sixty-six per cent of students are receiving free or subsidised lunches. The area includes the Ojibwe tribal school with 100 per cent American Indian students on an Ojibwe reserve (NPP 2000a).

In 1993, Chuck Ericksen, a dynamic community education director in the Northern Wisconsin School District, utilised a school reform grant from the Institute for Responsive Education to bring together a group of 15 school leaders committed to educational improvement. The result was a non-profit consortium – New Paradigm Partners Inc. (NPP). The original partnership of five public school districts, a tribal school and a private college (Mount Senario) continued to grow.

In addition to local and state resources, it has received funding from: the Annenberg Rural Challenge; the W. K. Kellogg Foundation; McDonald Charities Fund; and the Soros Foundation. NPP was created in the belief that ‘a powerful synergistic network of learning partners would give new life to our schools and communities and make a dramatic impact on student learning’ (NPP 2000a).

NPP’s work is grounded in principles of community education, which promote parent and community involvement in education, the formation of community partnerships to address community needs and the expansion of lifelong learning opportunities. Of particular concern is the future of small rural schools and communities. A depressed rural economy may either not motivate students to achieve or result in the best students having to leave the community in search of employment. The goal of NPP is to establish an inclusive, entrepreneurial culture, which is supportive of innovation, creative collaboration and leadership.

Early in June 2000, the NPP partners met to review the year’s accomplishments and plan for the future. This meeting of school district superintendents and administrators provided the following progress reports about a new kindergarten to grade 12 curriculum that has been integrated into the schools with a focus on local history, culture, entrepreneurship and ‘hands-on’ interdisciplinary approaches to learning. Multi-age, project-based learning activities include the following:

- *Journalism* – Youth Press is a community-based media project where 250 students work with media professionals within five regional ‘news bureaux’. Students produce articles on a regular basis for local print

media and publish *Pass It On*, a state-wide journal with a readership of 15,000. They create videos, public TV programmes and produce 'Rebel Radio', a monthly two-hour Saturday morning radio show broadcast on local FM stations. An electronic variety magazine, *M.ZINE*, now features short stories, editorials, poetry, illustrations, photography and student reflections – on the Internet. Youth Press activities have gained national renown and students travel throughout the U.S. speaking at conferences and workshops (NPP 1998).

- *Student-run businesses* – Entrepreneurial enterprises operated by students of all ages include: a wood drying and manufacturing business; a community newspaper; two greenhouse operations; several video production, graphic arts, web design and technology consulting enterprises; two canoe trip outfitting ventures, and a card and balloon business (*Milwaukee Journal* 1994).
- *Intergenerational learning* – Students through Circle of Light projects have interviewed elders and transcribed historical tales, later disseminated through print media articles, videos, educational CDs and a web site. With help from a professional songwriter, students write songs based on the stories and perform them with the elders at community events, including the American Folklife Festival in Washington, D.C.
- *Cultural preservation* – At the Ojibwe tribal school, tribal elders assist in the classrooms, providing individualised attention, nurturing, self-esteem-building and cultural enrichment while encouraging student learning across the ages.
- *Environmental restoration* – Students are involved in detailed environmental research and all phases of project planning and implementation. Through a variety of student funding initiatives, projects have included: trout stream and other water quality improvements; reforestation; park developments; prairie restorations; and wildlife habitat improvements.

New Paradigm Partners Inc. has also provided school renewal, community education and leadership training workshops. Curriculum development and teaching methods classes have been offered for graduate or undergraduate credit. An expectation of all training is that participants apply their learning to some tangible school or community improvement initiative. Careful collaborative planning is emphasised as each participant networks with others to plan and implement projects. Mentorships are facilitated when appropriate and mini grants have been made available using funds from a variety of sources.

Good Hope College established a new leadership programme as a minor at the college in which students develop leadership skills in the process of planning and implementing community and school projects. A regional Leadership Development Committee (LEARN), with representation from numerous agencies and schools, is giving shape to a series of new, highly collaborative leadership opportunities for principals, teachers, students, parents and other community members.

Greece

Traditionally, Greek schools have been resistant to any form of top-down inspection. In 1998 the Greek government introduced a self-evaluation project in six pilot schools as a much less threatening and intrusive approach to school improvement and educational renewal. Co-ordinated by the Pedagogical Institute, a governmental curriculum improvement organisation, the project involves teachers, parents and students in the process. A handbook, to guide schools in developing self evaluation methodologies, has been published by the Institute.

One of the pilot schools is Athens Suburban Lower Secondary School located in a prosperous suburb of Athens. The school with about 300 students (aged 12 to 15 years) has modern facilities and a staff of 33 teachers. The enthusiasm of senior staff and teachers has led to many new innovations including curriculum enhancement and extra-curricular activities. It has been important for the school to be seen by teachers as a 'whole organisation' in which they are a team. A sense of common purpose is shared by all stakeholders with parents active through their association's many activities in support of the programme, including fundraising to encourage curricular innovations.

Another example of self-evaluation in action is the Greater Athens College, a prestigious private elementary school on the outskirts of Athens. Opened in 1995, the school now has an enrolment of 650 boys and girls (aged 6 to 12) and a teaching staff of 53. It is supported by private funding and substantial student fees. A Greek American Foundation and a board of directors in the United States oversee a local board of trustees which operates the school including the annual budget, the appointment of principal and teachers; and administrative and curricular co-ordination.

The principal has studied co-operative learning, group work and individualised learning in England. A team of educational consultants from Harvard University visits the school two or three times each year to advise on curriculum leadership. The board of directors has required the school to engage in self-evaluation for which the principal prepares an annual development plan. This involves the supervision of teachers, with the principal formally observing lessons to improve teaching methodology and programme planning (OECD 2001c).

Flanders

The Flemish community promotes self-evaluation as part of a political policy to reinforce the innovative capacity of schools and to promote self-supportive organisations. The stakeholders are encouraged to participate with a budget allocated by the government for in-service training of teachers and school managers. In 1997 primary schools were requested to write their own 'work plans' including mission statement; objectives; organisation;

curriculum and programme; assessment, and school rules. However, a new approach of external school inspection has also been introduced.

Bree Middle School is a Catholic school serving 400 grade 7 and 8 students in the small town of Bree near the Dutch border. The staff of 52 have developed a management style based on an 'Educational Project' in co-operation with parents and students. The Project includes the following aims, objectives and values, which are reviewed each year:

- a definition of educational priorities such as learning how to learn, co-operative learning, progressive evaluation and participation of pupils;
- the school work plan;
- the in-service training plan.

A governing board includes representatives from the religious congregation and local citizens. A 'participation board' includes committees of parents, teachers and students. Seven teacher co-ordinators assist the principal in such areas as curriculum, programme, time-tabling and planning of tests. Working groups plan sports, festivities and field trips. Parents are collaborators who assist as classroom volunteers. Evaluation is a co-operative process of assessment according to objectives for the year (OECD 2001c).

Mexico

In Mexico the School Management Project has promoted a self-evaluation strategy to meet the needs of each individual school. Teachers, principals and area supervisors are encouraged to be active participants in selecting a self-evaluation process based on local self-assessment as well as external evaluations conducted by the state ministries of education. Anticipated results from the Project include the following:

- the transformation of traditional schools into 'new self-evaluating public schools';
- a focus on education of children in the classroom rather than administrative and bureaucratic procedures;
- ensuring the right of parents to participate in the education of their children;
- more professional co-operation between teachers and principals;
- teachers and principals to be more accountable for educational outcomes;
- making the public more aware of the school's self-evaluation process and its outcomes;
- a change in the role of the principal from administrative bureaucrat to 'educational leader';
- the management of each school to be according to each set of unique needs.

The project began in 1997 with 40 schools in each of five states but by 2000 had grown to 2,000 schools in 20 states. The original pilot schools have served as mentors to new schools joining the project. The results to date (2001) have demonstrated that a long-term commitment among teachers, principals, children and parents is required along with the support of state ministries of education. Other determining factors include: the involvement and support of area supervisors in the process; more availability of instructional materials and equipment; better school facilities; the participation of parents in project schools; and the leadership of principals in educational improvement.

An example of self-evaluation in action is to be found in the state of Colima. The school management project co-ordinator and his team of former teachers met with area supervisors, principals and teachers to discuss local needs and the objectives of the project. The importance of each local school technical council, where colleagues can discuss teaching methods, student learning and 'quality issues about education', was soon identified. In the 40 pilot schools, during the period from 1997 to 1999, it was felt that initial resistance to the project had declined and teachers were feeling more involved in the life of the school and working better together in solving educational problems and improving the quality of teaching. Evaluation of academic assessment has led to the improvement of language and mathematics outcomes through school projects.

Teachers have sought parental involvement by making them more aware of improvements in the school programme and teaching techniques. Parents, as a result, have often become advocates for better school facilities, school maintenance, food preparation and the organisation of special events. They have a better appreciation of the importance of literacy, numeracy and technological skills in improving the quality of life, social and economic well-being of students and the Mexican nation (OECD 2001c).

Sweden

The Helsingborg School in Helsingborg, Sweden, provides a specific example of educational renewal in action. With an enrolment of 900 students aged between 6 and 16, the school decided in 1993 that the traditional model for school management – led by a head teacher and a deputy head – was not the best way to improve the quality of education. They became one of the first schools in the country to introduce the concept of work teams where the cause of innovation and school improvement became the responsibility of teachers and students.

A discussion group was formed which focused on the question: 'What will be important to a 15-year-old in 30 years' time that the school should provide today?' A summary of responses produced several keywords such as: flexibility; environment/ecology; critical disposition; comprehensive

view; ability to work independently; security/belief in the future; and preparedness for the multicultural society. Teachers were also asked to suggest changes in the school's physical environment and ways to improve the organisation of their work to serve the needs of students better.

In the spring of 1994, 20 teachers, comprising about one third of the school's teaching staff, formed three 'work teams'. As tutor/mentors for the students, these teachers saw their new role as 'creating learning situations for students who would take responsibility for their own learning'. One of the first tangible changes supported by educational administrators and municipal politicians was the refurbishment of the school building, built in 1966, to provide a more 'open' feeling. The local library was also incorporated into the school premises.

But there was a recognition among all staff that collaboration does not necessarily exist simply because people are brought together in teams. Some preferred the old ways and challenged the right of management to impose a new organisational model. A consultant was brought in to facilitate teachers working together, but a handful of teachers chose to leave the school. The organisation has since gelled into ten teams of teachers under the general direction of a seven-member leadership group. Each team comprises teachers from across subject areas who effectively run 'schools within schools', taking responsibility for the educational and general welfare needs of about 85 students of varying ages. Each team meets before school every Monday morning to plan the week's activities and timetable. Teachers may work together with their students on group projects or collaborate on an overall theme. However, the lessons of teachers of art, music and craft are still timetabled across the school.

Each team member serves as a mentor for 14 to 16 students. Social or family problems can be referred to the school nurse or guidance counsellor. As a result, teachers tend to spend at least 35 hours per week at school giving more access to an adult if there is a problem. For the teachers, however, it means that marking and the preparation of lessons often must be done at home.

Pupils meet their teacher/mentors in groups three times a week for 20–30 minutes each time. The first two sessions are to plan the week's activities while the final session reviews progress achieved. Students have the opportunity to choose their own mentor. Teams cut across age groups and can stay together for up to six years. Students have three hours per week to devote to independent study but they have to write up and evaluate the work. Less motivated students get more attention from teachers. Students also have the opportunity to influence the general direction of the school through their own students' council.

In general, teamwork has tended to reduce the traditional isolation teachers may feel working alone in their own classrooms. However, a new type of isolation for teams who run 'schools within schools' has been identified. Some teachers miss the interaction with peers from other teams, as

well as those who share the same subject area. This is somewhat compensated for by the up to 13 professional development days Swedish teachers enjoy each year to bring subject area teachers together.

There is also a danger that teams may become isolated from each other. The leadership team addresses these concerns by encouraging feedback from other teams in setting goals for the school and assessing the quality of the programme. While the Helsinborg model is challenging and demanding on staff, few would wish to return to the traditional ways. More importantly, students feel a greater 'sense of ownership' of decisions which affect them (OECD 2001c).

Reflections

Those nations with a tradition of bottom-up renewal have often benefited from a sense of students, teachers and parents being integral participants in school improvement. This feeling of local ownership has led to innovative problem solving, a curriculum more responsive to local needs and improved morale among all participants in the learning process.

The bottom-up renewers, however, continue to be under attack by the ideologues of the neo-conservative right. Strong top-down management is advocated to introduce scientific management testing and budget reduction policies. Local grass roots involvement in the decision-making process by parents and other citizens of the community is seen as a threat to the economic agendas of the top-down reformers.

Self-renewal, therefore, may be characterised by these politicians as driven by the self-interest of parents, teachers and students leading to excessive spending in such areas as special education, second-language instruction, early childhood development, and school community involvement. These are often portrayed politically as expensive frills which detract from time spent on test preparation in an orderly, disciplined school environment. A propaganda campaign based on 'failing schools, lazy teachers and wasteful spending' becomes a plank in the neo-conservative election platform.

8 Community education partnerships

The concept of community education is very much a local bottom-up approach to educational renewal. It mobilises a broad range of human and educational partners including school leaders, teachers, parents, students, employers and other citizens in the community, to improve the quality of human and educational services.

The need for community involvement is recognised as an essential component in school improvement. Whether as part of the shared decision-making school-based governance model, or as a source of volunteer assistance or funding support, the community is an essential partner in the school management process. Community education advocates the local co-ordination of human services (e.g. health, employment, child protection, adult literacy, family support, leisure, etc.). A number of countries and school districts have policies in place in this regard. The active participation of the school and the leadership of its principal are essential in meeting human service needs, particularly in disadvantaged socio-economic areas. Examples from the OECD study (2001c) include the following.

Sweden

The community education movement has long championed the cause of a variety of public services sharing a mixed-use facility. Sweden has introduced a most innovative merging of services for children. The clear lines that once distinguished child care, pre-school, recreation centres and primary schooling are blurring. Pre-school education from the age of one year is available for parents working or studying. In 1999 a curriculum was developed to provide a 'seamless web' of learning for a child between pre-school and compulsory schooling. It is not unusual for a child to attend an integrated pre-school/primary school/recreation centre from early morning to early evening. Parents pay for pre-school/child care and recreation services while schooling is free. In this integrated management model, one leader (or a team) from any of the three disciplines may be in charge of the facility.

Karlstad School and Children's Centre is an example of an integrated facility in the Skare area of Karlstad. The 450 pupils are served by 25 teachers,

7 pre-school teachers and 15 recreation instructors, who have formed work teams in a 'learning organisation'. Beginning in 1994, the head teacher introduced process-oriented learning among staff to improve pedagogical theory and practice. Pre-school and recreational teachers had previously occupied a separate building. The staff was now integrated into work teams including all professional categories. The interdisciplinary teams function relatively independently with great freedom to manage their own resources. Classes are mixed and not divided along age group lines.

The school encourages a thirst for learning, as well as providing a secure and stimulating environment, which emphasises the knowledge and experience pupils bring with them from within the school and the community beyond. While the integrated pedagogy and teamwork brings the three professional groups closer together, it has not resolved disparities in salary scales and working conditions (e.g. holiday schedules). Nevertheless, teachers in the integrated school enjoy the shared responsibility and the ending of a sense of isolation previously felt (OECD 2001c).

Japan

In Japan a 'creating open schools' policy has been in place since the 1970s. Principals are required to be more active in encouraging community participation in the life of the school. While this does not constitute a sharing of school management, efforts to promote co-operation among schools, households and the local community are gaining momentum. Japanese principals are challenged to be more active in external relations. Formal administrative contacts with boards of education, teachers' unions and local communities are seen to be important. Traditionally, the Japan Teachers' and Staff Unions opposed central government control. But in 1990 the Japan Teachers' Union proposed the slogan 'participation, proposal, reform', advocating a consensus among government and business sectors. School-based management can be discussed in a more positive light.

Most schools have a parent-teacher association (PTA) to support teachers and provide human and material resources. However, this does not include parental participation in school management. A reform in this regard has been realised in the city of Kawasaki and other communities where an ombudsman system and local educational meetings promote co-operation among schools, households and the local community.

In 1985 Kawasaki established regional education councils to link schools more closely to their local communities by:

- reaching a consensus on child rearing and lifelong learning in the region through consultation with teachers, parents and other residents of the community;
- having residents participate regularly in the education process, including influence on school administration;

- co-operating and co-ordinating with the work of neighbourhood education advocacy groups such as children's associations and community sports clubs;
- promoting community activities which encourage the healthy development of children;
- assessing and supporting the lifelong learning needs of residents.

The approximately 40 members of each regional education council include: representatives from PTAs; neighbourhood associations and other child-focused organisations; residents' committees; teachers and administrative staff; and employees of youth, cultural and community centres. Members are nominated by their organisations and volunteer their time to work on subcommittees in such areas as playground space, a community newsletter and work experience programmes for older students (OECD 2001c).

Greece

Political policies reducing educational spending have often led to poorly maintained and deteriorating school buildings in many countries. Greece, through its Reorganisation of School Premises Project administered by the government's Pedagogical Institute, has demonstrated that school facilities can be upgraded and the physical learning environment of the school improved significantly. The importance of school leaders in transforming a deteriorating shared-use facility into a more secure and educationally viable building was demonstrated in secondary schools in the Athens area.

For example, the Eighteenth Lower Secondary School is located in a deprived area of Athens serving a migrant population. Originally opened in 1931 as a model school with high academic, cultural and athletic standards, the site became a military base during World War II and the subsequent Greek Civil War. In the 1950s the school site was re-established to serve newcomers from Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East; however, adequate public funding and community support was not available. As a result, the school buildings accommodate eight elementary, lower and upper secondary schools operating in the morning, afternoon and evening, each with their own principal and teachers.

By the 1990s secondary school classrooms and public areas were covered with graffiti and plagued by vandalism, drug dealers and theft of equipment. Students, many from non-Greek-speaking homes, posed behavioural problems, including lockouts of school staff. The multiple use of the facilities, deteriorating classrooms, loss of equipment and delinquency among students resulted in a serious morale problem among teachers and a sense of despair regarding the future of the school site.

In 1997 a new principal was appointed to the Eighteenth Lower Secondary School with a mandate to try to rectify the situation. His first step was an application to the government's Pedagogical Institute for a

'Reorganisation of School Premises Project'. Multiple use of the space posed a problem as the Institute required assurance that all principals on the site were committed to the project. A single school committee, comprising representatives of parents, teachers, students and principals from all schools was convened to support the project application. In 1999, after a year of negotiation between the committee and the Institute, it was agreed that the sum of three million drachmas would be provided and divided into three equal parts among three of the schools.

Within a year graffiti had been significantly reduced. New locks and alarm systems protected classrooms. Video equipment and teaching materials were safely stored. A new library, and scientific and ICT (information and communications technology) equipment enriched the learning environment. Co-ordination of project resources was seen as a key responsibility of the principals to be shared by parents, teachers and students. Principals also felt empowered to search for other sources of support and funding while maintaining a clear sense of direction and vision (OECD 2001c).

Another school to benefit from the Reorganisation of School Premises Project was the Athens Suburban Lower Secondary School. A vice principal had visited secondary schools in the United States and was impressed by their organisation of well equipped specialist classrooms. Project funding was therefore used to provide classrooms with specialised furniture, learning materials and display space including a well-equipped music room and other specific subject spaces for science, mathematics, ICT, history and languages.

The original three million drachmas made available by the project in 1995–6 was further supplemented by a grant from the local municipality. These additional resources created such amenities as a fully equipped school theatre; a basketball court for school and community use; consultation space for a vocational guidance officer; and a new well-equipped school library.

The improved accommodations led senior staff and teachers to embark on many new innovations in the belief that 'success breeds success'. Their sense of vision has led to an enhancement of the curriculum and new extra-curricular activities. Stakeholders, including parents, now see the school as a 'whole organisation' striving for excellence (OECD 2001c).

United Kingdom

The Francis Drake School in Garston, Watford, England has 830 students, aged 11 to 18, as well as 30 adult learners from the local community. It serves a lower socio-economic area with a high proportion of one-parent families. Many students require special education services and there is a high turnover of enrolment during the school year.

Francis Drake School has responded by developing strong links with its community. The school is represented on many community groups and is

currently developing a performing arts centre with strong community involvement. There are plans to locate a family service centre, involving all social service agencies, in the school. A students' council meets periodically to plan external activities, such as visits to the district council and magistrate's court.

A social inclusion unit has been established as an alternative programme for students at risk of permanent exclusion, those excluded from other schools, students with health or physical disabilities, and school refusers. Students have an opportunity for vocational studies such as food technology, business and the arts, as well as the national curriculum. They have access to the careers service and an educational psychologist, but re-integration back into the mainstream remains a priority (OECD 2001c).

The Netherlands

Joint representative advisory boards are encouraged by the national education authorities in the Netherlands to advise local school governing boards on such issues as employment and staff allocations. Professional staff, parents and students have taken an active role on advisory boards.

Community involvement, through the government's 'Local Educational Policy', is also actively encouraged. A variety of programmes for the socially and educationally disadvantaged include: services for newcomers; early and pre-school education; language instruction; and dropout-prevention initiatives. Co-operation between schools and community services has included: integrated special needs and primary education; preventive/pro-active youth care; and social welfare services for students co-ordinated by the community.

One example of school–community co-ordination of services is to be found at Hans Brinker College in The Hague. Organised around the 'broad or community school' concept, Hans Brinker College serves an inner-city neighbourhood suffering from the effects of unemployment, poverty and crime (e.g. overcrowding, theft, prostitution and drug sales).

Opened in the early 1990s utilising special incentive grants from Dutch and European governments, the school provides vocational education to an enrolment of 400 students, aged between 12 and 18, from immigrant and refugee families representing 70 nationalities (e.g. Surinam, Morocco, Turkey, Somalia, Iraq, Iran, etc.). Basic instructional and vocational training programmes include technical education (e.g. auto and electrical repair); administrative studies (e.g. bookkeeping, retail sales); and health care (e.g. nursing assistant), preparing students for service industry employment.

Area residents were initially opposed to the project (e.g. traffic flow, crime, etc.), but were reassured by an elaborate security system with television monitors and controlled-access gates. (This was a particular concern for Islamic parents who feared for the safety and security of their daughters.) Partnerships were forged with local services including law enforcement, social welfare, religious (area mosque), health, and truancy

prevention. A 'care committee' of community services meets regularly to assess the learning needs of individual students. A museum in the neighbourhood provides visual, performing arts and cultural enrichment. At least ten local employers have made significant financial and in-kind contributions including: a computer for every three students; a model retail sales centre; and a fully equipped automotive service facility.

The result is a modern, attractive, secure, extremely well equipped vocational education facility which makes use of several community services to enrich the learning environment. While parents are encouraged to join with students and teachers as members of the 'participation council', their involvement is often difficult to achieve due to language and cultural differences. Some critics, however, view the school as an artificial, paternalistic environment, which shelters students from societal realities. To quote the school's director: 'We take good care of them' (OECD 2001c).

Made Primary School is a Catholic school in the town of Made. This school of 450 students and 26 staff is led by a particularly dynamic director. The process of innovation really began in 1977, when three schools were merged into one new building. In 1991 it was recognised that the traditional theoretical curriculum (mathematics, spelling, etc.) was too difficult for some children. It was decided to develop a new approach to education, based on 'learning experience', better to serve the individual needs of pupils (Kolb 1984).

The community became the focus for education, with visits to the town hall, factories, local merchants and historic sites resulting in student-centred projects which combined both concrete and abstract learning. For example, constructing models of the town's streets and buildings integrated social studies, mathematics, science and language into a multidisciplinary theme. Students were encouraged to create their own learning projects.

In 1994 the central government offered additional funding to encourage 'inclusionary education'. Made Primary School became the 'school for experience' and an assistant director for education was appointed who has provided leadership in transforming the school into a 'centre for experiential learning' to serve the individual needs of all students, including those with learning disabilities (but not the physically handicapped). Consultations were undertaken with existing and former students, parents and neighbours to advise the school on its new policy. Assistance was also sought from professional organisations and an authority on inclusionary education at the University of Utrecht.

As a result of these consultations, three new goals were announced: involvement; well being; and solidarity. Inclusionary education was defined as 'a holistic approach to focus on the individual learning needs of all children including those with intellectual and behavioural disabilities'. Today, a series of standardised tests (developed by the CITO Institute) is administered to assess academic achievement and readiness for promotion. A system of 'learning contracts' between pupil and teacher has been developed. Parents are kept informed through parental interviews (three per year) and written

reports. Children who are not progressing are referred to a special education committee for remedial assistance. Parents also participate as members of the school governing board and the 'parent and teacher advisory committee'. About 200 parents are reported to be active volunteers in the school. The Primary Education Inspectorate conducts regular two to three day intensive visitations (every two years) based on the 'school plan'. Results of these inspectoral visits are published by the Ministry of Education.

Made Primary School is a most impressive learning environment filled with activity and excitement. A friendly rapport exists between pupils and teachers who seem to very much enjoy this student-centred approach to learning. The building is well equipped with colourful displays of children's work. The vibrant atmosphere and sense of respect and caring displayed by children and teachers are a tribute to the principal's 'transformational' style of leadership and concern for accountability to local stakeholders and national authorities (OECD 2001c).

Mexico

Another example of the use of community partnerships to enhance the education process is to be found in the state of Nuevo León, Mexico. Monterrey, the state capital, is in an industrial region which faces a shortage of skilled workers. Part of a huge former factory has been utilised to create the Escuela Industrial Monterrey, with several classrooms constructed within the vacant building. Modern equipment, donated by local employers, assists teachers to impart practical skills geared to future employment needs. Skill shortages in the region are addressed through a workplace setting providing an almost on-the-job learning experience (OECD 2001c).

United States

In the United States the National Commission on Excellence in Education in its 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk*, stressed the importance of community involvement in schools:

At the heart of the learning society are education opportunities extending far beyond the traditional institutions of learning, our schools and colleges. They extend into the homes and work-places, into libraries, art galleries, museums and science centres; indeed, into every place where the individual can develop and mature in work and life. But without lifelong learning, one's skills will become rapidly dated.

(NCEE 1983)

In a community school, youth, families and community residents work as equal partners with schools and other community institutions to develop programmes and services in five areas: quality education; youth development;

family support; family and community engagement; and community development. Community schools build strong learning partnerships and share accountability for high academic standards. Each community school identifies its own individual needs and assets while embracing diversity in a process of community betterment.

The Coalition for Community Schools is a national, Washington, D.C.-based organisation whose mission is ‘to mobilise the resources and capacity of multiple sectors and institutions to create a united movement for community schools’. Its goals are to: share information about successful school policies, programmes and practices; build broader public understanding and support for community schools; inform public and private sector policies to strengthen community schools; and develop sustainable sources of funding for them (Blank 2000).

In rural Wisconsin a consortium of several school districts, known as New Paradigm Partners Inc. (NPP), was established in 1993 with the following goals:

- to empower people, especially students, to become more effective, skilled and enterprising leaders and contributors to sustainable school and community improvement efforts;
- to sustain and increase purposeful commitments to goal setting, teamwork and consensus;
- to increase the restorative capacities of our schools and learning communities by increasing or improving learning opportunities for people of all ages;
- to create new learning environments which are relevant and engaging;
- to build and strengthen relationships and respect between people of different ages and backgrounds;
- to increase opportunities for participatory decision making, leadership development and service to the community.

Some examples of community education initiated by NPP include the Green Forest and Alderwood schools.

Green Forest School

Green Forest School has an enrolment of 247 with 25 teachers from kindergarten to twelfth grade. Over the years, Green Forest School has become famous for its student-led enterprises, including the following initiative.

The Beechwood Hills Manufacturing Partnership provides Weyerhaeuser (an old logging community with virtually no industry) with a student-run entrepreneurial venture in preparation for future education and employment. With help from the state’s Co-operative Educational Service Agency (CESA) and the federal School to Work Opportunities Act, students formed a limited liability company (LLC) which is registered with the state and

federal governments. Students own legal stock in the company, which they can purchase from graduating seniors, or earn by working for the corporation or through academic achievement.

Because there was no facility to dry green lumber in the area, Beechwood Hills Manufacturing Partnership built a solar-powered custom lumber-drying operation. The enterprise also serves as an incubator for spin-off businesses such as successful snowshoe and furniture-manufacturing and woodcraft ventures now located at the school.

Alderwood School

Alderwood is a K–12 school with 355 students serving an area of 200 square miles with vast socio-economic disparities among property owners and residents. Seventy per cent of property owners are comparatively wealthy summer dwellers. The majority of the remaining 30 per cent are retirees. Only 10 per cent of the residents have children in school. The Alderwood enrolment comprises the second-lowest level of family income in the region. Parents have traditionally survived at an impoverished subsistence level with limited interest in education and support for student achievement. Consequently, Alderwood students remained near the bottom on state academic test scores.

In 1994 Alderwood began a community education programme, which brought together a leadership team of staff and community members to conduct a school–community needs assessment, assist in communications, morale building, visioning and goal setting. The result was a school–community partnership to promote lifelong learning and educational opportunities for Alderwood students and staff.

A major source of pride has been the *Alderwood News*. As no newspaper had previously existed in the community, students, teachers and community members worked together to publish a community newspaper. Students write stories, do page layout on computers, sell and develop advertising and print the paper on an offset printing press. They gain skills, course credits and valuable work experience while fulfilling a community need. In 1995, the project was featured in *USA Today* as one of seven schools selected nationally for their Community Solutions through Education award.

Another innovation, to bridge socio-economic differences and improve support for education, has been the Senior Tax Exchange Program (STEP) intergenerational volunteer programme. Elder residents, who volunteer their time to assist the school as classroom tutors, mentors and role models, earn a decrease in their property taxes.

Alderwood has become a ‘lighthouse’ school in which the community has developed a sense of ownership. Learning activities for family members of all ages take place during the day, in the evening and during the summer through the Families and Schools Together (FAST) programme.

The community education process has had other positive outcomes for Alderwood. The inclusionary nature of the programme has meant all taxpayers, including summer residents, now have a sense of ownership in the school and support for public education. Persons of all socio-economic levels are meeting and sharing. Academic test scores continue to rise. The school completion rate, once among the lowest in the state, is now above the state average. Where once there was a call to close the school and bus the children to neighbouring Rice Lake, there is recognition of the importance of the school in retaining the town's identity, social, cultural and economic well being.

The community education process, as envisioned by the NPP consortium, has also retained the confidence and support of school leaders. To quote the Alderwood School district superintendent: 'Our community views New Paradigm Partners as an agent of change within the school district. Involvement in the consortium has broadened our scope and helped to create community spirit, integrating all ages and people of all experiences' (NPP 1998).

Public education has for many years benefited from a variety of sources of additional financial and goods and services support, other than from public taxation. Volunteers have been active in supporting curriculum and programme and educational service provisions for almost as long as schools have existed. They have assisted teachers in the classroom, served as remedial and special enrichment tutors, accompanied classes on field trips, and provided a variety of clerical and technical services to the school, without remuneration. They have also participated in fundraising activities to supplement the school budget and served on parent-teacher (PTA) and school advisory bodies. In a new era of shared decision making, the presence of parents in school has never been more important.

As schools have become more decentralised, and budgets more restricted, the need for supplemental financial support has risen. One approach taken by local authorities and individual schools has been the 'educational foundation' movement. Since at least the 1970s non-governmental charitable organisations have been created at legal 'arm's length' from school boards (or schools) with the expressed purpose of providing additional sources of financial support, goods and service to the public body. They have also served as vehicles of research and development (R&D), problem solving, community development and innovation, which might not have existed previously due to funding instability or bureaucratic intransigence (Shuttleworth 1993).

In some instances, the educational foundation, as a special purpose body, may qualify for financial grants, R&D funding, or commercial sponsorship otherwise not available to public education. Citizens and the media often see schools as financially well endowed where, in actual fact, they may be struggling with budget cutbacks so common to restructured public service in the new economic age. For example, school boards or other governing

bodies may not have adult education as part of their mandate. The levels of basic literacy, numeracy and language skills among parents may have a profound impact on their children's success in school. The educational foundation may be able to provide the ancillary services (e.g. adult literacy, second-language skills, vocational training) so important to the economic well-being of the family and the self-esteem of parents (Shuttleworth 1993).

The New Paradigm Partners Inc., from a disadvantaged region in rural Wisconsin, is an example of such a special-purpose organisation devoted to educational improvement and community economic development. This model transcends traditional schooling by serving people of all ages in a lifelong learning process that enriches the social, economic and physical environment (a twenty-first century learning organisation?).

Some countries also have a long tradition of philanthropic charitable giving through private foundations and trusts whose objects might include educational improvement or services to disadvantaged minorities. The New Paradigm Partners were fortunate to receive developmental funding from such philanthropies as the Annenberg, Kellogg and McDonald charities. It is interesting that the Soros Foundation has been active in both Hungary and rural Wisconsin. In Seattle, a group of key industrialists formed the 'Alliance for Education' to support improvement. In 1998 the Alliance contributed \$8 million to support a variety of school district programmes and initiatives. In March 2000, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation awarded \$25.9 million for the improvement of Seattle schools. It should be noted, however, that not all educators and policy makers support the work of these non-profit organisations. Some see it as simply 'soft money', which creates public expectations – not likely to be fulfilled in the long run. 'Better to keep the lid on before the pot boils over.'

Another area of growing concern is the incursion of private for-profit corporations into the world of public education. Some school boards (and schools) have been eager to sign exclusivity contracts with private enterprise in return for substantial financial and material rewards. For example, the contract to provide vending equipment, software or computer hardware might seem to be insignificant, but giving exclusive access to the minds and consumer tastes of students may have long-term moral and consumer implications. In a global economy of transnational corporations, whose wealth and economic muscle dwarf most nations, such ethical implications cannot be overlooked.

Reflections

The community education movement has a long history in public schooling. Originally espoused by such visionaries as John Dewey in the early twentieth century, and further actualised by Edward Olsen in the United States and Henry Morris in the United Kingdom, community education has had a strong philosophical and programmatic influence on the nature of schooling

in the western world. It ranges from the community-focused curriculum, to the school as multiservice centre for human development, to the school as a focal point for social and economic renewal to improve the quality of community life.

The impact of the industrial age on parenting and the decline of the influence of religious institutions has extended the role of the school beyond academics to encourage social, cultural and values integration. Schools represent a primary service of childcare, safety and security in the community.

The rise of neo-conservative economic policies, however, has often resulted in a dismantling of the community education infrastructure. Severe budget cuts and a 'back to the basics' mentality have often resulted in the sacrifice of these school and community partnerships. The school is reduced to a custodial testing clinic rather than a centre for community education and development.

9 Micropolitics of governance

The age of decentralisation/deregulation has driven decision making and management to the local school level. As a result, school managers are very much part of a micropolitical milieu which involves networks of individuals and groups, both within and in areas surrounding schools, competing for scarce resources, even political power. The actors in this drama include principals, teachers and other staff (including unions), central office officials, school board members, parents, students, other community service personnel and employers.

At the same time, central governments may be imposing a macropolitical control of curriculum, student testing and programme assessment affecting individual schools. This creates a loose/tight central/decentral system of accountability in satisfying conflicting demands of stakeholders. Among the skills which the modern principal should possess is an astute sense of 'political awareness'. Factors shaping the political school environment may include: shared decision-making bodies; interagency collaboration; aspirations and needs of local and national (or state) politicians; socio-economic realities; and community development. The study of the micropolitics of governance is becoming an essential means of survival for school leaders and other educators (Lindle 1999).

Professor Ron Glatter at the Centre for Educational Policy and Management at the Open University in the United Kingdom has developed four models for governance in school education (Glatter 2002).

Competitive market

This model sees the school operating as a business in a commercial marketplace. Its continued existence depends upon its ability to attract and retain students in competition with other educational service providers in the area. In this regard, it has a high degree of autonomy with relatively few formal links with government authority. Such links might include financial operating and capital improvement grants from the government. However, the school would often be required to meet educational performance standards set by the national (or state) government imposed through standardised testing or external inspections.

Examples of such market-driven schools may be found in the 'schools of choice' of the Netherlands and Flanders. Charter schools in the United States and grant-maintained schools in the United Kingdom might be seen as adhering to this model. The American system of school vouchers provides eligible students from low-income families the opportunity to opt out of the public system to attend private schools which meet certain government criteria. The mobility of students in the marketplace, however, may be affected by: socio-economic factors; the availability of transportation; and the density of population in the area.

School managers in such an environment often function as entrepreneurs accountable to their local governing board, with limited influence from central government authority. Their ability to satisfy the varied political agendas of their governing bodies, parental and labour interests represents a dynamic challenge to maintain their employment security. Energy devoted to marketing and profitability of the enterprise may supplant the importance of the traditional educationalist's role.

School empowerment

This model involves top-down policy makers seeking to 'empower school level stakeholders'. This includes the role of the principal, other staff and parents as well. There may be a political decision to decentralise decision making by dispersing power to the grassroots or it may be an attempt to ensure more managerial accountability at the local level. The latter has been most often true of national initiatives designed to bring decisions as close as possible to the point of action. In this regard, it may be combined with competitive activities through an encouragement of participation, identification and partnerships to enhance the profile of the school and attract more students.

The school-based management movement (SBM) in the United States decentralises control from central offices to individual school sites. The objective of SBM is to give school administrators, teachers, parents and other community members more authority over budget, personnel and curriculum. The premise is that SBM can 'improve school performance and ensure higher quality decisions' by engaging the talents and enthusiasm of all stakeholders. There is a major concern, however, that principals may not naturally possess the political know-how, human resource development abilities and business acumen to excel as school-based managers. Pre-service and in-service training is essential to prepare school leaders for this decentralised managerial model.

Local empowerment

As opposed to the individual school as the focus for empowerment, this model involves a locality as a collection of social and educational units. The school is one unit with a family of schools (or board of education) forming an

educational system as a member of a broader community with reciprocal rights and obligations. In this instance such responsibilities as finance, staffing, curriculum and student admissions are devolved to the local authority.

The individual school is then a unit within the collective community governance. A local community council, board of trustees or governors may be elected to provide political and/or managerial control. Standards and benchmarks for performance are set by the governing body, which allocates the funds to operate the units. Accountability is maintained through budgetary controls and a consultative process among the units.

This is the form of governance to be found across the United States as previously described in Cincinnati, Seattle and rural Wisconsin. It is also the Local Education Authority (LEA) to be found in the United Kingdom prior to the Education Reform Act of 1988. While the central government controlled overall spending levels, LEAs were responsible for school budgets, staffing, student catchment areas and most curriculum policies. The challenge for principals and head teachers is to function in a politicised environment where school governors or trustees may be elected to represent their communities. Internal politics within the collective may also impact directly on the role of the school manager.

Quality control

Due to perceived pressures of global competition and a cost-cutting agenda among market-driven political interests, some governments are introducing industrial quality control (QC) systems to guide school operating procedures and performance outcomes. The QC model is most likely to be bureaucratic in nature with strict top-down rules, controls and monitoring. The school is seen as a 'point of delivery with many goods on offer and targets established – the product mix and product quality having been determined at either the central or state level, depending on constitutional arrangements' (Glatter 2002).

One of the foremost proponents of QC has been the Hungarian Ministry of Education and its COMENIUS 2000 Programme for Quality Improvement in Public Education. Quality improvement is based on three pillars: strengthening the role of the state in the field of financing (increasing the ratio of state funding to local funding); supplementing the regulation of content by framework curricula; and developing the national system of assessment and quality control. COMENIUS 2000 is based on the assumption that quality concepts, widely used in industry, could be adopted to the field of education. The Ministry of Education, assisted by outside consultants, issued a 'manual of quality development'. A three-stage progressive process for quality improvement was launched in 2000. The first stage assesses local needs to form a school community partnership for programme planning. The second stage sets up a total quality control management system (TQM) including the following elements: focus on

partners; process control; and development of an organisation culture. The third stage disseminates the programme throughout the 400 pilot schools, assisted by external consultants selected by tender.

These specially trained consultants have experience in dealing with quality issues in industrial settings, but also some knowledge of education. The Ministry of Education enters into an agreement with each pilot school and its consultant to provide a given number of consultancy days.

The implementation of COMENIUS 2000 and the principles of quality control have meant a new role for principals which is both difficult and demanding. On the one hand they have been given responsibility for determining curriculum and programme as a result of decentralisation. On the other hand, COMENIUS 2000 has represented a limited re-centralisation as well as a return to a more traditional approach to curriculum. The introduction of external consultants and the expectation of more accountability from parents, students and school maintainers further complicates the role of the principal. Finally, the scientific management and free market principles underpinning QC would often be foreign to professional educators whose primary concerns are to satisfy the needs of their clients, ensuring the survival of their institutions. Extensive pre-service and in-service training for teachers and principals would seem essential to the success of this top-down innovation.

Shared decision making

Another approach to school governance which is gaining popularity in Sweden, and to a lesser extent in the United States and the United Kingdom, is shared decision making. Traditionally principals have been held accountable for the management of their schools. But there now is a movement to increase teacher involvement in the decision-making process. This creates a new and different role for teachers, often referred to as 'empowerment'. Advocates of shared decision making believe that the participation of teachers in school governance will ultimately improve student achievement.

School reform still places responsibility on the backs of principals to improve the teaching available to students and to increase the quality of the learning environment. The premise is that a shift in the role of principal from 'boss' to 'facilitator' and that of teachers from 'subordinate' to 'collaborator' will have a positive effect on student achievement.

Empowerment might be defined as 'a process whereby school participants develop the competence to take charge of their own growth and resolve their own problems'. Research conducted on the nature of teacher empowerment has identified five areas of perception:

- *Professional development* – feeling that their school provides opportunities to grow and develop, learn continuously, and develop their skills.
- *Status* – professional respect, admiration and support from colleagues with whom they work.

- *Self-efficiency* – the skills and abilities to help students learn, build effective programmes and effect changes in student learning.
- *Autonomy* – ability to control certain aspects of their work life.
- *Impact* – sense that they have an effect and influence on school life.

(Rinehart *et al.* 1998)

Teacher empowerment has been found to promote job satisfaction. But some types of participation were seen to be more empowering than others. Teachers on interdisciplinary teams in middle schools and junior high schools felt more empowered than those in traditional, departmentally organised schools.

How do principals feel about shared governance? Studies have indicated that principals in shared-decision-making schools may experience difficulties associated with new roles and responsibilities, losing power, lacking necessary skills, lacking trust, and fear of risk taking. However, a study by Blasé and Blasé among a group of secondary school principals made the following conclusions concerning their participation in shared-governance experiences:

- they felt less lonely and more motivated;
- their actions become more consistent with their beliefs and values;
- they experienced a sense of renewal as educators;
- they found that, while many of their skills and values were consistent with shared governance, they still had to make fundamental changes in their leadership style;
- they had to learn how to step back, when to step in and how to facilitate rather than direct;
- they learned to accept criticism and that shared governance is difficult and time-consuming;
- they were constantly learning about themselves, others and the process of shared governance.

(Blasé and Blasé 1999)

Reflections

During the 1990s neo-conservative, national and state governments often saw educational spending as an area where expenditures could be reduced to help balance budgets or introduce tax cuts. As a result, schools were faced with dwindling resources at the same time as they were being publicly scrutinised for perceived deficits in student achievement. The drive to make local schools more accountable to the people they serve in their political environment became a new challenge for school leaders.

For many families, schools are the most accessible part of their government. Taxpayers and former students, parents and other citizens often see schools as a major investment in community well-being. Depending on socio-economic status and political know-how, local citizens may often be

eager to enter into local decision making to guide and protect their investment. Demands from various political factions seeking election to governing boards, conflicting parental interests, labour-management struggles and student dissent, all contribute to the political milieu surrounding the modern principal.

The shifting nature of school reform policies creating a constant barrage of top-down curricular and assessment decisions often complicates the role of the school administrator. The linking of schools and social service agencies and local aspirations for community and economic development may further politicise the school environment. It is not surprising that there is a growing demand for the micropolitics of governance to become an essential component in the pre-service and in-service training of school leaders in the twenty-first century.

10 Zero tolerance

The increasing incidence of violence and truancy among students in many countries has led to new safety and security policies, which decree 'zero tolerance' for student misbehaviour. But the commitments of neo-conservative governments to spending on education have often been curtailed due to budget reductions or failure to keep pace with increases in enrolment and the cost of living. Among the outcomes have been cutbacks or termination of support services for students with a range of social adjustment and behavioural problems. As described in a previous chapter, schools have often become a 'safe haven' for students at risk, whose mental health and social well-being are threatened by a dysfunctional family or a deterioration of the quality of life in the community.

The OECD study (2001c) identified a common set of concerns about student behaviour that principals face both in the school and in the community. Reports of increases in vandalism, bullying, theft, drug and weapons offences, and assaults against students and school personnel were to be found among many of the nine countries. The following are some innovative programmes introduced to address these concerns.

Flanders

The Flemish population is changing, with young people exposed to a new mix of cultures due to an influx of immigrants and migrants. Some may also be overcome with emotional problems related to broken homes. The school is expected to solve social problems such as violence among young people, particularly in urban areas. The school often provides the only stable environment offering safety and security. This is particularly true in the integration of youth from migrant families.

The Ghent Health Services Institute in Ghent represents one response to these concerns. It serves 600 middle school students (grades 7 and 8), offering pre-vocational and vocational classes in the health sciences, and special classes for migrant children in second-language instruction. Many students are socially disadvantaged, requiring remedial support. Social education helps migrant children to integrate, improve study habits, complete homework

assignments and participate in activities such as the students' council. Students are encouraged to be active in fund-raising, concerts, flea markets and barbecues. For many it is their second home.

At the general education and first grade of vocational education levels, students follow the Freinet method where learning is based on experience, creativity, emphasis on aesthetics, and equality, with older pupils helping the younger ones. Project work is emphasised with ongoing evaluation and communication. This programme is unique in Flanders, involving progressive teachers who choose to work in this environment, rather than the traditional teachers' role of preparation just for examinations.

Programmes at the Institute are specially developed for children with social and behavioural problems who dislike school. Group projects, with 10 to 13 pupils, include maintaining their own bank account with funds raised from group activities. The importance of group problem solving and listening to individual concerns is stressed to meet social needs and encourage the learning process. Through group work and the students' council, a sense of school ownership has been developed. Behavioural and discipline problems, so evident with beginners, seem to dissipate in this supportive environment (OECD 2001c).

Greece

In Greece, principals are expected to teach classes on a regular basis in addition to their administrative duties. Each school has a teachers' council with responsibilities related to student discipline and day-to-day problems. Parents have the right to form a union in every school to participate in limited aspects of school administration. A parents' union representative participates in a school council, along with the principal, vice principal and a representative of the students' union, to advise on school operations.

Traditionally, each class has had its own classroom to which specialist teachers come to teach. As a result, there was a lack of adequate classroom supervision with students damaging school premises and equipment. The Reorganisation of Premises Project was introduced by the central government to address this problem.

As described in a previous chapter, the Eighteenth Lower Secondary School in Athens was one of the original schools to benefit from the Reorganisation of Premises Project. This inner-city school, serving a migrant population (Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Africa), was plagued with deteriorating vandalised classrooms, the theft of equipment and the presence of drug dealers and other intruders. Students were known to lock teachers out of the classrooms.

The infusion of financial assistance from the Reorganisation of Premises Project allowed the school to install new locks and alarm systems in the classrooms. Video equipment and teaching materials were securely stored. A new library was created and scientific and ICT equipment installed in

subject-based classrooms. The improvements in safety and security resulted in a decline in misbehaviour among students (OECD 2001c).

Japan

Concern has been expressed by the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture (Monbusho) for the increase in juvenile delinquency, truancy, dropouts and bullying. This has resulted in more violence against students and teachers and suicides resulting from bullying. It was felt that excessive competition in entrance examinations and traditional uniformity of schooling might be contributing to the problem.

Monbusho has responded by trying to reduce the pressure of school exams and a reform of the curriculum to reflect a lifelong learning perspective. The school week was reduced from five and one-half to five days with more emphasis on school community relations. Schools were encouraged to express their own individuality through the adoption of cross-curricular themes such as international understanding and environmental studies. At the upper secondary level, more emphasis was given to integrated programmes, credit-based courses and flexibility in students' choice of subjects and timetables.

Kawasaki Junior High School in Kawasaki City serves 300 students in an inner-city industrial area. As part of a programme of linking schools more closely to their local communities, a regional education council was established with representatives from: the parent-teacher association; organisations concerned with local children; residents' committees; employees from youth, cultural and community centres; and teachers and administrative staff. The principal and the council recognised the importance of improving the school's partnership with parents and the community. The council was seen as 'a way of building bridges between the school and the homes of pupils, between school and community and between school and the local administration'. Councils are seen as a way of addressing concerns related to student behaviour on the one hand, and ever-increasing parental expectations for student achievement on the other (OECD 2001c).

The Netherlands

A prime example of safety and security in action was to be found at Hans Brinker College in The Hague. As previously described, an inner-city campus providing vocational education served 400 recent immigrants from 70 nationalities. Opened in the early 1990s, the school took advantage of grants from the Dutch and European governments to create a 'purpose-built' learning environment in a neighbourhood suffering from the effects of unemployment, poverty and crime (e.g. theft, prostitution and drug sales). An elaborate security system was installed with television monitors and controlled-access gates.

Partnerships were established with local services including law enforcement, social welfare, religious, health, and truancy prevention. A 'care committee' met regularly to assess the learning needs of individual students. Other partnerships included the local museum and area employers who donated equipment and financial support. Parents were also encouraged to be partners in joining with students and teachers in a 'participation council'; however this was often difficult to achieve due to language and cultural differences.

Hans Brinker College has been a pilot project in the 'broad school' concept advocated by the Dutch government to encourage co-operation between schools and community services. The students were encouraged to be polite and show respect and appreciation. Critics, however, have seen the school as creating an artificial, protected, custodial society which pampers the students and shelters them from societal realities (OECD 2001c).

Sweden

The Stockholm Upper Secondary School has 650 students in an area of Stockholm serving many immigrants. In the 1990s, the school gained the reputation as 'one of the most ill-disciplined in Sweden'. A small group of students had been lighting fires in waste-paper baskets, resulting in the evacuation of the 3,000 people from the multi-storey building housing the school. Security guards were then hired to check student identity cards before they were allowed to enter the building. Media coverage resulted in the school gaining national prominence as a centre of student misbehaviour.

In 1999 the municipal authority used the individualisation of salaries national policy as an incentive to recruit a new principal with a reputation for strong leadership and problem-solving skills in serving immigrant students. One of the first changes he made was to provide open access for students to school offices, which were previously hidden in a secure area 'off-limits' to students. A new code of student behaviour was enacted which emphasised positive rather than negative outcomes. Instead of installing surveillance cameras to record student misbehaviour, he decided to treat them as young adults deserving an atmosphere of mutual respect.

But improvement would not be possible without the full co-operation of teachers who had to be comfortable with the principal's new vision for the school, which included:

- changing of attitudes concerning the education of immigrants;
- making the school well known for the quality of its programme;
- seeking to make ongoing improvements in the organisation.

Teachers were clearly eager to find a better way to relate to their students, curb misbehaviour and improve the school's reputation in the media.

The principal's flamboyant leadership style, relaxed student-friendly approach, media know-how and commitment to improvement helped to transform the school. Negative incidents decreased and students even became advocates in a media campaign to put a positive spin on the school's image. Relationships within the multicultural, multiracial student body steadily improved with a feeling of mutual respect among students, teachers and the administration. The result was a series of positive articles in the media which highlighted, in particular, plans for a new, more suitable school building (OECD 2001c).

United Kingdom

British authorities have been alarmed at the increase of youth crime and unruly behaviour among students in school. The teachers' union reported that at least one teacher per day suffers from a violent attack in the nation's schools. The Education Secretary argued that bad parenting has created a 'cycle of disrespect' among children. She has demanded that councils make greater use of their powers to force violent parents to attend counselling or face court and a fine of up to £1,000 (BBC News 2002e).

The General Secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters agreed that an increasing number of dysfunctional families and dysfunctional parents was at the root of the problem. Teachers were reluctant to enforce discipline, such as breaking up fights, in case they became the subject of malicious allegations from pupils and parents. They saw parents as reluctant to enforce discipline on their own children and expected teachers to act as 'surrogate parents' (BBC News 2002e).

Another cause for concern has been the incidence of truancy among students. An education welfare officer in Liverpool saw truancy as caused by a wide range of social issues including drugs, alcohol and abuse. But he also blamed parents who take schools for granted. Keeping a child out of school for a day of shopping may create an attitude among children as to the ultimate importance of schooling in their life and the impact on future life chances. He believed that poor or non-attendance contributed to crime, social exclusion and anti-social behaviour (BBC News 2002g).

The government has found a clear link between drug use, truancy and exclusion from school and criminal behaviour. A six-month study by Metropolitan Police found that 5 per cent of all offences were committed by children during school hours, and 40 per cent of robberies and 20 per cent of criminal damage were committed by 10- to 16-year-olds. Nearly half of all school-age offenders have been excluded from schools and a quarter were persistent truants. Government research suggests truants are three times more likely to commit an offence than those who attend school regularly (BBC News 2002g).

But how does the government propose to deal with this problem? One approach has been formal exclusion from school of students who commit serious offences such as sexual misconduct, drug dealing, actual or threatened violence, bullying or possession of an offensive weapon. Head teachers have been told that they can eject pupils from school for a single offence of bullying, if they consider it serious enough. It was felt that the shock tactic of 'one strike and you're out' would be a deterrent to student misbehaviour and youth crime. As a result, there has been a big rise in the number of pupils being permanently excluded for serious misbehaviour. It remains to be seen how putting more young offenders out on the street will affect the youth crime statistics (BBC News 2002h).

What has the OECD study to say about this problem? The Francis Drake School in Garston, Watford, as previously described, has an enrolment of 830 students, the majority of whom come from lower socio-economic backgrounds and one-parent families. A high proportion are on the Special Needs Register and there is a high student turnover during the year.

Francis Drake School has addressed these special needs by developing strong links with the community. The community is represented on the school council and the school sends representatives to community group meetings outside the building. A performing arts centre has been created and plans are in place to locate a family service centre, involving area social service agencies, in the school.

A student council meets every seven weeks. Their activities include field visits to the district council and the magistrate's court. The student council has an active role in interviewing candidates for new teaching vacancies but, to date, the students' views tend to coincide with that of management.

New students entering Francis Drake School are subject to a casual entrance assessment which includes records from previous schools, literacy, numeracy, and general academic achievement. An individual education plan is drafted and parents are interviewed. Good assessments result in immediate admission. Poor assessments, such as previously excluded students, involve the head teacher meeting with all parties to develop an integration programme.

The school maintains a 'social inclusion policy' for: students at risk of permanent exclusion; those permanently excluded from another school; students with physical disability or health concerns; and school refusers. A 'social inclusion unit' has been established with its own manager and a dedicated classroom with a separate entrance. Subject teachers visit the unit to deliver the national curriculum. A calm, stimulating environment includes vocational education in such areas as food technology, business studies and art. The unit's work is displayed around the school, but the interaction of unit students with Francis Drake School's general population is a privilege which must be earned (OECD 2001c).

United States

Concern about academic performance and student misbehaviour is endemic among American public schools, particularly in the inner-city and other poor areas. Many junior and senior high schools have installed entrance metal detectors with police and security guards patrolling school corridors. This deterioration of safety and security in the learning environment may be attributed to many factors including:

- theft, assault and bullying behaviour both in the community and in the school;
- easy access to weapons, including firearms on the street and in the home;
- an increase in the use of illegal, controlled substances such as alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, heroin, party drugs (e.g. ecstasy) and solvent sniffing among elementary and secondary students;
- the rise in youth gang violence and criminal activity (e.g. Crips versus Bloods), particularly among minority students in impoverished neighbourhoods;
- a greater incidence of dysfunctional family life involving violence, child abuse and emotional trauma;
- rampant truancy, low academic achievement and early school leaving prior to graduation, particularly in impoverished areas.

The impact of these concerns on the nature of public schooling has been profound. For example:

- many parents with above-average incomes have fled the public system to enrol their children in private schools;
- charter schools have been established in some states by both advantaged and disadvantaged parental groups, with restricted enrolment to exclude behavioural problems;
- other parents have utilised vouchers, where available, to send their children to private schools;
- public schools have difficulty attracting and retaining teachers to work in problem areas;
- many school districts have enacted 'zero tolerance' policies permanently to expel students who misbehave;
- some jurisdictions have contracted out responsibility for expelled and problem students to the private sector who operate strict discipline programmes and military-style 'boot camp' custodial institutions;
- both the federal and most state governments have enacted educational reform legislation which calls for more standardised testing to shame teachers and schools into improving their academic performance.

Critics of these policies have decried a neo-conservative agenda for two-tier education. The 'advantaged' may choose private schools (through tuition and vouchers) or charter schools – all of whom have the right to exclude 'undesirable elements'. What is left for the 'disadvantaged' is a deteriorating public infrastructure with decreasing financial resources to meet the needs of the poor, visible minorities, immigrants and migrants and students with behavioural problems.

Even the wealthy suburbs have not escaped the violence cycle – witness the mass murders committed by students with easy access to assault weapons and explosives (e.g. Columbine High School in Colorado). It is not surprising that safety and security have joined academic achievement as 'hot-button' items on political agendas in the United States.

An example of a school district trying to deal with these concerns is to be found in Cincinnati, the third largest city in Ohio. It has a school population of 47,000 consisting of about 70 per cent African Americans, 27 per cent Caucasian, and 3 per cent other. The district has experienced a continuing decline in enrolment, especially among Caucasians. Twenty per cent of school-age children attend private schools, with a growing number of charter schools being established by African American parents. The Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) and Cincinnati Teachers Federation (CTF) formed a partnership to improve student achievement and reduce dropout rates.

One outcome of the partnership has been the School Assistance and Redesign Plan (SARP) as described in Chapter 5. Parkland Elementary, serving a predominantly African American inner-city area, was placed under Redesign and forced to close due to behavioural problems and low academic achievement. A strong instructional leader was appointed principal before the school was allowed to reopen. She motivated the hand-picked staff and students to 'raise the bar' and introduced a rigid teacher-directed reform structure with an emphasis on discipline and test preparation. Her goal has been to boost academic performance, decrease the dropout rate and make Parkland the 'number one neighbourhood school in Cincinnati' (OECD 2001c).

Ontario case study

A case study in neo-conservative opportunism can be found in the Canadian province of Ontario with a population of more than 11 million. In 1995 a Conservative government was elected on the basis of a platform of tax reduction known as the 'common sense revolution'. In 1996 the government radically reduced the number of municipalities through regionalisation, resulting in many fewer locally elected officials (mayors, councillors, etc.). Financial transfer payments were restructured, e.g. the province assumes responsibility for schooling, while such costs as social services, housing, and transit must be borne by local ratepayers. As a result, the new municipalities were faced with increasing local taxes as deficit financing is forbidden.

The number of civil servants and administrative officials both provincially and locally was dramatically reduced to balance the provincial budget and allow for provincial income tax reductions. Services were contracted out to reduce spending at both provincial and municipal levels, causing shortfalls in essential areas, e.g. health care, water quality, etc. A radical reduction in the number of school boards (more than 50 per cent), and the assumption of overall financial responsibility and accountability for schooling by the provincial government, has been a central plank in the reform agenda.

As the number of school boards (kindergarten to grade 13) was drastically reduced, the province assumed overall financial responsibility and budgetary control through a funding formula applied to each schooling authority. The number of locally elected trustees was correspondingly reduced and their roles emasculated. Rigid budgetary controls and down-sizing in per pupil spending, and many fewer supervisory officers at the local level, have placed more responsibility on school principals. Other reforms included curriculum revisions; standardised testing at grade 3, 6 and 10 levels; mandatory competency assessment of all teachers to retain certification; and the removal of principals from membership of teachers' unions. The government also proposed that non-teachers fill these positions.

The provincial government ended the entitlement of adults (age 21 plus) to attend secondary schools or adult day schools as regular students, causing school boards drastically to reduce services to these students. This was a particular concern for learners of English as a second language in Ontario, the destination for more than 40 per cent of all immigrants and refugees coming to Canada. There was also a major concern regarding the training needs of the unemployed, as the federal government no longer provided funding for their skill training.

Budgetary cutbacks caused school boards to close schools and reduce the number of administrators (e.g. vice principals) and support staff (e.g. secretaries, caretakers and maintenance workers). Teachers were reluctant to apply for principal positions, resulting in an impending serious shortage of school managers. Schools were not being adequately cleaned and maintained. There was a shortage of instructional materials and supplies. Mandated curriculum reform, standardised testing and teacher assessment have resulted in serious morale problems among teachers, support staff and school managers. Many parents have the perception that schools are failing and teachers are lazy.

Candidates for principal and vice principals were required to take two years of part-time pre-service training leading to certification before being considered for a position. All supervisory officers (senior administrative officials) must similarly be trained and certificated. The content of training in both instances was mandated by the provincial Ministry of Education but offered by faculties of education and other service providers. All certificated teachers were required to complete successfully 14 professional learning courses over five years to retain their licences.

There was a steady shift from a strong ‘learner centred’ teacher as facilitator approach towards a more teacher-directed ‘time on task’ approach. This became particularly apparent following the advent of standardised testing whereby teachers felt compelled to ‘teach to the test’. Test scores were published in local media and parents often compared performance among schools. In the areas of literacy and numeracy, a strong ‘back to the basics’ (e.g. phonics versus whole language) was becoming more pronounced.

Information and communications technology (ICT) has had a profound impact on the learning environment, particularly the emergence of the Internet as an instructional aid. The impact, however, was affected by the availability of hardware, software and Internet access. Many teachers were still not comfortable with ICT as a focus for learning, but saw it as just another audio visual aid. ICT tended to be confined to special ‘learning labs’ as opposed to being an integral part of the classroom environment. Funding cutbacks were limiting the availability and updating of hardware and software. Many students from poor families had no access to ICT in the home.

Safety and security had also become major concerns in school management. In many urban schools the majority of students came from homes where English is not spoken, making communication with parents and multicultural understanding more difficult. Race relations remained an issue of increasing importance in urban centres.

The shifts mentioned above have been affected by provincial government political agendas; fiscal restraint; media influence on public perceptions; socio-economic disparities; government versus union conflicts; and federal immigration and settlement policies and procedures. Overall, government policy has focused on reduction in educational spending; the raising of standardised test scores; more control by the central authority of local school operations; more accountability regarding curriculum content and student, teacher and administrative performance; encouragement of a public perception that schools are failing and ‘need to be fixed’; and addressing the issue of safety and security in public education (Hirsch 2002).

In September 2001, the Ontario Minister of Education made the following comments in a news release: ‘We are keeping our commitment to help restore respect and responsibility in Ontario’s publicly funded school system. Parents, teachers and students have told us that students learn better and teachers teach better when they are in a safer environment. The new legislation and regulations will help principals to better protect their students and schools.’

The Safe Schools Act 2000 required that a student be expelled for committing any of the following infractions while at school or engaged in a school-related activity:

- possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm;
- using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person;

- committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner;
- committing sexual assault;
- trafficking in weapons or in illegal drugs;
- committing robbery;
- giving alcohol to a minor; and
- engaging in another activity that, under a policy of the board, is one for which expulsion is mandatory.

Any student who commits an infraction for which expulsion is mandatory will be immediately suspended and proceed to an expulsion inquiry or hearing. A decision by the school board to expel a student may be appealed to the Child and Family Services Review Board.

Fully expelled students will not be able to attend any publicly funded school in Ontario until they have completed a strict discipline or equivalent programme. Seven strict discipline demonstration projects are up and running to help those students continue their studies and turn their lives around. All boards are required to have similar programmes in place (Ontario Ministry of Education 2001).

Before being allowed to return to a school in a publicly funded school system, students who have received a full expulsion are expected to:

- demonstrate respect for themselves, for others, and for those in authority;
- demonstrate that they understand and can accept the consequences of their actions;
- demonstrate the ability to participate in school without compromising the safety and well-being of themselves or others at the school;
- comply with the standards set out in the provincial Code of Conduct.

Critics of the province's strict discipline political agenda have seen the Conservative Government playing on the fears of parents fuelled by North American media coverage of school violence and youthful misbehaviour. For example, the massacre at Columbine High School, other school-based assaults and concern about drug use among students have helped to convince many parents that schools are no longer safe. The fact that teachers have often been portrayed by the government and the media as lazy, incompetent, and overpaid may serve to raise the anxiety level among parents. A get tough 'zero tolerance' policy to rid the schools of the 'bad apples' can be a vote generator in a neo-conservative political agenda.

Students literally 'expelled for life', however, find themselves in a state of despair and alienation from society due to parallel government cut-backs in social and mental health services. Consequently, they often end up in the criminal justice system and inmates of correctional centres – the outcasts of society.

Nor is prevention any longer an option before students reach the point of being fully expelled. Reductions in spending for education have resulted in larger class sizes and the inability of most schools to afford remedial assistance; guidance and counselling; social and psychological services; or alternative programmes for special needs students. The introduction of a compulsory grade 10 literacy exam, which must be passed before graduation, is a further source of stress for the marginal student who becomes a candidate for early school leaving or expulsion.

Reflections

In surveying the policies and programmes as described above, certain neo-conservative ideological precepts seem to emerge:

- concerns about student misbehaviour seem to be most often directed towards immigrants, migrants, visible minorities and socially and economically disadvantaged children and youth;
- financial support for the improvement of educational facilities, instructional materials and equipment seems to be declining;
- funding to reduce class sizes, by employing more qualified teachers and support staff continues to be sacrificed;
- encouragement for community service partnerships with social work, mental health, substance abuse and law enforcement agencies has often been drastically curtailed;
- parental and student involvement in school planning and problem solving may be just patronising or superficial window dressing;
- the rise in school exclusions and permanent expulsions, without alternative programmes of remediation in place, would seem to be breeding grounds for even more serious anti-social behaviour leading to incarceration and ongoing criminal behaviour;
- investment in paramilitary personnel and their security weapons seems to be turning schools from community-focused learning environments to custodial, correctional institutions.

11 Digital divide

The importance of information and communications technology (ICT) in our daily lives continues to challenge principals and teachers preparing learners to be productive citizens in the twenty-first century. In its 1999 Education Policy Analysis, the OECD estimated an annual expenditure on ICT of U.S. \$16 billion for primary, secondary and tertiary education across their 29 member countries. The bulk of this was invested in hardware and networking, with little spent on software and only about 5 per cent on teacher training. This investment has continued to grow, representing an enormous commitment to the use of computers, the Internet and e-mail for teaching and learning purposes.

The influence of ICT on the economy has been profound, particularly in manufacturing industries such as automobiles and textiles, but it has become even more pervasive in such service sectors as retailing and banking. Schooling, however, has always been labour-intensive with its emphasis on face-to-face teaching in transmitting a knowledge culture. The adoption of ICT to the education process has been a challenge of dramatic proportions.

The school workforce in most OECD countries is rapidly ageing. Their traditional views of the learning process make the in-service training of teachers as ICT-learning facilitators a very complicated task. Most new teachers, on the other hand, have often grown up with ICT in their formative years. Another potential source of innovation can be found among ICT-knowledgeable students who may have surpassed even their teachers in computer skills and the use of the Internet as a primary source of learning. Such students may be pressed into service as peer tutors in assisting other students less familiar with ICT (OECD 2001a).

While digital technologies may enable most people to lead more productive and rewarding lives, and help society to address social and economic problems, there is also a strong potential for the creation of an ever-widening 'digital divide'. Those who are denied access to ICT skills and knowledge are increasingly incapable of participating in a society and an economy that is more and more dependent on technology. How can government policy makers and educational leaders ensure that the new

technologies do not confine the ‘digitally poor’ to the margins of society, unable to contribute and benefit from opportunities enjoyed by the ‘digitally rich’ (OECD 2000b).

In a 2001 publication entitled *ICT: School Innovation and the Quality of Learning* the OECD called for a re-appraisal of the learning environment whereby ‘the underlying aims of education can be strengthened and adapted to the changed circumstances of a massive penetration of ICT-based education and learning’. Such a re-appraisal would include the following:

- *ICT infrastructure* – countries should build up their hardware resources and connectivity to ensure all learners and teachers are equipped and the equipment maintained.
- *People* – all school leaders, teachers and students should be encouraged to use ICT in their daily work. This will require ongoing training and retraining so that schools become learning organisations.
- *Partnerships* – this requires strengthening in two directions: ‘horizontally’ to build and maintain an ICT infrastructure through combining the resources of education, the private sector and the community at large; and ‘vertically’ within the primary, secondary and tertiary education sectors to improve the dissemination of information and teaching methodologies.
- *Evaluation* – as an ICT strategy is implemented, there is need of ongoing research and evaluation, particularly to monitor and report successes and failures in the in-service training of teachers and school leaders.

(OECD 2001a)

Several of the nine nations comprising the OECD study on New School Management Approaches recognised ICT as one of their priorities.

Greece

The Athens Laboratory School, located in the central business district of Athens, served almost 500 students at the elementary, lower secondary and upper secondary levels. The school had benefited from the Reorganisation of Premises Project using the funding to refurbish the 70-year-old building with fresh paint and new furniture and equipment.

The school was also engaged in other funded projects including the ‘Connect Project’, a transnational programme in which ten other Greek schools participated. These schools were linked electronically with schools in Italy to explore new teaching methodologies concerning culture and tradition. The Athens Laboratory School has been a pilot in a national ICT project (OECD 2001a).

Hungary

The Soros Foundation has supported several school-level ICT programmes in Hungary co-ordinated with government policy. These activities have consisted of: developing ICT curricula and teaching materials; building the capacity of school libraries and supporting the further training of school librarians; and generally providing support and advice to schools.

In 1997 the Ministry of Education launched Sulinet – the School Network Programme – to connect all high schools and larger elementary schools to the Internet. But elementary schools in small villages were left out of the programme. The Soros Foundation responded by launching an ICT experiment for small regions. Four villages were selected, with each receiving a local area network consisting of 15 multimedia computers for two months at a time. A teacher travelled with the hardware to deliver an intensive information technology programme. After the computers and the teacher left, a well-equipped computer with Internet access was installed in the school library for the permanent use of pupils and teachers. The results of this pilot project, including method, know-how and experience, were shared with the Ministry of Education and local authorities (OECD 2001a).

Japan

In 1995 the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture (Monbusho) established guidelines for advanced information and communication networks, satellite communications, the development of educational methods using these infrastructures, and training programmes for teachers. In 1996 a report from the Central Council for Education focused on the need for improvements in technology education with elementary children becoming familiar with computers to enrich their learning activities. Junior high school students were to advance their computer literacy and learn more about computer techniques. In senior high schools, a more active use of computers was encouraged in each subject with information-related subjects promoted.

In 1998 Monbusho called for the systematic provision of information and communication networks, and the installation of education centres linking schools. There was also a new emphasis on technological literacy in teacher education and staff development.

In 1999 the Japanese government created the Virtual Agency, bringing together Monbusho, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Post and Telecommunication and the Ministry of Local Affairs. The Virtual Agency proposed the following agenda to be complete by 2005:

- provide computers and Internet access in every classroom in all schools;
- ensure high speed Internet access in all schools;
- equip every teacher to be able to teach using ICT;

- support information technology use in schools via personnel from local districts and industries;
- promote the development and delivery of high-quality education via collaboration between governmental agencies and industry;
- establish a National Centre for Educational Information.

The promotion of ICT has become a national priority for Japan's survival in the twenty-first century. Curriculum standards are to be revised and hardware and software provided, with all schools and students given access to the Internet (OECD 2000b).

Mexico

With a very traditional education system, an impoverished population and a resistance to change, the Mexican government has struggled to serve the needs of disadvantaged learners. They sought to provide more skilled workers to the burgeoning industrial sectors and prepare young people to be productive citizens in a new technologically focused, knowledge-based economy.

In 1992 the governments of the 31 states joined with the federal Ministry of Public Education (SEP) and the National Union of Education Workers (SNTE) to create the 'National Agreement for the Modernisation of Basic Education'. In 1997 the federal government introduced the 'School Management in Elementary Education Project'. Another outcome has been distance learning, supported through the EDUSAT (satellite education) net, which extended information services to 35,000 lower secondary and primary schools and expanded teacher education opportunities.

In 1994 the Mexican government approached the OECD to conduct a review of its higher education policy. The 1996 'Review of Higher Education Policy' report (OECD 2001c) identified a concern for the lack of diversification in upper secondary and higher education, especially technical education, which placed the country 'at a strategic disadvantage'.

As a result of the OECD review, the Pilot Project for Relevant Education was established in 1998 by the Vice-Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. In 1999 the pilot project began with ten upper secondary schools in urban areas in different states. One of the schools was Colima Project School in the city of Colima. Through a contract with the University of Colima and federal government funding, new facilities were created including 12 classrooms with screens; four television sets; overhead projectors; a computer-assisted design workshop; self-service computer lab; and a teachers' workroom with Internet and project networking connections. Teachers work together to enhance self-directed learning skills in such fields as applied chemistry; metallurgy; informatics; topography; design; literature; history; and English (OECD 2001c).

The Netherlands

The government reports a strong commitment to the implementation of ICT in Dutch schools. It is seen as essential that students gain modern information and communication skills if they are to compete for jobs and participate in society as a whole. While The Hague's Hans Brinker College, previously described as a special project on p60, was particularly well equipped with one computer for every three students, the nation's average is one for every 16 students. School managers, however, identify three factors which impact on the successful integration of ICT into the curriculum:

- the availability of appropriate software to support educational practice;
- the ongoing upgrading of computer hardware;
- the professional know-how of teachers to use ICT effectively in the classrooms.

However, limited financial support from central authorities in supplying ICT hardware, software and staff training on a continuing basis remains a problem. The introduction of 'Beacon schools' and a policy commitment by the Secretary of Education better to integrate information and communication technology in the schools would appear to be important directions for the future (OECD 2001c).

Sweden

Sweden prides itself as being on the forefront of the information and communication revolution, not just in the workplace but also in the home. It is felt that such technological innovations as the Internet will profoundly affect the way the family, the school, recreation and work activities are organised in the future.

In 1998 the Swedish government proclaimed an action plan for ICT covering pre-school, compulsory school, special school, Sami (ethnic minority) school and upper secondary school. During the period 1999 to 2001, the government's action plan introduced the 'Delegation for ICT in Schools' which included:

- distributing state grants to municipalities to improve the Internet access of their schools;
- creating opportunities for all students and teachers to have e-mail addresses;
- offering in-service training activities for about 60,000 teachers in teams (40 per cent of all teachers);
- making computers available for home use by teachers who have obtained an ICT certificate;

- supporting the development of the Swedish Schoolnet and the European Schoolnet;
- making special arrangements for special needs students.

The Swedish Schoolnet is a computer network which includes quality-assured links (portals) organised according to teaching subjects; meeting places and a notice board for sharing ideas and information; and a register of school e-mail addresses. The Multimedia Bureau, part of the Schoolnet, stimulates the school use of new media and serves as a source of materials, ideas, courses and information, as well as being a tool for distance publishing (OECD 2000b).

United Kingdom

Britain has been a world leader in educational computing. The new technology is embedded in all subjects of the national curriculum. Learning materials are being networked in schools and in vocational training. National technology-backed learning programmes and other innovative strategies are available at the local and community levels.

The National Grid for Learning is a web site of quality controlled and indexed learning materials. It provides an inquiry source for learning, with access to materials, courses, professional contacts and links with learning networks in the United Kingdom and beyond. All school teachers, post-secondary lecturers and trainers are equipped to use the new technologies to supplement ICT learning skills and stimulate the use of the national grid. All schools, colleges, libraries and museums are to be networked to encourage innovations by individuals and institutions.

At the end of 1999, a multidisciplinary task force reported to the government on the following means to bridge the division between the 'digitally rich' and the 'digitally poor':

- Strengthening coherence between the present multiplicity of objectives at national and local levels.
- Collaboration between central and local organisations, community and voluntary sectors, and business, to improve access to ICT in deprived neighbourhoods, by providing the technical infrastructure, applications relevant to the interests of the groups in question, and a strategy for longer-term sustainability.
- Recognition of the synergy between ICT literacy goals and general literacy goals, the two being mutually supportive.
- Support for 'local champions' to engage local people enthusiastically and drive activities forward.
- Setting realistic targets for future technology penetration and usage, following research and analysis.
- Improved networking to spread good practice, especially in relation to specific social groups.

- Recognition that costs are and will remain significant – hence, for example, continuing dialogue with telecommunications providers to ensure access to ICT for those in difficult economic circumstances. (OECD 2000b)

United States

In August 2002, *USA Today* reported on the results of the Pew Internet and American Life Project. They found that the gap between knowledgeable Internet students and their teachers continues to widen. Seventy-eight per cent of teens say that ‘teachers are totally clueless about using the Net for teaching and learning’. Unless teachers start taking advantage of the online resources teens have found on their own, the billions of dollars spent on wiring schools will have been wasted.

This is ironic, because during the Clinton era the Technology Literacy Challenge was enacted to address the digital divide as it impacted on schooling. There were four key objectives:

- modern computers and learning devices to be accessible to every student;
- classrooms to be connected to one another and to the outside world;
- educational software to be an integral part of the curriculum, and as engaging as the best video game;
- teachers to be ready to use and teach with technology.

The challenge led to the investment of two billion dollars over five years to put technology into schools. Telecommunication services were discounted so that many educational institutions could become ‘wired’.

Vice-President Gore brought together key leaders from business, organised labour, education and all levels of government to explore promising practice in workforce learning. Recommendations and commitments from this group included the following:

- New partnerships and collaborations should be initiated among traditional and non-traditional partners, from which a host of workforce development efforts can be launched. This was the group’s overarching recommendation, in spite of knowing it is hard to achieve.
- There should be delivery of education, training, and learning tied to high standards, that leads to useful credentials and meets labour market needs. High expectations and standards for all learners was the second major focus of the group’s recommendations.
- Improved access to financial resources for lifetime learning is needed for all citizens, including those in low-wage jobs. Too often, students, employees and employers are not aware of the full range of tools and services available to them.

- Learning should be promoted at a time and place and in a manner – anytime, anywhere – that meets workers’ needs.
- Awareness and motivation to participate in education, training, and learning should be stimulated. The group focused on the need to develop a culture of lifelong learning, where people better understand the benefits of investing in education and training.

(OECD 2000b)

Recently, CNN presented a case study of the changing face of the American classroom. They described the transformation of Southern Middle School in Tupelo, Mississippi, a small city in the American south. The school, with 1,150 seventh- and eighth-grade students, has a computer network that links every classroom, six computer labs and eight rolling carts loaded with 15 laptops that can be moved from class to class.

More than 50 students in the Excel Technology class are an in-house technical support staff for the school’s computer systems. Each classroom is set up for wireless laptops which teachers book as required. The eighth-grade ‘techies’ do all the maintenance.

‘When they aren’t troubleshooting, they’re updating the school web site – which they created. They type documents, scan photos, take and download digital photos, burn CDs, and use programs such as Publisher, Word and Power Point to create teachers’ classroom materials.’

(Duffy 2002)

Students also fill the positions of ‘tech helpers’ for teachers and students who need assistance using computers in class.

The Excel Tech programme is but a part of a technological revolution where keyboards and digital displays have become as common as the chalk-board used to be. In English classes, laptops are used to transform the traditional book report into a computer presentation complete with clip art, animation and video. Students have been challenged to use their ‘higher level learning skills’ to organise their thoughts into bullet points, choose appropriate elements and produce a coherent presentation.

Southern Middle School is one of the first schools in the United States to teach remote sensing – the use of technology to and from a distant location. Science students record weather data from a buoy in the Gulf of Mexico, passing it on to regional scientists via the net. Aerial pictures of the school can be taken from a kite with a digital camera. This was designed and built by students with help from NASA with whom they can talk directly via a web link in their ‘distance learning lab’. The lab also allows the school’s teachers to instruct students statewide, via links with Mississippi State University.

Many students are now assuming the role of teachers through an inter-generational community service programme. When senior citizens and nursing home residents were provided with laptops, it was Southern Middle

School students who taught them how to set up e-mail accounts and use the Internet. Some students have even been hired part-time by local computer companies hungry for technologically literate workers. To quote the principal: 'Our instruction is still traditional instruction. We are still teaching those core objectives, we're just doing a better job of it. I think they are more prepared for the workplace.'

Inequalities

Richard L. Venezky (2000), in an article entitled 'The digital divide within formal education: causes and consequences' details three causes for inequalities which may contribute to the digital divide.

The missing link

Students with specific disabilities and those in remote rural or inner-city areas often have limited access to the Internet. For example about 38 per cent of the total United States population use the Internet as opposed to 10 per cent who are disabled. While computer-based devices exist to assist those with motor and communicative disabilities, these devices are often very expensive and require special software. They tend to be available in schools serving affluent populations rather than those in impoverished areas. To the advantaged the Internet offers relief from social isolation (through e-mail, chat rooms, etc.); access to libraries and other learning resources; online instruction; and net-based tutors and mentors. The impoverished, however, tend not to enjoy this freedom of access.

Another group of students affected by the missing link are those in rural areas who lack satellite and microwave connections to access the Internet. Small high schools in remote locations may lack the enrolment to generate the number and variety of teachers to offer such options as foreign languages, career education and technical subjects. Distance learning technology offers web-based virtual courses providing the opportunity for student collaboration, a wealth of instructional resources and even remote manipulation of laboratory instruments.

A third group affected by the missing link are from impoverished neighbourhoods serving immigrants and underprivileged minorities. In a 1999 study by the United States Department of Education, it was determined that 52 per cent of teachers in low-poverty schools (those where fewer than 11 per cent of students received subsidised lunches) regularly used computers and the Internet to create instructional materials. This was compared to high-poverty schools (71 per cent subsidised lunches) where only 32 per cent of teachers made use of computer technology. These differences are attributed to less access to technical equipment and support, training in the use of ICT and a school culture related to ICT.

It should be noted, however, that in most countries the disparities of access within schools is nothing compared to that experienced between homes and communities. The trend in industrialised countries is to supply more ICT to the classroom. In affluent areas, computers and Internet connections are most often available outside school to support homework, while in poorer areas the community and home support systems are seldom available. To overcome this gap, it has been proposed in the United Kingdom by the Ministers of E-Commerce and Technology that Internet connections be provided in schools, churches and pubs located in poor urban areas. Likewise, in the United States, 1,000 community technology centres have been proposed by the federal government to serve low-income urban and rural neighbourhoods. The object is to allow lower-income families access to the same computing resources to be found in more affluent homes and communities.

The wasteland

In 2000 a report by a Commission established by the American Association of University Women found that girls do not fear the use of computers but feel alienated from the computer culture. While women make up more than 50 per cent of the United States college enrolment, they receive only 9 per cent of engineering-related bachelor degrees and less than 28 per cent of computer science bachelor degrees. Among information technology professionals, women make up about 20 per cent of the total.

The Commission found that girls perceive programming classes as ‘tedious and dull, and computer games boring, redundant and violent, and computer career options uninspiring’. To remedy this situation, the Commission recommended a number of changes for schools and communities, including changing the image of computing so women will not view it as solitary and anti-social; redesigning software to appeal to a wider range of people than the ‘computer nerd’ stereotype; preparing ‘tech-savvy’ teachers to portray computers as productive tools more effectively, and encouraging girls to explore their technological imaginations.

The majority of students who pursue computer science programmes at university level tend to be advanced in mathematics. Again, the potential of such talent to be fostered in high-poverty areas, particularly among African Americans and Hispanics, is not nearly as high as from affluent areas. If this problem is not addressed, changes to hardware and software will have little impact.

The foreign language

The encouragement of more effective use of ICT, however, involves more than just wiring schools and community organisations to the Internet. For many, computers and the Internet represent a foreign language which they do not speak or understand. Many students lack an understanding of how the

Internet can be used to enhance learning and gain experience in information-handling and effective independent learning. They require a range of skills, including self-monitoring and time management, before the use of computers and the Internet becomes meaningful.

The Internet requires an active, autonomous relationship to the technology. Stored information is available, but to use the medium effectively active search, communication and information-management skills are required. Those students who possess these skills as part of their 'learning style' usually do better as independent learners. The ideal instructional mix for elementary and secondary schooling varies according to age and maturity. It involves a combination of direct instruction, guided and independent practice, group interaction, and individual reflection, search and creation. Teachers who already teach this way can easily incorporate ICT into their teaching. Those who do not must acquire new teaching styles, as well as essential technology skills.

Some students, however, have low literacy and limited language skills, particularly in impoverished areas. The Internet – and the World Wide Web (www) – tends to use language and technical diagrams which are at or above high school reading level. Students who enter secondary school reading far below their grade level are at a real disadvantage in attempting to use the content to be found on the www. The low-literacy group may also suffer from problems in listening comprehension due to a limited vocabulary.

Immigrants and migrants, similarly, may not have a facility in the predominant language of their new country. While translation services may be a possible remedy, there is a need for an expansion of second-language instruction, particularly English, so that students can make effective use of the www.

Closing the digital divide, for those affected by the foreign-language problem, requires the development of ICT skills through the school, the home and the student's capacity for self-learning. School ICT use can be improved through national policies which promote the acquisition of more hardware, software and networking capabilities. But, aside from equipment and technological support, the training of teachers and school leaders remains a priority. Teacher training projects for ICT skills can be found in a number of countries including the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. The Mexican government has proposed the use of ICT to promote school reform through increased participation of teachers in planning course-ware development and instructional support. The U.K. project uses laptops and subsidised Internet service as an incentive for teachers to receive ICT training.

Policies to improve home computing for school-age students (and their parents) can be found in several successful projects. For example, the Buddy project in the United States supplies equipment, training and support services for parents of school-age children. But disparities still exist in many countries where high-speed Internet lines are installed in wealthy neighbourhoods while low-income areas are left with inferior communication equipment.

Policies encouraging the student capacity for self-learning are also essential. Computing remains largely a solitary activity, which requires problem-solving skills just to keep up with the current state of technologies such as system crashes, incompatible file formats and inaccurate or vague instruction manuals. Differences in self-study ability have been found to be major contributors to performance gaps when computer-assisted instruction is used for mathematics. Students who can monitor their own learning know when to seek help to understand a concept or communicate their learning needs. They tend to learn more from a self-paced system than those who lack these abilities.

Venezky (2000) summarises the challenge of the digital divide:

The digital divide in formal schooling is not simply an equipment differential that can be overcome with further selective investments in hardware, software, and networking. Instead it derives from both within school and within home – differences that extend to learning standards as well as support. Student self-learning ability, and in particular, student ability for independent learning, is an additional factor. National policies that attempt to close the digital divide for schooling must attend to all of these contributing factors to be successful.

Reflections

But how does the use of ICT impact on the management of schools? It certainly has been a significant line item in school budgets across the countries participating in the OECD (2001c) study. Where government policies may reduce spending to meet neo-conservative agendas, budget allocations for computer equipment, software and training may be subtracted from funds available for teachers, management and consultative personnel, support staff and learning materials. In business terms, what is the cost benefit analysis of ICT?

There is no doubt that information and communications technology has become an essential component of our lifestyle. Computer- and Internet-related skills have also become a necessity in preparing students to compete in the job market. Should ICT be seen as the focal point of the classroom, or just another teaching aid in support of the learning process? What about the concerns for social isolation, cultural differences and socio-economic inequalities which contribute to the digital divide?

In a study of ICT usage undertaken in 2002 by the British Department of Education, 840 primary schools, 790 secondary and 360 special schools were surveyed. In primary schools, average spending on ICT rose by half in the space of one year from £10,300 to £15,400 while secondary spending rose from £60,300 to £76,900.

As compared to a similar survey in 2001, there was a dramatic change in the use of ICT in the curriculum. Primary schools saw its use in English fall

from 89 per cent in 2001 to 65 per cent in 2002. In mathematics it fell from 74 per cent to 48 per cent, while science declined from 50 per cent to 26 per cent and history from 46 per cent to 9 per cent.

In secondary schools, mathematics was down from 60 per cent to 21 per cent and science from 67 per cent to 29 per cent. Even design and technology fell from 81 per cent to 56 per cent. These dramatic changes could not be attributed to teacher training in ICT as 93 per cent of primary teachers and 75 per cent of secondary teachers had been trained.

Nor could the use of ICT be seen to be raising standards, in spite of the increased spending. Another study undertaken by Becta, the government's computer agency, found no consistent relationship, from 1999 to 2002, between the average amount of ICT use in any subject and its apparent effectiveness in raising standards. The report said that the proportion of lessons involving ICT was generally low. Pupils were using computers at home as much as at school (BBC News 2002i).

Another study looked at 200 Israeli schools, 122 of which were teaching on some of the 35,000 educational computers acquired in the mid-1990s using state lottery funds. Test results were compared in mathematics and language between schools with computers and those using conventional teaching methods. The computer students showed no discernible improvement or an actual decline in achievement. In mathematics, the computer students' test scores were 10 to 15 per cent lower. The study's co-author, Victor Lavy of Hebrew University of Jerusalem, observed:

One logical conclusion of our study is that computers are hurting the learning process. You have to look at the possibility that computers, which are very expensive to buy and maintain, are crowding out other, potentially more helpful programmes. In fact, the average U.S. \$120,000 spent per school for computers would pay four teachers' salaries in Israel.

(Hall 2002)

There is no doubt that computer literacy is becoming a necessity to prepare students for employment. It is also true that manufacturers of computer hardware and software target schools as a major market source, as well as an entrée to influence future buying habits among students. The struggle for the school manager, faced with budget cutbacks to suit political agendas, is to be able to make choices which really benefit children and the local community, as opposed to questionable manipulations from an industrial/political élite.

12 Learning to manage knowledge

School systems are facing two challenges in the twenty-first century. First, as society evolves from an industrial to a post-industrial information-driven economy, schools have been expected to become learning societies. Second, as ‘houses of knowledge’, schools face competition from other knowledge sources such as information and communications technology (ICT) and the entertainment sectors. What is to be the new role of schools and school leaders in this knowledge-based economy?

If schools are not to be marginalised, they must continually improve to find their role in this new learning society. Education has not traditionally been viewed in scientific terms where research, technical and organisational advances are continuing to transform sectors such as medicine and manufacturing. Schooling has been more like an ‘art form’ where a systematic scientific base of knowledge is not always relevant.

What new roles must schools and their professional personnel assume in preparing students for life and work in a knowledge economy? The OECD (2000a) believes future job creation will be more knowledge intensive, accelerating the demand for highly skilled, well-educated workers. The knowledge economy emphasises lifelong learning from early childhood to adult education. The concept of lifelong learning incorporates several factors:

- People learn in a variety of settings – leisure, work, home – not just formal educational institutions. This requires a new approach to the definition of education, and to the way in which we take personal control of learning and shape it to fit our own personal needs.
- We must learn how to learn and develop the skills and competencies to do so. This becomes an essential outcome for learning organisations, especially schools. Future employees need to develop the capacity to learn independently and continuously so as to make a positive contribution to their working environment. These skills cannot be taught, however, in a traditional didactic fashion. They need to be ‘modelled’ through a radically new version of apprenticeship, which is based, not on skills from the past, but on highly transferable skills such as learning how to learn and the art and craft of networking.

- Patterns of employment are continually changing. In the age of short-term contracts and contracting out, people must change jobs more frequently. Ongoing training and upgrading is required as the 'shelf life' of skills gets shorter and shorter. New sources of readily accessible 'just-in-time' education and training are required, which may change the role and function of traditional formal educational institutions known as schools, colleges and universities.
- More comprehensive systems of career education are needed to ensure students receive the counselling and guidance necessary for the transition between school and employment. This is a priority to meet the demands that knowledge economies will place on them.
- 'Knowledge mediators' including information and communications technology are needed as supplementary services to formal education. For example, information and communications technology can assist students with their homework assignments or even serve as a primary learning source for those involved in home schooling. In many situations students may be more technologically advanced than their teachers. New multimedia and software developments have enormous potential to extend learning opportunities.
- These new developments will result in the expansion of ICT-related educational services with the private sector both complementing and competing with public sector provisions. This is particularly true in higher education where ICT partnerships and digital broadcasting are encouraging the growth of distance learning to serve underdeveloped countries in Asia, Latin America and the Middle East.
- Post-secondary institutions faced with budgetary reductions and restraint are being encouraged to be less dependent on government funding. As a result, tuition costs have soared in many countries, making higher education less available to low-income students. The demand for high-quality yet inexpensive education is bound to have a profound impact on university education, including teacher training, in the coming years.
- As the partnership between post-secondary institutions and business and industry becomes more important, choices have to be made as to where to place priorities, e.g. undergraduate versus postgraduate; vocational versus liberal arts; traditional disciplines versus multidisciplinary studies; research versus teaching; and international versus regional credibility.
- As the boundaries between formal and informal education blur, so do those between vocational preparation and leisure activities or between the school, the home and the workplace in finding a focus for lifelong learning. Schools may evolve into multipurpose, all-ages neighbourhood learning centres with easier access and longer operating hours. In addition, households integrated into knowledge-based learning networks may be the educational delivery system of the future.

- While schools may continue to concentrate on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, they are also now expected to engage in moral and citizenship education to prepare students for the duties, rights and responsibilities of adult life to ensure social order and social cohesion.
- Individuals and institutions in the knowledge economy also must learn to differentiate between knowledge which should be forgotten and that which needs to be remembered and stored

(OECD 2000a)

Schooling for tomorrow

Schools, teachers and management personnel are being pressured by some parents, politicians and employers concerning the level of student achievement and how educational institutions can guarantee that achievement. These critics call for higher productivity by ‘working smarter’. They call for the reconceptualising, restructuring and reculturing of the nature of educational institutions to improve knowledge creation and application.

In 2000, the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) at the OECD studied the nature of learning and school in a knowledge economy. Their report (OECD 2000a) raised five questions concerning the role of educational institutions in the twenty-first century:

- What knowledge (and innovation) is likely to be needed and by whom in education systems of the future?
- What are the best ways of i) producing, ii) mediating/disseminating and iii) applying such knowledge?
- What action needs to be taken to increase the education systems’ capacity for the successful production, mediation and application of knowledge, and what infrastructure might be needed to support and sustain this capacity?
- How can this be done to ensure that education systems are efficient and effective and meet the new goals and functions that are likely to be set for them?
- In particular, how might all these developments influence and support ‘schooling for tomorrow’?

Knowledge management refers to ‘the production, mediation and use of knowledge’. In organisations such as commercial companies, hospitals and schools, knowledge management involves the management of intellectual capital which, like physical or financial capital, must be managed if the organisation is to be successful.

CERI has developed seven themes to relate school management to knowledge management.

Developing a commitment

Schools are entrusted with the task of transmitting and cultivating knowledge, skill and understanding to students. But the creation and management of pedagogical knowledge among professional staff, to improve teaching and learning, is often neglected. In addition, many teachers and administrators are reluctant to look to business and industry (e.g. engineering) for sources of professional development.

Traditionally, teachers tend to work in very individualised settings – one teacher with a group of students in a classroom. Professional knowledge is acquired by trial and error on the job on a personal basis which is more tacit than explicit. Teachers seldom share their knowledge collectively; rather they preserve it as part of their own ‘personal art and craft’.

One method of counteracting this trend has been self-evaluation (as described in Chapter 7). The school conducts an audit of selected areas such as curriculum, programme and resources. A similar audit of the professional knowledge of the staff might be undertaken to begin a process of knowledge management. Teachers would explore and map what they and their colleagues collectively know about teaching and learning. In the same way, they identify what they do not know and need to know. Business and industry have considerable experience in conducting such audits and the mapping and creation of repositories for the outcomes.

By sharing this methodology and experience from the commercial sector, schools should be able to investigate their own collective knowledge, as well as knowledge gaps which need to be addressed. To quote CERI (OECD 2000a): ‘An audit of knowledge might, as in industry, be an incentive to manage it more effectively and to create knowledge to meet the challenges of schooling for tomorrow.’

Expanding the role of practitioners

Teachers, while producing knowledge, must often function in the role of problem solvers. Both medical doctors and engineers learn through trial and error, particularly if they do not seem to be getting results through conventional means such as ‘book knowledge’. Both rely upon first-hand experience, particularly in assessing and managing work that cannot be done routinely. Among engineers, research and development (R&D) requires a lot of trying, testing and revising before a successful result is achieved.

In the same respect, teachers are artisans who work primarily alone, with a variety of diverse materials, in a personally designed workspace. Over time, they develop a repertoire of teaching skills and learning strategies. Their diagnostic abilities and assessment techniques allow them to assemble and use the appropriate tools to meet student needs. This repertoire is usually developed through trial and error based on success or failure in classroom practice as they

become more experienced. When things do not go well they are prone to experimentation and ‘tinkering’ to solve the problem. Because students have different abilities and styles of learning, teachers must tinker to find the right approach to meet an individual need. Tinkering is, in fact, an important means of learning to solve problems and create knowledge among all professionals. It is a source of knowledge creation because, when something does not work in practice, tinkering is a kind of experiment to discover what does work.

When knowledge is new, learning takes place as it is transferred from an abstract idea into something one can use in practice or modified to fit local circumstances. Implementing this new knowledge represents a form of R&D.

Next, the new knowledge, which is often explicit, must be integrated with pre-existing tacit knowledge. Tinkering allows the new knowledge to move from just something told about, read about, or observed, to become accepted as a tacit element.

Tinkering has been found to be best done with another person or group, so as to share ideas, support one another and combine creative applications. But teachers traditionally work alone, particularly new teachers who lack self-confidence. Group tinkering represents a way in which teachers can explore their professional learning through trial and error without the stigma of failure or incompetence. Education professionals may benefit from the experience of knowledge-intensive companies where learning through failure is part of a culture of success.

Another challenge for teachers in a knowledge economy is to prepare their students to be lifelong learners. The role of the teacher has traditionally been ‘the sage on the stage’ with expertise in a subject area and the skill to teach it. Today’s teachers are increasingly expected to assume the role of ‘the guide on the side’ in helping students to learn how to learn.

CERI (OECD 2000a) defines the elements of lifelong learning to be as follows:

- being motivated to learn throughout life;
- being skilled at identifying one’s own learning needs or knowing how to get help with this task;
- being able to identify the kind of education and training to meet those needs and how it is to be accessed;
- being able to acquire a range of meta-cognitive skills – thinking about one’s own thinking, learning how to be flexible with learning styles and strategies;
- being able to learn independently and in a range of contexts (work, leisure, home) other than formal educational organisations;
- learning how to access information and knowledge from the new world of the information and communication technologies.

To achieve these outcomes would seem to require a major transformation of pedagogical practice. No longer is the teacher-directed dependency model

relevant to the preparation of lifelong learners. Learning how to learn requires a new facilitating role for teachers as mentors to encourage and enable students to identify their own learning needs, identify and access resources to address those needs and to develop the self-confidence and self-esteem to find success as an independent learner. It remains to be seen how many current teachers see themselves as independent lifelong learners – role models for their students to emulate.

Establishing and using networks

‘Schooling for tomorrow’ requires a transition on the part of teachers from working and learning alone to being part of a co-production of knowledge with professional colleagues. This transition from solitary work, where knowledge production belongs to others, to interactive models represents a challenge to bring teachers together to share their creative output. Traditional teacher education and training courses are too slow, costly and inefficient to meet this objective. Computer networking has been a well-established means for academic study in the industrial sector. If teachers could become a networked profession, it could become an important means of managing knowledge capital to improve the effectiveness of schooling. Among teachers, however, networking tends to be underdeveloped.

Many schools are already networked organisations in that internal networks often exist among staff, as well as network connections with outside individuals and organisations. Teachers, however, tend to view schools as a workplace rather than part of an interactive network. Therefore teachers need to become more aware of their internal and external networks, recognise the importance of strengthening these networks, and deploy such networks in the interest of professional knowledge creation, dissemination and use.

Any audit of a school’s professional knowledge should include an appraisal of its internal and external networks to see how they are currently used and the potential for extending their use for further advantage. The extension of networking beyond a single school may be an important step in knowledge management. This has certainly been the case among knowledge-intensive biotechnology companies who create network alliances among themselves and with universities.

Many teachers already use networking to share information and experiences on an informal personal basis. The transfer of practical knowledge among professionals should mean more than simply telling or providing information. The sharing of information about practice represents just acquired information, not personal knowledge. Transfer occurs when the knowledge of the first teacher becomes information for the second teacher who then works on the information until it develops meaning and purpose. This is integrated into pre-existing knowledge and then applied in action. Transfer is the conversion of information about another person’s practice into one’s personal know-how.

Simple dissemination of information is ineffective because it does not provide the support which the receiver of the information needs to convert it into personal knowledge which can be actively applied. When a teacher ‘tinkers’ with new knowledge, it represents the conversion of abstract information into applicable know-how which is the essence of transfer. Professional development days, usually involving staff activities in the school or elsewhere, could be used for network visits to other schools and teachers to share information, tinker and transfer new professional knowledge.

To disseminate information from one person to another is ‘knowledge transfer’. If the knowledge is transferred from one place (classroom or school) to another it represents ‘knowledge transposition’. Disseminating knowledge from one school to another involves both transfer and transposition. But there may be differences in the type of school, grade level, student background, teacher value system, etc. It is difficult for teachers in different schools to find opportunities to tinker together.

There are significant differences between primary and secondary schools when it comes to transfer and transposition. Primary teachers are mainly subject generalists with a common curriculum to teach children of about the same age. Transfer of knowledge and knowledge base integration is much more difficult with secondary teachers who are usually subject specialists with different knowledge bases and professional language. Transposition among some subject teachers in different schools may be easier than transfer between teachers of different subjects in the same school.

Principals of primary schools, like other primary teachers, share the same professional knowledge and experience. Secondary principals, by contrast, may have a background in just one of the subjects taught in the school. They are essentially managers rather than practising teachers. Persuading teachers of different subjects to participate in creative tinkering remains a challenge for secondary principals.

Use of information and communications technology (ICT)

Most schools are either linked or have the potential to be linked through ICT. They can take part in professional knowledge-creation activities, as well as its application and dissemination. But it is difficult to establish networks among schools because teachers tend to be fully occupied with their classroom teaching duties. Professional development days are needed, with the absence of students, so teachers have time for networking among colleagues and other schools.

As schools become linked through ICT networks, there is potential for inter-school and inter-teacher networks in a variety of forms including good practice databases, virtual teachers’ centres and forums for discussion and debate. Private industry has seen an upsurge of such activity since the 1960s with a rapid interchange of information, data, drawings,

advice and specifications between geographically dispersed sites. Such networking has resulted in innovations in design, customisation and flexibility with a permanent shift in industrial structure and behaviour.

Schools and teachers are gradually catching up with the new technologies providing the potential for institutions and personnel to be profoundly changed. But the simple sharing of explicit knowledge such as ideas, experiences, designs and documents is not enough. People really need to meet personally or electronically to tinker in order to achieve knowledge transfer.

School principals need to support and encourage the creation of internal and external networks among staff. Teachers need time to collaborate and tinker for knowledge creation, transfer and application. It is common for teachers, especially at the secondary level, to be allowed some time for preparation, marking or professional development (although this time allocation tends to be under attack due to cutbacks, budgetary restraint and political agendas). It is important that 'prep time' should not be formalised by introducing top-down mediators, managers or structured professional development courses. Teachers need freedom to manage their own professional time to facilitate the tinkering required for knowledge creation. Experience in the industrial sector strongly supports the direct involvement of individual specialists in knowledge creation.

New roles for researchers and practitioners

The increased demand for higher education in many countries has tended to reduce the funding available for research and development (R&D). This has been particularly true in the field of education. For example, advances in the study of cognitive science, evolutionary psychology and neuroscience certainly have potential application to teaching methodologies, schools and students. However, to expect any immediate 'breakthroughs' in pedagogical theory and practice seems over-optimistic.

Schools and teachers are traditionally resistant to change. Are mediators and brokers the answer to bringing innovation to the classroom? It seems new knowledge gained from outside R&D must be gradually introduced to modify existing professional knowledge and teaching technologies. To this end, there is a need to understand better how innovations and new professional knowledge can best be applied to knowledge creation in the education sector.

In the commercial sector, close relationships between researchers and users have always been of utmost importance. Stanford University in California saw the value in encouraging their graduates to start their own entrepreneurial ventures in the electronics field when they established the Stanford Industrial Park in 1951. Two of those graduates, Hewlett and Packard, went on to found the Hewlett-Packard electronics empire in the Park. It also became the focus for technology transfer from university research labs to other business start-ups, which eventually became known

as the Silicon Valley. Income that the University derived from the Park was used to recruit and retain star faculty, which moved Stanford to the front ranks of academic excellence.

Such examples of industry/university partnerships, however, have not led to a widespread restructuring of educational R&D to bring researchers and teachers into closer association. Researchers, in general, have not moved into schools to work alongside teachers as R&D partners. But there is a potential for the improvement of formal education systems if university-based educational researchers become more active in schools. CERI in its report *Knowledge Management in the Learning Society* (OECD 2000a) advocates the following:

- Training and supporting practising teachers in research skills, including knowledge validation, to enable them to carry out more school-based research for knowledge creation.
- Interpreting their partnership with teachers less often as occasions for transmitting academic or research knowledge to them and more often as opportunities to contribute to the integration and combination of different kinds of knowledge as an important ingredient of teacher-led knowledge creation.
- Co-ordinating dispersed, school-based R&D programmes, from small-scale, preliminary knowledge creation in a consortium of two or three schools to large-scale, multisite experiments, in order to create bodies of cumulative knowledge about effective pedagogic practices.
- Helping to disseminate the outcomes through networks of schools and teachers.
- Making the study of the creation, dissemination and validation of knowledge in education a focus of university-led research.

Research, however, should not be limited to traditional school-based learning. There is a need to study and integrate into the repository of knowledge different forms of learning outside the formal academic settings of schools and universities. Adults involved in lifelong learning will encounter a variety of different modes, including part-time study; distance education; non-formal learning; and prior learning assessment and recognition. Knowledge management must also include integrated work and learning which demands cross-disciplinary and cross-institutional collaborations among educational researchers. This represents a blurring between formal academic education and informal on-the-job training. There is much to be learned from these new R&D partnerships.

New forms of professional development

Apprenticeship has been a common preparation mode for many professions (e.g. medicine and engineering), but not always among teachers.

Apprenticeship, which has long been the preferred method of preparation for the skilled trades, has some important advantages, such as socialising the novice into the practice of collective learning by doing. This represents one of the cornerstones of knowledge creation of practitioners, as well as continuing professional development through on-the-job learning.

Teacher training institutions have tended to be segregated settings (classrooms) where formal, explicit, and codified knowledge is acquired. Formal programmes of work (the curriculum) are taught by pedagogical experts who may also be trained and qualified teachers. Apprenticeship learning takes a quite different approach.

Apprenticeship, or situated learning, involves participation in a group who already have competence and are willing to share their knowledge and experience with the learner. These 'masters' are fully endorsed members of a 'community of practice'. The new trainee wishes to acquire the knowledge and experience of the masters, who allow the trainee to participate in their learning community. Participation begins peripherally until the trainee gains the work experience and demonstrates the requisite skills and knowledge to be accepted as a full member of the community. This happens gradually through supervised observation and practice. They move from the margins to the centre with learning fused to work and the acquisition of knowledge and skill resulting in a change of identity.

In many countries, teacher trainees tend to be institutionalised under the guidance and direction of university-based teacher trainers, who may often be educational researchers as well. Their relationship to the novice teacher is not that of the master to the apprentice. The trainer belongs to a different community of practice than that of the master teacher. Fortunately, the trend in several countries is now to place trainees for longer periods of time under the supervision of practising master teachers within their own community of practice. There is also a trend to locate more research in schools to strengthen the role of the practising teacher as master in a teacher apprenticeship programme.

Another approach to the professional development of qualified teachers is to link it to school development. The importance of this approach is that teacher learning is linked to the aims and objectives of their school; the focus is on improving the quality of teaching to improve students' learning and achievement, and collaboration and peer support among the teaching body is encouraged. CERI (OECD 2000a) believes a school-based strategy for professional development should include:

- An experimental focus on the concrete tasks of teaching, grounded in and derived from teachers' work with students.
- An emphasis on inquiry, reflection and experimentation, and collective problem solving.
- Attention to relevant research and the evidence base for teachers' practices.

- Collaboration among the teachers, with a focus on teachers' communities of practice rather than individual teachers.

School principals would see this as an innovative way to manage knowledge capital by linking school-based research and development. New approaches in this regard can be found in work experience for teachers in private companies in Japan; problem-based learning for teachers in Sweden; and teacher networks in the United States.

Integrating social capital

Social capital has two aspects. Structurally it refers to the networks which exist between persons or organisations. Culturally, it can refer to norms of reciprocity, mutual obligation and trust between people or groups. The two aspects are often combined where social capital describes the amount of mutual aid, civic engagement or participation in voluntary associations, which exist in a community. The structural and social aspects of social capital involve social connections and networks associated with trust relationships. Trust encourages co-operation, which builds social connections. Knowledge capital requires the sharing and exchange to be found in social capital. Social capital is essential within and between organisations to encourage the process of knowledge creation or knowledge transfer by people and organisations in networks. In the commercial sector high levels of social capital are associated with high levels of performance and innovation.

But schools in many countries find themselves in a stressful environment where continuing critical political demands for reform and restructuring have eroded social capital and actually discouraged educational innovation. As trust in social organisations (such as schools) declines, society has more difficulty coping with the technological and cultural changes inherent in the information age.

New economically productive and socially fulfilling relationships between work, family and community are required to cope with these changes. Schools should be seen as generators of social capital. In fact, social capital along with cultural capital contributes to educational achievement, particularly among disadvantaged students. This can occur through the teaching of citizenship; participation in extra-curricular school activities; student council membership; and community service learning.

Teachers who display a high level of social capital become role models and mentors for their students. They project to their students the values of tolerance, reciprocity, trust and networking. The degree to which schools can demonstrate these values depends upon partnerships with parents, employers and other citizens of the community. A strong relationship between education and social capital represents the essence of lifelong learning.

Reflections

To support the proliferation of knowledge management in education requires a support structure at the national, regional and local levels. Without such a support structure, schools, colleges and universities cannot truly become learning organisations. Leadership is required to begin to change the traditional culture of schools.

At the national level, ICT networks need to be established to link educational organisations and their partners. Principals, school managers and senior administrators require training in the implementation of knowledge management within their organisations. More resources should be made available to support knowledge management. Powers and responsibilities for the support of knowledge management need to be delegated. Finally, forums should be convened to explore strategies and guidance for educational R&D.

At the regional and local levels, facilitators and co-ordinators are required to develop and maintain local networks. Professional development of educational personnel needs to be co-ordinated with mechanisms for R&D in knowledge management. New partnerships need to be forged between schools, universities and employers to share experience skills, as well as local forums for debate and exchange. Finally, best practice in knowledge management among educational organisations needs to be identified and disseminated.

The role of the school principal is vital in ‘bridging the gap’ by facilitating personal links within networks of innovative schools. But they need support from local and national governments in their efforts to encourage networks which promote knowledge transfer and innovation. University-based research may also be an important means of support in mapping patterns of linkage between schools, resulting in better knowledge management. To quote CERI:

Governments, both national and regional, will, in forging educational policies that are influenced by trends and developments in knowledge-intensive industries and professions, need to take account of the relationship between different forms of capital – human capital, knowledge capital and social capital – since it is from their interactions that the highest social and educational leverage can perhaps be obtained.

(OECD 2000a)

13 Tracking innovation

The OECD study (OECD 2001c) surveyed nine countries concerning innovations in their school management practice. In every instance they were looking at the effectiveness of these innovations and their transferability to other countries. The following is a summary and critique of best practices in the participating nations.

Flanders

A highlight of the Flemish experience has been their self-evaluation policy. This policy incorporated evaluation, responsibility, continuing training and increased school autonomy. The objective was to improve the quality and the attractiveness of the schools. But rather than a bottom-up approach the government chose to introduce industrial quality concepts from the top-down. Unfortunately, teachers were not familiar with the language of the corporate sector. This impacted on the rate of transfer. The goals of private enterprise are different to those of public education.

In terms of increasing school autonomy, success was seen to be dependent on school leadership. The most effective schools were seen to be managed by charismatic leaders. But the range of responsibilities for school heads continues to increase, including a variety of tasks for which they are not prepared. This leaves the managers often standing alone between the expectations of external policy makers and their own school community.

There were three problems encountered in the Flemish context:

- *Recruiting good leaders* – the teaching profession is not attracting quality candidates, especially future principals whose salaries are not much different from that of a teacher. Principals must shoulder additional workload and responsibilities without an improvement in working conditions and other forms of support.
- *Professional development* – pre-service and in-service training tends to be focused on management of people and relationships within the school environment. There is a need to evaluate the effectiveness of the

training and extend the opportunity to all school managers. Private school networks tend to guard their autonomy and not to make professional training compulsory when employing school managers.

- *Sense of isolation* – many principals express the need for more group work in the school and the opportunity to network with their peers.

While participatory leadership seems an ideal, some teachers are uncomfortable with a responsive, interactive atmosphere and seek more structure and discipline. Staff members at Bree Middle school identified the following characteristics of a school leader within a participatory culture:

- Be a convincing missionary of the school mission.
- Have a strong belief in the promotion of each participant and a strong commitment to realise the most optimal conditions for all.
- Have strong organisational qualities to make a learning organisation possible.
- Recognise that team members have specific tasks and responsibilities.
- Attend courses and participate in debates about innovations in education.
- Take into consideration the recommendations of the review of the policy plan.
- Be a dynamic, enthusiastic, flexible coach, proficient in social and communication skills.

Changing a school into a ‘learning organisation’ means a major shift in attitudes among staff and a transformation of the school’s culture. Leadership is very important in facilitating this transformation. The role of principal as ‘change agent’, therefore, requires a totally new set of human relation skills rather than those traditionally available in the training of school managers. However, it may be that some parents, particularly from immigrant families, are more concerned about structure and success in examinations than the school as a learning organisation.

The fact that most schools in Flanders are private and subsidised makes for a multiplicity of structures and decision making. The government has introduced decentralisation to encourage innovation. While many principals seek the freedom to innovate, there is a sense that the government does not appreciate how really difficult it is to be a school leader in a post-industrial society (OECD 2001c).

Greece

Schools in Greece have suffered from weaknesses in school buildings and equipment. They have begun to address this concern through the Reorganisation of School Premises Project. Student classrooms have been converted to subject specialist classrooms at the lower secondary level. The government maintains that this has led to improved teacher and student

morale; more effective delivery of the national curriculum; security of teaching equipment; and greater parental involvement in schools. It should be noted, however, that schools must volunteer for these projects through their principals and associated stakeholders. Only a limited number of such projects have been established.

The other area of innovation is the Self-Evaluation Project where pilot schools have been supported by the government to try out new ideas. Due to Greece's aversion to external inspection, the pilot schools develop and implement the self-evaluation strategies, including the evaluation of senior staff and individual teachers.

Both the Reorganisation and Self-Evaluation Projects are co-ordinated by the Pedagogical Institute, a governmental curriculum development organisation. It is unclear how the results of the projects will be evaluated and disseminated throughout the country.

Greece has been redefining the role of the school principal to focus on decentralisation, deregulation, democratisation and modernisation. The government has also encouraged the schools to be innovative, participate in decision making and accept new responsibilities. Principals are expected to shift from a systems maintenance role to a managerial systems improvement role. Innovation is seen as being dependent on the ability of principals to pursue a common goal in organisational improvement. The need for pre-service and in-service training of principals to achieve this goal seems of critical importance (OECD 2001c).

Hungary

The priority of the Hungarian government has been to promote decentralisation while involving more private sector trainers in the innovation process. Emphasis has been placed on developing and implementing new curriculum and programme, quality improvement and training for teachers and principals. At the same time that decentralisation has been encouraged as a policy objective, the government has introduced a new curriculum framework. While all schools were given the responsibility of developing their own curriculum and programme, only some were able to do so. Quality improvement was piloted in about one tenth of the country, and the challenge for the government is to spread the innovation nationally.

But the economic recession and the costs of modernisation have limited educational spending and affected the rate of innovation. Small schools in poor areas have less income, so the government has introduced special grants if smaller villages agree to work together. However, conflicts between local and central political interests still tend to impede progress. Private sector training courses are offered but they have to involve all players, not only those who are the most motivated and enterprising.

Hungary encourages private free-market involvement in the training process but some service providers seem to have better connections to be

awarded contracts. There is a concern that large international training companies will attempt to control the market. The large number of providers competing for contracts can also be a source of confusion for schools and teachers.

But introducing industrial concepts and experts from industry to the field of education raises a number of problems between the two worlds. They represent different cultures and use different terminology. There tends to be a huge difference in income between teachers, who are poorly paid, and outside consultants. Hungary represents a good place to study the dangers and benefits of linking education and the market place.

Principals find themselves under great pressure with an ever-increasing set of responsibilities. They must attempt to satisfy the government's quest for innovation while fulfilling the needs of students, parents and other local stakeholders. This may often lead to conflicting demands. They must develop and implement their own curriculum and programme instead of simply following the dictates of a centralised, bureaucratic system.

Despite the introduction of innovative privatised training programmes, principals still require more to be done to improve their pre-service and in-service opportunities. The government is trying to transform a traditional, conservative, centralised school system into a modern competitive, market-driven, decentralised educational service. But to what extent can quality issues be addressed when teachers are so poorly paid and principals must be managers in such a stressful environment (OECD 2001c)?

Japan

School community relationships have been highlighted in Japan embracing both curricular and extra-curricular activities, community development, school improvement and public relations. A strong set of bottom-up initiatives were introduced in Kawasaki City with input from area residents. School advisers were introduced to bring another community perspective to school management. While these innovations are relatively recent, they do represent formal links between schools and their communities.

Parental choice represents another innovation on a smaller scale. As enrolment continues to fall, competition for students becomes increasingly important. Principals will need to market their schools as being unique and successful to ensure their long-term viability.

Traditional top-down hierarchical public management is slowly beginning to change as decentralisation policies gain strength. Local and prefectural education boards have hastened this process, but it is still difficult for bottom-up initiatives to take root and be accepted within the school and community.

Education boards currently assume most of the managerial responsibilities concerning human resources, staffing, and financial affairs, including school budgets, which primarily consist of staff salaries. Flexibility for

individual school management comes through subsidies provided by the education boards (e.g. newly appointed school advisers).

Student behaviour remains a concern at the local school level, as well as increasing parental expectations for student achievement. Principals are now responsible for curriculum improvement, staff development and improving school/community relations. Their role has changed from 'sensitive mentor and careful administrator to the efficient manager and human developer' (OECD 2001c).

While principals are aware of their need for professional development policies in such areas as staff evaluation, curriculum development and community relations, it is not mandatory that school managers receive pre-service or in-service training in these areas. They must fulfil local expectations, as well as externally defined administrative and legal requirements.

Public schooling has not escaped the government's reform agenda of decentralisation and deregulation. But decentralisation is supposed to mean the transfer of resources and decision making to prefectures, municipalities and schools. The financial resources have yet to be transferred. School board members and school advisers continue to be nominated by the central government, not elected. It remains to be seen how traditional top-down management practice in Japan will be reconciled with the need for twenty-first century innovation (OECD 2001c).

Mexico

The Mexican federal government (with its 31 states) faces a monumental task in its efforts to transform school management at the pre-school, primary and lower secondary levels of compulsory basic education. This represents more than 200,000 schools with 1.5 million teachers serving 28 million students. The rate of poverty stands at 42 per cent of the population (or 40 million persons), especially among indigenous peoples and migrant workers. Only 50 per cent of Mexican students continue beyond a grade 9 level.

One reform thrust of the federal government has been the 1995–2000 Educational Development Programme, which included the following innovations:

- increased spending to improve school buildings;
- purchase of new furniture, equipment and learning materials;
- an increase in teachers' salaries;
- curriculum reform and the publishing and distribution of new texts and workbooks for primary schools;
- improvement in school libraries at the basic education level;
- special teaching and learning materials for indigenous and migrant children, including a computer tracking system, to improve their education.

The School Management in Elementary Education Project has focused on the needs of teachers to be self-evaluators in their own learning environments. This requires a redefinition of the role of the principal from administrative gatekeeper to transformational leader. They are required to empower teachers to assess learning needs, plan and implement school projects and evaluate the results on an ongoing basis.

Parents have been acknowledged as valued participants in the learning process. The self-evaluation design involving professional development and action research began with 200 schools in five states and has now been extended to 2,000 schools in 20 states. Top-down resources have been used to encourage bottom-up renewal.

The Pilot Project for a Relevant Education was implemented at the upper secondary level involving governments, employers and universities. Ten schools have initiated a new diversified curriculum, teaching methods, professional development, and liaison with employers seeking skilled workers. Classroom and library facilities were improved, and computers and technical equipment installed, the better to prepare students for higher education and future employment. The objective of that project was to transform a traditional academic upper secondary system into one which attracts and retains students while preparing them for the challenges of a new technological age.

A basic education school management project in the state of Nuevo León has endeavoured to transform the role of the area supervisor from purely administrative functions to that of a facilitator and monitor of educational improvement at the local level. Professional working groups were established to redefine the supervisor's job description. Modern pedagogical and evaluative skills were acquired, engendering a new sense of self-esteem and professionalism among the area supervisors. Success with the pilot project has meant a totally new leadership role for area supervisors in the state.

Mexican innovations have stressed intervention at the grass roots bottom-up level rather than a series of top-down directives, rewards and sanctions. The use of the carrot, not the stick, seems to be working to improve Mexico's vast, complex, impoverished system of education.

Netherlands

Parents and other interest groups in the Netherlands have the constitutional right to establish 'schools of choice'. They have demonstrated that local stakeholders not only have the ability to create schools responsive to their needs but can manage them effectively. The central government financially supports these schools provided they meet national standards. This experience has important implications for experiments in school management in other countries (e.g. charter schools in the United States and grant-maintained in the United Kingdom).

The Dutch government and some governing boards have maintained a definite commitment to the concept of the 'community school' (open

school or broad school). These schools make extensive use of community-based resources to improve services and opportunities for learning. Partnerships are forged with social welfare, health, immigrant support, and law enforcement services. Cultural resources (e.g. museums, galleries, theatres, etc.) are used to enrich the learning environment. Another area of school/community development has been industry education partnerships where employers may donate equipment and participate in school-to-work transition programmes. Parental involvement is also important in community schools with parents participating as classroom volunteers, serving on school governing boards and acting as fundraisers for the school.

While teacher-directed education is still the norm in Dutch schools, a new emphasis on active, independent learning is beginning to grow. Study centres have been introduced at the upper secondary level where students are encouraged to undertake independent study projects after the basic education curriculum has been completed.

At the primary level, Made Primary School has demonstrated a 'learning through experience approach'. The introduction of personal learning contracts, and co-operative problem solving in small groups, has laid the framework for a more inclusionary, holistic approach to education. The principal, as transformational leader, has been the key element in creating this climate of innovation.

There is also a strong commitment to the implementation of information and communications technology (ICT) in Dutch schools. ICT is seen as an essential skill for competition in the job market, and for participation in society as a whole. On average there is one computer for every 16 students in the nation's schools, but school managers face the following challenges in the integration of ICT into the curriculum:

- the availability of appropriate software;
- the ongoing upgrading of hardware;
- professional development for teachers in ICT use;
- ongoing financial support from central authorities to meet the above challenges.

Central authorities in the Netherlands support a variety of in-service training programmes for school leaders, particularly at the primary level. A series of part-time courses is offered with the government picking up tuition and replacement costs. The objective of the two-year programmes has been to see the school manager as an integral leader, both in classroom and administrative practice, in the following ways:

- Strategic leader (school and environment).
- Human resources manager (transformational).
- Quality performer (financial, academic achievement).

- Reflective practitioner (creative problem solving to promote good practice).

The primary delivery mode has been through group learning where a cohort from different areas meets together to discuss problems, reflect on solutions and support each other. Content includes self-directed learning; co-operative learning; transformational leadership, etc. During the second year they reflect on Senge's Five Disciplines (challenging, inspiring, enabling, modelling, encouraging) and the school leader as coach.

The education system in the Netherlands has a unique loose/tight approach to accountability. While autonomy is stressed in local school governance, the central authorities impose uniform curriculum standards and an inspectorial system of school assessment. Principals are expected to be accountable to both central authorities and local governing boards for student achievement and school operation. The result is a complex and sometimes turbulent environment (OECD 2001c).

Sweden

Sweden has not embraced one single-management structure but rather several styles of leadership. In some schools the head no longer manages individual teachers but facilitates teams of teachers who may simply reinforce existing practice rather than introduce changes in the way students learn. The school leader must challenge the teams to find new ways to solve pedagogical problems.

At the same time students may take more responsibility for their own learning if they gain the skills and the environment to enhance that learning. While learning can be individualised, it is felt to be important to look at the whole student rather than just individual subjects. The whole interest of the student must be taken into account – interpersonal relations with family, friends, the environment and societal institutions. Every teacher should be seen as a leader of learning experience.

The adoption of decentralisation in Sweden has produced a conflict between administration and the economy on one hand, and the leadership of teaching and learning on the other. To be accountable in a decentralised system there is need for clear lines of responsibility – planning, implementation, follow-up and evaluation. But there are still tensions which exist between central control and decentralised views on how evaluation should be conducted. School leaders need to be able to resolve these tensions while solving pedagogical problems within their own schools.

But the nature of pedagogical leadership has changed, just as methods of teaching have changed. Teachers no longer simply interpret the world for their students. They now are organisers of work processes, which enable students themselves to understand the world around them. Teachers become more thought-challengers and knowledge-challengers and less thought-prescribers and knowledge-prescribers. While teachers may learn

the language of change quickly, it does not necessarily mean that they will behave in a different way. It is the role of the school leaders to facilitate the adoption of new goals and finding ways to achieve these goals.

The need for training in school management is accepted at both the national and municipal levels. Leaders in charge of schools, however, may not have experienced any in-service training for many years. There now is the view in Sweden that management training should not be reserved for a select group of school heads but should be an activity for all members of the school staff, both in-service and pre-service. If teachers are to lead students to manage their own studies, they also have to be part of a team and understand the management of their own school. Democracy is ingrained in the Swedish psyche and it is necessary that teachers have a clear understanding of the day-to-day operations of their school.

Three other impacts of decentralisation have been noted. A dismantling of the national system has meant that the energies of parents tend to be concentrated at the local level with less representation in policy discussions at the national level. In the upper secondary area parents have no representation at the national level. Although primary and secondary parent-majority boards can be established, it seldom happens. Under the Education Act of 1985, all children and young people are supposed to have access to equal educational opportunities. But since 1991 inequalities have arisen. The challenge for school leaders in a decentralised system is to promote equality of opportunity.

Decentralisation may give greater freedom to municipalities, schools, teachers and students to work out their own pedagogical problems within the framework of national goals. But politicians, local school directors, superintendents and school leaders must have the courage and foresight to use these opportunities wisely (OECD 2001c).

United Kingdom

The major changes in school management structures and processes in England and Wales began with the Education Reform Act of 1988. Four of its provisions called for a national curriculum, the operation of school budgets, competition between schools and the privatisation of services traditionally supplied by local education authorities (LEAs).

The national curriculum covered years 1 to 11 of compulsory schooling. This provided a standard educational experience for all, whereas before the curriculum had varied between schools. A series of standardised national academic achievement tests was introduced at the ages of 7, 11 and 14.

The 1988 Act also changed the procedures for funding schools. School budgets had previously been set by the LEAs, which also controlled staffing levels. The Act delegated budgets to schools, related to numbers and ages of students. Control of the budget was delegated to school governors but the influence of principals over decisions increased. Schools were free to hire

their own staff and the appointment of head teachers became the responsibility of local governors. While LEAs continued to offer services such as supply teachers, advice and in-service training, schools had the option of purchasing services elsewhere. Schools also had the option of spending the money on other things with different providers.

In the new financial arrangements, many schools sought to increase revenue. As students generated funds, schools began to compete with neighbouring schools for students. Successful schools, according to test results, could market themselves to fill excess capacity. Less successful schools, with lower test scores and serving a more challenging student enrolment, suffered a decline in enrolment and related financial support.

Successful schools could apply for grant-maintained (GM) status whereby they opted out of LEA control altogether. Funds would flow directly from a government agency, including funding previously allocated to the LEA. GM schools became more attractive and attracted advantaged students. Less successful schools, unable to compete with GM schools, were left with a smaller enrolment serving a disproportionate share of educational problems and behavioural needs. As a result, schools viewed each other as competitors in the market place, not education service collaborators.

With the displacement of LEA services, schools were able to source alternative suppliers from the private sector for such contracts as school meals, staff development, training, consultative and replacement services.

Other impacts on school management have been the introduction of school performance tables, comparing results that children achieve in the tests for 11-year-olds and public exams at the 16- and 18-year-old levels. These performance tables are fully distributed within the school's community, to local parents and the media. However, a number of factors impact on the results including ability of students entering school; socio-economic status; and education level of parents. But league tables only publish raw materials. Some schools in disadvantaged areas may actually be improving while those in advantaged areas may just be marking time.

Another government policy has been the introduction of a national system of school inspection carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED). Every school must be inspected by an OFSTED team within a four-year cycle. It involves a review of the quality of teaching and learning according to the national curriculum and management arrangements. The OFSTED inspectorial team, many of whom are non-educators, also collect evidence from parents and students to include in their formal report which is published and distributed.

The OFSTED inspectorial procedure has caused concern to schools as issues previously regarded as 'professional' and 'confidential' are now placed under public scrutiny. There is also concern over the privatisation of the OFSTED inspectorial process. Despite these concerns, the Conservative

and subsequent Labour governments have continued to promote the external inspections as a 'significant measure for school improvement'.

The Labour Government has also introduced a 'performance management' scheme for teachers and school managers. By reaching a performance threshold teachers can win new levels of remuneration. Objectives for performance are agreed to by school managers and progress is regularly reviewed. Governing bodies are responsible for a review of heads and deputy heads with the assistance of a trained external adviser.

In 1997 the Labour White Paper *Excellence in Schools* (OECD 2001c) introduced target setting. Attainment goals are set for students at different stages of their schooling. Governing bodies must set performance targets for student achievement during one academic year. Target setting is seen as a means to ensure that development plans related to improvements in school performance are achieved.

Another area of innovation has been the 'Beacon schools' – those identified by OFSTED inspectors as among the best performing schools in the country. The Department of Education and Employment began providing extra funding to the first 75 schools in 1998. They were particular schools which could serve as 'Beacons' of exemplary practice for other schools in the nation. By 2000 there were 550 such schools, with plans to have 1,000 by 2002.

Beacon schools tend to emphasise self-evaluation – identifying weaknesses as well as strengths and then resolving them. They provide a collaborative culture with teachers working in partnership with colleagues inside and outside the school to share practices and experience.

An independent evaluation of the first 75 Beacon schools found the following:

- Beacon schools can be a lever for change, acting as a catalyst for debate, and challenging other schools to review their own practices.
- They have demonstrated a felt need to learn from each other.
- They reinforce the value of collaboration and partnership between schools.
- They demonstrate the potential for school improvement through professional development.

British schools operate within a tight top-down structure as spelled out in the School Standards and Framework Act of 1998. This encompasses target setting, performance management, publication of performance tables, and the OFSTED inspection system. The principal's role is defined through this framework and the administration and implementation of the national curriculum. Little time is left for developing and managing a curriculum within a school.

United States

The fact that the United States has a federal system, with 50 different state jurisdictions divided into thousands of local school districts, makes the choice of innovations particularly daunting. Relative success has been found in both top-down reform and bottom-up renewal policies and programmes. Many school districts are decentralised with principals assuming significant discretionary powers in site-based management decisions (e.g. budget, personnel, curricular, etc.).

In general the situation in the United States is as follows:

- Everyone seems committed to improving the quality of education in the nation's schools.
- Every state has some system of standardised testing or assessment by which to identify and compare academic outcomes.
- Most states and school districts recognise the importance of parental and community partnerships in improving schools.
- Most states utilise federal educational policies and incentive funding to promote school improvement in impoverished areas (e.g. Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration).
- The majority of states have approved a legal framework for the establishment of charter schools.
- Many school districts have adopted site-based management policies.
- Most school districts have teacher- and principal-appraisal procedures in place.
- All states require pre-service training for school administrators, while some school districts also provide in-service training for administrative personnel.
- Many school districts are having difficulty recruiting competent, qualified teachers and administrators.
- A future direction is for teacher unions to work with school district management to promote school improvement (e.g. Teacher Union Reform Network – TURN).
- School districts are making increasing use of alternate sources of support (e.g. business and industry, foundations, federal programmes, etc.).
- Many school districts subscribe to the concept of 'community schools' as part of their school reform/renewal plan.
- Most states and school districts are reviewing and revising curricular content to reflect new economic and employment realities.

Some would say the United States must adopt a corporate-business-like model to redesign, restructure, and reform schools, based on rigid instruments of assessment to coerce new, more rigorous, academic standards. Others would say 'communities of learning' must be created at the local level which: involve all stakeholders; are committed to excellence; and are

self-renewing. All agree that literacy, numeracy and co-operative problem solving are among a universal set of essential skills. United States policy makers seem to be seeking the best of both the top-down and bottom-up approaches (OECD 2001c).

Reflections

In reflecting on the innovation in school management identified in the nine countries participating in the OECD study, the following comments come to mind:

- School management has become a hot political issue in most countries. Neo-conservative reform policies have produced top-down structures and constraints on public spending at the same time as we experience a technological revolution.
- School managers are faced with an increasingly complex and demanding working environment. At the same time many countries face a shortage of school managers and inspirational leaders to fill current and future vacancies.
- Professional development and management training at both the pre-service and in-service levels are essential in such areas as human resource and financial management, labour relations, and transformational leadership.
- There is a sense of excitement that change is possible, but it requires a change in the culture of schooling from an industrial, structured, approach to a post-industrial learning society. This is likely to be a slow process.
- Successful schools have a clear vision of their mandate and a sense of commitment by all stakeholders whose roles are clearly defined (e.g. students, teachers, support staff, parents, employers, community service agencies, etc.).
- School leaders, as change agents, must motivate their learning communities to do more than 'talk the talk'. They must also 'walk the talk' in search of achievement, responsibility and self-fulfilment.
- The school leader should be an effective manager of communications who encourages the effective use of technology to enhance the learning process.
- Wherever possible, a research component should be added to innovative projects to ensure that a formal evaluation will be available to inform policy decisions.
- Leaders who form management teams tend to have a more pervasive influence than those who rely on their own personal efforts.
- A school-based community development process mobilises resources, improves management, and builds a sense of shared ownership and problem solving, gaining confidence to undertake future innovations.

- Innovations should not be dependent on the single charismatic leader to sustain change within schools. Learning organisations must develop broad leadership bases if their innovations are to endure. ‘The ultimate test of any transformation is its durability beyond its original instigator’.
(OECD 2001c)

14 Management for a learning society

At a 1998 conference on Institutional Management in Higher Education convened by OECD/CERI, John Bryne of the Kellogg Commission had the following observation:

Today, the knowledge level of our citizens is higher than ever and is rising. Lifelong learning is a reality for many citizens, and as a result, society itself is assuming many of the characteristics of a learning organisation. 'Learning societies' are beginning to develop. A learning society is one in which lifelong learning of individuals is a reality and society itself has developed organised ways of raising its collective educational level, of gaining new knowledge, and of applying that new knowledge for the benefit of all. Society itself becomes a learning entity, which continually develops its ability to create new tools for collective improvement. In a learning society, the techniques for the intellectual development of workers at all levels developed by organisations for their own advantage are, at the same time, beneficial to the larger community.
(Bryne 1998)

Dee W. Hock, founder and CEO Emeritus of VISA U.S.A. and VISA International, begins an article, 'The chaordic organisation: out of control and into order', with this observation:

It is almost impossible these days to read a business article or participate in a seminar without stumbling over such popularities as 'learning organisations', 'empowerment' or 're-engineering'. It is equally common to encounter in the scientific community the study of complex adaptive systems commonly referred to as 'complexity'. I find it cumbersome to either think or write about fundamental principles underlying both physical systems and human institutions in terms unique to either business or science. So after grubbing in various lexicons for a suitable word to describe the kind of organisation discussed here, it seemed simpler to construct one. Since the knowledge pursued is believed by scientists to lie on the knife's edge between chaos and

order, the first syllable of each was borrowed and Cha-ord emerged. By Cha-ord, I mean a self-organising, adaptive, non-linear, complex system, whether physical, biological or social, the behavior of which exhibits the characteristics of both order and chaos or, loosely translated to business terminology, co-operation and competition.

(Hock 1995a)

Hock, considered to be the father of the credit card system, poses an interesting dichotomy between two ages. The industrial age of controlled structure and order and the new economic-information age which often defies any sense of order, logic or organisational form. It is in this environment that our school leaders find themselves in the twenty-first century.

Actually they must live in three worlds – the past, the present and the future – and be somewhat marginal to all of them. Hock describes the late 1960s when VISA was born. He speaks of the dilemma of ‘expert managers’ living on the cusp of two different ages. On the one hand, the experts were trained to deal in the creation and control of constants, uniformity and efficiency, but their need now became the understanding and co-ordination of variability, complexity and effectiveness. These were attitudes and skills for which they had never been prepared.

Hock, in a speech at Governors State University, provided a vivid insight into the future of learning (not just schooling) in the new millennium:

Learners have the choice of all-inclusive, site-specific schooling, or construction of a unique education by combining courses, educators, classes and self-instruction delivered either electronically or personally, at home, at computerised centres, or at traditional site-specific schools, or any combination of the three. Some learning is interactive and some highly instructional. Learning services are purchased by each individual, or through purchasing groups formed in voluntary concert with others. Prices generally move freely by supply and demand, although they can be set by public policy where essential.

(Hock 1995b)

Is this the teacher-directed classroom in the hierarchically administered school experienced in most of the twentieth century? The need for school managerial transformation has never been more apparent.

E. Verbiest, in a 1996 article in *Meso, the Journal for Educational Management*, recognises the social, economic, political and technological trends which are shaping public education throughout the western world:

- a strong but limited role for the government, especially as regards educational objectives and frameworks of accountability;
- a stronger emphasis on a system of education meeting the demands of a nation in the context of a global economy;

- greater autonomy for schools within the constraints of centrally formulated parameters;
 - the use of new information technology in education;
 - greater emphasis on more independent learning, problem solving, creativity, permanent education;
 - a greater role for parents as well as for the (local) community.
- (Verbiest 1996)

Leadership styles

The concept of the ‘powerful principal’ has long been synonymous with school success and educational improvement. In 1989, an OECD report on ‘Schools and Quality’ found in reviewing a number of studies that the ‘quality of leadership of the principal’ played an active role in school improvement initiatives. But this can work both ways. John Goodlad stated that ‘the role of the principal was strategic, as much impeding, as facilitating change’. Michael Fullan in his review of American and Canadian research also concluded ‘that the positive or negative role of the principal has a critical influence on teachers’ receptiveness to new ideas’ (OECD 1989a).

What do we mean then by a powerful principal? What is the role of the modern principal to be? In the 1989 report, U.K. head teachers were recognised as: playing a key role in developing curriculum; devising assessment policies; managing the teaching staff and their in-service needs; fostering good relationships with surrounding communities; and giving the individual school its particular ‘ethos’.

In the United States, principals were expected to play a key role in fostering school and community support for programme reform and curriculum renewal, while often delegating to their assistants day-to-day administrative and disciplinary duties. In some European and other countries, with a tradition of strong central control, the school leader was expected to promote teaching and school-based appraisal procedures.

Three traditional models exist for school leadership:

- a pyramidal hierarchy characterised by structured top-down authoritarian control;
- collegial leadership where the designated leader may delegate or share some administrative duties and decision making with teachers;
- representative leadership where staff may elect a ‘first among equals’ from their group to serve for a fixed term.

(OECD 1989a)

However, the increasing impact of the educational reform movements, particularly in the United States and the United Kingdom, tends to reinforce a control orientation for school managers fostered by standardisation and accountability measures (e.g. teacher evaluation, curriculum and teaching

methods). Principals are seen as: administrators; technicians; implementers of programmes and policies; and enforcers of rules, regulations, mandates and procedures, as defined by external agents.

This role might be contrasted with the post-industrial information-age concept of the principal as developer of the ‘learning organisation’. To quote Peter Senge: ‘Learning organisations continually expand their capacity to create results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free and where people are continually learning how to learn together’ (Senge 1990).

The school is seen as a ‘community of learners’ where all participants – principals, teachers, parents and students – engage in learning and teaching (Barth 1990). Unfortunately, with the stressful environment which characterises many of today’s reform-driven schools, there may be relatively little time (or energy) to create such a learning organisation.

The Netherlands demonstrates a comprehensive appreciation of leadership styles more congruent to today’s complex educational milieu:

- *Instructional leader* – serves as a role model, co-ordinating the educational programme, encouraging professional development, monitoring pupil and academic performance and maintaining an orderly and peaceful learning environment.
- *Transformational leader* – promotes school improvement and renewal through professional co-operation, professional development and effective problem solving.
- *Integrative leader* – combines a personnel-educational and financial-management vision, which encompasses the school’s mission of continuous improvement.
- *Co-operative leadership* – leadership is shared by professional staff who are qualified to assume managerial responsibilities (such as instruction, teacher co-operation, vision development, facilities management, professional development, encouragement and recognition, standardisation of procedures and monitoring of change) as a shared responsibility of the whole school.

(OECD 2001c)

After eight years of research on Chicago school reform, Sebring and Bryk described key elements of principal leadership in productive elementary schools as follows:

- *Inclusive, facilitative orientation* – principals can articulate a ‘vision in outline’ for their schools and invite teachers and parents to further elaborate and shape this vision.
- *Institutional focus on student learning* – they set high standards for teaching, understand how children learn and encourage teachers to take risks and try new methods.

- *Efficient management* – they ‘get things done’: texts are available when classes start; academic and social support for students is available; classroom disruptions are minimised.
- *Combining pressure and support* – while pressing to adopt a new approach they also make time for teachers to learn new content and strategies, to receive coaching and obtain necessary materials.

(Sebring and Bryk 2000)

Another United States study among elementary principals in a north-eastern state found that ‘social influence’ (trustworthiness, attractiveness and expertness) and ‘teacher empowerment’ (decision making, professional development, status, autonomy, impact and self-efficacy) were important attributes of principals involved in a shared-governance school-improvement model. It found that principals who want to promote teacher empowerment have to consider the social attractiveness between leaders and followers. Based on these findings, principals might communicate genuine concern and empathy for the welfare of their faculty, as well as support for teachers’ work (Rinehart *et al.* 1998).

A study of primary heads in a depressed area of Wales explored the real-time issues arising from a change of their role and a better understanding of their real-world preoccupations. Of particular interest was the disproportionate amount of time spent in a counselling role with parents discussing parenting and personal problems and in some instances setting up social and life skill classes for parents. The heads perceived themselves as a source of help and stability, even though they had no formal training as social workers or family counsellors (Jones 1999).

Another study in the United Kingdom sought to explore the nature of collegial leadership among head teachers and middle managers (department heads) in secondary schools, during an era of site-based management and decentralised decision making. It sought to discover whether the delegation of whole school decision making ‘reaches to, involves and empowers middle managers’. The study also looked for evidence of alternative models of management for decision making. They found that there has been an open or tacit acceptance of collegial styles of management. But United Kingdom reform in preparatory training for aspiring head teachers introduced in 1997 has largely been framed in terms of school hierarchy (head teacher as corporate manager). Teachers’ willingness to share in decision making is influenced primarily by their principals. They appear more willing to participate if their principals are more open, collaborative, facilitative and supportive. They are less willing to participate if their principals are closed, exclusionary and controlling. Instead of the school managers’ time and energy being spent on control, it can be better spent facilitating teachers’ knowledge, talent and expertise (Brown *et al.* 1999).

Training for school managers

The in-service and pre-service training of school leaders was of primary importance to the nine nations which were the focus of the OECD study. In analysing their experience at least three factors should be considered:

- 1 *Content* – what are we training leaders to do? Are they to implement an industrial, quality control, scientific management, top-down managerial model? Are they to be deregulated, site-based managers within parameters set by a central authority? Are they to be collegial managers who share decision making with teachers, parents, students and other citizens of the community? Or are they to be members of a co-operative leadership team, which shares duties, responsibilities and visioning as part of a collective management strategy?
- 2 *Style* – is the training to be a traditional university or institute-based ‘lectures by experts’ model? Will it be a school-based apprenticeship/mentoring method, which encourages teamwork and personal fulfilment? Will it be offered as an interactive distance learning option via the Internet or video conferencing? Will the focus be on the ‘learning community’ rather than ‘tips for survival in the trenches’?
- 3 *Focus* – is it to be a pre-service programme for aspiring leaders or in-service for current school managers (or both)? Will other players in a shared-governance model participate in the process (e.g. teachers, parents, students, other citizens, etc.)? If an in-service programme, is it part of an ongoing process of professional renewal? When will the training be offered and who will pay for it?

In the Netherlands, Fontys University for Professional Education (through its Centre for School Management) has joined with the Catholic Training Institute to offer 20 programmes throughout Holland for practising principals and vice principals. This part-time residential course (over two years) focuses on ‘school manager as integral leader’ in the areas of: strategic leader; human resources manager; quality performer; and reflective practitioner. The delivery method is ‘inter-vision’, where a cohort of participants from different regions work co-operatively to solve problems, support each other, and gain an insight into ‘good practice’ in school management.

The Netherlands School for Educational Management (NSO – a co-operative venture among the University of Amsterdam, Free University of Amsterdam, Catholic University of Nijmegen, University of Utrecht and State University of Leiden) has developed a management programme for secondary school leaders. It is a part-time, two-year course for applicants who aspire to leadership roles at the secondary school level (as well as further education or community colleges). Applicants must have teaching experience in primary, special or secondary education to be eligible. The format includes seminars, training sessions, consultations and practical

projects. Participants are expected to utilise knowledge, skills and attitudes gained to enlarge and improve their problem-solving performance in the workplace.

The curriculum covers the following competencies:

- *Pedagogical and educational* – improving practice in school management; guidance; change and innovation; effectiveness and quality care; curriculum planning and organisation.
- *Control* – creative handling of financial, legal and jurisdictional issues including business economics, budget and financial planning, personnel, buildings, government and labour relations and information management systems.
- *Executive and leadership* – including decision-making and change processes; leadership, communications, negotiating, conflict and stress management skills.
- *Organisation* – involves policy development, internal and external relations, market and public relations, programming, self-evaluation, and quality control.
- *Guidance* – includes human resources management, staff relations, supervisory skills and socio-psychological processes.

(NSO)

In 1997, the United Kingdom's Teacher Training Agency (TTA) introduced the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) which provides (over one to three years) professional training for those seeking appointment as a head teacher. For the first time, nationally agreed standards have been set for school leaders which eventually will become mandatory. The NPQH is an acknowledgement that planned, consistent and coherent professional development is required for head teachers.

As of 1998, there were 11 assessment centres and 11 training and development centres in England and Wales providing NPQH training. The role of the assessment centre is: to select candidates from non-local education authority-maintained schools and those not employed in schools; needs assessment for all candidates; the assessment of any national standard not assessed through training (experiential profile); and final assessment for all candidates.

The training development centres are responsible for the compulsory 'strategic leadership and accountability' module and the three optional (depending upon individual assessment) modules in:

- teaching and learning;
- leading and managing staff;
- efficient and effective deployment of staff and resources.

The needs assessment process takes one and a half days, including: a candidate's self-evaluation; a psychometric test; a presentation; an observed

group discussion; and a personal interview. The candidate then draws up an action plan for the training and development phase.

After successfully completing the needs assessment phase, candidates undertake training and development according to their individual action plans. Using a range of assessment techniques, including a portfolio demonstrating their direct involvement in school improvement, candidates are assessed against the national standards. Final assessment involves the candidates taking a rigid battery of exercises focusing on 'the core purpose of headship to provide professional leadership for a school which secures its success and improvement, ensuring high-quality education for all its pupils and improved standards of achievement' (TTA 1997).

In 1993 the Vlerick School of Management at the University of Ghent, Belgium, conceived a new in-service programme for school teams. Participation was open to all secondary schools. There were no prerequisites for past participation in other university or governmental programmes. The objective of the programme was 'to stimulate creative, critical and problem-solving thinking of school teams in their local environment and to limit academic barriers as much as possible'. The format of the training was to be a 'school-based management contest' supported and financed by the Ministry of Education (Devos *et al.* 1998).

The programme was designed so that the training and coaching of participants would be school-site-based. A team of five people per school must be directly involved in school organisation. Team members could be school administrators, teachers, parents, members of the school board or any other person involved in school operations. The programme focused on the development of the personal, organisational and self-assessment skills of the participants. The process was to be enhanced by using the learning capacity of the school and the ability of participating teams to learn from each other.

The idea for a contest-based programme came from business games, used in master of business administration programmes, to combine co-operative and competitive learning. Teams of students must perform certain tasks in an inter-group competition. It has been found that such a simulation game leads to significantly higher satisfaction, trust, openness and social support among team members (Bottom and Baloff 1994).

Unlike the business games, the school management contest was not a simulation. It was an actual school-based programme focusing on the daily practice of school leaders in their own environment.

An interdisciplinary team from the Vlerick School of Management designed five assignments for the first edition (pilot) project:

- dealing with complaints of parents and the local community of the school;
- coaching first-time teachers;
- professional relations between teachers;

- the concept of school-based management;
- analysing data on enrolment, transfer and dropout rates of students.

An evaluation of the pilot project among a sample group of team members indicated 'great satisfaction with their experience'. The problem-based and practice-based team approach caused a thorough analysis of the school's practices, regarding the different topics.

By December 1998 four editions were organised, with 174 teams from 143 different schools. As each team must have five members, more than 900 people were officially registered (Devos *et al.* 1998).

A survey of other countries with regard to their school leader training provisions produced this summary:

- In Japan, the focus was on shifting the traditional role from 'school administrator' to the new role of 'school manager'. Teachers need to pass an exam to hold a managerial position and boards of education and teachers' unions have mounted a variety of training programmes in curriculum management, staff development, external relations and financial control (OECD 2001c).
- The governing board in Antwerp, Flanders, requires candidates for the position of principal to complete a two-year part-time special training course. The emphasis is on human resources management and how to implement change with a view to creating a 'learning organisation'. The course of study includes: conflict resolution; communication and leadership styles; multiculturalism; lifelong learning; differentiation; policy making; networking; and quality improvement. Simulation games, videotapes, role playing and case studies are used to enhance the learning process (OECD 2001c).
- In Sweden, there is a view that management training should be an activity for all members of the school staff, as well as being part of initial teacher training. Democracy is deeply ingrained in the Swedish psyche. Many believe that just as teachers encourage students to manage their own studies, they have to work as part of a team and understand how teamwork is essential to the running and management of the school (OECD 2001c).
- The United States, as a federal system, has a vast array of leadership training programmes for principals and other administrative personnel throughout the 50 states. For the most part, these courses are offered by university faculties of education at the graduate school level, leading to a masters' degree.

There is a growing tendency, however, to move the training from the 'halls of academe' to deliver team-based training and support directly on-site at the local school. In this regard, rural Wisconsin provides a joint venture between New Paradigm Partners Inc. and Good Hope College which offers collaborative leadership development for

principals, teachers, parents, students and other citizens involved in school improvement and community development (OECD 2001c).

The two teachers' unions in the United States – National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) – have both been active in promoting school reform by sharing leadership with district and local school management. One example of labour/management partnership has been the 'Quality Challenge' – an integrated approach to school improvement by the National Education Association and the Pinellas County Schools Quality Academy. In 1991 Pinellas County Schools established the 'Quality Academy' based on the United States Department of Commerce's Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award criteria to improve classroom, school, department, and district level performance. The 'Quality Challenge' integrated management system has a set of core values to guide the cultural transformation of the school, classroom or team. The Quality Challenge assessment criteria are organised into six categories: leadership; strategy development process; customer focus; information and analysis; human resources development and management; and performance results. A schematic plan is designed as a circle and represents all the categories working together to accomplish the aim of the system with leadership moving the organisation through cycles of continual improvement (NEA 1997).

Another example of new labour partnerships involving both NEA and AFT is the Teacher Union Reform Network (TURN). TURN has stressed strong collaborative working relationships with district and school management. This has included performance systems to support teacher career development, and standards to demonstrate teacher knowledge and skills. They often partner with school authorities and community interests to support pre-service and in-service training activities.

Reflections

The concept of the learning society envisions an environment which supports and encourages lifelong learning where people of all ages share the opportunities and access to resources required to improve their knowledge and skills. In this regard, the school is another workplace, not unlike those to be found in business, industry, the community service sectors, and indeed the family itself.

The principal, therefore, has the potential to develop the school as a true learning organisation, which encompasses the needs of all participants, including students, teachers, support staff, parents and administrative personnel. The fact that principals are often expected to be scientific managers within a reform structure, as opposed to facilitators within a learning society, creates a conflict. Dee Hock characterises it as the difference between competition and co-operation.

The top-down, all-powerful principal, driven by neo-conservative ideals, seems out of place in the learning society. The OECD study of school management describes several examples of in-service and pre-service training of principals and vice principals which attempt to combine both the reform and renewal agendas. Is it possible to do both, or are industrial age school managers ill-equipped to be post-industrial educational leaders in a learning society? This is the challenge faced by the principal in the twenty-first century.

15 Leaders for the twenty-first century

The late W. Edwards Deming is acknowledged as the father of the quality movement, which influenced the Japanese economic miracle of the 1970s and 1980s. Deming was a harsh critic of national education policies which promote goals, tests, state and school report cards, merit pay and other coercive means of 'management by results'. He taught that trying to manage public education by test scores was the equivalent of 'driving down the road by looking in the rear view mirror'. He recognised that management and workers must be concerned with the system in place and the processes affecting that system. One of his great insights into human endeavour was to understand that true standards of performance are not set; they are created. He showed us that extraordinary performance could be achieved through a process of continuous improvement and a clear focus on the aim of the system (Ramirez 1999).

As mentioned in previous chapters, school improvement has been 'hijacked' by the political right as a platform which has resonance with the electorate. People are confused and frightened about the future. While the knowledge economy and the information age have been a source of emancipation to many, the new technology has also served further to alienate others and increase stratification between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'. In this instance we are speaking not just of wealth but of employability and job security. Those who 'have' the information age communications, lifelong learning, problem-solving, teamwork and entrepreneurial skills should be able to cope and even prosper in the new economy. Those who 'have not' acquired this knowledge, these skills and attitudes may be locked into an industrial age hierarchical style of employment and are destined to be discarded. The widening gap which exists between the 'rich copers' and the 'poor discards' is a massive socio-economic problem of global proportions.

All school reformers agree that we need more 'copers' and fewer 'discards'. The question in the latter part of the twentieth century has been: 'How do we get there?' The social, economic and political stability and well-being of OECD member countries, as well as others in the developing world, hang in the balance.

We are faced with a quandary in school leadership between what John Goodlad calls the 'soft and tender' versus the 'hard and tough'. The hard and tough neo-conservative reformers still promote Tayloresque top-down scientific management to repair (or privatise) schools which are broken. The soft and tender liberal renewers believe in New Age management, which espouses teamwork and 'affective' leadership with flexible, self-renewing learning organisations as envisioned by Peter Senge and others.

Can the gulf which exists between the two ideologies ever be bridged or are school leaders to wander in a schizophrenic wilderness? The impact of this conflict in values and behaviour can have devastating consequences. As previously stated, a teachers' union in the United Kingdom is currently embroiled in a dispute with the Chief Inspector of Schools concerning a 57-year-old teacher who committed suicide after a visit by OFSTED inspectors. In some school districts, especially those serving low-income, immigrant and migrant areas, test scores have, in fact, declined under the pressures of top-down structured reform policies.

In addition to their tradition of financial, personnel and other administrative duties, principals are now expected to be systemic change agents, transformation experts, and mental health counsellors. Some leadership models emphasise top-down efficiency while others focus on moral authority and shared decision making. Often the role is 'multidimensional' without the means to integrate diverse strategies into a cohesive plan.

Reform demands the 'powerful principal' as an 'heroic, take charge leader' who can still share powers with others. Principals often support site-based management, in principle, but the parameters of their authority may remain ambiguous causing frustration and stress. Concerns about safety and security in schools and the threat of terrorism have further strengthened the role of the powerful principal as a custodial shepherd protecting the flock.

In the realm of bottom-up renewal, however, principals are involved in intentional improvement. As 'learning leaders' they are expected to expand the school's capacity for learning by creating 'learning communities' that collaboratively solve problems facing the organisation.

Another leadership concern is a public perception that schools may be losing their 'moral authority'. Principals must demonstrate a high level of ethical behaviour as a 'moral voice' for the school community and a focus for shared values and personal motivation and fulfilment (Lashway 1999).

It is not enough for principals to 'cope' by simply working harder and adding duties and responsibilities. This may leave them tired, frustrated and cynical, ready to seize the first pre-packaged solution (or retirement package) that comes along. Management and administrative tasks, being more immediate, tend to push leadership into the background. Schools looking to improve should support full service leadership, not just management by expedience.

To quote Abbott and Ryan:

Those people in positions of influence over the current systems of education (elected officials, educational administrators and teachers' unions) see their role as participating in the management of the current system; they are concerned with reform, not transformation. This means it is in their interest to defend the system from those who advocate changes that would seek to disperse power to those outside the control of the formal system. These educational gatekeepers often make the argument that what is needed is incremental strategies of educational reform that can be easily managed and controlled. It is in their interest to manage rather than lead for the simple fact there is less risk and exposure to controversy by not rocking the boat. Besides, why challenge a system that has been good to you personally? Fifteen or more years of increasingly prescriptive legislation has turned the job of Headship (or in the United States the job of Principal) into that of a manager rather than a leader. Managers have rules to follow, not questions to ask.

(Abbott and Ryan 2000)

Quest for leadership

School leadership may be equated with the terms 'leadership' and 'management' as both are combined in the role of the 'powerful principal'. In 1989, the OECD proposed three models for organising school leadership: the pyramidal hierarchy; collegial leadership; and the principal elected or appointed by the teaching staff as the first among equals. To this might be added the autonomous or semi-autonomous site-based principal and the principal who is an agent of the central bureaucracy implementing policies dictated from above (district/region/state or national levels).

In many countries the trend is for the principal to function in an increasingly participative and collaborative environment. But teaching and learning may be defined differently in different cultures. For example in Asian countries, a teacher's knowledge and the teacher's identity may carry more respect than in Western societies. In some cultures parental involvement is encouraged, while in others parents view teaching and learning as exclusively school activities and parental involvement as interference. Similarly, teacher-centred learning predominates with student-centred learning frowned upon or not understood. In some schools, the teacher is expected to be a subject specialist, while in others he or she would be expected to teach a broad range of subjects. These are cultural differences, which the school leader must learn to accommodate depending upon the predominant cultural environment of a country (e.g. Asian versus European) or the prevailing cultures (or cultures within cultures) to be found among immigrant and migrant parents and their

familial values. School leaders must have a knowledge of and sensitivity for the cross-cultural nature of the community in which they serve and adapt their leadership style accordingly (Dimmock and Walker 1998).

Another prevailing issue in school leadership is the change in the traditional role of women as industrial age housebound mothers, able to spend 'quality' time on the care, nurturing and moral education of the children. While neo-conservative political theory stressing family values would see mothers return to that role, it now often takes the income of both parents to sustain the economy of the family. This requires fathers to assume more responsibility in the parenting role (which may, or may not, happen). The increasing proportion of single-parent families also leaves limited time for traditional parenting. The school often becomes the institution which society expects to subsidise the parenting role. The principal may now be required to provide leadership in inculcating moral values and social skills.

Site-based management and shared decision making involve the whole community in the managerial process. In this regard, another non-traditional role for school principals would see 'the school as an extension of the community it serves'. Instead of being a clinical institution sheltered from the realities of community life, the school becomes a focus for community living and human fulfilment. This has been the 'community school' model originally envisioned by John Dewey and Edward Olsen. In this community development process, the school, as the major human and physical resource in the neighbourhood, provides leadership by helping to bring citizens together to assess local needs, mobilise resources and improve the quality of life in the community. The principal of the community school is an integral leader in a community development process. This has been of particular relevance to impoverished rural and urban areas (Shuttleworth 1993).

For example, community education in the Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale, England, addresses the learning needs of people of all ages in a variety of community-based settings. The focus is on the 'whole person', with particular emphasis on individuals or groups who face discrimination or who are disadvantaged in that they have not benefited from a traditional approach to schooling.

A set of core principles for community education includes the following beliefs:

- People should be actively involved in the management of their own learning, making decisions not only about alternative forms and outcomes but also about curriculum development and resource allocation.
- A community development approach to education should be fostered in order to enable local people to develop together skills and knowledge, as well as critical awareness about the issues which affect them, and to empower them to improve the quality of life in their communities.

- Education should be organised in a way which recognises that learning is a lifelong process and that people's educational interests and needs continue to change and develop.
- Curriculum should be rooted in the realities and resources of local community life.
- In order to make the most of educational resources within communities, systematic strategies must be developed to break down the traditional barriers between provider agencies and to facilitate collaborative initiatives

(Giles 1992)

Reflections

The role of the school administrator emerged in the twentieth century as that of a practising teacher with added technical responsibilities. In the latter part of the century, the role became that of a full-time professional manager of human, financial and other resources. Instructional leadership, staff evaluation, budget management, performance assessment and community relations were added to the job description. When the school operated as an industrial age learning factory, duties were relatively straightforward and systematic. Many teachers (especially males) saw a principalship as the crowning achievement in their educational career.

The politically driven school improvement/educational reform movement has added a totally new dimension to the job. Principals are expected to be motivational leaders demanding a high standard of performance from students and teachers. Decentralisation has often meant site-based management and deregulated school boundaries requiring enhanced business and marketing skills in a highly competitive struggle to recruit students on the open market. Ensuring the safety and security of students and faculty has gained a new sense of urgency for school managers.

The new economic age has also expected principals to be knowledge managers able to inspire teachers and students to be self-renewing learners in a learning organisation. Here lies the conflict. Should the principal on the edge of a new millennium be an industrial age supervisor of quality control standards (the powerful principal), or a multidimensional knowledge manager of human and physical resources – able to share power and decision making as a facilitating source in a learner-centred community? Can these roles be combined? Where are we to find such leaders?

During the past decade, teachers and principals have been devalued, confused and frustrated by their changing role in society. Stress levels have risen, as self-esteem has fallen – hardly good role models for our children. Young people may think twice before choosing a career in education. Teachers may no longer aspire to a career path which leads to the stress and frustration of the principal's office. This is at a time when thousands of new

recruits are needed just to fill vacancies as baby boomers retire from the profession. We can ill afford not to pay teachers and principals well, not to value their contribution, not to renew our schools, and not to prepare our young people adequately to compete in a new economic age, where unskilled labour is expendable. Strong, inspirational, yet empathetic, school leaders and management teams are needed to span the digital divide between the old industrial age and the infinite flexibility of our new life-long learner-focused society.

This does not mean that schools, teachers and principals should not be accountable to the people they serve. What it does mean is captured in the words of economic visionary W. Edwards Deming: 'True standards of performance are not set; they are created.' Extraordinary performance can only be achieved through a process of continuous improvement based on a clear collective assessment of our learning needs, followed by an investment in the leadership and resources to fulfil these needs for all members of the community. To quote Andy Hargreaves: 'In the face of the global tendencies to force educational change through externally imposed restructuring and reform, we should emphasise the parallel and often greater importance of improving the internal interactions and relationships of schooling' (Hargreaves 1997).

Schools are but one facet of an essential public service infrastructure that has been struggling with a neo-conservative agenda which includes decentralisation, taxpayer accountability, restructuring, and privatisation with diminishing financial support. This is an organic, politicised, service delivery system, which must continually respond to diverse consumer needs. The public service cannot pick and choose its clients or manipulate its outcomes. It has a universal mandate to serve virtually all members of society. In a service economy, it is the most accountable sector within the social order. If we are to retain and improve the standards of excellence our society deserves, we must invest in renewing the self-esteem, learning capacities, problem-solving abilities and leadership skills of our public service professionals. Schooling by test scores, sanctional threats, chronic criticism and employment insecurity are devaluing our human and social capital and are poor sources of motivation for improved performance among students, teachers and managers. Our future social and economic well-being and quality of life are clearly at stake.

Appendix

National profiles

Belgium (Flanders)

Belgium has one of the highest population densities in Europe with ten million people occupying just 30,000 square kilometres. From 1970 on, Belgium has become progressively a federal state divided into three distinct communities: the Dutch-speaking Flanders with 5.9 million inhabitants and 58 per cent of the population; the French-speaking Walloon region with 32 per cent, and a small German-speaking community. Approximately one million immigrants, of whom about one half are of Turkish or Moroccan descent, are also to be found in Belgium.

Flanders occupies, in many respects, a central position in Europe. Brussels is at the same time the capital of the Flemish Community of Belgium and of Europe. Furthermore, the Flemish Community is at the crossroads between different European cultures and traditions and actively participates in a number of European programmes. It has a common history with the French-speaking part of Belgium, but a common language, and to a large extent a common culture, with the Netherlands, with which there are frequent exchanges of ideas and of experiences.

During the 1980s, Belgium experienced a dramatic decline in the manufacturing sector which was matched by a rise in service industries. Unemployment rates in Belgium have been amongst the highest in OECD countries. However, this is changing as unemployment figures have been substantially declining in recent years, reaching 9 per cent in 1999. Unemployment in Flanders, at 7.1 per cent, is below the national average and, unlike the Walloon region, tends to be cyclical rather than structural.

Freedom of education has been included in the constitution since the beginning of the Belgian state. This principle consists of two pillars: free choice of school; and educational freedom, namely the right to establish schools autonomously. However, this principle has been the cause of much conflict and struggle. The 'school wars' constitute a significant part of the cultural and political history of Belgium, both in the nineteenth century – with major flare-ups around 1850 and 1879 – and in the twentieth century, particularly from 1951 onwards. This century of confrontation ended with

the signing of the 'School Pact' in the 1950s. This was an agreement between the political parties to ensure a distributive justice between the different educational networks. A law of 29 May 1959, referred to as the School Pact Law, has formed the basis for the organisation of all educational establishments, with the exception of the universities, in an educational system organised and grant-aided by the state.

Education is a priority in Flanders and the standards of education are above the average. According to the TIMSS international survey, the level of achievement of Flemish students in mathematics and science is one of the highest (OECD 1998d). Participation in pre-primary education is almost 100 per cent whilst in secondary education it is very high. Compulsory education has been extended up to the age of 18 (OECD 2001c).

Greece

To understand recent changes in school management in Greece it is necessary to consider political, economic, demographic and social changes that have occurred since 1945. A civil war in the mid-1940s was followed by a constitutional monarchy that lasted until 1967, when it was replaced by the military dictatorship that ended in 1974. Since then, Greece has been a presidential parliamentary republic with a written constitution. Given this history, it is not surprising that words like 'authority, control, inspection and management' need to be used cautiously in any discussion about the governance of educational institutions.

Economically, Greece has moved rapidly from being heavily dependent on primary resources, such as agriculture, fishing and quarrying, to a more diverse range of employment, including tourism, commercial and manufacturing industries. These changes have impacted on schooling as increasing prosperity has led to higher parental and student expectations. These have been expressed in higher participation rates in upper secondary schools and institutions of tertiary and higher education, and the expansion of full-time and part-time private schooling. There has also been a greater demand for vocational education at secondary schools and beyond.

Demographically, the last 50 years have been characterised by population growth, rural depopulation and urban expansion and periods of emigration. This has involved the in-migration of returning migrants and the immigration of persons from neighbouring countries. Cities have grown in area and population density, resulting in school overcrowding. The demand for more schools in the cities, while enrolment has declined in rural and island communities, has posed quite different problems for educational planners.

Since the establishment of the modern Greek state in 1832, Greece has had a long tradition of a highly centralised, tightly regulated system of education. Legislation determines the organisation of schools, the national curriculum, the funding arrangements for schools and all aspects of school

staffing. In recent decades, the government has sought to decentralise, deregulate and de-bureaucratise public administration in general, and education in particular (OECD 2001c).

Hungary

During the last decades, Hungary has experienced a process of transition, which has had far-reaching consequences for the economy and society as a whole. But it is important to underline that this process has been initiated much earlier than in the neighbouring countries. In the 1980s, a gradual process of democratisation and of decentralisation was introduced and the private sector became increasingly significant. Dynamic entrepreneurs began to appear and intellectuals were quite aware of new ideas and developments on the international scene.

It is not so surprising, therefore, that when the change of regime took place, around 1990, Hungary went through the transition process at a particularly rapid pace. Drastic measures of privatisation and economic reform were undertaken as well as far-reaching institutional changes involving a large degree of decentralisation. During the early 1990s, economic restructuring and the loss of export markets (especially in the Soviet Union) had serious adverse effects on the standard of living. There was a deep economic recession, with unemployment, poverty and inequalities between regions and social groups appearing for the first time.

The stabilisation programme adopted in the mid-1990s was followed by an economic recovery. The growth rate of the GNP has been high during the latter part of the decade, but problems of poverty and inequality cannot be solved overnight. Restrictions on public expenditure had to be maintained, which continued to have a serious impact on all government activities.

Changes which have taken place in the field of education have been reviewed extensively by an earlier OECD report, *The Transition from School to Work* (OECD 1992). All aspects of the educational system have been affected by these economic changes, particularly the organisation of schools and the curriculum content. In view of its relationship with a changing labour market, the re-orientation of vocational and technical education has received considerable attention.

In the whole system, teaching methods have usually been perceived as rather conservative. But according to international surveys, the average performance of Hungarian students is very good in science and mathematics, while reading performances are not so satisfactory. There are wide and increasing inequalities. For example, the recent International Adult Literacy Survey data published by the OECD shows that Hungarian adults are not at the same level as the students (OECD 2000e). There are also wide and increasing inequalities among regions and among families of students with different backgrounds. The most important trend affecting the school system is the drastic demographic decline of the school-age population (OECD 2001e).

Japan

From the 1960s, Japan has made massive economic progress based largely on manufacturing industries with a move towards tertiary industry. By 1997, only 5.5 per cent of the working population were employed in primary industry with 31.9 per cent in secondary industry and 61.8 per cent in tertiary industry. A period of continuous economic growth came to an end in 1997, leading to calls for industrial and commercial restructuring. This coincided with increasing attention being paid to globalisation, particularly to the impact of new information and communication technologies, which brought reforms in education.

Demographically, Japan has witnessed intensive urbanisation and consequent rural depopulation. The government is concerned with the implications of a falling birth rate, the trend towards nuclear families and an ageing population. Across the country, educational expectations have been heightened, with parents wishing to see their children attend prestigious schools followed by prestigious universities and hopefully by high status jobs. Increasingly, expectations have been high for both males and females. Social mobility, maintaining high living standards, and education have been seen to be closely linked.

Traditionally, the centralised administration has been strong in Japan. But, in recent years, important steps have been taken to deregulate and decentralise many areas of the public sector, including education. A package of laws designed to promote decentralisation was passed in July 1999, with implementation beginning in April 2000.

Such broad trends are reflected in national, regional and local policies for educational reform. In 1996, the second Hashimoto Cabinet designated educational reform, alongside government administration, the economic structure, the financial system, the social welfare system and the fiscal structure, as one of the government's major areas for reform. More recently, the Obuchi Cabinet took up education as a major agenda item and in March 2000 established the National Commission on Educational Reform, a private discussion group of eminent citizens advising the Prime Minister.

The Japanese state education school system consists of compulsory elementary schools (six years) and lower secondary or junior high schools (three years), voluntary upper secondary or senior high schools (three years), followed by universities (four years) or junior colleges (two years). In 1999, the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture approved the establishment of a unified six-year secondary education system in three forms: unified secondary education, both provided in one school; jointly established lower secondary and upper secondary schools; and co-ordinated lower and upper secondary education. Municipal lower secondary schools and prefectural upper secondary schools are co-ordinated on educational programmes and exchange of teachers or students (OECD 2001c).

Mexico

With a land area of almost 2 million square kilometres and a population of about 96 million, Mexico shares borders with the United States to the north and Guatemala and Belize to the south-east. It is a representative, democratic and federal republic with a government composed of legislative, executive and judicial branches. The country is divided into 31 sovereign states, as well as the federal district in which the capital, Mexico City, is located.

Bridging both temperate and tropical regions, Mexico's terrain includes mountains, plains, valleys and plateaux. Snow-capped volcanoes slope down to pine forests, deserts and tropical beaches. This diverse topography supports a variety of industries including manufacturing, mining, petroleum and agricultural production. As a member of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), it has the United States and Canada as main trading partners. In economic terms, Mexico boasts a GDP of U.S. \$370 billion (U.S. \$8,100 per person), which ranks it thirteenth in the world. It has an annual growth rate of over 6 per cent. Beginning in 1985, Mexico started a process of trade liberalisation and privatisation. From 1982 to 1992, government-controlled enterprises were reduced from 1,155 to 217.

Approximately 80 per cent of the population is of mixed European and North American Indian or African slave ancestry (*mestizo*), while 10 per cent is of purely indigenous descent (*indígena*). Mexicans are predominantly Roman Catholic Spanish-speakers, but more than 50 distinct indigenous peoples maintain their own languages and cultural traditions. The indigenous population is over-represented in the poverty statistics in which 28 million Mexicans are estimated to live in extreme poverty, with a further 12 million classified as poor.

Both rural/urban and internal/external migration characterise the life of many Mexicans seeking improved employment opportunities. For example, the population moving from rural areas to municipalities of more than 2,500 increased by 13 per cent from 1970 to 1990. Seasonal agricultural labourers regularly migrate with their families to northern farms searching for work. The number of Mexican citizens living in the United States was estimated to be 7 million in 1996.

Mexico has a very young population, with 56 per cent aged 24 or younger. In 2000 the population below the age of 14 represented a third of the total – falling to 28.4 per cent by 2020. The number of pre-school children is declining at an annual rate of 0.7 per cent, while the demand for mandatory basic education among 6- to 14-year-olds is experiencing an annual increase of 0.1 per cent. It is estimated that the juvenile population aged 15 to 24 will reach 20 million by 2020.

Mexico has a vast educational system with about 1.5 million teachers instructing 28 million students enrolled in 208,000 schools during 1998–9. Ninety per cent attend primary and secondary schools, while 8 per cent are enrolled in post-secondary institutions and 2 per cent receive job training.

Education has long been a political priority and was a major issue in the 2000 presidential elections which were won by the National Action Party (OECD 2001c).

The Netherlands

The Netherlands is the second most densely populated country (after Korea) among OECD nations, with 15.7 million people crowded into 41,000 square kilometres. Fertile land reclaimed from the sea provides for a highly automated and efficient agricultural sector whose worldwide exports are second only to the United States and France. It also has a strong industrial economy led by food processing, oil refining, metalworking, chemicals and electronics. Almost 80 per cent of the gross domestic product, however, is devoted to the service sector, which accounts for 75 per cent of the labour force.

The Netherlands boasts an unemployment rate of about 5 per cent – one of the lowest among OECD countries. However, a quarter of the labour force is either on social security or on job-creation schemes. Many new jobs created during the 1990s have been part-time. Women comprise about 50 per cent of the workforce, but the long-term unemployment rate among women with little education is four times that of the unemployed population as a whole. Persons of Dutch heritage comprise 96 per cent of the population, with the other 4 per cent being of predominantly Turkish or Moroccan origin.

Two themes characterise schooling in the Netherlands. First, the national government maintains a stated policy to ‘decentralise and deregulate’ the educational services. While overall financial support is provided by the Ministry of Education, 70 per cent of schools are operated by the private, non-profit sector (e.g. denominational), leaving 30 per cent to be administered by local municipalities (state schools). In fact, ‘the right of choice’ is enshrined in national educational policy. Groups of parents, religious or pedagogical interests may establish and maintain independently managed schools financially supported by the Dutch government. In 1999 there were more than 7,700 primary schools with an average enrolment of 218 pupils or an average of 140 for those serving children with special needs. Secondary education consists of 700 schools with an average enrolment of 1,200.

The second theme might be described as ‘governing from a distance’. To ensure accountability, the national Ministry of Education combines deregulation and enhancement of school autonomy with ‘quality control’ at the local school level. These were formulated after extensive consultation with all parties concerned in the field of education to form an ongoing complementary relationship.

The schools are provided at both the primary and secondary levels. Primary education serves children from age 4 to age 12, while secondary education is for students between 12 and 18 years. Both levels provide special education for pupils with learning disabilities. Secondary schools

include education at the pre-vocational (VBO), junior general (MAVO), senior general (HAVO), and pre-university levels (VWO). Secondary vocational training is also provided at the assistant, basic, professional and middle management levels for students aged 16 to 20 years (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, 1998). MAVO and VBO are currently in the process of being transformed into VMBO or pre-vocational secondary education, which will also incorporate part of special education.

Individual schools (and collectively managed groups of schools) are encouraged to be more autonomous through deregulated financial provisions covering pay and non-pay items of expenditure. VBO, MAVO and HAVO have the same 'basic education' curriculum during the first three years of secondary school. Educational output is regulated through final exams with 'attainment targets' to be maintained and measured through normative standards of the Inspectorates in Primary and Secondary Education (Kreuzen *et al.* 2000).

The result is a 'loose/tight' deregulation versus regulation conflict. Schools on one hand are encouraged to be more autonomous in certain financial, facility and personnel management areas. At the same time, the national government has tightened its controls and expectations regarding curricular content, student achievement and school management. Schools, therefore, often function in a complex and sometimes apparently contradictory environment.

Changes in the social and economic environment have also impacted on the role of the school. Factors such as the changing nature of work, socio-cultural realities, family relations and the growing freedom of young people, have required schools to develop new values and norms for children and adolescents. Another issue is the growing importance of information and communications technology (ICT) in everyday life and future employment opportunities. The implementation of ICT, while a priority, has been difficult due to a shortage of equipment and teacher know-how. 'Beacon schools' have been established to encourage the integration of ICT into the school curriculum and programme and to act as models for other schools (OECD 2001a).

Sweden

Sweden has been to the forefront of the information technology (IT) revolution, not just in schools and the workplace but also in the home. The Swedes are among the highest users of the Internet for business and personal use. There is a widespread recognition that even more rapid changes in communications and information technologies will reverberate throughout society and will have a profound impact on the manner in which family, school, recreation and work activities are organised.

The increase in usage of IT coincided with the recovery from the economic downturn that had led to cut backs in public expenditure as well as

to higher unemployment in the early to mid-1990s. The unemployment rate has returned to around 5 per cent while industrial production was up 11.6 per cent in June 2000 compared with June 1999. However, the benefits of the improvements in the economy are not spread evenly among the 8.8 million people in Sweden, of whom 12 per cent are either foreign-born or first-generation immigrants. If anything, inequalities have grown.

Sweden has been moving steadily in the direction of greater decentralisation and deregulation. The municipalities, or *kommuner*, have been given additional powers but also greater responsibilities. They are obliged to offer pre-school education for children whose parents are working or studying. Pre-school centres, primary schools and recreation facilities are being integrated in many municipalities, with consequent changes for the manner in which the education system is organised.

There is a recognition – at official level at any rate – that teaching and learning have to change in parallel with what is happening in the wider society outside the school. The day-to-day practice at school level inevitably takes time to catch up with the official rhetoric. But the acceptance of the need for change is reflected in some of the far-reaching decisions taken over the past few decades whose effects are still working their way through the school system.

Teachers are now employees of the municipalities, which have to weigh school needs with other demands on local budgets such as care of the elderly, libraries, childcare, etc. With the agreement of the unions, teachers' pay has become increasingly individualised. They are no longer automatically entitled to incremental pay raises. Instead these are awarded on the basis of criteria, including a commitment to improve the quality of learning for their students. The introduction of market forces means that school leaders can be 'headhunted' to work in other schools in return for higher pay to a much greater extent than previously. In the 1990s the state opted out of direct negotiations on salaries, which became individual with negotiations between the teacher unions and the municipality association (OECD 2001c).

United Kingdom (England)

The United Kingdom, which has a population of around 60 million, is a leading trade power and financial centre. Services, particularly banking, insurance, and business services, account for by far the largest proportion of GDP while industry continues to decline in importance. Agriculture is intensive, highly mechanised, and efficient by European standards, producing about 60 per cent of food needs with only 1 per cent of the labour force. The United Kingdom has large coal, natural gas, and oil reserves; primary energy production accounts for 10 per cent of GDP, one of the highest shares of any industrial nation.

Over the past two decades successive governments have greatly reduced public ownership and contained the growth of social welfare programmes.

However, 17 per cent of the population is estimated to be below the poverty line. Unemployment was at 6 per cent in 1999. But some areas, particularly in the north of England, had higher rates, while London experienced shortages of skilled workers, particularly in high-tech areas. Economic growth slowed in 1998 and 1999; however in 2000 growth exceeded potential, approaching 3 per cent. This recovery was based mainly on domestic demand.

The Blair Government, which made ‘education, education, education’ its three priorities, has continued with and developed many of the education policies it had inherited. During the 1980s, the then Conservative Government had become increasingly frustrated as its own educational policies were modified or delayed by local authorities which were frequently not under its political control and often had fundamental differences with them over policy direction. The mid-1980s had also been a period of conflict with teacher unions, resulting in a series of ‘work-to-rule’ and strike actions by teachers, which caused great dissatisfaction to parents and was making the government’s educational reforms generally unpopular.

Against this background of unrest and in the face of a lot of opposition, the Conservative Government pushed through the most sweeping reforms that the education system had seen in over a hundred years of public provision for schooling. These reforms aimed at creating a new balance of power within the system, with a much stronger role for central government, a more clearly defined set of management functions at the school level, and restrictions on the role of the local education authorities (LEAs). The reforms were promoted as offering a radical restructuring of management roles and functions in the school system. A more efficiently and effectively managed education service was promised, with a strengthening of the links between schools and parents, and a greater responsiveness to the needs and preferences of the school’s community (OECD 2001c).

United States

The federal republic of the United States of America has a population of 270 million of predominantly European heritage. It has the world’s strongest economy, producing about 25 per cent of the global GDP. This is accomplished by only 5 per cent of the world’s population, occupying only 7 per cent of the earth’s arable land. The 1990s have seen the longest peacetime economic expansion in U.S. history, creating 18 million new jobs. Unemployment has been the lowest in 41 years, reaching 4.3 per cent in 1999, with the rate for African Americans declining to 7.8 per cent and Hispanic unemployment reaching 6.6 per cent. Recovery of the construction and manufacturing sectors, as well as continued growth in service employment, has led the way.

Seventy-five per cent of Americans are urban dwellers and, in spite of the booming economy, 30 per cent of workers earn poverty or near-poverty wages. Low-wage workers are now the lowest paid in the industrialised

world, with more than 20 per cent of children in the United States living in poverty. The number of U.S. citizens who work in more than one job has increased 92 per cent between 1973 and 1997, with 43 per cent of workers putting in more than 50 hours per week. Young entry-level workers without a college education saw their real wages fall by 20 per cent between 1979 and 1997. On the other hand, the CEOs (chief executive officers) of major corporations now earn 419 times more than the average salary of their employees. The richest 1 per cent of the population now earns as much wealth as the bottom 95 per cent.

In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE), in its influential report *A Nation at Risk*, set the political tone for the closing years of the twentieth century by strongly criticising American schools and setting an agenda for education reform. The eminent American educator John I. Goodlad, in his book *What Schools are For*, also defined the nature of public schooling in the United States: 'The fabric of our society blends "the soft and tender" and "the hard and tough" with one tending to dominate the other in successive cycles. With regard to schools, I once conjectured that each cycle had a life span of approximately 22 years, during which either the soft and tender or the hard and tough rose and then faded from dominance as the other began its ascendancy' (Goodlad 1994).

According to the United States Constitution, the responsibility for public education is divested to the states. Each of the 50 states has its own department of education, which delegates the actual operation of schools, from kindergarten to grade 12, to a number of local public school districts. One approach to school reform has meant that virtually every state has set standards of accountability for curriculum content and academic performance for students at each grade level and for each subject area. These results are typically made public, with comparison data across districts, so that communities can assess their district's performance in relation to other districts.

A second approach to school improvement is known as 'renewal'. This is more of a 'bottom-up' process with the people in and around schools improving their practice and developing the collaborative mechanisms necessary to improve the quality of their schools relatively free of the linearity of specified ends, means and outcomes. It addresses such fundamental issues as social justice, racism, sexism, and economic inequality to equip citizens for a productive life in a democratic society.

The corporate 'top-down' language of school reform is complemented by a sense of 'bottom-up' renewal, which continues to exist among many educational theorists and practitioners. All agree, however, that American schools need to improve in an age of 'test-score Olympics', where other nations' maths and science standardised test results (particularly in the East) are seen to be consistently superior to those of the United States. Just as the launch of Sputnik galvanised the American public to improve scientific outcomes, the test-score deficit is seen to represent a threat to maintaining international economic dominance in the new millennium (OECD 2001c).

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