

Curriculum and Transformation: Rethinking Leadership and Schools All Over Again

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Abstract

In this article I present the complex multiplicities of leadership and power in schools by examining leadership and curriculum in sustainable change for K-12 schools. I argue that stakeholders need to value an open community based upon ideals in which freedom of expression is protected, civility is affirmed, and appreciation and understanding of individual differences are honored; where stakeholders value a caring community in which the well-being of each person is important. I speculate that change will take place when we see leadership as value-laden and when power and empathy in decision making is reflective. This article concludes that transformational leadership will occur when all stakeholders in K-12 education engage in an active process of questioning the visible and hidden curricula, understand affective change for learners, and confront the complexity of the social, political, economic, and historical influences on our schools.

It is not surprising that educators and members of a professional community hold strong values. As a collective, we care about people and empowering them. As a collective, we seek to assist in cultural preservation while striving for social innovation. As a collective, we are bound together by a commitment to the advancement of these strong values. But we are very different than our non-education professional colleagues, because educators ask “how we ought” to work to achieve our ends; our value set (and the actions resulting from our consideration of these values) causes us to be different from all of the other professions. This value set serves as the convention, which guides us in our professional practice, and, if grounded in questions of moral philosophy, serves as our set of professional ethics. This set of ethics can guide our practice so that we can discern the difference between right and wrong practice. In contrast to this ethical perspective, popular thinkers are more likely to ground perceptions of society, and education in particular, in accountability, and to consider them in the light of efficiencies and production payoffs rather than the methods of science.

With regard to education, the likes of Bloom (1987) and Hirsh (1987) focus on this accountability view, which is then powerfully articulated by pundits like Glenn Beck, Sean Hannity, and Lou Dobbs. The assumptions underlying the convictions put forth by these reformers threaten the possibility of rational ethical discourse and action. Similarly, the mindset of politically motivated school reformers including state governors, local officials, and business leaders, such as Bill Gates, do not account for the importance of ethics in reform. Greater efficiencies and general reform drive the critics

and thinkers alike, and there is very little support for efforts directed at releasing human potential. When society speaks about our schools, any questions on how to practice, who shall practice, and how to choose educational experiences should always begin from an ethical foundation.

Practitioners must seek out means to reconnect to the ethics that form the basis for their actions. Although most educators dislike the notion that their profession is instrumental, the reality of this rationale sits at the forefront of teacher innovation and inclusion in the curriculum process. Practitioners cordon behind ontological excuses of time constraints and curricular rigidity to avoid direct contact with theory. Indeed, it appears that when curriculum moved from the realm of the practical to that of the possible, teachers were left at the curriculum crossroads. The de-professionalization of the teaching profession has historical origins and today continues to be dominated by (a) accountability issues that handcuff teachers and administrators, (b) societal and parental expectations of what schooling should be, and (c) educational textbook writers grounded in the subject-matter approach to teaching (Klein, 1994, p. 22).

This article is a humble attempt to grapple with complex multiplicities of our profession, specifically leadership and its role in what I believe to be one of the most important aspects of power in schools— democracy. The focus of this article is a critical examination of the notions of leadership and the role curriculum leadership can have in sustainable change in K-12 schools. I believe leadership is value-laden action that needs to address specific issues that dominate the conversation on schools, and I hope to spotlight the idea of transformational leadership by emphasizing the role of power and empathy in decision making for change.

Organized around conversations about theory and what I label “possibilities for practice,” I first speak to the basic assumptions behind the role of evaluation culture for cohesion and identity. Then, after concluding that transformational change requires transformational leadership, I attempt to contextualize transformational leadership within notions of power and empathy with an eye toward possibilities and sustainability for school curriculum. Finally, I offer approaches for sustainable change in schools by re-integrating evaluation with curriculum and school leadership, and recognizing the idea that given the changes in the United States today, school leaders face critical choices on schooling. However, I challenge these leaders with a call to action, emphasizing reflectivity in decisions on how schools are led.

Institutional Cohesion and Identity

I continue my critical assessment, but, as do all critical discussions about schools, these assessments need to be connected and flow from ideas and thoughts about change and practice (both traditional and innovative). Research, Albers (1965) writes, is the ability to search and search again. It is the ability to see, as Arendt (Passerin d’Entreves, 1993) suggests, the idea of fragmentary historiography, which seeks to identify the moments of rupture, displacement, and dislocation in history. Such

fragmentary historiography enables one to recover lost potentials of the past, in the hope that they may find actualization in the present. For Arendt (1958), “It is necessary to redeem from those past moments worth preserving, to save fragments from past treasures that are significant for us” (p. 4). Only by going against the grain of traditionalism and rejecting the claims of conventional historiography can the past be made meaningful again, provide sources of illumination for the present, and yield its treasures to those who search for them with “new thoughts” and saving acts of remembrance (Passerin d’Entreves, 1993, p. 5). It is important to keep in mind Dahl’s (1970) charge that “though you would find it less tidy, it would not be absurd for you to start with your own proposed solutions and work backward” (p. 166). I believe that in order for us to become active in school leadership, educators need to move away from the current disinvestment occurring in our public schools and develop proposals for change (Molnar, 1996).

Assessment

As is the case with much reform, we need to remain grounded in the conversation about measureable outcomes that Washington, DC has continued to pursue since Lyndon Johnson’s administration. Educators need to ask the following questions: (a) How can the evaluation of students, teachers, administrators, and even our communities improve our community schools? (b) How can that evaluation be used for strategic planning? and (c) What constitutes evidence of thinking for our students, teachers, administrators, and communities? In the past thirty years, the standard form of operation has been to pick random dates and measure outcomes on those particular days. School leadership has taken this as dogma and created a school culture—reflected in many schools of education—that assesses test-taking and test-passing abilities rather than real learning. Like lambs at the slaughter, school leadership then waits—with teachers and parents—to justify their failure. Sadly, arguments always lean toward the failure of the poor, people of color, diverse language learners, and children with disabilities. There is little or no proactive action that seeks to offer alternative points of view as to what constitutes learning and whether children are actually learning between those pre-designated test dates.

I suggest that school leaders look inward and reassess how they measure learning. As educators we have to keep in mind that the impetus, planning, and budgetary support for the subject-centered and test-driven curriculum revision comes from outside the state and local school districts. The reformers, who are ultimately legally responsible to their benefactor, the federal government, do not take into account the unique contexts of schools. Ironically, few curriculum makers in schools have devoted serious time to what their schools are about or what ideals they should be trying to achieve; instead, they often cling to the notion of local control while allowing external and impersonal curriculum creators to make the most important decisions of schooling.

The major problem with teacher education policy today is that too much decision-making takes place in Washington, DC and within corporations instead of in schools and schools of education. These conversations and their consequences often take practicing teachers, administrators, and teacher educators by surprise; those on the frontline often never see changes coming. Others, including practitioners, choose merely to accommodate and follow mandates, no matter how obtuse or ill-informed they may be. Still others are more sinister, including university faculty, stating that they are researchers whose purpose is to drive knowledge when in reality they limit its growth.

In response, educators need to develop tools that make thinking visible. Specifically, schools need to gather their own evidence of student thinking (e.g., the grocery store in Arthur, Nebraska discussed later in this article). School leaders have unique insights on their learners' creative thinking, problem solving, and most importantly, the connections they make to themselves, others, texts, and the world. Daily anecdotal notes can make excellent records of how learners think and provide an alternative assessment that can show growth among schoolchildren (Kohl, 1967; Meier, 2002). Student work is more than merely a benchmark; it is the foundation of growth toward learning. Significance of learning cannot be determined by the size of the quantitative (statistical) measurement but by what it represents. Worthy artifacts can show breakthroughs including instances where skills or strategies that were confused are now performed well. Under No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001) and now Race to the Top (U.S. Department of Education, 2009a), parents have been slowly banned from their children's schools, which is one reason many choose alternative options for their children, such as charters, home, or private schooling (Apple, 2004). I argue that in reality school leaders should be inviting parents to their children's classrooms as co-observers. Historically, schools and teachers have had adversarial relationships with parents. By inviting parents to school, educators have a better opportunity to encourage and engage parents in the common cause that is the education of their children. Last, school leaders need to think about data as a living and dynamic history of their schools. As Dahl (1970) writes, revolutions emerge from individual solutions to common problems. We need to consider all solutions and search out multiple successful ways to measure thinking.

Despite technological advances, storing assessment data can be a challenge for schools. On a recent visit to a school district in Kansas, I discovered that a child took over 30 different standardized tests between preschool and third grade. Some were short (lasting no more than 30 minutes) while others lasted several hours. In examining the strategic plan for the school district, I discovered that the tests were not correlated with strategies used to increase performance. More disturbing was that both English as Second Language and students with disabilities were tested 45% more than other children. The inefficiency was astonishing and the oppression of children was criminal.

As such, any alternatives provided to measure learning must take into consideration diverse populations; because if we are honest, the money and research schools produce on diverse populations serves primarily to justify the interventions and

actions we take. Diverse populations require diverse evaluation. Looking at the merit and worth (absolute and relative) of a particular person is much more difficult than examining an automobile or a coffee maker. With an automobile or a coffee maker, you can easily measure its specifications and performance; a social or educational program, however, is much more complex and includes many variable elements. This complexity should lead us to agree that there are many different, but appropriate ways to evaluate them. Why is it that we use only one type of measurement, standardized tests, to measure these diverse activities that make up learning?

Inquiry and Reflection

Any democratic action taken to change and transform schools must begin by asking how schools define reform. Educational programs should require the use of open-ended and conscious approaches to dialogue that encompass the transformational language of democracy and action. An often, overlooked position is that a sustainable definition of leadership can be realized through inquiry and reflection, rather than through the management-controlled approaches schools currently experience. Inquiry and reflection are the most important aspects of creating sustainable schools.

There are many examples of using inquiry and reflection to create sustainability, including those researched by Craig (2004) in Houston and Macintyre Latta (2001) in Calgary, Canada, where community members and students used an arts-based curriculum to create and foster sustainable education. The interesting issue is that these schools are not unusual; there are many examples in which local leaders have understood that the community school is a vital institution both for teaching values and democracy and for helping the community to focus on the importance of communication. In these schools, the learners, teachers, and community discover the values of coalition, cooperation, and communication through community-based education experiences.

One of the most powerful experiences for me, which has guided my optimism on what schools can do, is the Olson Nature Preserve partnership with the Albion Public Schools in Nebraska. The Grant Olson estate bequeathed 77 acres of land to the Albion Schools. The land was converted into a teaching tool and a tourist attraction. A new partnership emerged with the Prairie Plains Resource Institute, a non-governmental agency that maintains and restores ecosystems in Nebraska. Visitors come to see how early inhabitants lived, walk trails cleared by high school students, and study wildlife catalogued by biology classes. Students used geographic information systems to map the preserve and art and poetry classes meet there regularly. Community members join the students as stewards by picking up litter, mowing, and completing other tasks relating to sustainable land management.

Given that the economic forces driving schools today no longer resemble those of the early 1900s (Kliebard, 2004; Tyack, 1974) when industrialism and manufacturing

were prominent, we need to ask why schools still function within an industrial model with post-industrial language. Our schools think too simplistically about their constituents; the complexity of our society requires that we offer new approaches about cultures of thought and innovations that extend beyond generalizations about students and their families. Furthermore, we must emphasize that we are related not by experiences, but by causes of history. The following example illustrates this point.

In a recent speech at the University of Virginia, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan offered what he labeled “new solutions” to the current problem of teacher quality in schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2009a). He cited experience and historical knowledge as crucial to changing schools; noting that Lyndon Johnson’s War on Poverty in the 1960s was a result of Johnson’s work as a teacher in poor and rural southern Texas in the 1930s. However, Duncan’s new solutions to improve teacher quality (i.e., Teach for America and other teacher residency programs) and math and science education in the schools fail to meet the spirit of Johnson’s example and legislation. The programs proposed by Duncan are in conflict with the 50 years of civil rights legislation he spoke about. This lack of inquiry and reflection about the history of K-12 education reflects the criticism Katz (1968) leveled against the common school movement as espousing democracy and practicing oppression. In his speech, “The Race to the Top Begins,” Secretary Duncan touted that,

Forty-six states signed on to a state-led process to develop a common core of K-12 state standards in English language arts and math. At the same time, states such as Tennessee, Rhode Island, Indiana, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Colorado, and Illinois have lifted restrictions on charter school growth (U.S. Department of Education, 2009b).

Duncan appears to believe that the key solution for successful schools lies in lifting caps on charters, increasing involvement of business and local political partners in school management, providing alternative certification programs, restructuring teacher unions in terms of their power, and relying on standardized assessment. The Secretary did not reflect or inquire critically about the history and social context of education. Transformational leadership requires such thoughtful inquiry and examination of our history (Freire, 1970/1997), which can lead to becoming aware of our consciousness and further empowering us to become leaders. Leadership, if it is to become transformational, needs to have a reflective component in order to result in understanding of the social and political virtues of change.

Leadership: Rethinking our Approach

Burns (1978/1982) published *Leadership* to help readers understand the moral foundation of leadership. He wrote about two types of leadership: transactional and transformational. Transactional leadership was based on contingency— where reward or punishment is dependent upon performance— described in many textbooks as management. Transformational leadership for Burns entailed leaders and followers

united in a moral endeavor to fundamentally change the external world and the psychological processes of society. He described transformational leaders as engaging in synergetic and human relationships among leaders, followers, and institutions that raise the level of motivation and ethics of an organization or a nation. This synergy in many cases, stated Burns, begins when individuals with separate needs come together through discovery of related goals. Burns' work became a model for educational and business texts with scripted procedures for transformational change. Lost in the texts was the concept that transformational leaders are those who are able to also engender the personal side of organizations. Transformational leaders merge their power bases in a mutual exchange around moral and ethical issues that ultimately transform both leaders and followers (Burns).

Transformational leadership occurs when leaders are attuned to those they lead and remain empathetic throughout the process without becoming oppressive themselves. Burns' thought process is similar to that of Freire (1970/1997) and Arendt (1958), who valued empathy and power in relations among the oppressed, oppressors, and liberators. Arendt explained that those deprived of seeing and hearing others and of being seen and heard by others are "imprisoned in the subjectivity of their own singular experience, which does not cease to be singular if the same experience is multiplied innumerable times . . . seen only under one aspect and is permitted to present itself in only one perspective" (p. 58). In the foreword to *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Shaull (1970/1997) stated that Freire:

Operates on one basic assumption: that man's ontological vocation (as [Freire] calls it) is to be a subject who acts upon and transforms his world and in so doing moves toward ever new possibilities of fuller and richer life individually and collectively (p. 32).

Freire (1970/1997) declared, "Pedagogy of the oppressed must be animated by authentic, humanistic (not humanitarian) generosity and present itself as pedagogy of human kind" (p. 36). Concurrently, transactional leadership functions on a system that exchanges performance for rewards or punishment; however, the exchange could be social, political, philosophical, economic, or psychological. The relationship among people remains as long as the common interest is maintained. For example, goods, such as votes or money, might be bargained though participants have no investment other than an understanding that they need each other. Once the arrangement is over, participants may choose to go on their separate ways. In education, this relationship is mistakenly seen as transformational; we use transformational language to describe these simple acts of transactional leadership. Burns (1978/1982) clearly used transformational leadership and transactional leadership to differentiate between management as method and leadership as art. What is ironic is that we continue to use transformational leadership to describe and justify any action we label reform.

The Role of Curriculum in Transformational Leadership

Curriculum design and evaluation provide a set of standards based on short-term goals that seek to respond to pre-determined skill- and content-based subject learning. The dominance of such curriculum design in schools is based on narrowly defined ideas of change and reform. This curriculum design seeks to align performance on math and reading (achievement gap) with the larger social issues of poverty and race. With apologies to Charles Dickens, it is the best of times and it is the worst of times. It is an age of unprecedented spending for program growth and an age of record budget deficits and cutbacks. In countless school districts across America, new programs have risen to replace traditional ones and accommodate a growing number of students. Yet, a faltering economy has put the squeeze on operating budgets and has made constituents less likely to support ambitious construction proposals. So, as programs and alternatives open at record pace, new graduates fall behind because they are taught in schools that are inadequate and severely underfunded. The push for improving quality in education is more than just a question of aesthetics. Students who attend traditional schools and are taught by teachers who have not been certified through alternative means still do better than their counterparts, including comparisons of minorities and children of high poverty (Constantine et al., 2009; Darling-Hammond, 1999; Darling-Hammond, Berry, & Thorenson, 2001).

In the arguments made by educational reformers, assessment has been cited as the key to educational change. However, little to no discussion is articulated as to the purpose of curriculum leadership. What emerges from school leaders and their formal and informal education is that one model is the dominant form to articulate and prepare future democratic citizens (Levine, 2005). This articulation has emerged from management literature that seeks to create a single process for change that can easily be measured and readjusted to deal with the changing contexts (Levine, 2005; Robinson, 2001). I propose that this single process model— which has led American manufacturing to its full collapse— is based on the ability to grow and profit from change (Egan, 2008). Robinson (2001) has written that this Industrial Revolution model has driven education and training, and is hampered by archaic ideas of intelligence and creativity that waste the potential of countless numbers of human beings (Eisner, 1979/2008).

In Figure 1, I offer an alternative approach to school leadership that enhances possibilities to increase the competitive advantages of schools in the next five years given the economic and political changes in the United States. The process includes all stakeholders in the success of schools to enhance their social, economic, and political sustainability within their state, region, and nation. In the post-NCLB world, dominated by educational consultants and reformers, schools should look inward to establish a vision for change. This vision, which is created through a dialogue among all stakeholders, then has the possibility to evolve through an emerging leadership into a plan of action for a new form of school leadership.

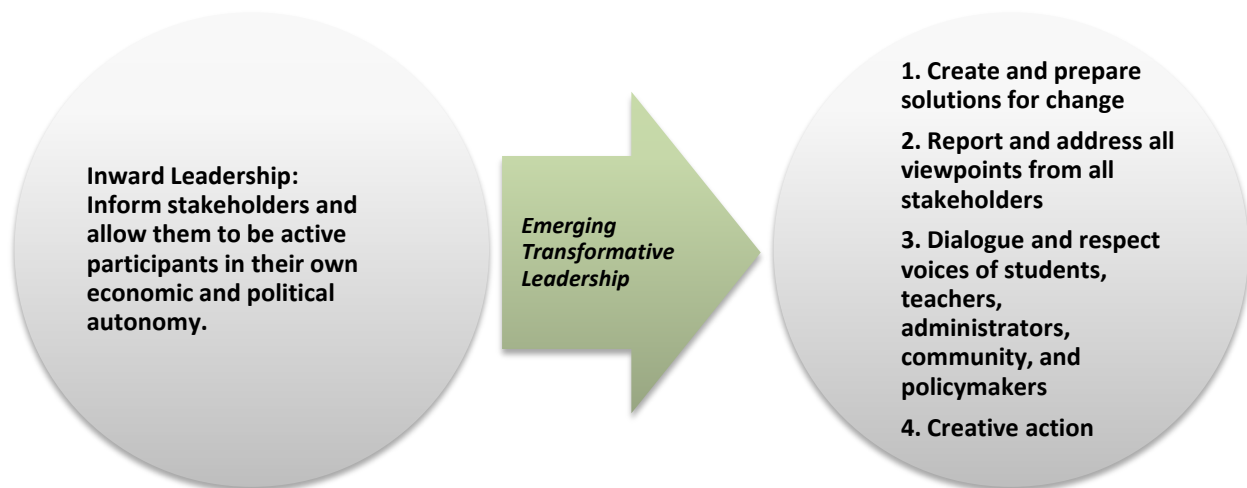


Figure 1: Inward leadership approach to transformational change, a process that includes all stakeholders in the success of schools to enhance their social, economic, and political sustainability within their state, region, and nation.

I am always conscious of not only our past but of our current context. There is a mismatch between the ideals relayed in university education programs and leadership situations encountered in the “real world.” University education programs are labeled with the word “leadership” and actively invest in creating Teacher Leader programs while in reality schools are often led by appointed managers through legislation (such as Chicago’s Mayor Richard Daley) or coercion (as in New York City). Courses and degrees do not translate directly into transformational leadership practice and neither does the attainment of a powerful political office. Transformational leadership needs to emerge through the creation of an educational system whereby all who participate can become part of a transformational process (see Figure 1). In order to begin to see leadership as transformational, educators should look inward to ponder the possibilities of change.

Given the constraints above, educators need to change how we define strategic planning. Strategic planning has become mainly related to meeting standards set while remaining within the boundaries of accountability, social expectations, and curriculum companies. Our possibilities for change are endless, but they must emerge from our imagination— where we reinvent our resources for teachers and administrators and treat curricula through a new culture of evaluation (Eisner, 1979/2008). We must also examine how to move beyond the industrial model to an idea of curriculum change for academic sustainability— a new idea of what is meant by a competitive advantage. The approach lies in enhancing interactions between the schools and the community to form strategies for transfer of knowledge that develop the local community through intellectual sustainability. For example, the town of Arthur, Nebraska (population 148) was missing a grocery store, leaving residents to drive 50 miles to the nearest town. In

1999, students from the local high school realized the need and began plans to open their own store. The students engaged in research, obtained grants from Wal-Mart, and studied how to convert an old building into the store. Once it became apparent there was enough interest to get the enterprise going, parents and community members became involved and through a combination of efforts, the Wolf Den Market opened in November of 2000. The student-run store continues to operate as a co-op. This example is not unique to Arthur. Across our nation, schools and communities possess the common interests that can fuse to become transformational experiences—educationally and socially.

Schools need to operate as complex systems in which state of affairs and their processes are not necessarily placed within traditional structures of particular disciplines. Instead, they are allowed to be a representation of a slice of life, conceptualized as an organized totality, in which elements are not separable, and, therefore, cannot be separately studied. In this environment, education is constantly occurring and evolving. Schooling must strike a balance between methodology and curriculum (accountability) and interpretation and curriculum (curiosity) as driving forces. Dewey (1934) describes what transformational leadership and transformational leaders could be when he states:

I do not think that the dancing and singing of even little children can be explained wholly on the basis of unlearned and unformed responses to then existing objective occasions. Clearly there must be something in the present to evoke happiness. But the act is expressive only as there is in it a unison of something stored from past experience, something therefore generalized, with present conditions (p. 71).

Schools and communities, like the children described by Dewey, have lost their sense of self and play. In focusing on methodology and not interpretation, we lose the essence of what schooling is: the search for knowledge. Eisner (1998) is not concerned with methods or approach but with the notion of seeing. His notion of the educational experience encompasses any situation that involves interactions between groups of people where learning leads to changes in one's outlook (Eisner, 1979/2008). Given Eisner's challenge to leadership, I believe we need to examine practice and what can be done to change how transformational leadership is realized.

Approaches for Sustainable Change

In this section, I provide examples of the previous theoretical exercise. First, what is the role of schools in regional economic sustainability and development? Given the history of the United States, we have examples such as the Gary or Winnetka plans that sought to construct curricula to train school children for a future in these factory towns (Kliebard, 2004; Rippa, 2008; Tyack, 1974). Historically, the schools responded to the needs of the community and, as I have written, these needs tend to be determined by those in power—specifically economic power. In many cases, schools, teachers, and

administrators rarely develop the same working relationship with their students' ethnic or social community that they do with the local real estate developers. Alternately, leaders might seek underrepresented communities (ethnic or professional) who have formal and informal ties to the schools and develop new relationships with those communities. A recent experience in West Virginia opened my eyes to the possibilities of these types of relationships. The local superintendent included the black community in deciding what to do with the former segregated black high school; together they opted to make it a community center and museum rather than succumbing to the pressures of two large real estate developers who wanted to build commercial space. Given the economic atmosphere, it was a tough decision but provided African-Americans fulfillment of a promise made in the 1970s and created an educational experience for many of those who were not alive during that time and had forgotten that this "progressive town" was segregated.

Concurrently the focus of compulsory education is driven by professions (law, medicine, engineering, teaching, business, health, etc.) and universities that suggest university preparation focuses on job training that will develop our graduates to be ready to enter the labor force out of college. Is it possible to establish academic foundations for the formation of our graduates with those communities and their anti-intellectual interests (Hofstadter, 1963; Slater, Callejo Pérez, & Fain, 2008)? Can emphasis on democratic action, such as demand for equal health care for all, be a legitimate curricular concern for schools? In *Dare the Schools Build a New Social Order?*, Counts (1932) wrote that schools had the duty to acculturate students to act as democratic citizens and demand social equality and civil rights. When Bobbitt (1918) was hired to create a curriculum for the Los Angeles Public Schools, considerations for questions of workers' rights, women's rights, and economic independence were left out of the curriculum. In the home economics curriculum, specific lessons were developed to properly instruct young women how to be better wives (Kliebard, 2004). In re-thinking our curriculum for change, we should ask questions such as, What practical experiences could our students' experiences bring to their own development? Dewey (1897; 1910) and Eisner (1979/2008) agree that evaluation of learning is best determined by the individual. Eisner suggests that:

1. Tasks used to evaluate what the students know and can do need to reflect the tasks they will encounter in the world outside schools, not those limited to schools themselves. Evaluation tasks should think about more than one possible solution and one possible answer to a problem.
2. Tasks should have curricular relevance, but be limited by the curriculum itself.
3. Tasks should require students to display sensitivity to configurations or wholes, not simply discrete elements.
4. Tasks should permit the student to select a form of representation they choose to use to display what has been learned.
5. The tasks used to evaluate students should reveal how students go about solving a problem, not only the solutions they formulate.

6. Tasks should reflect the values of the intellectual community from which they are derived.
7. Tasks need not be limited to solo performance. Many of the most important tasks we undertake require group efforts (pp. 203-210).

The predicament in creating change is that society is suffering from an inertia born out of a helpless marriage to economic utility. Schools' reliance on the capitalist sphere has not only tainted the curriculum but also reoriented students to accept a new kind of reward: economic utility. Graduates are told to study not for the sake of knowledge but to get "well paying jobs" in the future (Postman, 1996, p. 27).

Curricular and Transformational Leadership: Seeking Real Solutions

In 1835, Alexis de Tocqueville offered the following observation, "people in America obey the law, not only because it is their work, but because it may be changed, if it be harmful; a law is observed because, first, it is a self-imposed evil, and secondly, it is an evil of transient duration" (as cited in Heffner, 1956, pp. 107-108). This statement is no longer true. Gripped by fear and bound to our notions of nationhood, Americans have allowed themselves to further deemphasize what our rights and freedoms are under our laws. Similarly, educators are no longer involved in self-determination; allowing fear to dominate how we run our schools (Carini, 2001). Playwright Vaclav Havel (1987) questioned why people behave the way they do, and then concludes that "for any unprejudiced observer, the answer is . . . self-evident: they are driven by fear" (p. 4). It is almost trite to suggest that primary to our character is our unexamined but deeply held belief that all Americans are entitled to basic rights that ensure liberty and freedom (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swindler, & Tipton, 1985).

In the preface to *A Reassessment of the Curriculum*, Huebner (1964) explained that the curriculum field was burgeoning. He observed that "ideas are rampant, innovation is encouraged, and the pressure to change is sometimes uncomfortably great . . . the curriculum worker wishes to act constructively and responsibly" (p. v). In the same volume, Schaefer (1964) concluded that "to regain the sense of excitement which has so long been characteristic of educators interested in curriculum we need to develop new analytical skills and a new faith in the relevance and power of classroom research" (p. 7). The curriculum leader in schools has historically had two choices: to continue along the traditional path or, as Robert Frost suggests, to choose the one less traveled. Transformational leadership is ultimately political change and must begin in common moral relationships with others. Stakeholders need to value an open community based upon ideals in which freedom of expression is protected, civility is affirmed, and appreciation and understanding of individual differences are honored; where stakeholders value a caring community in which the wellbeing of each person is important.

For me, leadership is a process, a series of authentic conversations, which are public and open. Leadership needs to allow us to become informed practitioners, while

experience needs to allow us to understand each other and our communities. Transformational leadership should reflect the basic assumption that improving educational policy and practice is a complex matter, requiring multiple disciplines and many angles of vision, and that it is impossible to ignore the social context of schooling and, in particular, the multicultural dimensions of society in the United States. Leadership should be rooted in a strong commitment to contribute positively to the challenges confronting schools today. It has to address the social, historical, psychological, political, economic, and philosophical context of schooling. Leaders need to (a) engage in an active process of questioning that examines what is visible and hidden in an aesthetic method, intended to foster close links between theory and practice; (b) develop leadership skills to affect change; and (c) prepare learners for a wider understanding of learners and learning, confronting the complexity of diversity in traditional and non-traditional educational settings.

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