WHAT DO WE MEAN BY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT?

The Role of Teacher Education

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Improvement in Medicine

Conducting surgery using a robot
Drip irrigation systems
Israel ranks 7th in mathematics in international education tests
School Improvement?

Studying with computers
School Improvement?

Alternative schools
Reduction in number of matriculation exams
The difficulty in education

- Unclear goals
- Unclear criteria
School Improvement

- Not grades
- Not teacher abilities
- Not impact on environment
- School as the unit of analysis
Improvement Distinctions

- Effective schools versus school Improvement (Clark et al., 1984)
- Different outcome variables
- School effectiveness - student achievement
- School improvement - adoption of change
Research results indicate that the primary resource for school improvement are the people - teachers and students.
What Characterizes Effective Schools that Matter?

“Schools that matter can be characterized as:

1) Focusing on academic achievement of students
2) Maintaining high expectations for student achievement
3) Allocating and utilizing academic learning time efficiently and effectively
What Characterizes Effective Schools that Matter?

4) Maintaining an orderly and supportive school climate
5) Providing learning opportunities for teachers as well as students
6) Using regular programs of evaluation and feedback to students”

(Clark et al., 1984, p. 50)
What Characterizes Effective Schools that Matter?

All these features depend on teacher knowledge, motivation, instruction skills, personal interaction with students, autonomy, flexibility, and positive accountability (acceptance of responsibility for learning outcomes, a sense of efficacy).

A key term: synergy

Mutual expectations and activities.
School Improvement

∗ Change is a process not an event  
  (Fullan, 1982)

∗ Adoption – Implementation – Continuation

∗ The central role of teachers

∗ The practicality ethics
Characteristics of an Innovation

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1) The greater the relative advantage of the innovation, then the greater the likelihood of implementation;

2) The greater the complexity of an innovation, then the less likely it will be implemented and the less likely it is trivial; and
3) The greater the compatibility of an innovation, then the greater the likelihood of implementation and the greater the likelihood that it is trivial.

" (Paul, 1977)

Still,
“The greater the complexity of the innovation, then the greater the relative advantage and the greater the likelihood of implementation, provided that personal and professional benefits and costs are balanced”

(Clark et al., 1984, p. 57)
“Teachers can and will implement new practices and programs given active leadership from building and central office administrators, a chance for planning the implementation process, appropriate training, opportunities for interaction, breathing space to try and fail, and continuous assistance and support”

(Clark et al., 1984, p. 59)
Community and Context Characteristics

Impact on the educational process and outcomes
The Problem of Causality

“When any two events are related interdependently, designating one of those two cause and the other effect is an arbitrary designation. ... In any causal loop no variable is any more or less important than any other variable. No variable in a loop controls other variable without itself being controlled by them.”

(Weick, 1976)
Learning from Success of Schools

(Gawande, 2007)

Commitment, a bias for action, leadership, focus, climate, tolerance for failure.

What leads to such successes?
What Leads to such Successes?

- The role of accountability

(O'Day, 2002)

- Reform movements tend to “take the school as the unit of accountability and seek to improve student learning by improving the functioning of the school organization”

(O'Day, 2002)
Distinction Between

* Outcomes-based bureaucratic administrative model of school accountability

and

* Professional accountability
A Problem with Administrative Accountability

“The school is the unit of intervention, yet the individual is the unit of action”

(O'Day, 2002)
“Professional accountability is rooted in the assumption that teaching is too complex an activity to be governed by bureaucratically defined rules and routines”

(O’Day, 2002)
Advantages

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- Focus on the process of instruction (not only on outcomes)
- Concerns the performance of teachers
- Emphasizes knowledge development by teachers
- Models norms of professional interchange
Limitations

* Overall weakness of professionalism and professional accountability in the education system
* The problem of equity among schools
* Does not address systems purposes and needs
Accountability for school improvement combines administrative with professional accountability
Professional Accountability

- Colleagues
- Teacher Organizations
- Students
- Parents
- Society
- School (principals)
- Professional Development

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Goals for School Improvement

School improvement requires setting of clear goals.

An example for such goals can be found in the Delors Report (1996)
Goals for Education

(DeVors, 1996)

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* **Learning to be** – identity formation
* **Learning to know** – gaining knowledge
* **Learning to do** – mastery of practical skills
* **Learning to live together** – cultivation of interpersonal relationships as well as responsibility for the community as a whole
The Role for Teacher Education

1) Creating awareness of appropriate school goals

2) Preparation for professional accountability
“We have learned the answers, all the answers: it is the questions that we do not know”

Archibald Macleish
“Can prospective teachers learn to be both educators and activists, to regard themselves as agents of change, and to regard reform as an integral part of the social, intellectual, ethical, and political activity of teaching?”

(Cochran-Smith, 1991)
Teachers can be agents for school reform. This function requires additional components in the curriculum for teacher education.
The Curriculum for Teacher Education

**Content**

* School goals at the societal level and at the school level.
* The task for teacher education – translating societal school goals into instructional goals at the school level.
* Focus on the hidden curriculum and its concrete manifestations at school.
The Curriculum for Teacher Education

Instructional modes

🌟 Problem Orientation - focus on issues like poverty and education, racism, equity, community

(Martin, 1970)

🌟 “A Curriculum conceived as embracing a wide and varied range of human activities and conduct, as encompassing forms of living or activity and not just forms of knowledge.”

(Martin, 1970)
The Curriculum for Teacher Education

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* “Content should enable the learner to make responsible personal and moral decisions”
  (Scheffler, 1970)

* Preparing teachers for teaching dilemmas raised by race and racism
  (Richert & Rabin, 2013)
Educational Accountability

Bureaucratic/Administrative Accountability

Impact on School Improvement

Lives in the Present

Understanding of the Past

Hopes for the Future

Professional Accountability
I passed by the school where I studied as a boy and said in my heart: here I learned certain things and didn't learn others. All my life I have loved in vain the things I didn't learn. I am filled with knowledge, I know all about the flowering of the tree of knowledge, the shape of its leaves, the function of its root system, its pests and parasites. I'm an expert on the botany of good and evil, I'm still studying it, I'll go on studying till the day I die. I stood near the school building and looked in. This is the room where we sat and learned. The windows of a classroom always open to the future, but in our innocence we thought it was only landscape we were seeing from the window.


THANK You