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Reflections on The Goals Project Conception of Vision Amy Gerstein

The Goals Project Conception of Vision

As I understand the Goals Project conception of vision it is one deeply rooted in a philosophical approach to vision as a picture of a particular kind of person. This conception involves both a substantive and content-based approach to describing human nature. Once a school holds this conception/definition of a vision, then they can develop strategies for employing this vision and assessing efforts to achieve that vision. Below I describe my initial understanding the dimensions of this conception of vision delineated in the five levels described by Danny Morom.

Level 1: Philosophy

This level is characterized by such questions: What is a human being? What is a Jew?

Level 2: Philosophy of education/Philosophy of Jewish education

What is an educated person or an educated Jew? Here, habits of mind and habits of heart would be articulated. Also, the larger aims of the community are involved at this level.

Level 3: Translation

This level describes moving from philosophical assumptions to a theory of practice in education.

Level 4: Implementation

At this level, the philosophy becomes very practical for education. Goals are defined and are used to create concrete structures and practice. For example, teacher training and curriculum development occurs at this level.

Level 5: Evaluation of Goals

Once the goals are explicit, authentic assessment of progress toward the goals becomes possible.

How the Goals Project conception differs from conceptions of vision within the field of school reform

My reflections regarding the Goals Project conception of vision and other conceptions of vision grow mostly out of my work in school reform. I will draw upon my experience in the field, my understanding of multiple reform initiatives, and a few key authors in this area. I am defining school reform as those initiatives which aim to fundamentally change the whole school. By whole school, I include structures, policies, practice, school culture and vision. These descriptions are broad brush strokes and are not meant to be comprehensive and specific. I describe how the current field of school reform defines vision, uses vision, derives vision, and regards vision as a strategy for change.

The Goals Project conception of vision significantly differs from other conceptions of vision in that the Goals Project conception is much more complex and finely described than ones that are traditionally described and used in reform. For example, vision is often talked about in general terms. *What is your vision? What are the qualities of students you are trying to achieve?* These questions are linked to levels one and two.

Sources and Uses of Vision

Within the field of school reform visions are typically developed out of a variety of sources which include:

1. Research on learning
2. Organizational theory and development
3. Beliefs, values, and assumptions about learning and the purposes of school
4. Experiential or practical wisdom

These cuts on vision are described often in strategic terms: as a lever for change, as a tool for designing curriculum, as a support for guiding the direction of change. These conceptions of vision differ from the Goals Project conception in that they are not mainly rooted in philosophical conception of the substance and content of human existence. They have many different sources: psychology, anthropology, sociology, and practice.

Reformers, inside and outside of schools, talk about the importance of shared vision in order for schools to change. This definition usually implies a strategic use of vision statements. Defining what is meant by a vision apart from a strategy is not typically a commonplace in practice or discourse in reform circles. Peter Senge, author of the Fifth Discipline, suggests that learning organizations need to have a shared vision:

...in order to create a sense of purpose that binds people together and propels them to fulfill their deepest aspirations. Catalyzing people's aspirations doesn't happen by accident; it requires time, care, and strategy. Thus the discipline of building shared vision is centered around a never-ending process, whereby people in an organization articulate their common stories—around vision, purpose, values, why their work matters, and how it fits in the larger world. (Senge, et al, 1994, p.298)

Senge is a proponent of vision as a strategy for reinforcing the development of a learning organization (one which is constantly renewing itself.) Yet the source of vision for Senge and others comes not from philosophical deliberation and examination of texts, but rather from peoples' values and experiences. Creating these shared visions involves continual work and attention to eliciting these values.

[A]t the heart of building shared vision is the task of designing and evolving ongoing processes in which people at every level of the organization, in every role, can speak from the heart about what really matters to them and be heard. (Senge, et al, 1994, p.299)

Many schools engaged in comprehensive reform engage members of the school community to ask the question: "What do we want our students to know and be able to do when they graduate?" It is this question that supports and guides their work. In the Coalition of Essential Schools members call it "planning backwards." Once a teacher begins with a conception of what type of student the school is aiming for, then he or she can design curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment accordingly. The answer to this essential question is derived from individuals' beliefs, values, and assumptions about learning. Again, the Goals Project approach to vision suggests that teachers would need to be more deeply grounded in philosophy and a set of essential texts to develop the beginnings of a vision. A long term process of developing goals would ultimately result in implementation.

Providing guide posts

Some reform initiatives provide a broad vision (set of principles or beliefs) that schools are encouraged to use to inform their own vision development process. These general statements are used as a set of guide posts for school communities to develop programs and even vision statements that support the larger goals. Initiative-wide vision statements are also meant to inform policy and practice at the school and sometimes district level. Examples include the Coalition of Essential Schools (Ted Sizer), the Accelerated Schools Project (Hank Levin), the School Development Program (James Comer), Harvard Project Zero (Howard Gardner), Paideia Schools (Mortimer Adler).

These initiatives provide direction, establish a set of core values worthy of pursuit and a set of strategies which range from prescriptive to ideological. For example, the Accelerated Schools Project requires schools to engage in a specific set of activities (Taking Stock) as a means of beginning the reform process that will enable a school to embrace the ASP vision. The School Development Program also has a set of activities and even clear guidelines about which role groups and the number of each type that need to participate in any given committee. The Coalition of Essential Schools encourages schools to interpret the nine Common Principles to address the needs and particular strengths of their particular communities without providing these schools with a concrete process to engage in the interpretation.

These initiatives have blurred the 5 levels of vision described by the Goals Project. For some, the derivation of their vision statements is indeed philosophy. For most, however, these vision statements grow out of research and a set of theories about learning.

A skeptical view of the value of vision for reform

Thinking about vision as a strategy for change has been critiqued by Joseph McDonald and by Michael Fullan, two researchers in the field of school reform. McDonald reminds us of the lessons of history and of the complexity of school systems.

Of course, vision alone is never enough to create change. And there is always the chance that this vision-- like its predecessors of the 1960s and 1930s--will float above most American schools and never come to ground. If so, the fault will likely lie in the folly that Seymour Sarason identifies, namely, that most proponents of good educational ideas consider schools the mere nodes of a complex system rather than complex systems in their own right. Whether school reform is launched from the outside or the inside of schools, it typically follows a linear strategy; hence, the effectiveness of some intervention is presumed to be intrinsic to the intervention itself, rather than a function of whether its impact is managed to good effect inside a turbulent world. (McDonald, 1993, p. 1)

Michael Fullan's view of visions is characterized by his conceptions of schools as dynamic systems. He describes having observed too many "pre-mature visions" which are not used in a compelling way to inspire and support reform. He believes visions should grow over time and be derived from action. These visions ought to be considered provisional after more action causes reflection on the vision: "Ready, Fire, Aim." Like Senge, Fullan believes visions ought to be shared and that schools should engage in a long-term process to develop this shared vision. He cautions:

Reliance on vision perpetuates cultures of dependence and conformity that obstruct the questioning and complex learning necessary for innovative leadership. (Fullan, 1993, p. 33)

The critical question is not where visions are important, but how they can be shaped and reshaped given the complexity of change. (Fullan, 1993, p.30)

Both McDonald and Fullan point to the dynamic and complex nature of schools and the complex and multi-dimensional nature of change. They call for a conception of vision that is adaptable to this climate. The Goals Project asserts a type of vision that may be more stable and would withstand the ever-changing nature of schools. Alternatively, a conception of vision as stable may be too rigid to withstand the dynamism.

The opportunities inherent in the Goals Project approach to vision

- A complex conception of vision may connect well with the complex nature of educational institutions.
- A multi-level approach to vision allows for more entry points and more opportunities for deep learning along the way.
- In what ways is the inquiry process involved in understanding a school's vision a model for teaching and learning strategies inside of classrooms?
- The power of this conception of vision may be compelling enough to weather the storms of resistance to change.
- The reliance on developing a vision through consulting texts and through including the larger community ought to create conditions that will promote the use and acceptance of this process.

The challenges inherent in the Goals Project approach to vision

- If every school/institution has multiple sets of goals operating at any given time (individual/personal, organizational, curricular, grade level, etc.) which level is appropriate for interrogation and intervention?
- How will an individual teacher, team, students, parents, experience the transition from multiple sets of goals to a more unified approach?
- Since the multiple levels of the Goals Project conception of vision require long-term and deep work, how will interest and support for the initiative be maintained?
- If there are a set of "readiness conditions" necessary for piloting this approach to vision, how can the Goals Project support the development and sustenance of these conditions?
- In what ways is the inquiry process involved in understanding a school's vision a model for teaching and learning strategies inside of classrooms?
- Since any "new" reform effort encounters pre-existing efforts at improvement, how will the pursuit of a vision-driven reform initiative interact with and take account of the current terrain?
- What is the current problem statement that Jewish educational institutions are suffering from? Would they define their problem in terms of vision? If not, how will they come to understand this critique and the power of it as a solution?

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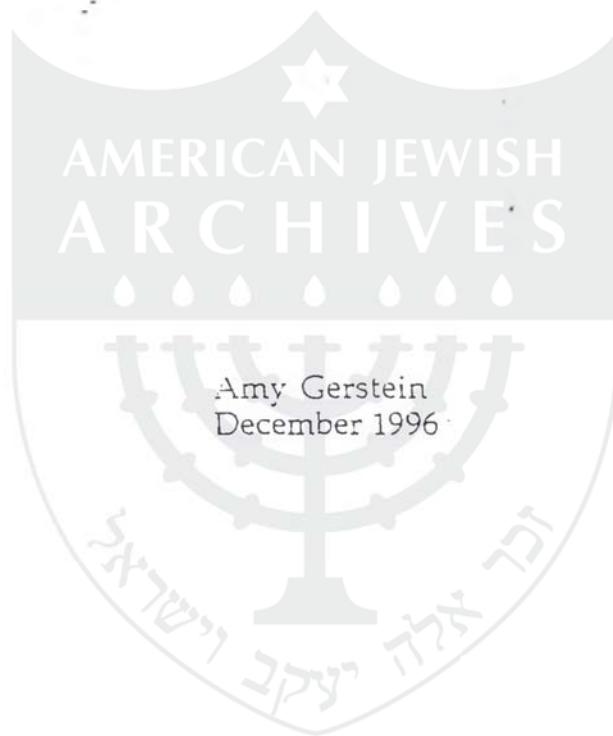
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Different Approaches to Educational Change:
Choosing a Route that Makes Sense



Different Approaches to Educational Change: Choosing a Route that Makes Sense

Moving to the San Francisco Bay Area from the East Coast in 1990 has involved a long-term transition process which has touched many different dimensions of my life. The pace is different--it is slower. The food is different--it is healthier. The people are different--they are more diverse. The geology is different--there are earthquakes. The norms are different--people worry a lot about traffic. Since I arrived in California I have learned to consider carefully the route I travel from point "A" to point "B." There are always multiple routes, and there are always multiple opportunities to get tangled in traffic. Every smart driver in the Bay Area chooses a route that has options. And most of us have opinions about the best way to reach our destinations. Some rely on freeways. Others rely solely on forms of public transportation. Still others use a combination of modes of travel. This paper on different approaches to educational change reminds me a bit of the ways in which Bay Area drivers talk about ways to avoid traffic. There are multiple routes to a given destination. Not everyone agrees on the roads and not everyone agrees on the destination. But everyone agrees that there are multiple paths to educational change.

I begin this paper by outlining a few of my assumptions and biases about educational reform. Then, I describe several categories of different approaches to change and a few common critiques of each approach. I will briefly outline some lessons derived from the last decade of educational reform. Finally, I will give a set of considerations to use when crafting an approach to educational change in a variety of settings.

My beliefs and assumptions

Through 10 years of working in educational reform I have developed a set of assumptions and biases, or lenses through which I view the field. I outline these lenses as a means of identifying my perspectives as I describe the different routes to educational reform.

I assume that the primary goals of educational reform involve increasing student achievement and providing a safe, healthy and caring learning environment for adults and for students. I define successful reforms as those which have demonstrated impact on student performance through improving skills, qualities and habits of mind in academic and affective areas and have also created a vibrant learning community for adults.

I further define a chief goal of education as teaching *all* students not just the easiest ones. I delineate this assumption explicitly because it exists in

contrast to traditional assumptions that underlie the current system in public schools. Public schools were historically designed, in part, to sort students not to truly serve all students (Cuban, 1990; Fine, 1989; McNeil, 1986; Parish & Aquila, 1996; Powell, Farrar & Cohen, 1985; Tyack, 1974; Weis, 1983). We continue to see explicit sorting practices: tracking by "ability groups" as early as age 6, differential educational and counseling services (vocational vs. college bound), separate classes for those with special needs, etc. I am not describing the extreme cases of separate classes for students with severe disabilities, rather those cases where students are identified as different from the mainstream and are labeled and treated as such. There are many historical reasons for a sorting design principle which grow out of the societal context in which schools were previously situated and which reflect historical values. The current population of students is far more complex than the population of students that schools were historically designed to serve. The societal context in which schools work is also increasingly complex and troubled. All reform efforts address or confront this value explicitly or implicitly.

THE WHOLE SCHOOL CHANGE APPROACH

What follows is a brief description of a set of well known and successful whole school reform efforts. Included are a number of questions and concerns that have been raised regarding each effort and systemic reform efforts in general. These efforts vary in their philosophies, targeted age groups, the amount of technical and material assistance provided to schools, and the degree of local interpretation of the programs. Most of these initiatives are designed as a network of schools.

The Coalition of Essential Schools, founded by Ted Sizer at Brown University in 1984, is a network of schools which share as their goal implementing the nine Common Principles. The Common Principles are a set of ideas about teaching, learning and the organization of schools. Comprehensive in nature, the principles were designed to be interpreted at the school level. The main focus of the Common Principles is to teach students to use their minds well. Principles also encourage the organization and practice of schools which value knowing students well in order to teach them well. Working mostly with secondary schools, CES questions the fundamental assumptions that undergird a school and the compromises that teachers are forced to make in the current design of schools. Assistance is provided by regional centers, a national office staff, and a large body of resources (thoughtful newsletters, research articles, and books.) CES relies on "conversation" as the main vehicle for change. Concerns have been raised about the lack of resources and support for teachers (e.g., there are no CES curriculum materials) and an over-reliance on assisting schools with governance and cultural issues. This concern is due, in part, to the way CES

values local wisdom and interpretation over a centralized model. Questions have also been raised about the degree of significant change in classroom practice and lack of clear and compelling data that students are performing better.

The Accelerated Schools Program, started by Hank Levin at Stanford University, has been designed to work with elementary schools (and has gradually included middle schools) who serve "at risk" low socio-economic populations. The basic premise is that schools tend to remediate students who are not achieving and that they need, instead, to accelerate learning opportunities for students. Holding students to high expectations is at the center of this effort. Emphasis is placed on a year-long "taking stock" process in which schools assess current practice and are closely assisted by ASP staff. Then school-wide committees are established to address some of the findings in the "taking stock" process. Schools are encouraged to include parents every step of the way. Ultimate value is placed on the belief that all students can achieve and that by increasing resources to those who typically underachieve students will perform better. Criticisms about the ASP approach have included a concern about schools not "owning" the work due to having developed dependency on ASP in the early phases of the effort and having trouble in later stages when they are not provided with enough assistance later. In addition, questions have been raised about indicators of success.

Working almost exclusively in urban elementary schools, the School Development Program aims to include multiple stakeholders in the lives of children. Started by James Comer, a psychiatrist at Yale University, the project seeks to improve the overall school ecology by refocussing adults' attention to students needs and issues. The project values the psychological development of students and increases the role of social service agents and the larger community in the life of the school. Value is placed on the relationships developed between students and adults as a vehicle for improving student achievement. Schools engaged in this process undergo an initial school-wide training, followed by on-going coaching and in-service professional development. Changes focus on developing school-wide goals, re-configuring the governance and decision making process to reflect the representation of various stakeholders in the work of the school, and establishing school-wide committees which focus on different aspects of reform (curriculum and instruction, assessment, technology, planning and management, etc.). Concerns have included a lack of focus on and demonstrated success in the classroom (curriculum, assessment, and instruction.)

The Child Development Project, founded by Eric Schaps, was originally conceived as a research and development effort with a very small group of elementary schools. CDP focuses on fostering students' ethical and

prosocial behavior and understanding through attention to the intellectual, ethical and social development of children. Intensive work has been done with a limited number of schools. Schools have been provided with fairly close technical assistance consisting of an intensive three year training, comprehensive curriculum materials, and in-house study groups. This effort resembles a model in which outside experts provide the program to the schools. Research conducted by CDP has shown this work to be very successful in improving student achievement and developing social and ethical growth in children. Questions include the size and scope of the effort, the difficulty of implementation of the model without close facilitation, and the lack of clear standards for all students.

League of Professional Schools. This network of schools was started by Carl Glickman. It represents a school-university partnership effort (like CES and ASP) between k-12 public schools and the University of Georgia. The schools in this network share a commitment to improving teaching and learning by working on three priorities. First, schools are asked to craft a "covenant" which defines the educational focus for the school. The covenant serves as the collective vision for the school. Second, schools develop a "charter" for shared governance of the school. These are the rules the school agrees to follow to enact the covenant. The charter refers directly to the covenant. Finally, the schools agree to participate in a "critical study process" by engaging in school-wide action research about how the school assesses its work toward achieving the covenant. Emphasis is place on the value of democracy both for adult decision making and for student learning. School to school collaboration is promoted to create learning across sites. The League does not focus on student assessment as one of its goals and therefore may not encourage teachers to truly transform their teaching. High Schools in the League are not as successful as elementary schools.

One common critique of all of these efforts is that because the changes are comprehensive by design and long term in nature, it is difficult to detect improvements in the short term. Each of these efforts aims to change the culture, policies, practices, and structures of a school. It is challenging for any school to simultaneously address all of these dimensions. Since the work is long term, changes in the environment of the schools (new leadership, state and district policies, funding crises, increased immigration, etc.) impact progress toward reform goals. These environmental shifts are inevitable. Each of these reform efforts vary to the degree that they understand and are able to support schools to cope with environmental flux.

THE CHANGE IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE APPROACH

Another set of reforms focus on the governance and management of schools. These reforms are not always formal initiatives or a network of schools and are often encouraged at the local school district level. The main

goal of school governance reforms involves providing more decision making power to the people who are closest to the children. Several assumptions underlie this set of strategies. One such assumption involves the belief that teachers and school site administrators are best able to determine resource allocation (time, money, and human) in order to best serve students. Another is that fundamentally schools are hierarchical organizations in which teachers and students are disenfranchised and this creates a moral dilemma. "Teachers have to be part of the educational decision making process not only as recognition of or incentive to professional status, but also because the daily lives of teachers are influenced by decisions in which they have no voice." (Sarason, 1990, p.52) Many proponents of these reforms believe that until the basic power relationships in schools change, no substantive change will be achieved.

Often under the umbrella of "site-based management" (SBM) or "shared decision making" (SDM) these reforms stress teacher empowerment. School districts which provide sites with the power to allocate resources, hire personnel, and set school policy are engaging in site-based management. Schools which simply share decision-making power among teachers, administrators and sometimes parents typically call their effort shared decision making.

There are formal "democratic schools" networks which share an ideological base and are informed by the work of Lawrence Kohlberg, Paulo Freire, Carl Glickman and others. Other initiatives have been launched and supported by teachers' unions and associations (Rochester, NY and Dade County, Florida are the most famous of these efforts) as a way of promoting teacher empowerment.

Most of the whole school change efforts include a governance component. What distinguished these efforts from whole school change is that these reforms are often not coupled with a focus which includes attention to school culture, structure curriculum, instruction, student assessment, etc.

The success of these efforts have varied widely. One common concern has involved a lack of explicit (or sometimes even implicit) connections between changing the governance of the schools and improved opportunities for student learning. Critics have been known to eschew SBM/SDM because the indicators of success typically promote change in teacher satisfaction rather than improved student achievement. In addition, many districts and schools have moved into SBM or SDM without providing sufficient support for teachers to develop the new skills, or to adjust to the new school culture that results from these reforms. Another common pitfall with SBM and SDM has involved a lack of clarity about what type of decisions are truly important for teachers to make. Distinctions have often not been made about

which type of decisions are most critical for teacher voice. For example, many schools have engaged in long meetings in which teachers debate the amount of paper each teacher is allocated, or debate the process for repairing the photo-copy machine. These examples stand in contrast to schools in which teachers decide which text books to use or design, plan and facilitate their professional development opportunities for the year.

STANDARDS BASED REFORMS

Another set of reforms which occur at a local, district, state, and national level involve the development and use of standards. These reforms share a belief that teachers need to use a set of standards to insure equity, to promote high expectations, to inform decision making about both classroom and school level issues, and to encourage work toward common goals. Standards are designed to express what students know and are able to do.

In general, there are two types of standards which educators espouse: content standards and performance standards. Content standards are typically a set of agreements about what students should know and do within a given curricular area. For example, Project 2061: Science for All Americans, run by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, has compiled a set of content standards for science. Another content standard might be: students should be able to describe the major forces which precipitated World War II. Content standards are promoted by school districts, states, and even national initiatives. Performance standards are designed to capture how well a student demonstrates a given skill or area of knowledge. Defining how well a student ought to write a persuasive essay, or how well a student can design and conduct a scientific experiment are examples of performance standards. Performance standards are often written in the form of a developmental rubric which describes the different ways in which a given skill appears. These rubrics are used for assessing the performance of a student given the standard. (See the recent issue December 1996 Educational Leadership devoted to "Teaching for Authentic Student Performance." 5(4).

Standards reforms are often, but not always, tied to developing assessments which can assess student performance relative to the standards. Authentic assessments are typically discussed in this light. Assessments of performance are *authentic* when they refer to the ability to perform things that are valued in the adult world (Wiggins, 1993). Performance assessments typically refer to ways in which students demonstrate their relative mastery of a standard or assessment.

This shift in thinking about student assessment has tremendous implications for how teachers design their pedagogy and curriculum. When

working toward a set of standards teachers must consider what is important for students to learn and the nature of assistance students need in order to develop the necessary skills to meet the standards. Furthermore, assessment data relative to a set of standards can guide decisions about school-wide programs as well as classroom programs.

Harvard Project Zero, founded by Howard Gardner, is one effort specifically designed to help schools use curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment tools in order improve student performance. While not rooted in standards reform, the assessment work that Project Zero does is closely associated with much of standards work. Other key leaders in the field include Grant Wiggins, Richard Stiggins, Lauren Resnick, and Ruth Mitchell.

Critiques of standards based assessment range from pedagogical to ideological. In many State standards programs tests are closely tied to the standards. These tests are often not well developed and may not work in concert with other policies (state approved curriculum, etc.) Results often impact funding levels, status, and personnel decisions.

Insufficient support is usually provided for teachers to teach to the standards. Major assumptions are made about the use of standards. Schools often underestimate the value and implications of developing standards. Efforts are focused on development without consideration of implementation issues: professional development, necessary changes in school policies, inevitable changes in school culture, structural issues, etc. Teaching to standards and performance assessments requires a new way of approaching the classroom for most educators.

Many critics argue that standards must be developed locally to respond to the priorities and needs of the local communities. If they are developed more remotely, critics argue, then the process is fundamentally undemocratic. Others argue that standards ought to be developed at a national level to promote a common base of knowledge for all Americans.

While proponents argue that standards will help insure high quality education for all students, unless explicit attention is paid to help those students who are typically underserved in schools then standards will be one more reform that passes them by. This means teachers will need to understand how to teach to all students and that current practices of tracking (using multiple sets of standards for different students) will need to be reassessed. In order to fundamentally change this cycle, schools will need to shift from lowering standards (or having multiple sets of standards) to increasing support to meet the standards. This approach requires fundamental shifts in the ways in which students are viewed: all are capable of learning at high levels rather than just some.

CHANGING ONE SLICE OF A SCHOOL

Many reforms aim at a "slice" of the school. They are not intended to impact all students nor all adults. Rather, these efforts are designed to provide support to more narrow dimensions of the school. I have grouped a number of these efforts into three categories: curricular reforms, skill building reforms, and instructional strategy reforms.

Curriculum reforms are a good example of this type of change strategy. Typically designed to provide curriculum to teachers who aim to improve their current materials or strategies. These materials range in scope and degree of specificity. One lens with which to analyze these strategies involves the way in which the curriculum developers view teachers or the ways in which the purposes are conceived. The purpose of the reforms may be to provide resources to teachers or it may be a way to try to combat what is perceived as poor classroom practice. Some curriculum efforts are designed to provide broad guidance and ample resources. In these efforts teachers are encouraged to be creative and augment with their own ideas, materials, and adapt to the population of students they teach. Examples of this type of curriculum reform include: Facing History in Ourselves, the Algebra Project, Teachers' Curriculum Institute, and Interactive Math Project. Other curricular reforms follow a more prescribed or "teacher proof curriculum." Teachers are expected to follow the programs exactly to achieve the desired results. Examples include Success for All (an early literacy program), FAST (Foundational Approaches to Science Teaching) and Math Power.

Curricular reform efforts serve important purposes. They provide useful resources for teachers. Many demonstrate success but show limited impact when viewed across all students or the whole school. These efforts do not intend to impact all students or all dimensions of the school. Some of these efforts have structural components, that is they may recommend increased instructional time for literacy or extended planning time for teachers. Critics describe the vast history of curricular reforms in which the changes in approach and materials disappear over time without a trace.

Another category of narrow reform efforts are the skill building initiatives. These efforts are designed to help students develop skills that are deemed important and are typically removed from a curricular context. Two examples of these efforts are the HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills) program developed by Stanley Pogrow at the University of Arizona and Kumon Math which was adopted out of methods made popular in Japan. HOTS works with students for 25 minutes per day. The lessons are scripted for teachers to use. "At risk" students are pulled out of traditional classes to participate in HOTS. Kumon Math also has scripts for teachers and involves intensive timed drills of math skills. Emphasis is placed on skills and swiftness not on conceptual learning.

A third category might include those reforms which target instructional strategies. A related skill building reform, this approach targets teachers not students. The most well known model was devised by Madeline Hunter from UCLA. Her model, "Instructional Theory Into Practice" involved a multi-step instruction process designed to work at any grade level and with any content area. Popular in the 1980's, these programs were taught largely in a staff development inservice model. Techniques involved giving students an "anticipatory set" or agenda for a given lesson and "checking for understanding." These strategies did not appear to impact teaching techniques nor improve student achievement over time.

Another popular instructional reform involved "cooperative learning." Teachers were taught theories, formulas, and strategies for encouraging students to work in groups. Proponents include Elizabeth Cohen, Robert Slavin, David Johnson, and many others. While the theories and strategies differed, the purpose was to provide opportunities for social learning and promote the practice of working together.

These types of programs have demonstrated marginalized success. There is little evidence, over time, that any of these strategies remained and improved student achievement. These strategies are also not intended to impact all children. In programs like HOTS, there is very little evidence of carry over or transfer to other dimensions of the student's learning. Similarly, Kumon Math skills are limited to Kumon Math.

POLICY REFORMS PROMOTED AT DISTRICT, STATE, NATIONAL LEVEL

Several of the reforms described above (curricular, SDM, SBM, standards, etc.) have been promoted or even mandated at one or more of these policy levels. Reforms initiated outside of the school building by those in policy positions have not tended to be very successful. The California State Curriculum Frameworks are a well documented example. Teachers were asked to teach math, for example, in a way that fostered understanding and not rote memorization. They were provided with textbooks tied to the new Framework, and other curricular materials (manipulatives, etc.). But they were also provided with little support and professional development to understand how to teach with the materials in a new way. Researchers found that teachers did not understand the new Framework and used the textbooks and materials to support the old way they had been teaching (Ball, 1990a; Ball, 1990b; Cohen, 1990; Wilson, 1990). What changes do result maybe what Larry Cuban would call "incremental" rather than more fundamental second order changes (Cuban, 1990; Cuban, 1993). One reason for the limited success may be that these reforms are too remote from the context in which teachers are teaching (McLaughlin and Talbert, 1993).

EMERGING LESSONS FROM EDUCATIONAL REFORM

Reformers and scholars will not always agree about the essential lessons that emerge from different approaches to change. The perspective of the critic shapes the lessons. My perspective is shaped by my experiences as a reformer and as a researcher focused on whole school change. I am interested in understanding the conditions that support and impede comprehensive and lasting changes that have "authentic pedagogy" at the center. The brief lessons, or generalizations, that follow are intended to help illuminate these conditions.

Making significant educational change is long term work. To change deeply rooted traditions, practices, beliefs, and structures may take a generation (Elmore & McLaughlin, 1988; Sizer, 1992). Many working toward comprehensive change of this nature have already discovered the necessity of including all stakeholders in the process, anticipating the swinging pendulum of imperatives directed toward educators, and the challenge of trying to change a system while working within it.

Most people are unprepared for the political and personal dimensions of the work. Challenging assumptions that have existed for years evokes deeply charged responses. The work becomes personalized and highly political. Teachers and administrators have to work harder than they had previously worked. The potential for burn-out, always present, intensifies in a reform context.

Change is not fun. Adults resist changing. Professionals who have grown into proficiency do not enjoy losing competency when faced with adopting new habits, skills, and challenging their belief systems. (Evans, 1996)

Inquiry, conversation and relationships are essential vehicles for change. Creating opportunities for teachers and administrators to learn from their practice, to learn together and to commiserate is absolutely critical to any change process. The work is too hard to sustain without colleagues, friends, and intellectual stimulation. CES and others rely on critical friends to provide both support and hard questions to challenge the work. Networks are proving to be invaluable for schools by providing like-minded colleagues engaged in similar efforts and yet the context differs enough to provide necessary perspective.

* Authentic pedagogy is a construct developed by Newmann and Wehlage which emphasizes teaching that requires students to think, develop in-depth understanding, and to apply academic learning to important, realistic problems (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995).

To achieve successful reform, changes need to occur on a school-wide (or institution-wide) scale. This view is consistent with one which views organizations as ecological systems which function much like an organic system (Hannan & Freeman, 1984; McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993). Ecological balance is always sought. If one aspect of the school is impacted, other aspects will necessarily be effected. For example, if a high school community chooses to adopt a new set of curricular materials and instructional methods in mathematics, other departments and aspects of the school will experience the shift. For example, increased professional development resources may be devoted to mathematics and subsequently diminish the resources for other teachers. Mathematics teachers may work more closely as they try new methods --they might eat lunch in their classrooms, they might travel to conferences together and develop private jokes, they might be tired and unavailable to participate in other committees, they might even develop disdain for their colleagues who still teach in the old way. Inadvertently cliques, factions, and even hostilities develop. A typical elementary school example might evolve from a focus on Early Literacy which typically includes K-3rd grade teachers. Teachers at the upper primary or intermediate levels are "left out" in a variety of ways. Only some teachers are learning skills that would apply to the teaching of reading at all levels. The upper primary teachers might be under the false impression that their instructional methods don't need to change. Exciting professional development which creates camaraderie and collegial learning is available to only a subset of the school. Again, unintentional groupings develop and create a dysfunctional school community and inhibit the development of a school-wide learning organization.

The people who currently work in schools have the ability to accomplish the work of reform (improve teaching and learning, write curriculum, re-design the structure and culture of the institution) but they will need support to build their capacity (Fullan, 1991; McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993; Miles & Louis, May 1990; Sarason, 1990; Wasley, 1994). Reform efforts vary in their commitment to this value. On one end of the spectrum models are provided to schools with very specific implementation strategies and on the other end of the spectrum, schools are provided with a set of ideas to consider how to implement. Providing high levels of support is essential. The best kind of professional development is highly contextual, usually site based, and ongoing.

Reform strategies and efforts are highly contextual (Hannan & Freeman, 1984; McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993). What plays in Peoria may not play in Palo Alto. Because reform work is ultimately shaped by those who are doing the work (teachers and students) the strategies will be interpreted by those people. Additionally, every community is different. Reform strategies that support this kind of variation is essential for success.

High expectations (for students and for adults) are essential to success (Meier, 1995). A reform which ultimately does not target all children may foster prejudices and develop biases which will have pernicious effects later (McDermott, 1987). Successful reforms include all children and expect the most of them.

Teachers have to want to change what they do. No one can mandate what is really important (Weatherley & Lipskey, 1977). Fundamentally, teachers are in control of much that happens inside their classrooms. This means that reforms that they don't believe in and are not interested in implementing will not likely come to fruition.

The environment which surrounds educational institutions is always in flux. Changes in leadership, in the community, in the political stream, and in funding mean that nothing in the environment is ever stable. Schools need to be flexible enough to adapt and planful enough to anticipate change.

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CHOOSING YOUR ROUTE AND YOUR DESTINATION

The lessons and descriptions above suggest a number of considerations when planning a route to reform. I briefly outline a few areas and key questions to think about when embarking on a journey toward educational change. Just like travel in the Bay Area, educational change requires careful thought about the means of reform as well as the ultimate destination.

1. *Consider your goals.* What are you hoping to achieve. Are you targeting all students? Are you interested in transforming the entire institution or just a part? Does the culture of the institution need to change? What is your vision of educational change? What are your goals? What are your goals based on? How widely shared is the vision for change?

2. *Consider your resources.* What human and financial resources are required to pursue your goals? What resources are available? How can you leverage current resources? Who else can contribute? What type of ongoing support have you considered providing to the participants of reform?

3. *Consider the readiness of your institution.* Have conversations even begun about what needs to change? What percentage of the community is currently involved in thinking and planning for change? Would your community benefit from a few small highly prescribed innovations before tackling the larger dimensions of your institution? (Slavin, 1995) Have you surveyed the faculty to ascertain their personal and professional needs to participated?

4. *Consider your community.* Have you conducted a needs assessment (however formal) of your local community? Are you aware of community concerns and interests? Have you included all the stakeholders in the conversation? Have you waited too long to consider the stakeholders?



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