

REFORMING SCHOOLS: ARE THESE LESSONS TO LEARN FROM THE UNITED STATES?

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I

The aspiration to reform schools has been a recurrent theme in American education. And now Spain too is engaged in such an effort. The desire to reform schools frequently is stimulated by changes outside of the nation in which schools function. For example, the successful orbit of Sputnik I on October 4, 1957 was sufficiently traumatic to the American ego to motivate the Congress of the United States to provide funds for the development of curricula in science and mathematics «in order to catch up with the Russians». During the 1960's over \$100,000,000 was spent in building new programs and in retraining teachers. Despite all the effort and all the money, there is little that now remains in American schools that reflects the aspirations of the curriculum reform movement of the 1960's: Few of the curricula are to be found. Sputnik I motivated many, but its educational residue is difficult to find.

Since Sputnik I, American schools have been subjected to numerous efforts at school reform, the latest initiated at a presidentially-sponsored education summit on September 27 and 28, 1989, a summit attended by the nation's governors and by the U.S. Secretary of Education, a summit whose aims were described on national television by our «education President» (as he wants to be regarded) as a part of his State of the Union speech. Yet only a few years earlier another President supported another effort at educational reform. *A Nation at Risk* (1984), a document that enjoyed the highest level of visibility of any American educational policy paper published during this century, caught not only the attention, but the enthusiasm of almost everyone. Yet, despite these reform efforts

the schools remain largely as they were. What went wrong? Is there anything to learn from United States that might be useful to Spain in its efforts to reform its schools? This article describes some of the features of schools that make them difficult to change and how schools might be studied in order to identify what needs attention and what does not. Finally, it presents a framework that might be useful for developing a more comprehensive and effective agenda for school reform.

Although I have visited Spain on several occasions and know something about the Spanish educational scene, I know that I know too little. I also know that the situation of schooling in the United States differs significantly from the situation in Spain. For example, the United States has no national Ministry of Education. The legal control of schools in the United States rests with each of the 50 states. In addition, in America there are 16,000 local educational authorities—school boards we call them—which are responsible for defining and implementing state educational policy and monitoring, to some degree, the effects of these policies. When one combines these facts with the fact that America has 47,000,000 students attending over 130,000 elementary and secondary schools in which 2 1/2 million teachers work, differences of scale loom large. Hence, my comments about the stability of schools in America might not apply to schools in Spain. You, the reader, must determine the extent to which the shoe fits.

Schools Are Robust Institutions

One thing is clear. It is much easier to change educational policy than to change the ways in which schools function. Schools are robust institutions whose very robustness provides a source of social stability (Cuban, 1990). But what is it about schools that makes them so stable. Consider the following eight factors.

1. Images of what teachers do in classrooms, how they teach and organize children and tasks are learned very early in the child's life. In one sense, teaching is the only profession in which professional socialization begins at age five or six when children begin school. There is no other field in which the child has as much systematic opportunity to learn what a professional does in his or her work. Indeed, many children spend more time observing the work of their teacher than being in the presence of their mother or father. This fact of early professional socialization should not be underestimated. Many young adults choose teaching because of the image of teachers they possess and this image is not unrelated to what they believe being a teacher entails. Images of teaching and ways of being a teacher are internalized early in the child's life and bringing about significant changes in the ways in which teachers

function requires replacing old images with new, more adequate ones. When the university teacher education program tries to promulgate a new image of teaching, but sends its young, would-be teachers back to schools that are essentially like the ones in which they had been socialized, the prospects for replacing the old ideals in the all too familiar contexts in which new teachers' work is dimmed: The new wine is changed when it is poured into the old bottle.

2. Being a teacher, if it requires any set of skills and understanding, requires the ability to manage a group of children so that the class as a class remains coherent and in tact; nothing can be done if the class as such is in a state of disarray. But matters of management are only one part of the equation. The other is having something to teach. Teachers acquire a repertoire by virtue of their experience in classrooms and that repertoire includes some degree of pedagogical mastery of both the content that they wish to teach and the methods and tactics through which to teach it (Berliner, 1986). This repertoire is extremely important to teachers for it provides them with a source of security and enables them to deal with pedagogical tasks efficiently. If a teacher does not know what to teach or is insecure about a subject, attention must be paid to matters of content. This can exacerbate both problems of management and problems of pedagogy. It is difficult to be pedagogically graceful when you are lost in unfamiliar territory. Because teaching repertoires provide an important source of security for teachers they are often reluctant to relinquish them in order to deal with new content areas which might require new pedagogical routines. Given the overload that teachers typically experience in school—large numbers of students and many courses or subjects to teach—economy of effort is an important value (Flinders, 1987). Teaching repertoires provide economy of effort, hence changes in schools that require new content and new repertoires are likely to be met with passive resistance by experienced teachers who have defined for themselves a program of practice that they can efficiently employ. To make matters even less promising for school reform, few efforts at reform in the United States have provided time for teachers to develop mastery of new content or the skill required for new forms of teaching. Typically, new expectations for teachers are «add ons» to already overloaded curricula and very demanding teaching schedules.

3. A third source of school stability resides in the stability of school norms. Every social occasion from the birthday party to the funeral service is pervaded by social norms that prescribe implicitly if not always explicitly ways to be in the world. Schools are no different. What teachers are supposed to be, how children are supposed to behave, what constitutes an appropriate and fair set of expectations for a

subject is pervaded by the norms of schooling. These norms have been described by Breeben (1968), Jackson (1968), Lortie (1975), Lightfoot (1983), Powell (1985), and Eisner (1985), and decades earlier by Waller (1932). In the past two decades educational scholars on the political left such as Apple (1982) and Giroux (1989) have also examined the ways in which the covert aims of schooling shape attitudes, create inequities, and often reproduce the inequities of the society at large. Undoubtedly some of their observations are correct, but my point here is not so much to make a statement about what Bourdieu (1977) has called «cultural reproduction», as to make it plain that if schools are to address matters such as intellectual development, the cultivation of sensibility, and the refinement of the imagination, changes will need to be made in educational priorities. Such changes will require alternatives in institutional norms.

Norms, after all, reflect our values. They adumbrate what we care about. Trying to convert schools from academic institutions —institutions that attempt to transmit what is already known— into intellectual ones —institutions that prize inquiry for its own sake— will require a change in what schools prize. Most efforts at school reform fail to address this challenge. The tack taken in educational policy papers is typically superficial and the language technical. The problem is often conceived of as one of curriculum «installation»; we are to «install» new curricula, then «align it» with other curricula. In short, we typically employ a language of change that reveals a shallow and mechanistic conception of what real change requires. Policy makers, whether in Madrid or in Washington, D.C., cannot install new norms in schools any more than they can install new teaching methods. Both need careful cultivation and nurture. By persisting in using inappropriate mechanical metaphors for thinking about the process of school reform, we persist in undermining genuine change.

4. A fourth factor that thwarts school reform is the fact that in the United States we have structured schools and defined teaching roles in ways that make improved teaching performance difficult to achieve. Consider the ways in which teachers are insulated and isolated from their colleagues. Teaching, by and large, in both elementary and secondary schools is a lonely activity. It is not that teachers have no contact with people, after all, they are with students all day. The point is that they have very little contact with other adults in the context of their classrooms. There are some school districts in the United States and some enlightened policies that provide teachers with aids and with special assistance by certified professionals, but these human resources are relatively rare. The most common context for the individual teacher is the teacher's classroom, a closed environment of twenty-five to thirty-

five children or adolescents in which the teacher spends almost all of his or her working hours. Of course there are occasions —lunch time and the occasional staff meeting, for example— where teachers see each other, but seldom in the context of teaching. Even teachers who have worked in the same school for twenty years are likely to have never seen their colleagues teach.

The result of professional isolation is the difficulty that teachers encounter in learning what they themselves do in their own classrooms when they teach. Classrooms, unlike the rooms in which ballerinas practice their craft, have no mirrors. The only mirrors available to teachers are those they find in their students' eyes and these «mirrors» are too small. Hence the teacher, whether elementary or secondary, must learn on his or her own, usually by reflecting on how things went. Such personal reflection is subject to two forms of ignorance, one type remediable, the other not.

The two types of ignorance I speak of are primary and secondary ignorance. Primary ignorance about teaching, or about anything else for that matter, is when you don't know something, but you know that you don't know it. When you don't know something and you know that you don't know it, you can do something about it. Secondary ignorance is when you don't know something, but you don't know that you don't know it. In this case, you can do nothing about the problem. The professional isolation of teachers fosters secondary ignorance. How can a teacher learn that he or she is talking too much, not providing sufficient time for student reflection, raising low order questions, or is simply boring students? Teachers unaware of such features of their own performance are in no position to change them. Educational reform efforts that depend upon new and better approaches to teaching yet make it difficult for teachers to learn about their own teaching are destined to have a poor prognosis for success. Despite what seems obvious, we have designed schools physically and organizationally to restrict the professional's access to other professionals. Discretionary time for teachers is limited and although the school principal could make the time to provide teachers with useful feedback, he or she often does not have the inclination or the skills or is so preoccupied with other matters of lesser importance that attention to the improvement of teaching become marginalized. As a result, it is not unusual for teachers to feel that no one really cares about the quality of their work (Eisner, 1985).

5. In service education is the major means used in the United States to further the quality of teaching. But inservice education typically means that teachers will attend meetings or conferences to hear experts (often university professors who often have had little contact with schools) provide advice on the newest developments in mathematics,

the social studies, or language instruction. The assumption is that once teachers are exposed to such wisdom, they will implement the practices suggested in their own classrooms. The inservice seminar is one in which the advice-giver has typically never seen the teacher he or she speaks to teach. The advice-giver does not know the teachers' strengths or their weaknesses. The situation is much like a voice coach giving advice to a singer whom he or she has never heard sing. General recommendations go only so far.

Thus, we try to improve teaching by asking teachers to leave their classrooms in order to travel to distant locations to get general advice from people who have never seen them teach. One does not need to be a specialist in learning theory to know that for complex forms of human action general advice is of limited utility. Feedback needs to be specific and focused on the actor in context. What we do, however, is to decontextualize inservice education and, as a result, weaken its potential usefulness.

My remarks should not be interpreted to mean that inservice programs for teachers cannot be useful. My remarks should be interpreted to mean that inservice education without some direct observation of teachers in the context of their own classrooms is not likely to be adequate. In this case, as in so many others, we have greatly underestimated what it will take to improve what teachers actually do in their own classrooms.

6. Another factor that contributes to the robust quality of schools and their resistance to change is that the expectations of both students and parents regarding the function of schools and the forms of practice that are appropriate for it are usually conservative. What does a good teacher do? What kinds of questions are appropriate for students to ask? How much freedom should teachers provide? What kinds of problems and projects should students be asked to engage? How should students be evaluated? Should they have any role in their own assessment? Answers to each of the foregoing questions are related expectations of what schools, classrooms, and teachers should be. The expectations of parents and students are often quite traditional on such matters.

The call for «back to basics» in United States —a return to the educational practices of the past— is regarded by many as the way to save American schools from mediocracy or worse. Familiar practices are not threatening; the past almost always has a rosy glow. Practices that violate tradition are often regarded as subversive of high quality education. School reform efforts that challenge tradition can be expected to encounter difficulties, especially for that segment of the population that has done well in socio-economic terms and who has the tendency to

believe that the kind of schooling that facilitated their success is precisely the kind that their own children should receive.

Expectations by students for practices with which they are familiar go beyond general forms of teaching practice; they include expectations for the way in which specific subjects should be taught. For example, students whose experience in art classes does not include learning about the history of art or writing about the qualities of particular works of art may regard such practices as distasteful; for many students reading and writing have no place in an art class. A program in the social studies that requires group cooperation on project-centered work can be regarded as inappropriate by students whose concept of social studies is one that is devoted exclusively to individual tasks. Parents whose experience in learning mathematics emphasized drill and practice may regard an arithmetic program oriented to the practical application of arithmetic as less intellectual and less rigorous. The point here is that educational consumers can exercise a conservative function in the effort at educational reform. As I indicated, in the United States many school districts offer «innovative» school programs whose features emphasize traditional education. In American it is difficult for schools to exceed in aim, form, and content what the public is willing to accept.

7. Reform efforts in American education are almost always from the top down. For whatever reason, educational policy makers mandate change, often through national or state reports or through new educational legislation that sends the message of changed policies to those «on the front line». The tacit assumption is that once new policies are formulated, a stream of change will begin to flow with little further assistance. When assistance is provided it sometimes comes in the form of new policy papers, curriculum guides, and district conferences. Typically, the structural conditions of schools stay the same. Teachers remain on the receiving end of policy and have little hand in its formation.

The problem of providing teachers with a hand in shaping educational policy is formidable if one views educational practice as an effort whose features, at their best, are uniform across school districts and geographic regions. If one's model of ideal educational practice is one of standardized practice, the way in which an efficient manufacturing plant might function, giving 2 1/2 million teachers in the nation the opportunity to determine what is best for their own school or school district can appear chaotic or even nihilistic. Thus, there is a real tension in the process of school reform. At one end of this tension is the desire to create a uniform and «equitable» program for children and adolescents, regardless of who they are or where they live. This requires centralized decision-making. At the other end of the tension is the realiza-

tion that unless teachers feel some commitment to change, they are unlikely to change. To feel such commitment it is important for teachers to have the opportunity to participate in shaping the change process.

Many veteran teachers, those who have seen educational reforms come and go, are often skeptical about new reforms and provide passive resistance to them: they simply ride out the new policies. This can be done without much difficulty for two reasons. First, educational reform policies come and go about every five or six years. They are more visible in the public press than they are inside the schools' classrooms. Second, once the classroom door is closed, the ways in which teachers teach is essentially a private affair. School principals do not closely monitor teaching practice and at the secondary level at least, they do not have the subject matter expertise in the wide variety of fields to do so.

The growing desire to engage teachers in the change process has led to the notion of «teacher empowerment». In general, the idea is that as important stakeholders in what schools do, teachers need to have authority to plan and monitor the quality of the educational process in their schools. The effort, in a sense, is to democratize educational reform by giving teachers a say-so in what happens in their school. This say-so includes defining curricular goals and content, improving teaching practice, and developing ways to assess what children experience during the school day. In some cases, it includes decision-making about budget allocations through a process called site-based-management.

A practice related to this general thrust of teacher improvement is the practice of *action research*. Action research is intended to encourage teachers to collaborate with other teachers and, at times, with university professors in order to undertake research in their own school or classroom (Atkin, 1989). The aim of the enterprise is to stimulate professional reflection by encouraging teachers to take a more intellectual role in understanding and improving practice than they have in the past.

It is not yet clear just how many teachers are interested in being «empowered». It is not yet clear how many teachers are interested in larger responsibilities and in the formulation of educational policy. Many teachers gain their deepest satisfactions in their own classrooms. This is their professional home and they are not particularly interested in collaboration or in doing educational research. As I indicated earlier, their conception of the teacher's role is acquired early in their development and they are often comfortable with it. If a bird has been in a cage for a decade and suddenly finds the door open, it should not be too surprising if the bird does not wish to leave. What we know is often more comfortable than the uncertainty of the unknown.

The problem of bringing about teacher empowerment, if that is con-

sidered a virtue, is more complex than I have suggested. When innovative reform policies are formulated or new aims or programs presented, they are often *in addition* to what teachers are already doing; they are add-ons. Given that the teacher's day is already quite demanding, it should be no wonder that taking on added responsibilities for the formulation of policy or for monitoring the school should be regarded by some as an extra burden. In other words, it is unrealistic to expect overworked teachers who have very little discretionary time in the school day to be more active in their school without relief from some of the responsibilities they have at present. Such a restructuring requires money, something that is in scarce supply in many school districts. As a result, much of the activity in the context of school reform is more at the level of rhetoric than at the level of practice.

As educational reformers have become increasingly aware of the difficulty of bringing about significant change in the ways in which schools function, they have talked about the restructuring of schools (Restructuring California Education, 1988). For this term, which to me generates an image of fundamental rather than superficial change, there are almost as many meanings as there are writers. In my discussions with practicing school principals and school superintendents, «restructuring» meant to them changing the ways in which funds were allocated rather than reconceptualizing the organization, content, and aims of schools. By conceptualizing it in terms of financial resource allocation, the potential power of the concept was neutralized.

Another complexity regarding teacher empowerment has to do with the question of authority and responsibility. If teachers are given the authority to change local educational policy in their schools, will they assume responsibility for the consequences of those policies? And if so, how will those consequences be determined? What will be the responsibilities of the school district superintendent and the district's central office staff? Just what is the appropriate balance between authority and responsibility and who is responsible for what when responsibility and authority are localized?

In United States, these questions are not yet resolved. The recent interest in giving teachers a genuine role to play in the reform of schools is seen by many, including me, as salutary, but how lines of authority and responsibility are to be drawn is far from clear. Can genuine school improvement occur without commitment from teachers? It seems unlikely. Just how can such commitment be developed? These questions are on the current agenda of school reform in the United States.

8. An eighth factor that impedes school reform pertains to the ways in which the school itself is organized. One of the most problematic features in the organization of schools is the fact that they are

structurally fragmented, especially at the secondary level. By structurally fragmented I refer to the fact that curricula are divided and organized into distinct subject matters that make it difficult for students to make connections between the subjects they study (Eisner, 1985). In the United States secondary school students will typically enroll in four to six subjects each semester. In Spain they enroll in ten, and eight during the final two years of secondary education. As a result, teachers must teach within narrow time blocks. They teach four to seven classes each day, see 150 to 180 students each day, and students must move every 50 minutes to another teacher who teaches them another subject. There is no occupation in American society, and I think none in Spain, in which workers must change jobs every 50 minutes, move to another location, and work under the direction of a different supervisor. Yet, this is precisely what we ask of adolescents hoping, at the same time, to provide them with a program that is coherent.

Structural fragmentation also pertains to the fact that the form of school organization that we have created isolates teachers. And as I have already indicated, such isolation makes it difficult for them to receive critical and supportive feedback about their work. Teachers experience little collegueship in the context of the classroom. And, of course, it is in the context of a classroom that the real business of education is played out. Unless there is significant change in the way in which teachers and students live and work together, there is no significant change in schools, only illusion.

Given the fact that forms of school organization are cultural rather than natural entities, they need not be regarded being of necessity; they can be other than the way they are. Moses did not receive instructions about school organization on Mt. Sinai, at least as far as I know. Yet, we persist in maintaining school structures that might not be either in our teachers' or our students' best interests. I can tell you that the organizational structure and the curricular requirements of the secondary school I attended 40 years ago are quite like the organizational structure and curricular requirements of secondary school students encounter today. It would not surprise me if my experience in the United States was similar to the experience of others in Spain. How much structural and curricular overlap is there between the secondary school you attended and today's secondary schools?

9. Finally, the last factor that impedes significant educational reform is the piece-meal and shallow way in which reformers think about educational reform. Minor efforts at change are typically superficial in character and are eventually swamped by the factors that do not change. Robust systems can withstand minor incursions. Thus, the need, I believe, is to think about school reform ecologically or at least organi-

cally. Aspects of schooling that remain constant militate against those aspects of schooling that are being changed. For example, efforts to teach teachers how to teach inductively are not likely to succeed if the evaluation system the school or state employs rewards other types of learning. Efforts to encourage teachers to engage in reflective teaching are likely to be feckless if teachers have no time during the school day for reflection. Efforts to create intellectual coherence in the students' understanding are likely to fail if the form that the curriculum takes makes coherence impossible. Improvement in teaching is unlikely as long as teachers get no useful feedback on the work they actually do in their own classrooms.

It is important in educational reform to think big even if one must start small. There needs, I believe, to be an overall conception of what schools are as forms of shared communal life and persuasive and attractive visions of what such shared living might become. The next section of this paper describes a means for securing a better understanding of what schools are as living organisms. The last section of this article provides a model or framework which identifies important candidates for educational change.

II

One of the most important places to begin in school reform is with the effort to understand the ways in which schools actually function, what it is they teach both implicitly and explicitly, and how they reward the people who spend so much of their lives there. Unfortunately, many approaches to school reform are based upon the results of standardized achievement testing and the results of such testing say little about the processes that lead to them. We cannot know much about the educational quality of schools simply by examining test scores. The need is for a finer, more refined screen and one that focuses on the processes as well as the outcomes of schooling.

Much recent research in the United States has focused on the quality and process of schooling (Goodlad, 1986,Sizer, 1984, Powell, 1985, Eisner, 1985). Many of these studies have used ethnographic research methods or modifications of such methods (Wolcott, 1984). Some studies have been rooted in critical approaches (Willis, 1977) and others in methods derived from the arts and humanities (Lightfoot, 1983). As a result of this work a number of salient features of schools, many of which are quite common across a variety of schools, have been identified: structural fragmentation, teacher isolation, didactic teaching, treaties between teachers and students, the particular ways in which effec-

tive teachers and school administrators relate to students, the emphasis on extrinsic rewards and the like. These features —and I identify only a few that are characteristic of a great many elementary and secondary schools— may also be found in other schools. Are these features present in Spanish schools? If so, how salient are they? Are there important differences? How can we know? What would such knowledge mean for the efforts now being made to achieve Spanish school reform?

The only way I know of knowing what the salient and significant features of schools in Spain are is to look. What the implications will be for what is found will depend upon what is found and upon the educational values that give direction to Spanish education.

To look at Spanish schools as I have suggested is not enough. Anyone can look. The trick is to see. Seeing requires an enlightened eye. It requires schemata through which different genres of teaching can be appreciated (Eisner, 1991). It is a mistake to assume that all good teaching has identical characteristics, that one size fits all. Thus, to see what happens in classrooms requires a willingness and a set of sensibilities and schemata that can pick up the distinctive features of particular types of teaching. These types of teaching are not simply generic. They emerge within the constraints and possibilities of particular subject matters. What one teaches counts. As Stodolsky (1988) says, «The subject matters». But even more than this, any given subject matter —history for example or mathematics— can have a wide variety of aims and methods. Perception of school processes requires an understanding of the types of teaching possible within the subject matter field and the varieties of quality that can be manifested within each.

This article is not the place for me to describe in detail the forms of perception and description of life in schools I have in mind. Readers interested in what I have called *educational connoisseurship* and *educational criticism* can find the approach described in a variety of articles and particularly in my latest book (Eisner, 1991). The point is that school reform should begin with a decent understanding of the schools themselves, not with old memories of schooling held by middle-aged men and women working in bureaucracies far removed from schools. A major part of the current investment in school reform should be aimed, in my opinion, at trying to understand such processes as how teaching takes place in particular fields, what constitutes the implicit as well as the explicit norms of the school, the sense that students make of what they study, the conception of aims that teachers embrace and the relationship of those aims to what they do in their classrooms. It should also deal with the quality of what is taught and the procedures that are used to motivate and reward students and teachers. The aim of such inquiry is to secure an organic, cultural picture of schools

as places to be. The basic questions are what goes on in them and what is their value. Such questions are easy to raise but difficult to answer, yet unless they are raised educational reform is likely to be predicated upon very partial forms of understanding of what schools are like for teachers and students.

As I have indicated, the kind of study I am suggesting is one that is organic or cultural. It is an approach to educational research that is referred to in the United States as *qualitative* in character. I do not know the extent to which it is an approach that pays attention to the processes of schooling and to the context in which those processes occur. There is no way to find out what schools are like except by going to schools themselves to see, to describe, to interpret, and to evaluate what is occurring. Such an understanding can provide a foundation for reform that addresses what is genuinely important in education.

III

I turn now to the final section of this article in order to identify five dimensions of schooling that I believe need to be considered in thinking comprehensively about the reform of schools. I call these dimensions:

1. The intentional.
2. The structural.
3. The curricular.
4. The pedagogical.
5. The evaluative.

My thesis is that meaningful and educationally significant school reform will need to consider each of these dimensions. Attention to one dimension without attention to the others is not likely to lead to change. Where it does, such change is likely to be temporary and superficial.

The intentional refers to what it is that schools are intended to accomplish. What really counts in schools? Defining intentions pertains to both the general aims of schooling and to the aims of the particular subject matters being taught. Consider, for example, intentions that are typically *not* given high priority in schools or in reform efforts: the development of a desire to continue learning what schools teach, the development of curiosity, the ability to think metaphorically, the creation of a caring attitude toward others, the development of idiosyncrasy, the ability to define one's own goals and the ability to pursue them, and the ability to raise perceptive questions about what one has studied. An argument for each of these intentions could be made that is cogent and relevant to the world in which children live. If such intentions were taken se-

riously, their ramifications for educational practice would be considerable. My point here is not to advocate such intentions (although I do not reject them) but, rather to illustrate the idea that the conventional intentions schools serve are not necessarily the most important ones. What is important will depend upon an argued set of educational values and an understanding of the students and society schools serve.

Most efforts at school reform operate on the assumption that the important outcomes of schooling, indeed the primary indices of educational success, are high levels of academic achievement as measured by standardized achievement tests. Just what do scores on academic achievement tests predict? They predict scores on other academic achievement tests. But schools, I would argue, do not exist for the sake of high levels of performance in the context of schools, but in the context of life outside of the school. The significant dependent variables in education are located in the kinds of interests, voluntary activities, levels of thinking and problem solving that students engage in when they are not in school. In other words, the real test of successful schooling is not what students do in school, but what they do outside of it.

If such intentions were central in our educational planning, we would make other arrangements for teaching, curriculum, and for evaluation than we now employ. Significantly new intentions are likely to require new ways of leading educational lives.

The structural aspects of schooling pertain to the ways in which we have organized subjects, time, and roles. I have already alluded to the fact that we structure subjects by type. We use what Bernstein (1971) has called a collection-type curriculum. Each subject is bounded and kept distinct from others. This boundedness is reinforced by how time is allocated, what is taught, and in America in some secondary schools, where on the school campus a subject matter department is located. In some schools there is a section of the school devoted exclusively to the sciences, another to the fine arts, another to business and computer studies. We emphasize separateness and reinforce that separateness through a departmentalized structure.

Departmentalization might be, in the long run, the most rational way to structure schools, but it is not the only way. My aim here is not to advocate a particular change, but to problematize the structures we have lived with for so long that we come to think about them as natural entities rather than the results of decisions that could have been otherwise. Is a departmentalized structure the best way to organize schools? It depends upon a set of educational values and an exploration of alternative modes of organization. In the United States very few efforts at school reform—open schooling being a vivid exception—have tried to restructure schools. The curriculum reform movement of the 1960's

was a movement that attempted to create curricula that were designed to fit into existing school structures. Can new messages change the school or will the school change the new messages?

The structure of the school also influences the way in which roles are defined. In American schools there are basically two roles for adults in school; teacher or principal. The teacher spends his or her day with children or adolescents. The principal seldom is responsible for teaching functions and has far more discretionary time than teachers. If a teacher wants to secure more professional life-space, he or she must leave teaching and become a school administrator. Once such a decision is made, for all practical purposes, there is no return to the classroom. Like the caterpillar once it becomes a butterfly, it remains a butterfly until it dies.

Working as an educator in a school need not be limited to two roles, nor must these roles be conceived of as «permanent». Schools can be structured so that teachers who are interested can devote some years or parts of some years to curriculum development, to the design of better evaluation methods for their school, to serving as mentor teachers to beginning teachers. Teachers could create liaisons with community agencies such as museums, hospitals, cultural centers, retirement homes in order to secure services that could enhance and enrich school programs. Teachers could devote time to research in their own school and assist parents with children who are having difficulty in school. There are a host of possible roles that could make important generic contributions to the school's way of life, but for these contributions to be made educators need to create school structures that permit them to be developed. American schools, with few exceptions, are structured to inhibit these roles rather than to encourage their formation. The paradigms we have internalized about the nature of schooling —the way time is allocated, the way subjects are defined, the way in which roles are specified— are so strong that efforts at reform are typically conceptualized to fit into the constraints of those structures, thus defining the parameters within which reform efforts are to occur.

The curricular is the third dimension that needs attention in any effort to create genuinely significant educational reform. Decisions about curricula can be made about several of its features. Among the most important are decisions about the content that is to be provided, a second are decisions about the activities that are to be used to help students experience that content, and the third, the way in which the curriculum itself is to be organized. As I have indicated, most efforts at curriculum reform in the United States have left the organization of curriculum intact: separate subjects separately taught has been the dominant mode of organization, although at the elementary level (but even there) less so than at the middle or secondary school levels. Yet

in spite of frequent admonitions by educational scholars to reduce curriculum fragmentation (Eisner, 1985,Sizer, 1983), the separation of subject matters persists and is supported by the infrastructure of professional education: testing programs, university admissions criteria, teacher training programs, specialization among subject-matter teachers. But, this collection-type form of curriculum organization (Bernstein, 1971) is not the only way in which curriculum can be organized. Whether it is the most appropriate form, given the potential costs of other forms of organization, depends upon our educational intentions. If integration of learning is desired, separation may indeed be problematic. Again, my point here is not to argue for a reorganization of curricula as much as to urge the careful rethinking of the organization that now prevails.

What is taught in the first place is of primary importance. One way to increase the probability that something *will not be learned* is to insure that it *will not be taught*, that is, to make a subject matter a part o a *null curriculum* (Eisner, 1985). The fine arts are often relegated to this position. For many citizens, both in America and in Spain, the arts are someone else's pleasures. How many Spaniards are familiar with the painting of Antoni Tapies or the architecture of Gaudi? Large and important legacies of Spanish culture go unseen, unheard, unread, and as a result, unloved. Schools contribute to this state of ignorance by withholding from the young important parts of their cultural legacy. The list could be expanded.

Regarding the activities that allow students to grasp or experience what is taught in schools, according to Goodlad (1984), the lecture still holds sway at the secondary school level. Students typically have few opportunities to formulate their own questions and to pursue them. Typically they are expected to do what the teacher requests; their role is in the application of means rather than the formulation of ends. They become, says Apple (1982), deskilled, unable to formulate the aims and goals they seek to attain.

The provision of opportunities for students to define at least some of their purposes is arguably an important educational provision and the ability to do so an important educational achievement. What is the situation in Spain? Is such a skill important in Spanish education? If so, to what extent is it being developed? Genuine reform of schools in Spain will require attention not only to intentions and school structure, but to the content, tasks, and forms of organization of the school curriculum. Which aspects of curricula should receive attention will depend upon what is now occurring in Spanish schools; the only way to know that is to go to the schools to see.

The fourth dimension needing attention in genuine school reform is *the pedagogical* aspects of educational practice. If the curriculum is

the systole of education, teaching is the diastole. No curriculum teaches itself and how it is mediated is crucial. In fact, I find it useful to distinguish between the *intended* curriculum and the *operational* curriculum (Eisner, 1985). What we plan to teach —our materials, outlines, projected activities and goals— constitute the intended curriculum. The operational curriculum is the curriculum that actually occurs in the context of classroom life. In this process pedagogy plays a crucial role. When programs call for new teaching skills that teachers do not possess —inductive teaching for example— they use the skills they do possess and these may not be adequate to the task.

No intended curriculum can be followed by teachers as a script; the classroom is too uncertain a place for recipes. The professional teacher needs to use the curriculum as a resource, as an amplifier of his or her own ability. Of course, different teachers need different amounts of guidance and specificity. Thus, the pedagogical is a central aspect of school reform. Unless classroom practices change, changes on paper, whether policy or curriculum, are not likely to be of much consequence for students.

How can students of education in Spain know about the ways in which teaching occurs? What are the strengths teachers possess and what are their weaknesses? Are there important educational consequences on both sides of the ledger? These questions are, of course, easy to pose, but difficult to answer. At minimum, qualitative studies of classroom life must be undertaken. Such studies could provide the basis upon which effective change strategies could be initiated and could provide a focus for efforts aimed at pedagogical issues. **Both** curriculum and pedagogy need to be seen in context and both need attention for strengthening school reform.

Finally, the fifth dimension needing attention in school reform is *the evaluative*. It makes no sense whatsoever to write policy papers about educational reform and to prepare syllabi and curriculum guides for teachers that advocate a new direction for educational practice and continue to assess the outcomes of schooling on instruments that reflect older, more traditional views. Yet, this is what we often do. Consider the proposition that good schools increase individuality and cultivate productive idiosyncrasy. Consider the idea that good schools increase differences among students, they do not diminish them. If we truly embraced these views, how would we go about evaluating the educational effectiveness of schools? Would commensurability remain an important criterion? What kinds of opportunities could be provided to students to develop what they have learned? To what extent would we use closedended examinations —something much more prevalent in the United States than in Spain.

High-stake assessment procedures symbolically and practically represent what «higher-ups» care about and performance on such procedures significantly affect both the options students have and the professional reputation of teachers. Evaluation of outcomes is in the United States a major agent influencing what teachers and school administrators pay attention to. Thus, the redesign of assessment instruments so that they provide information about what teachers and others care about the most from an educational perspective is a fundamental aspect of school reform. Schools cannot move in one direction and be assessed by procedures that represent values in quite another direction.

Evaluation, however, should not be conceived of exclusively in terms of outcome assessment. Evaluation, it seems to me, should be regarded as an educational medium. The processes of teaching and the quality of what is taught, as well as their outcomes, are the proper subject matters of an adequate approach to educational evaluation. If the quality of the content being taught is poor, it doesn't matter much if the quality of teaching is good. Indeed, if the content being taught is pernicious, excellence in teaching is a vice.

Evaluation is an aspect of professional educational practice that should be regarded as one of the major means through which educators can secure information they can use to enhance the quality of their work. Evaluation ought to be an on-going part of the processes of education, a process that contributes to its enhancement, not simply a means for scoring students and teachers.

These factors, the *intentional*, the *structural*, the *curricular*, the *pedagogical*, and the *evaluative* are all important interacting dimensions of schooling. Collectively they constitute a kind of ecology of schooling. To bring about reform in schools that is more than superficial and short-term requires attention to all of them.

To consider these dimensions, not simply as an academic enterprise but as an activity leading to an agenda that can be acted upon, is the tough test of educational reform efforts. In some way that agenda has to be set. I am sure that the Ministry of Education in Spain will have an important —perhaps the leading— role to play. But teachers will also need to be involved and school administrators who themselves are not afraid of new forms of practice. The details of this agenda, the role, for example, that Spanish universities might play in school reform cannot be addressed from my side of the Atlantic. The particular exigencies require a level of local knowledge that I do not possess. I do know that unless the plan for school reform is comprehensive, it is likely to leave little residue in the long run. We sometimes say in America that educational reform is like a pendulum swing; we go back and forth. Pendulums are objects that move without going any place. Facing

up to the magnitude of the task is an important first effort to dismount the pendulum.

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SUMMARY: REFORMING SCHOOLS: ARE THESE LESSONS TO LEARN FROM THE UNITED STATES?

Most efforts at educational reform are designed to improve specific educational practices. More often than not, both the practices and the improvement impose no structural changes on schools; they are designed to fit into existing schools structures. This paper identifies the features of schooling that make educational change so difficult. Most educational reforms do not succeed in bringing about significant educational improvement. The author identifies five dimensions that need to be taken into account and, in an orchestrated fashion, modified if educationally significant reform is to occur. Unless such efforts are made, school reform efforts will continue to be characterized as a pendulum swing; movement without advancement.

KEY WORDS: American and Spanish reform of school. Educational change. Educational policy.

SUMARIO: REFORMA DE LA ESCUELA ¿LECCIONES PARA APRENDER DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS?

La mayoría de los esfuerzos realizados en las reformas educativas están diseñados para mejorar prácticas educativas específicas. Lo más frecuente es que tanto las prácticas como las mejoras impongan cambios no estructurales a las escuelas, siendo diseñados para encajar en las estructuras escolares existentes. Este artículo identifica los rasgos de la escolarización que hacen tan difícil el cambio educativo. La mayor parte de las reformas educativas fracasan en la consecución de mejoras educativas significativas. El autor identifica cinco dimensiones que deben ser tenidas en cuenta y, de una manera orquestada, modificadas si es que ha de producirse una reforma educativamente significativa. A menos que se hagan tales esfuerzos, los intentos de reforma escolar continuarán caracterizándose por ser una especie de movimiento pendular: movimiento sin adelanto.