

Raven, J. (1994). *Managing Education for Effective Schooling: The Most Important Problem Is to Come to Terms with Values*. Unionville, New York: Trillium Press; Oxford, UK: OPP Ltd. (now available from the author at 30, Great King Street, Edinburgh EH3 6QH, UK).

CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW

The broad aim of this book is to show that there are hidden barriers to achieving widely agreed goals of education and to clarify the - often surprising - steps that are required if these goals are to be achieved.

The book begins, in Chapter 2, by summarising evidence showing that there is widespread agreement among teachers, pupils, parents and employers that the main goal of education should be to foster such qualities as initiative, problem-solving ability, the ability to work with others, and the ability to understand and influence society.

The research summarized in Chapter 3 indicates that these are indeed the qualities required for effective behavior in the workplace, the community, the home, and in civic affairs. Of wider significance is their necessity in tackling the difficult environmental, social, and economic problems facing our society.

Chapter 4 summarizes some of our work on the nature of high-level competence. It emerges that the qualities which make for competence are best thought of as motivational dispositions. Effective behavior requires a large number of cumulative and substitutable, self-motivated, components of competence. These include the ability to think about ways of avoiding or overcoming unanticipated problems, the ability to motivate other people, and the ability to understand, and contribute to the development of, organizational and political systems.

Chapter 5 shows that, far from fostering desirable competencies, the effects of most schooling are socially dysfunctional. The educational system encourages counter-productive beliefs and attitudes, and leads to the promotion of those who are best able to present themselves as others would like to see them.

Chapter 6 investigates how effective parents, teachers, and managers nurture high-level competencies. It emerges that, amongst other things, they identify each individual's motives and incipient talents and then create *developmental environments* in which those concerned can practice and develop high-level competencies whilst carrying out activities they care about.

In addition to emphasising the need for tools to help teachers think about the individual development of their pupils, Chapter 7 documents more problematic barriers to the achievement of educational goals in schools. These include:

- What happens in schools is determined, not by the educational priorities of teachers, pupils, or parents, but by what is assessed in the credentialing process. It follows

that, if schools are to foster high-level competencies, their assessment must be included in the certification process. Unfortunately, because high-level competencies are inseparable from values, this creates a host of dilemmas.

- In fostering high-level competencies, teachers need to both influence the values and political beliefs of their pupils, and identify and harness their existing values. As a society, we are ambivalent about teachers doing either of these things.

One way of side-stepping some of the dilemmas posed by the value-laden nature of high-level competencies would be to offer parents and pupils a choice between a wide range of educational programs explicitly and effectively directed toward different goals.

Unfortunately, this "solution" creates further difficulties:

- a) There is a lack of the information which would be needed by parents and pupils to make an informed choice between different types of program.
- b) There is a fear that, if different pupils are treated in different ways, some would get a better deal than others.

One way of overcoming these problems would involve those who manage education developing a range of alternatives designed to meet the needs of a cross-section of the population. The quality of each option would need to be monitored, and information on the personal and social, short and long term, consequences of each collected and fed outward to the public (instead of upward through a bureaucratic hierarchy to elected representatives). The crucial importance of the decisions to be taken regarding the collection and dissemination of this information would mean that there would need to be open supervision of the decision-taking process.

Public servants need to be more accountable for innovative behavior and decisions taken in the interests of the public. However, before we can develop appropriate staff appraisal procedures, it will be necessary to recognize and dispel the idea that public servants are functionaries whose job it is to carry out the prescriptions of elected representatives.

The observations recorded thus far point to the conclusion that the reform of education has proved difficult because it is intimately bound up with the reform of government and society and especially of the public sector management system. In Chapters 8 and 9, two key components of the required system are discussed. These are, first, new arrangements to create a climate of innovation in schools, and, second, a new interface with the public.

The crucial change needed in the internal operation of the educational system is the creation of a climate of concern with innovation. This requires a structure, and time set aside, for "parallel organization" activity. Kanter gives this label to activities which are carried out alongside the hierarchically-organized day-to-day executory functions on which people currently concentrate most of their attention. Innovative activity requires a "flat", non-hierarchical, structure which enables those with ideas to obtain direct access to those who control the release of resources, and which facilitates the formation of task groups to tackle emergent projects. Teachers must develop a wider role, influencing the social constraints (such as the expectations of parents and administrators) which restrict their activities in the classroom. Finally, the effective execution of parallel organization activity will require that the educational system is provided with access to a much better R&D structure. Only this can produce the concepts, tools, and organizational arrangements needed to expose and overcome the deep-seated barriers to effective education.

The arrangements just described are almost completely at odds with the widely held assumption that progress in education is to be made through governmental prescription of goals and the means to their achievement, and the use of tests to gauge their attainment.

Equally fundamental changes are required in the management of the educational system and its interface with the public. For more than 50 years, public servants have failed to act on information which demonstrates the failure of the educational system to achieve its goals effectively. Chapter 9 deals with the role of the public servant in the management of education. It argues that, in order to ensure that information is acted upon in the public interest, public servants' behavior should be exposed to public scrutiny and their actions monitored for innovation and effectiveness.

To monitor and assist the work of teachers and other public servants, it is proposed that a fluid, network-based, supervisory structure be established. The "monitoring" groups would consist of those with a relevant interest - we might envisage a group made up of parents, members of the local community, teachers and researchers. Since the activities of any one teacher must be related to those of other teachers in the school, and in turn to those in other schools in the community and the country generally, there is a clear need for a network of linked groups as well as links via the media and research.

The establishment of any network-based supervisory structure would involve finding ways of encouraging more people to play an active part in the management of society. Chapter 9 goes on to suggest that the solution to this problem lies in recognising that public-sector activities are themselves wealth-creating, so that participation in their management merits remuneration.

While this is a highly practical book, its main contribution is to advance *understanding*. Indeed, its main conclusion is that the development of the understandings, organizational arrangements, and tools required for the effective management of our society is heavily dependent on investment in innovative, policy-relevant, social research. Unfortunately, because the management of research rests in the hands of those who lack the very competencies the book is primarily concerned with, the practice and supervision of research needs to change dramatically. The required understandings and arrangements are discussed in Chapter 10. It emerges that the requisite research is an adventurous and problem-driven activity. Also that research which advances basic understanding, and contributes to the invention and development of new administrative and assessment tools can only be carried out in the context of action: it is, for example, not possible to develop valid measures of high-level competencies without changing schoolroom practice, but classroom processes will not change until we have means of giving pupils and teachers credit for alternative outcomes.

Any attempt to change the state of education faces a tissue of problems none of which can be tackled on its own and most of which pose Catch 22s. Thus classroom processes cannot be improved without better measures of their outcomes, the development of the tools needed to administer them, new concepts of management, and reform of the interface between schools and society. Such change in turn demands change in social practice. Social change can occur only if we develop better concepts of competence, better staff appraisal systems, and better institutional arrangements. Yet the research for

these developments can not be carried out without the improved organizational arrangements which it is the very object of the research itself to develop.

It would not be appropriate to conclude this overview without noting the wider significance of the developments required to improve the educational system. Our society is in great need of management structures which will facilitate urgent innovative action to tackle the current environmental, financial, and public sector management crises. The evolution of an effective educational system would lead to the development of the competencies required to promote the development of such a system. But, more specifically, the development of an effective educational management system would contribute directly to the evolution of more effective ways of running society.