

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 11

### THE WAY FORWARD

In essence, what we have seen in this book is that the failure of the educational system to achieve its main goals is multiply determined and that that failure contributes to the perpetuation of a society which, at least in the short term, requires its educational system to perform functions which are in sharp tension with the educational activities it manifestly needs to undertake.

The social forces which lead to the narrow educational activities were summarized in graphical form in Diagram 1 at the end of Chapter 7. As was indicated at the time, the Diagram makes it abundantly clear that, if changes are introduced one at a time, their effects will tend to be neutralized, and the changes themselves will tend to be eliminated, by other forces operating in the system. This is one reason why curriculum change has in the past tended to be isolated and/or short lived: the only schools which have been able to maintain a distinctive curriculum over an extended period of time have, in one way or another, been able to isolate themselves from forces operating in the rest of the system. Likewise, attempts to change assessment procedures are not only undermined by a lack of understanding of how high-level competencies are to be assessed: They are also rendered invalid by the absence of classroom environments in which the relevant qualities can be fostered and displayed and marginalized by the need to reduce all assessments to a single score which can be used to allocate social position and status.

It follows that, if enduring change is to be introduced, it will be necessary to make multi-pronged *systemic* (but not centralized, system-wide) interventions: it will be necessary to introduce *simultaneous* change into the way schools are managed (and especially to take the steps that are needed to create climates of innovation within them), into curriculum, into assessment, into the interface with employers, and into the interface between schools and the community.

Unfortunately, in yet another illustration of Catch-22, immediate attempts to introduce systemic change could not work because there is so little understanding of key issues - of the nature of the qualities that are to be fostered, how they are to be nurtured, and how they are to be assessed, of the nature of the required "parallel organization activity", of the roles of administrators, principals and teachers - because administrators, principals and teachers lack the requisite expectations and competencies, because there is a dearth of appropriate evaluation activity, because the necessary interface between schools and the community has yet to be established, and because, within the current structure, it is so difficult to initiate and conduct research of the kind that is needed.



could impact:

- The climate for innovation in schools;
- The quality of the developmental environments available to pupils;
- The level and diversity of talents nurtured and credentialed;
- The level of awareness of the non-sustainable nature of modern society and the developments needed to impact it;
- The extent of recognition of the developments needed to run society more effectively.

These developments would be mutually supportive. What is more, the developments in education would flow round to reinforce changes in society and these in turn would facilitate - rather than inhibit - developments in the educational system.

The key developments are new forms of democracy and bureaucracy. But to get these we need changed beliefs about the topics covered in the central box in Diagrams 1 and 2. Changed beliefs in these areas - spelt out in the author's *New Wealth of Nations* - would lead directly to both new forms of bureaucracy and democracy and to the implementation of the research needed to develop the understandings and tools that are needed to run the educational system - and society more generally - effectively.

The heaviest feedback loops are those on the right hand side of the diagram, and it is on producing the developments indicated in the boxes which precede them that attention needs to focus.

Most people could contribute in one way or another to intervention at these "leverage points": Everyone can do something to help to promote a wider debate in the media. Everyone can strive to influence local school systems. Most people could form, or contribute to, groups to put pressure on congressmen. They could press to have recruitment into teaching based on the ability to facilitate growth rather than on qualifications which primarily index the willingness to regurgitate what "authorities" want to hear. They could try to persuade employers to change their selection criteria. They could campaign to get test agencies to invest in the R&D required to broaden the range of their products. They could take legal action against test agencies for damaging people's lives and careers and society at large. They could press for social change so that there is less need for schools to manufacture discriminations which compel participation in the useless activities of which modern society is so largely composed.

The most important single change they could try to bring into being would, however, involve getting Federal and State Governments to change the philosophy which informs their current thinking about how the system is to be managed. The need, both within the educational system and outside it, is to create a climate which facilitates development, rather than one in which it is assumed that those in authority should prescribe the activities to be carried out by public servants and teachers and then check up to find out whether those instructions have been obeyed. The new arrangements would include a network-based structure to supervise the public service, tools to run the educational system, and the public service in general, more effectively and a support structure to conduct the necessary research.

Technological change is also extremely important. Teachers teach, and pupils work, toward the goals that are *assessed*. Teachers and administrators do those things for which they will be credited in staff appraisal systems, and teachers attend only to those classroom processes they can monitor. Teachers need tools to help them administer individualized, competency-oriented, developmental programs. Such tools would help them to identify and harness pupils' motives, create individualized programs, monitor the results, and record the outcomes. The availability of easy-to-use tools in these areas would transform education, regardless of whether or not steps were taken to overcome the other barriers to effective education which have been identified in this book.

However, the most difficult, but vitally important, task facing National, State, and Local Governments is to initiate the developments needed to create a society in which there would be no need for schools to perform their latent sociological functions. These functions include (a) the legitimization of the rationing of privilege, (b) the advancement of those most prepared to do whatever is necessary to secure that advancement, and (c) the manufacturing of useless work and the creation of discriminations which compel participation in both the "educational" system itself and the institutions of modern society. Ironically, the development and dissemination of the understandings needed to divert the educational system away from these functions, and toward the real goals of education, is unmistakably a task for the educational system itself. Unfortunately, as we saw in Chapter 5, Robinson<sup>11.1</sup> has shown that even a relatively innocuous attempt to address this agenda threatened vested interests to such an extent that a concerted campaign was established to crush the activity. There is no reason to suppose that future activity in the area would not meet with a similar response. There are, however, a number of new features in the situation which might lead to a different outcome: (1) we can now anticipate, and prepare for, the reaction of those who have a major interest in the perpetuation of the system; (2) there is now much more widespread dissatisfaction with the educational system; (3) there is now a much wider awareness that the way our society is organized will have to change dramatically; and (4) it is now clear that major social reform is essential to even the relatively short-term interest of those who are most likely to resist change<sup>11.2</sup>.

It will now be apparent that one of the reasons why the reform of education has proved to be so difficult is that it involves the reform of government and society.

It follows from the observations made in this book that, if we are to translate our social and educational values into effect, we will need, above all, to analyse the workings of our society with a view to identifying leverage points at which it would be possible for us to intervene for the common good. To do this, each of us could do worse than begin by asking ourselves, as individuals: "What are my social and educational values?" "What prevents me from translating those values into effect?" "What can I do to influence the current situation?"<sup>11.3</sup>.

### *Notes*

11.1. Robinson (1983)

11.2. The author and publisher are committed to producing another book which will spell out in greater detail what these are.

11.3. I am indebted to Jack Whitehead for suggesting these questions.