Action Research

The School as the Center of Inquiry

Why should our schools not be staffed, gradually if you will, by scholar-teachers in command of the conceptual tools and methods of inquiry requisite to investigating the learning process as it operates in their own classrooms? Why should our schools not nurture the continuing wisdom and power of such scholar-teachers? (Schaefer, 1967, p. 5)

The famous social scientist, Kurt Lewin, devoted his career to studying democracy and the relationships of individuals within groups. His contributions ushered in the school of gestalt psychology, group dynamics, and the concept of action research. He argued that social research should be based on the actions groups take to improve their conditions. Social research should not focus on controlled experiments, removed from real conditions. As people plan changes and engage in real activities, fact-finding should determine whether success is being achieved and whether further planning and action are necessary (Lewin, 1948, p. 206).

Stephen Corey applied Lewin's concept of action research to education. He argued that traditional research is done mainly by researchers outside the public school and has little influence on school practice. Corey wrote:

Learning that changes behavior substantially is most likely to result when a person himself tries to improve a situation that makes a difference to him . . . when he defines the problem, hypothesizes actions that may help him cope with it, engages in these actions, studies the consequences, and generalizes from them, he will more frequently internalize the experience than when all this is done for him by some-

> body else, and he reads about it. . . . The value of action research . . . is determined primarily by the extent to which findings lead to improvement in the practices of the people engaged in the research. (1953, p. 9)

Thus, action research in education is study conducted by colleagues in a school setting of the results of their activities to improve instruction. Although an individual teacher can conduct action research, in most cases it is best done as a cooperative endeavor by faculty attempting to improve on a common instructional concern (see Calhoun, 2002).

As Richard Sagor (1993) wrote, "By turning to *collaborative* action research . . . we can renew our commitment to thoughtful teaching and also begin developing an active community of professionals" (p. 10). Action research implies that the practitioners are the researchers. The objectivity and rigor of research methodology can be questioned by classical researchers, but the benefits of the process for students and teachers seem to outweigh the loss of experimental purity.

In addressing the power of teacher-led research, Hubbard and Power (1993, p. xiii) wrote: "Teachers throughout the world are developing professionally by becoming teacher-researchers, a wonderful new breed of artists-in-residence. Using our own classrooms as laboratories and our students as collaborators, we are changing the way we work with students as we look at our classrooms systematically through research." Table 20.1 compares traditional research with action research.

How Is Action Research Conducted?

In the first phase of action research, a focus area is selected—an area of teaching and learning in need of improvement. Second, a needs assessment gathers data on

TABLE 20.1 *Comparison of Traditional Research and Action Research*

	Traditional Research	*Action Research*
Usually led by	Outside expert	Practitioners
Purpose	Develop new knowledge	Solve practical problem, improve practice
Types of data gathered	Quantitative or qualitative	Quantitative or qualitative
Purpose of gathering and analyzing data	Gain better understanding of phenomenon, develop or test hypotheses	Explore practical problem, guide action planning, evaluate results
Standard for quality research	Peer review of methods and results	The research results in desired change
Primary audience(s)	Other researchers, the profession, government or private agencies	Members of the school community

the focus area. The purposes of data gathering at this stage are to understand the problem and how it might be solved and to gather baseline data to help with the evaluation of improvement efforts. The third phase of action research is to design an action plan for solving the problem. The plan includes activities for evaluating the success of improvement efforts. The fourth phase is the implementation of the plan. The fifth phase of action research is the evaluation; data on the action plan's effects are gathered and analyzed. Based on the evaluation, action plan objectives and activities may be continued, expanded, revised, or discontinued.

If these five phases sound suspiciously similar to the development of action plans with individual teachers in Chapter 16 (direct assistance), you have won the first round of the supervision concentration game. The aim of direct assistance to teachers is to promote increased thought, choice, and responsibility in individual teachers, and this can be done through cycles of classroom action research. The supervisor's role is to determine what type of assistance the individual teacher needs (directive informational, collaborative, or nondirective), depending on the developmental levels of the teacher with respect to the particular topic. Figure 20.1 depicts the five phases of action research.

A Developmental Approach to Action Research

The developmental model we have discussed throughout this text can be applied to action research. Of the four supervisory approaches discussed in Part III, the

> **Phase 1**
> Select Focus Area

> **Phase 2**
> Conduct Needs Assessment

> **Phase 3**
> Design Action Plan

> **Phase 4**
> Carry Out Action Plan

> **Phase 5**
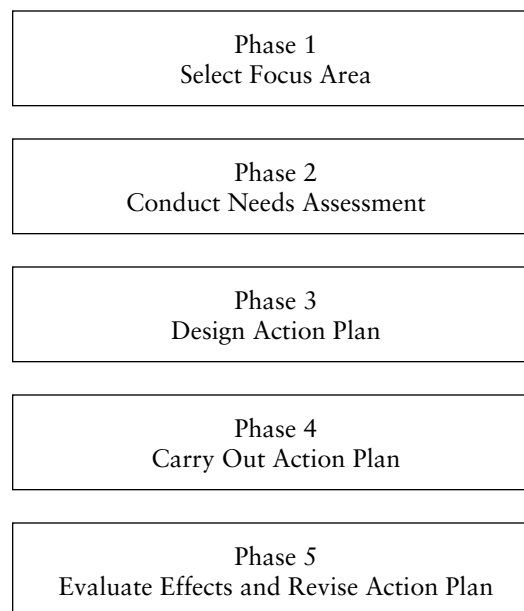> Evaluate Effects and Revise Action Plan

FIGURE 20.1 *Five Phases of Action Research*

directive informational, collaborative, and nondirective approaches are appropriate for supervising action research. Since teacher action research involves teachers making their own decisions about inquiry and instructional improvement, controlling directive supervision is inappropriate for such research.

Teachers of *very* low levels of development, expertise, and commitment are probably not ready to engage in action research. They will need to receive intensive direct assistance and staff development to help them develop the minimal decision-making capacity and motivation necessary for successful action research. They might be asked to read and discuss articles about action research, shadow a teacher or group engaged in research, or attend a workshop to develop action research skills. For teachers of *fairly* low levels of development, expertise, and commitment, the supervisor can use directive informational supervision while suggesting alternative goals, data-collection and analysis methods, and action plans, and then asking teachers to choose from the alternatives. Since this type of action research involves limited teacher decision making, the supervisor will wish to move toward collaborative action research as soon as teachers are ready to assume more decision-making responsibility (McBee, 2004).

The supervisor can engage in collaborative action research with teachers of moderate or mixed levels of development, expertise, and commitment. In this approach, the supervisor engages in joint decision making with teachers during the goal identification, action planning, implementation, evaluation, and revision phases of action research. Even collaborative action research is a transitional form of teacher inquiry. The ultimate goal is for teachers to reach levels of development, expertise, and commitment that allow teacher-driven research, in which the supervisor uses nondirective supervision to facilitate teacher decision making during each of the five phases of action research. Houser (1990) described full-fledged "teacher-researchers": "They initiate every aspect of the research project. They are responsible for formulating the questions, selecting the (research) tools, and collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data" (p. 58).

Decisions about Action Research

Collective action research can integrate direct assistance, group development, professional development, and curriculum development. Prior to the beginning of action research, the supervisor chooses an appropriate entry strategy for working with an action research team. The choice of interpersonal approach is shown in Table 20.2.

First, the team conducts a needs assessment of faculty and collects baseline data to determine common goals for improvement of instruction. Techniques for conducting a needs assessment can be chosen from the following list:

- Eyes and ears
- Systematic classroom and school observations
- Official records

TABLE 20.2　*Choosing an Interpersonal Approach*

Interpersonal Behaviors	*Decision*
Nondirective: 　listening 　reflecting 　clarifying 　encouraging	High teacher/low supervisor
Collaborative: 　presenting 　problem solving 　negotiating	Equal teacher/supervisor
Directive informational: 　presenting 　problem solving 　directing alternatives	Low teacher/high supervisor
Characteristics of Teachers	
levels of development 　expertise 　commitment	

- Review of teacher and student work products
- Third-party review
- Written open-ended survey
- Check and ranking lists
- Delphi technique
- Nominal group
- Cause and effect diagrams
- Flowcharts
- Pareto charts

Explanations of each assessment technique can be found in Chapter 13.

　　Second, the team brainstorms activities that will cut across supervision tasks. The team can respond to these four questions corresponding to supervisory tasks:

1. What type and frequency of direct assistance must be provided to teachers to reach our instructional goals?
2. What meetings and discussions need to be arranged as part of group development for faculty to share and reach our instructional goals?
3. What professional development opportunities, such as lectures, workshops, demonstrations, courses, and visits, need to be provided for faculty to reach our instructional goals?

4. What is the necessary curriculum development, in terms of course content, curriculum guides, lesson plans, and instructional materials, to reach our instructional goals.

These tasks of supervision are explained in Chapters 16, 17, 18, and 19.

Third, the team makes a plan relating activities to goals. Techniques for writing plans are as follows:

- Affinity diagrams
- Impact analysis chart
- Gantt chart
- Force field analysis
- PDSA cycle
- Strategic planning

A description of each planning device can be found in Chapter 13.

Fourth, the team determines ways to observe the progress of the action plan as it is implemented in classrooms. Observations can be made with the use of the following instruments:

- Categorical frequency
- Performance indicator
- Visual diagramming
- Space utilization
- Verbatim
- Detached open-ended narrative
- Participant open-ended observation
- Focused questionnaire
- Tailored observation systems

Use of these instruments is explained in Chapter 14.

Fifth, the team chooses an evaluation design that will enable them to analyze data, determine whether objectives have been met, and decide what further actions need to be taken. The design can be quantitative, qualitative, or a combination of both. Questions to be asked in the evaluation include the following:

- What is the purpose of the evaluation?
- Who will evaluate?
- What questions need to be answered?
- What and how will data be gathered?
- How will the data be analyzed?
- How will the evaluation be reported?

To understand the components of a comprehensive evaluation, refer to Chapter 15.

Action Research: Vehicle for a Cause beyond Oneself

Previously, each task of supervision (direct assistance, group development, professional development, and curriculum development) was discussed separately. In reality, any effort to improve instruction must relate each task to the others. It is time to soften the boundaries between the tasks and show how action research can be the vehicle for their integration.

Action research is focused on the need to improve instruction, as perceived by the faculty. As instructional improvements are identified, faculty and supervisor plan related activities to be implemented in each of the tasks of supervision (see Figure 20.2).

Think of action research as a huge meteor falling into the middle of the supervision ocean. As it hits, it causes a rippling of water that activates the four seas of direct assistance, professional development, curriculum development, and group development. The rippling of water continues to increase in force until a giant wave gathers and crashes onto all instructional shores, sweeping away the old sand of past instructional failures and replacing it with the new sand of instructional improvement. Stepping away from the beach, let's look at some examples of action research related to supervisory activities.
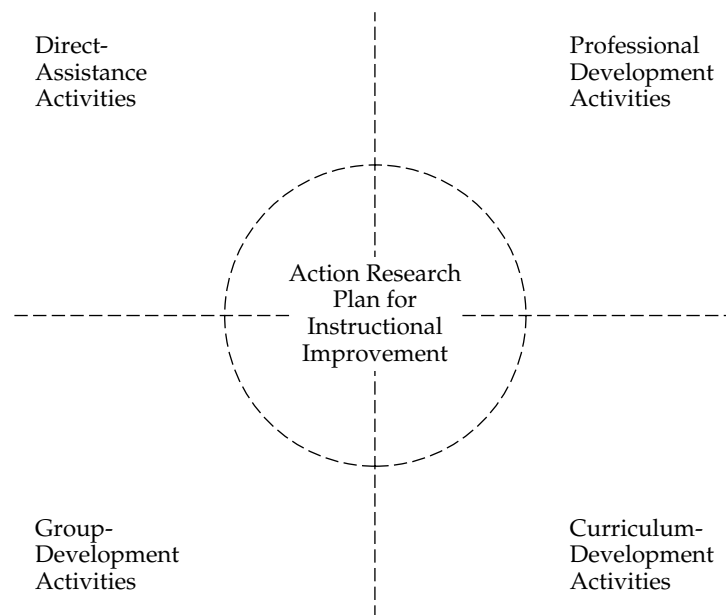
FIGURE 20.2   *Action Research as the Core of Related Supervisory Activities*

Example of Action Research

Matthews Elementary School is located in the heart of Austin, Texas. Matthews serves students from 32 different cultures. The student population includes children from the local Salvation Army shelter and city children's center. Matthews also serves the children of an international community of professors and graduate students from a nearby university. Approximately 50 percent of Matthews' students are classified as at-risk. The goal of action research at Matthews was to improve the school's balanced reading program. Needs assessment data gathered included student results on two reading tests, indicating that a large number of students were reading below grade level. Data on teacher perceptions of the reading program was gathered through surveys and interviews. Based on the needs assessment, the action plan called for acquisition of additional resources for the reading program, professional development for teachers, and more effective monitoring of the program.

In the first component of the action plan, teachers participated in discussion groups to identify needed resources. In response to these meetings, new nonfiction and fiction books, books on tape, and a variety of new instructional materials were added to the program. The professional development component included monthly meetings of support groups in which teachers learned new strategies, discussed concerns, and shared ideas. Balanced reading also was discussed at general faculty and vertical team meetings. A supervisor served as a mentor for new teachers, providing them assistance as they implemented balanced reading. Two literacy specialists served as support persons to all teachers, leading support groups, teaching demonstration lessons, and visiting classrooms. Teachers visited other schools to observe balanced reading lessons, participated in district workshops on balanced reading, and attended national reading conferences. The last component of the action plan was improved monitoring of the reading program. This included supervisors and reading specialists observing classrooms to determine if balanced reading was being implemented effectively and also to make sure that teachers were receiving the resources and support they needed. Teachers played a major role in monitoring. They assessed student progress daily by analyzing student work samples, keeping anecdotal records, and listening to students' oral reading. Additionally, teachers used a standardized reading assessment to measure students' reading levels in September, January, and May.

Year-end evaluation of the action research included teacher surveys and interviews as well as pre-post comparisons of student reading levels. Teachers reported a high commitment to balanced reading, understanding of the reading program, and confidence in their ability to implement the program. The teachers stated that they now had adequate materials to implement balanced reading and that strategies they learned through professional development enabled them to understand strengths and needs of students and to individualize student learning. Analysis of student achievement data supported teacher perceptions. Over the school years there were increases in the percentage of students—including the

percentage of economically disadvantaged students—reading on or above grade level. By the end of the school year 85 percent of all students were reading on or above grade level.

€xpanding Boundaries: Alternative Approaches to Action Research

The approach to action research emphasized in this book, as well as in most schools that use action research, is a problem-solving approach. A problem is identified, needs assessment data are gathered to find out more about the problem, an action plan is designed to solve the problem, the plan is implemented, and evaluation data are gathered to determine what progress has been made and what revisions in the action plan might be needed. There are alternative approaches to action research that schools may wish to consider, including interpretive and critical action research.

Interpretive Action Research

Teachers doing interpretive research are attempting to understand phenomena in schools and the meaning participants make of those phenomena. Examples that might be studied include a school's culture, classroom implementation of a new curriculum, and interactions between teachers and students during classroom discussions of controversial issues. For a more detailed example, let us say a group of teachers decided to carry out an interpretive study on the use of a new inquiry-based science program. Research questions might include the following:

1. What does the teacher experience during inquiry learning?
2. What does the student experience during inquiry learning?
3. How does the teacher describe learning that results from inquiry learning?
4. How does the student describe learning that results from inquiry learning?

To gather data on these questions, interpretive researchers might observe inquiry lessons and take extensive field notes on class activities, interactions between teachers and students and among students, and so on. Additionally, the teacher-researchers might conduct interviews with teachers and students on their experiences with inquiry learning and their interpretation of learning resulting from inquiry lessons. The researchers probably would find that different participants experience the same learning activities differently and construct different interpretations of inquiry learning. Through dialogue on alternative perspectives and interpretations identified in the action research, teachers can gain a more holistic understanding of the phenomena being studied. The dialogue, and increased understanding that results, can be the foundation for improved practice. For instance, based on the results of their interpretive research, teachers in our inquiry-learning example might modify the way they present science problems to students.

Critical Action Research

Critical research examines and challenges established, taken-for-granted practices that help maintain certain inequities, with an eye toward changing practice to increase equity. In particular, critical research examines power relationships that lead to inequity. External social, economic, and political forces that cause inequity also are examined, and ways to overcome those forces' negative effects are considered. An important process used by critical researchers is *praxis,* which denotes an interactive cycle of practice and theory building. In critical action research, praxis takes the form of an ongoing cycle of action and reflection aimed at emancipating groups and individuals from inequitable treatment.

Teachers engaged in critical action research on a high school's tracking system could begin the research by formulating a set of critical questions like the following:

- Whose interests are served by the existence of the tracking system?
- What cultural values are reinforced by the tracking system? What cultural values are delegitimized?
- What power relationships are present in the current tracking system?
- How does the tracking system reflect socioeconomic realities in the community that the school serves?
- How does the tracking system reflect ethnic and racial issues present in society?
- Who decides which students are placed in the various tracks?
- Who is placed at an advantage by the tracking system? Who is placed at a disadvantage?

Teachers engaging in critical action research find answers to these questions through repeated cycles of data gathering and dialogue on the meaning of the data. Eventually, the researchers begin to focus on a series of questions about changing the system to increase equity.

- How can we include parents and students in decisions about how to best meet student learning needs?
- How can the diverse learning needs of students be met in an emancipatory way?
- What ways of grouping students will benefit the least-advantaged students?
- How can student grouping promote democracy and social justice?
- How can the growth and development of all students be placed in the center of the decision-making process at this school?

Again, teachers would go about finding answers to these questions through repeated cycles of data gathering and dialogue. In time, teachers and other members of the school community would use research results as the basis for changes in decision making, student grouping, curriculum, and instruction. The test for the

effectiveness of critical action research is whether equity has been increased in a meaningful way.

Shared Governance for Action Research

A shortcoming of earlier studies of school improvement and action research has been the lack of descriptions of how individual schools or districts went about the process of change (Fullan, 1985, p. 398). Achieving "a cause beyond oneself" in pursuing collaborative and collective instructional goals for students sounds admirable, but how does a supervisor initiate and sustain such efforts? What follows is one explanation, using case studies from the public schools that are part of the League of Professional Schools (Glickman, 1992). The model of shared governance and schoolwide instructional change has been adapted and used in elementary, middle, and secondary schools in Georgia, South Carolina, Vermont, Michigan, and the United States Department of Defense Dependent Schools in Europe.

Premises

Three declarative premises underlie shared governance.

1. Every professional in the school who so desires can be involved in making decisions about schoolwide instructional improvements.
2. Any professional in the school who does not desire to is not obligated to be involved in making decisions about schoolwide instructional improvements.
3. Once a decision is made about schoolwide instructional improvements, all staff must implement the decision.

Thus, an individual can choose to be or not to be part of the decision-making process. However, once decisions are made, all individuals must implement the agreed-on actions. Operationalizing these premises allows a school to move forward with people who are interested in participating, without forcing any individual who is not interested into a corner. Afterward, an individual who did not wish to participate in making decisions has no grounds for complaint about decisions on schoolwide instructional actions. Perhaps when the next issue, concern, or topic is brought up for schoolwide action, nonparticipants who have been disgruntled with previous decisions will have a renewed interest in participating.

Principles in Operating Shared Governance for Instructional Improvement

1. *One person, one vote.* Each representative has the same rights, responsibilities, and equal vote as any other representative. Each teacher who sits on the representative schoolwide council has the same vote as the school principal or any

other administrator or formal supervisor. This means, in practical terms, that an individual administrator or supervisor cannot get his or her own way on decisions about instructional improvement, just as a single teacher representative cannot get his or her own way. Decisions are made by the group, so expertise, influence, and credibility are more important than power and authority.

2. *Limit decisions to schoolwide instruction within the control and sphere of responsibility of the school.* Action research and shared governance involves the core of a school's existence: curriculum and instruction, or teaching and learning. Areas for decision making should be schoolwide and instructional. Issues of day-to-day administration, contracts, school board policies, other schools, and personnel are not the concerns of shared governance for schoolwide action research. The scope of concerns for deliberations, decisions, and actions is always grounded in the question: What should *we* be doing *here* with *our* school to improve learning for *our* students?

This is not to dismiss the influence on student learning of external policies and operations, nor is it to suggest that changes to improve conditions for students should not be pursued at levels beyond the school. It is simply to suggest that unless a school has a clear, streamlined mechanism for keeping the focus on creating a dialogue about instruction within the school, shared governance will often dissipate into a depository of complaints about noninstructional concerns. Time and energy spent on complaining or proposing what other schools, parents, the central office, and school board should do (which the individual school has no legal or direct control over) take time and energy away from instructional changes that *can* be made. (Talking about others can be an excuse for not talking about ourselves.)

3. *Authentic feedback necessitates small groups.* To call a faculty meeting with a large staff for the intended purpose of an open, freewheeling discussion of ideas, opinions, and positions is at best misguided, if not outright manipulative. Large meetings result in input from the most confident, the loudest, and the most powerful persons—who are not necessarily the wisest, most insightful, or most interested persons. A true forum for intellectual discourse is a small group (ideally, 7 to 11 members); therefore, shared governance in large schools must operate in small groups.

Operational Model

The work of Schmuck, Runkel, Arends, and Arends (1977) has provided the basis for an operational model for shared governance, action research, and school improvement that uses the premises of individual choice of involvement and implementation by all and the principles of one-person, one-vote; focus on teaching; and small groups. The model discussed here is a compilation of various models used by schools in the League of Professional Schools (see Glickman, 1992; Allen and Glickman, 1992). Many schools use comparable models of operation and have their own specific versions. The goal is not to advocate a particular model

of shared governance, but rather to achieve the premises and principles of shared governance and action research, leading to a purposeful, collective, and thoughtful school—a school that is the center of inquiry.

The Formal Groups.   Shared governance in this model involves three groups (see Figure 20.3). *The executive council* is a 7- to 11-member body, consisting of a majority of teachers with administrators. Parent and student representatives can serve as well. (For more details about representation of other groups, see Glickman, 1993.) Teachers could be democratically chosen from liaison groups (described in the following paragraph) or from among grade-level heads, team leaders, department heads, and union representatives. They could be elected at large from the faculty, or some combination of election and appointment could be used. They hold a term of at least three years and move off the council at staggered times. Teachers serve as chairperson and co-chairperson of the executive council. The principal is a member of the committee with the same rights and responsibilities as any other member. The executive council's responsibility is solely for acting on and monitoring schoolwide instructional improvement recommendations. *The council does not make recommendations;* it is an approving board. Recommendations must come from task force groups within the school. The executive council does not involve itself in administrative matters, community relations, school board policies, personnel matters, or issues that are departmental in nature. It acts on instructional improvement recommendations that the faculty has the legal power to carry out. This differentiation between instructional and administrative responsibilities helps avoid problems that can arise from delving into matters beyond the school's own control.
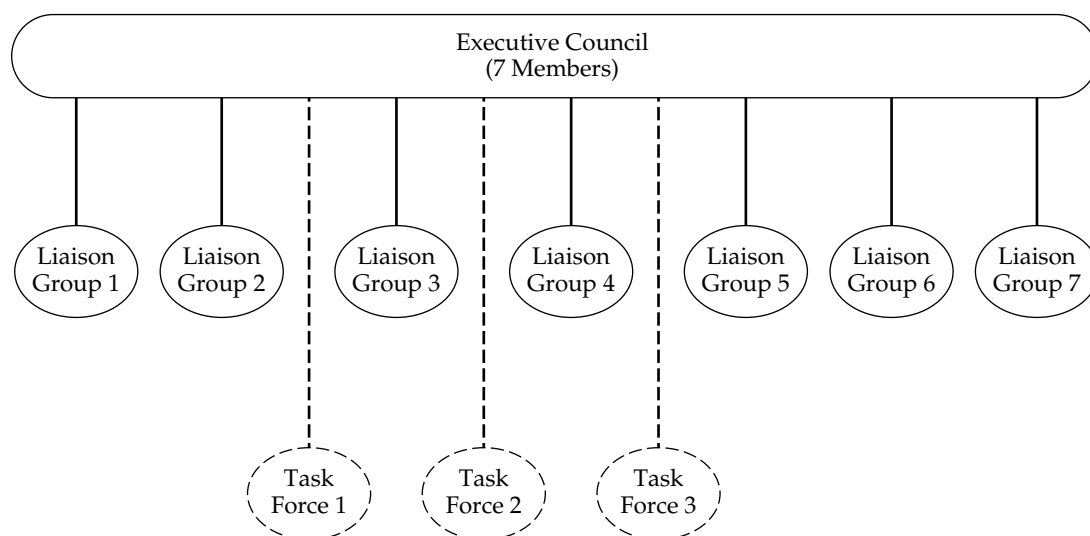

FIGURE 20.3   *Action Research as the Core of Related Supervisory Activities*

Liaison groups are formal groups set up as communication links between the faculty and executive council concerning needs, reactions, opinions, and ideas about schoolwide instruction. Liaison groups are an important unit for considering the faculty's ideas and opinions about assessing instructional goals and responding to proposed recommendations. For example, in the case of a school with 50 teachers, there could be seven liaison groups consisting of approximately 7 faculty members each. An alphabetized list of all faculty names is gathered and each person is assigned a number from 1 to 7. All 1s go to liaison group 1, all 2s go to liaison group 2, and so forth. This assignment procedure ensures that members in each liaison group come from various departments and grade levels. Each liaison group is a microcosm of the entire school. Each group elects a representative to the council. The executive council member can (a) call the liaison group together from time to time for a brief meeting to review a specific recommendation under executive council consideration, (b) gather written opinions about a particular proposal, or (c) simply drop by and talk to the various liaison group members.

Task forces are the last groups shown in Figure 20.3. These ad hoc task groups of volunteers are formed after the executive council has solicited feedback from all the liaison groups about perceived schoolwide instructional needs and reviewed any existing data on schoolwide instruction. The executive council then targets priority instructional areas for the next one to three years. Schoolwide priorities might be such matters as increasing instructional time, coordinating curriculum, improving student attitudes, teaching higher-order thinking, increasing student success rates, improving school discipline, improving school and classroom climate, improving the quality of feedback to students, or improving test scores.

Once the needs for improvement have been selected by the executive council, ad hoc task force groups are formed by recruiting volunteers who have an interest in and a commitment to the particular topic. At least one executive council member serves on each task force, but this person normally does not serve as chair of the task force. The task force volunteers meet, review their task, select their own chairperson, schedule meetings, and set a timeline for making a final recommendation for schoolwide action to the executive council. Depending on the topic, one task force might meet three times over three weeks to make a recommendation, whereas another task force might meet every other week for five months before making a recommendation.

Decision-Making Procedures.   When the task force is ready to make a recommendation, it makes its report in three parts: (1) goals and objectives, (2) action plan (what will be done, by whom, and when), and (3) evaluation (how the success of actions will be known). The executive council discusses the recommendations and either makes an immediate decision to approve (most councils use a consensus vote to approve a first-time recommendation) or, without the required vote, tables the recommendation until the next meeting. During the interim, the executive council members can discuss the recommendation and check with their respective liaison groups to gather input from the entire faculty. At the next meeting, a

second vote can be taken. (Most councils use a two-thirds vote to approve a tabled recommendation.) By the second vote, the council will have a good sense of total faculty receptivity and the chances of successful implementation. Some issues are deemed so important by the council that the final decision is made by going back to the entire faculty, parents, and students.

Implementation.   After a decision has been made, the executive council (with the task force) announces the approved plan to the school. The task force then disbands, and the executive council implements the plan. It becomes the responsibility of the executive council (including the principal) to enforce the schoolwide decisions and to oversee action research that monitors and evaluates the results.

Suggestions for Assisting Action Research

Beyond the governance structure described above, our work with schools using action research leads to additional suggestions for increasing the quality of teacher research. First, it is important that teachers receive basic preparation in gathering and analyzing data. Here we are not talking about making every teacher an expert in research design and statistical analysis. Rather, teachers should be introduced to a variety of simple data-gathering methods, both quantitative and qualitative. Also, teachers need to learn simple methods for reviewing and summarizing data and drawing data-based conclusions. Second, to ensure that no teachers or students are placed at academic, social, or emotional risk, the school governance body should establish a set of ethical guidelines for action research, along with a process for reviewing research proposals to make sure they comply with the guidelines. Third, resources need to be provided for action research teams. The most important resource needed by teacher-researchers is *time* to plan action research, gather and analyze data, and implement action plans. Finally, teachers should be provided opportunities to share action research with the school community, and even with teachers from other schools. Sharing action research gives recognition to the teacher-researchers, serves as a basis for reflective dialogue among teachers, and provides other teachers ideas for improving instruction in their own classrooms and schools.

Conclusion: Focus, Structure, and Time for Development

Supervision provides a focus, structure, and time for teachers to be engaged in dialogue, debate, research, decisions, and actions about instruction. Without focus, teachers will not discuss teaching, because it has not been an accepted norm for discussion in most schools. Without structure, there are no clear apparatus, procedures, and rules for how decisions are made and implemented. Without time,

there is no functional or symbolic expression that teachers have the capacity to make collective and wise instructional decisions on behalf of students.

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Function of SuperVision

The chapters in Part VI address aspects of supervision that transcend traditional knowledge, skills, and tasks of supervision. Chapter 21 focuses on the change process, viewing it from both the supervisor's and the teacher's perspectives. Chaos theory is discussed in relation to change, and applied to schools and classrooms. Cultures of change are described, and we argue for changing the conditions of teaching. Chapter 22 discusses democratic and moral purpose. Ten moral principles of the "good school" are presented. The moral dilemma brought about by the No Child Left Behind Act is examined, and short-term as well as long-term strategies for addressing No Child Left Behind are proposed.

SuperVision, Change, and School Success

Although not all change represents progress, progress—by definition—is not possible without change. Facilitating change necessary for instructional improvement is a supervisory function that cuts across all five tasks of supervision. Initiating a clinical supervision program (direct assistance), assisting teachers in deciding on schoolwide instructional improvement goals (group development), delivering a skill-development program in which teachers learn new models of teaching (professional development), moving from a discipline-based to an interdisciplinary curriculum (curriculum development), and assisting teachers as they conduct research on a new classroom management system (action research) are all examples of facilitating change. In this chapter, we will look at assumptions about change, change from the teacher's view, a developmental view of change strategies, creating a culture for change, changing the conditions of teaching, the role of supervision and supervisors in school improvement, and school success.

Assumptions about Change

After many years of research and reflection on change in schools, Michael Fullan (1991) proposed 10 assumptions about change. Our own experience with change efforts in schools leads us to agree with Fullan's assumptions:

1. Do not assume that your version of what the change should be is the one that should or could be implemented. On the contrary, assume that one of

the main purposes of the process of implementation is to exchange your reality of what should be through interaction with implementers and others concerned. Stated another way, assume that successful implementation consists of some transformation or continual development of initial ideas. . . .

2. Assume that any significant innovation, if it is to result in change, requires individual implementers to work out their own meaning. Significant change involves a certain amount of ambiguity, ambivalence, and uncertainty for the individual about the meaning of change. Thus, effective implementation is a process of clarification. . . .

3. Assume that conflict and disagreement are not only inevitable but fundamental to successful change. . . .

4. Assume that people need pressure to change (even in directions that they desire), but it will be effective only under conditions that allow them to react, to form their own position, to interact with other implementers, to obtain technical assistance, etc. . . .

5. Assume that effective change takes time. Unrealistic or undefined time lines fail to recognize that implementation occurs developmentally. Significant change in the form of implementing specific innovations can be expected to take a minimum of two to three years; bringing about institutional reforms can take five or more years. Persistence is a critical attribute of successful change.

6. Do not assume that the reason for lack of implementation is outright rejection of the values embodied in the change, or hard-core resistance to all change. Assume that there are a number of possible reasons: value rejection, inadequate resources to support implementation, insufficient time elapsed.

7. Do not expect all or even most people or groups to change. The complexity of change is such that it is impossible to bring about widespread reform in any large social system. Progress occurs when we take steps (e.g., by following the assumptions listed here) that increase the number of people affected. . . .

8. Assume that you will need a plan that is based on the above assumptions and that addresses the factors known to affect implementation. . . . Evolutionary planning and problem-coping models based on knowledge of the change process are essential. . . .

9. Assume that no amount of knowledge will ever make it totally clear what action should be taken. Action decisions are a combination of valid on-the-spot decisions, and intuition. . . .

10. Assume that changing the culture of institutions is the real agenda, not implementing single innovations. Put another way, when implementing particular innovations, we should always pay attention to whether the institution is developing or not. (pp. 105–107)*

Guskey's (1994, pp. 9–20) six guidelines for promoting professional development and change are consistent with Fullan's assumptions:

- Guideline 1: Recognize that change is both an individual and an organizational process
- Guideline 2: In planning and implementation, think BIG, but start SMALL (emphasis in original)
- Guideline 3: Work in teams to maintain support
- Guideline 4: Include procedures for feedback on results
- Guideline 5: Provide continued follow-up, support, and pressure
- Guideline 6: Integrate programs (integrate innovations into existing frameworks)

Change from the Teacher's View

Gene Hall and Shirley Hord (1987) have extended the work of Frances Fuller (1969) on teacher concerns (discussed in Chapter 4) and described seven stages of concern about school innovations (numbered from stages 0 through 6). Figure 21.1 describes each of these stages. Note that awareness as well as informational and personal concerns about the innovation relate to Fuller's self-concerns; management concerns about the innovation relate to Fuller's task concerns; and consequence, collaboration, and refocusing concerns about the innovation relate to Fuller's impact concerns. Teachers are not likely to move to higher stages of concern until their lower-stage concerns have been addressed.

To help us better understand stages of concern, Hord and associates (Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, and Hall, 1987) have provided "expressions of concern" made by individuals at each stage of concern. Table 21.1 lists stages and expressions of concerns. The supervisor's role is to facilitate teachers' movement through stages of concern—*and* implementation of the innovation—by (1) assessing individual and group stages of concern and (2) meeting the needs of teachers and groups at various stages. The supervisor can assess teachers' stages of concern through conferencing, open-ended concerns statements, and questionnaires (see Hall and Hord, 1987).

Chaos Theory and Change

Chaos theory cuts across a wide number of disciplines, including biology, chemistry, mathematics, meteorology, and physics. The "new science" of chaos has two foci. The first is the exploration of the hidden order that exists within chaotic systems. The second is the study of how self-organization emerges from chaos (Hayles, 1990). Chaos theory involves a number of related concepts, not all of which are relevant to change in schools and classrooms. Several aspects

Impact	6	REFOCUSING: The focus is on exploration of more universal benefits from the innovation, including the possibility of major changes or replacement with a more powerful alternative. Individual has definite ideas about alternatives to the proposed or existing form of the innovation.
	5	COLLABORATION: The focus is on coordination and cooperation with others regarding use of the innovation.
	4	CONSEQUENCE: Attention focuses on impact of the innovation on student in his or her immediate sphere of influence. The focus is on relevance of the innovation for students, evaluation of student outcomes, including performance and competencies, and changes needed to increase student outcomes.
Task	3	MANAGEMENT: Attention is focused on the processes and tasks of using the innovation and the best use of information and resources. Issues related to efficiency, organizing, managing, scheduling, and time demands are utmost.
Self	2	PERSONAL: Individual is uncertain about the demands of the innovation, his or her inadequacy to meet those demands, and his or her role with the innovation. This includes analysis of his or her role in relation to the reward structure of the organization, decision making, and consideration of potential conflicts with existing structures or personal commitment. Financial or status implications of the program for self and colleagues may also be reflected.
	1	INFORMATIONAL: A general awareness of the innovation and interest in learning more detail about it is indicated. The person seems to be un-worried about himself or herself in relation to the innovation. She or he is interested in substantive aspects of the innovation in a selfless manner such as general characteristics, effects, and requirements for use.
	0	AWARENESS: Little concern about or involvement with the innovation is indicated.

FIGURE 21.1 *Stages of Concern about the Innovation*

Source: Reprinted by permission from *Change in Schools: Facilitating the Process,* edited by Gene Hall and Shirley Hord, the State University of New York Press. © 1987 State University of New York. All rights reserved.

of chaos theory that have significance for educational change are reviewed here.

Nonlinearity

In a linear system simple cause-and-effect relationships exist; A causes B which causes C, and so on. A linear system is analogous to tipping over the first in a line of dominoes. The falling first domino knocks down the second, the second knocks down the third, and so on. A chaotic system is nonlinear. A nonlinear system is analogous to throwing a bowling ball toward a set of pins. Myriad variables come

TABLE 21.1   *Stages and Expressions of Concern*

Stages of Concern			*Expressions of Concern*
I M P A C T	6	Refocusing	*I have some ideas about something that would work even better.
	5	Collaboration	*I am concerned about relating what I am doing with what other instructors are doing.
	4	Consequence	*How is my use affecting kids?
T A S K	3	Management	*I seem to be spending all my time getting material ready.
S E L F	2	Personal	*How will using it affect me?
	1	Informational	*I would like to know more about it.
	0	Awareness	*I am not concerned about it (the innovation).

Source: Taking Charge of Change by S. M. Hord, W. L. Rutherford, L. Huling-Austin, and G. E. Hall. Copyright 1987 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development in the format Textbook via Copyright Clearance Center.

into play and interact with each other. The slightest variation in how the bowling ball is released may result in a strike in one frame, and a split or a gutter ball in the next.

Complexity

Chaotic systems take complex forms, making their precise measurement difficult if not impossible. Chapter 5's discussion on measuring the coast of Britain is an example of the problem with measuring complex forms; the method of measurement affects the measure. If one uses 200-mile-long rulers, the coast of Britain is 1600 miles long. If the rulers are 25 miles long, the length increases to 2,550 miles (Smith, 1995). As the length of the rulers becomes shorter, the length of the coast of Britain increases, on to infinity (Briggs and Peat, 1989).

Butterfly Effect

This phenomenon is technically known as *sensitive dependence on initial conditions*. This means that a small and seemingly unrelated event in one part of a system can have enormous effects on other parts of the system. Theoretical meteorologist Edward Lorenz made the term *butterfly effect* famous when he argued that a butterfly stirring its wings in Bejing today could unleash powerful storms in New York City next month. One implication of sensitive dependence on initial

conditions is the impossibility of predicting not only next year's weather, but the long-term future of any chaotic system.

Fractals

A fractal is a geometric shape that is similar to itself at different scales. Mid-sized branches of a tree are remarkably similar in shape to the larger branches from which they come. Smaller branches, in turn, are the same shape as the mid-sized branches from which they come, and so on. Other examples of fractals include coastlines, mountains, clouds, rivers, weather patterns, and the human vascular system. Complex social systems can also reveal self-similarity on different scales: at each level of the system, specific patterns of organization and culture reappear.

Feedback Mechanisms

Chaotic systems contain feedback loops enabling outputs to feed back into the system as input. Feedback can bring stability or turbulence to a system. For example, a thermostat is a feedback mechanism that causes temperature stability. Conversely, when the sound from a loudspeaker feeds back through a microphone, it is rapidly magnified to create a disruptive shriek (Gleick, 1987). Feedback can also cause a system to move toward greater levels of complexity. Physicist Joseph Ford, for example, has referred to evolution as "chaos with feedback."

Turbulence

Turbulence can be caused from disturbances inside or outside of a system. Consider a river, flowing smoothly until it runs through a bed of rocks. The water is perturbed and becomes unstable. Turbulence can also be caused by a heavy rain that greatly increases the volume of water flowing through the river bed. The more complex a system is, the more subject it is to instability due to turbulence. If instability becomes great enough, a point of phase transition is reached; sudden, radical change takes place, resulting in either reorganization or disintegration.

Strange Attractors

Chaotic systems are not truly random. Rather, they possess patterns that are extremely complex and unpredictable, but that stay within certain parameters. Strange attractors are "deeply encoded structures" within chaotic systems (Hayles, 1990).

> The discovery that chaos possesses deep structures of order is all the more remarkable because of the wide range of systems that demonstrate this behavior. They range from lynx fur returns to outbreaks of measles epidemics, from the rise and fall of the Nile River to eye movements in schizophrenics. (Hayles, 1990, p. 10)

To summarize, chaos theory informs us that order and chaos are not opposites. Rather, in the words of Margaret Wheatley (1992) they are "mirror images, one containing the other" (p. 11).

Chaos Theory Applied to School Change

School improvement efforts traditionally have treated the change process as linear, with each step in the change effort affecting the next step in a simple cause-and-effect relationship. But despite linear organization charts and improvement plans, schools are not linear systems; they are *nonlinear,* chaotic systems. An implication for this reality is that, rather than viewing a change effort as a blueprint to be drawn and followed, it should be viewed as an organic process:

> Here the metaphor for change is the growth and development of a complex organism (for example a human being) rather than the operation of a simple machine. A complex organism begins life at a relatively small stage. Its development is not completely predictable. Its health requires interdependence, consistency, and balance among its various subsystems. Finally, organisms that flourish tend to be adaptable to changing environments. In fact, they are themselves in a constant state of change or "becoming." (Gordon, 1992, p. 73)

The fact that schools are nonlinear systems means that change cannot be controlled from above. It can only be nurtured by promoting a culture for change. The supervisor attempting to nurture such a culture needs to remember Fullan's admonition not to believe that the change the supervisor envisions is the one that should or even could be implemented. Rather it is the interaction of the supervisor's ideas about change with ideas from other members of the school community—and the interaction of the change process with many other variables within the school culture—that will determine the direction of change.

The *complexity* of schools means that neither external research on effective schools, nor legislated standards, nor the results of standardized achievement tests can, by themselves, precisely measure improvement needs or the level of success of improvement efforts. Keedy and Achilles (1997) argue that local educators must ask:

1. Why they want to change
2. What they want to achieve
3. How to go about the change process (p. 116)

We would argue that local educators need to ask a fourth question as well: *how to measure success*. Keedy and Achilles recommend that supervisors and teachers reach consensus on these questions through collaborative, critical inquiry informed by awareness of the change process.

The *butterfly effect* applies to school change: it is impossible to predict the long-term effects of school improvement efforts. This does not mean that formal

planning for school change should not take place. It does mean that a different type of planning is needed. Planning in a chaotic system like a school should be medium range (one to two years) rather than long range (five to ten years). It should emphasize general goals, broad guidelines, and built-in flexibility (Gordon, 1992). Formal planning in an unpredictable system needs to focus on process rather than product, with the goal of producing "a stream of wise decisions designed to achieve the mission of the organization" (Patterson, Purkey, and Parker, 1986).

Like *fractals* in nature, schools reveal self-similarity in different scales. For example, a schoolwide staff development day, a department meeting, a classroom lesson, and a hallway interaction between a teacher and student might all reveal the same cultural characteristic. Thus reflective inquiry at the school, team, classroom, and individual level can help educators better understand their school culture, needed change, and pathways to improvement.

Once school improvement efforts are under way, feedback becomes essential for monitoring and assessing change. *Feedback mechanisms* need to be created and maintained. Feedback can take the form of student performance data, survey results, quality circles, third party reviews, and so forth. The important thing is that meaningful data on the results of change efforts be made available to teachers, and that they be given opportunities to reflect on the data and redirect their change efforts accordingly.

All complex systems experience *turbulence,* but efforts at change tend to increase its frequency and intensity. Turbulence is not always negative. Without some perturbance, the system would remain in a steady state and improvement would not be possible. However, too much turbulence (from outside or inside the school) can cause school improvement efforts to disintegrate. Keedy and Achilles (1997, p. 115) maintain that supervisors and teachers should construct a normative consensus—"a collective, critically examined, and contextually-based agreement" of essential school norms that they can hold fast to during times of turbulence. He maintains that it is this normative consensus (referred to earlier in this text as a "cause beyond oneself") that can hold a school together during the change process.

Finally, *strange attractors,* those deeply encoded structures within chaotic systems, have implications for school change. Is it possible for supervisors and teachers to create strange attractors within schools that will—albeit in unpredictable ways—create permanent patterns leading to school improvement? Policy makers have attempted to do just that, mandating such structures as site-based management, shared decision making, and parent choice (Keedy, 1996). However, these structures have all failed to lead to patterns of improvement. Keedy (1995) maintains that the design that should be embedded throughout the social fabric of schools—for our purpose a "strange attractor"—is *student-centered learning.* He also believes that embedding this design within traditional schools is an extremely difficult task, and that the best chance for making student-centered learning a school's underlying pattern is the design of new schools around that concept.

AU: Keedy 1996 not in refs. S/b 1995?

Implications of Chaos Theory at the Classroom Level

Chaos theory has implications beyond the school level. Classrooms and even individual students can be considered chaotic systems (the reader smiles and nods in agreement)! All joking aside, chaos theory is consistent with recent research that the brain learns in *nonlinear* ways. This calls into question a host of traditional classroom practices, including grouping students by age, separate subjects, a sequential curriculum, and discrete behavioral objectives (Rockler, 1990–1991; Tygestad, 1997; Bloch, 2005). Nonlinearity supports constructivist teaching and learning as discussed in Chapter 5.

Complexity implies that student learning can take many different forms and can be expressed in different ways. This means that teachers should place less emphasis on any single indicator of student aptitude or achievement. It especially calls into question use of the standardized achievement test as the sole measure of student growth (Rockler, 1990–91; Stiggins, 2002; Coladarci, 2002; Clark and Clark, 2000; Newell, 2002; Behuniak, 2002). Complexity suggests the use of multiple measures of student learning, matching different assessment measures to different learning goals. It also supports the use of authentic assessment methods. Finally, complexity gives credence to the idea of allowing students to participate in planning assessment and in making self-evaluation part of the assessment process.

The *butterfly effect* means that a wide variety of factors seemingly unrelated to a lesson plan (whether a student argued with a parent the night before, ate breakfast, or made a new friend on the school bus that morning) can lead to significant differences in what takes place in the classroom when the lesson is taught and how the lesson affects an individual student's learning. The butterfly effect ensures that no lesson will ever go completely as planned, or have the same effect on any two students. It indicates the need for teacher flexibility in teaching, as well as the need for individual attention to students, each of whom is experiencing a given lesson within his or her own personal context.

If the butterfly effect accounts for differences in classroom interactions and student outcomes, *fractals* are a metaphor for patterns that can be observed on different scales within the classroom. Systematic classroom observation can record behaviors and effects that cut across whole-class, small-group, and individual levels. Additionally, patterned behaviors and interactions can be observed from lesson to lesson. Reflective inquiry into classroom practice, whether in the form of clinical supervision, peer coaching, or action research, can help the teacher to identify patterns that foster and hinder student learning, and to alter the learning environment accordingly.

Feedback mechanisms can have positive or negative effects on classroom teaching and learning. For example, high-stakes testing (much to the chagrin of those who design the tests) can become a negative mechanism. In many cases, feedback on student performance on high-stakes tests has led teachers to ignore curriculum not measured by the test and teach to the test through "drill and kill" methods focused on practice test items. With all of the the unpredictability present

in classrooms, beneficial feedback is critical for both teachers and students. For teachers, student performance data, direct student feedback, and classroom observation data can all assist teachers to improve classroom instruction. Skill at what Donald Schon calls "reflection in action" enables teachers to receive and analyze feedback and respond to that feedback while in the act of teaching. For students, feedback on their cognitive and affective performance—from teachers, parents, and peers—is an essential part of the learning process. The fact that in chaotic systems like classrooms output becomes input means that the artificial distinctions we often draw between learning and assessment need to be removed; in reality, learning and assessment cannot be separated.

Turbulence, like nonlinearity, supports constructivist teaching and learning. Trygestad (1997) points out that new knowledge, like turbulence, causes instability ("disequilibrium") before it is assimilated into a new conceptual scheme. The teacher's task is to first present perturbations that cause instability and activate conceptual change (Luffiego, Bastida, Ramos, and Soto, 1994), and then to support student reconstruction (Doll, 1986).

Finally, the improvement of teaching—like whole-school improvement—is dependent on the ultimate *strange attractor,* student-centered learning. Additional patterns within the fabric of classroom practice can foster student-centered learning, including reflective inquiry, instructional dialogue, and collegial support. It is not possible to predict precisely how these embedded patterns will change classroom instruction in the long run. Rather, they are designed to facilitate a process of continuous improvement.

And so ends our brief journey into the world of chaos, a world that elicits different reactions from those who enter it.

> Those who feel comfortable with order and reason, with symmetry, equilibrium, and stasis, will find life in the world of dynamic complexity quite challenging. On the other hand, those who are comfortable with being in the process, the flow of the system, those who can see the larger patterns beyond the endless change and dynamisms, those who can tolerate ambiguity and unpredictability, those people will find being in a complex system at the edge of chaos to be stimulating and rewarding. (McAndrew, 1997, p. 40)

Does not all that is said in the above quote about chaotic systems apply as well to modern schools and classrooms?

Creating a Culture for Change

The traditional literature on organizational culture treats culture and change as polar opposites, with one purpose of the culture being to *resist* change. Such resistance indeed seems to be part of the typical school culture. However, some school cultures actually foster positive change. What characteristics do these school cultures have that are not present in most schools? Those who have studied "cultures for change" have described very similar characteristics. Little

(1982), Rosenholtz (1989), Fullan, Bennett, and Rolheiser-Bennett (1990), Fullan (2001, 2002), and Harris (2002) all cite shared purpose, collegiality, and a spirit of continuous improvement. Simpson (1990), Fullan (2001, 2002), and Harris (2002) described sharing and collegiality, teacher empowerment, and participative/collaborative leadership. Leithwood (1992) described "transformational leadership" that fosters school reform through maintaining collaborative cultures, fostering teacher development, and improving group problem solving.

Saphier and King (1985) describe 12 cultural norms that foster school improvement:

1. Collegiality
2. Experimentation
3. High expectations
4. Trust and confidence
5. Tangible support
6. Reaching out to the knowledge bases
7. Appreciation and recognition
8. Caring, celebration, and humor
9. Involvement in decision making
10. Protection of what's important
11. Traditions
12. Honest, open communication (p. 67)

Rather than viewing school culture as a wall impeding change, a better way to define it is as a set of commonly held beliefs, values, norms, and assumptions that can result in change being resisted *or* embraced. Empowered individuals and groups are more likely to develop beliefs, values, norms, and assumptions that are congruent with risk taking, experimentation, and continuous improvement rather than with the status quo. Given the many problems facing our schools today, creating a culture for change has become a critical imperative for supervision and supervisors.

Changing the Conditions of Teaching

Any discussion on change in education would be incomplete if it did not address the conditions of teaching across the nation over the last several years. To say the least, these conditions have not been optimal. All of the research on change now available will be of little value if changing the conditions of teaching is not a central goal of both external and internal school improvement efforts.

• Change is needed, *away from* treating teachers as technicians expected to transmit curriculum developed by bureaucrats, using canned methods published by commercial interests, and measuring student learning through one-size-fits-all tests mandated by policy makers; *toward* treating teachers as professionals invited to make professional decisions about curriculum, instruction, and student assessment.

- Change is needed, *away from* overloading teachers to the extent that they are unable to develop the teacher-student relationships, engage in the reflective planning, and perform the critical self-assessment required for effective teaching; *toward* the manageable class and student load that are prerequisites for quality teaching.
- Change is needed, *away from* the physical and psychological isolation caused by outmoded school structures and norms of individualism; *toward* structures and norms that provide opportunities for professional dialogue and collaborative work.
- Change is needed, *away from* bureaucratic organizations in which teachers are overwhelmed by regulations and paperwork, or—worse yet—mistreated by authoritarian organizations more representative of old-style dictatorships than modern democracies; *toward* democratic school communities in which supervisors promote shared decision making, collegiality, and teacher leadership.
- Change is needed, *away from* policies that treat teachers as part of the problem and consider education a low priority in the allocation of resources; *toward* polices that value teachers as part of the solution and provide the human and material resources teachers need to improve schools and provide all students with a quality education.
- Change is needed, *away from* teaching as an unstaged career with minimal extrinsic rewards; *toward* teaching as a career in which teachers are properly inducted into the profession and are provided new responsibilities, appropriate support, increased recognition, and significantly increased salary at each career stage.
- Change is needed, *away from* diversity as a combination of colors and symbols; *toward* a vision of practice that values and honors respect and dignity as well as shared power and decision making.

Early in the twenty-first century, although many teachers face negative conditions, there also are efforts to improve the conditions of teaching. Many members of the business community, concerned citizens' groups, and policy makers are working to improve external conditions, and many supervisors have worked from the "inside" to make schools centers of democracy, inquiry, and dialogue. The door for improving external and internal conditions will never close; it is simply a matter of whether or not we care to step in and make a difference.

What Is School Success?

Ironically, the definition of school success has been left to near the end of this book. This has been done for a reason, however. The rationale for a school faculty making its own collective definition of school success should be apparent. In referring to studies of successful schools to support many of the propositions of this book, we mentioned schools that were achieving what they had set out
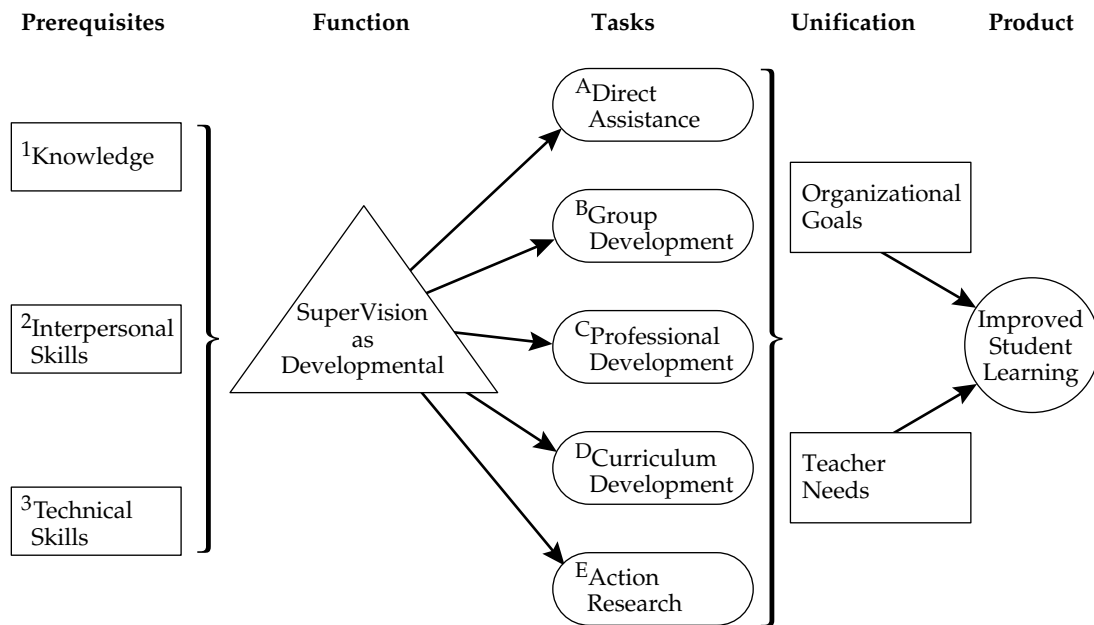
Prerequisites	Function	Tasks	Unification	Product

FIGURE 21.2 *SuperVision for Successful Schools*

to do, regardless of what those goals were. Some schools prioritize academic learning and achievement as their criteria for success. Some prioritize creativity and self-directed learning. Other schools prioritize problem solving, community involvement, and social cooperation as their criteria for success. Many schools want it all: they want to be successful in academics, creativity, self-directed learning, problem solving, community involvement, and social cooperation (Goodlad, 1984, pp. 33–60). Schools should strive to educate all students well, in ways consistent with education in a democratic society (Barber, 1993). Although we personally prefer schools that strive to have it all, that decision should be a local school matter. It is in the clarity of common purpose that action to improve instruction takes place.

With an understanding of what is meant by improved instruction and school success, we can fill in the remaining circle on the diagram of supervision for successful schools that has served as the map of this book (see Figure 21.2).

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22

Supervision for What? Democracy and the Good School*

- ◗ **Reform around Purpose**
- ◗ **The Good School and Moral Principles**
- ◗ **Priorities**
- ◗ **Applying Moral Principles to a Moral Dilemma: No Child Left Behind**
- ◗ **Conclusion**

We first must reaffirm our commitment to education's public purpose and weave it into the fabric of our schools.

—National Commission on
Service Learning, 2002

All children have the right to experience the joy of learning. We believe it is time for a new commitment to education reform in our country with the goal of giving every child the opportunity to be a part of a learning community that engages and inspires them to reach their full potential.

—Civil Society Institute, 2003

These two quotes taken from two broad-based nonpartisan national commissions strike a timely chord. Currently in state after state across the United States, the measure of school success or failure is how students perform on high-stakes achievement tests. These tests, usually consisting of multiple-choice items measuring cognitive learning at the lower level of Bloom's taxonomy, have become state legislatures' primary tools for bringing about school reform. The vision of many

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educational leaders is a higher percentage of students passing the test. Curricula are aligned with the test, teachers are teaching to the test, and increasingly, students' promotion or graduation depends on their test performance.

In this age of legislated learning enforced by legislated testing, there seems to be little room for a broader vision of school success. Yet in times like this, it is more critical than ever to make a clarion call for what many would consider a different and better vision of a successful school. This vision is not new, just currently unpopular. It is a vision of a school that is focused not solely on externally imposed standards and tests scores, but on the overall well-being, growth, and development of all students, indeed of all members of the school community. The vision is based on the premise that each individual possesses intrinsic worth as a human being and should, therefore, be afforded the educational opportunities prerequisite to a meaningful and fulfilling life (Baez, 2005).

Reform around Purpose

Listen to the voices of teachers talking about the same group of regular students they have during the school day:

Mr. A: The kids here are where the problem is today. These kids are just unteachable. There's nothing wrong with the curriculum. If I could just get the right students, I could teach and everything would be wonderful.

Ms. B: These students are just not real smart, and they don't want to learn. They're just putting in time.

Mr. C: There are kids here who really want to do a good job, but they have seen so much and heard so much that they often are distracted. Their perspective is gone. But they are basically really good kids.

Ms. D: My guys. They're very, very clever and brave kids. It's amazing how they are always figuring out what is going on around them. It is a job to keep up with their energy and channel it into learning experiences.

Without arguing over perception versus reality as reflected in those attitudes towards students, let us ask which of the views expressed are consistent with the founding principles of American society.

All men [and women] are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights; that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness; that to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it. (Declaration of Independence, 1776)

Take these words and make a few alterations and you have the central purpose of public education.

> All students are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights; that among these are an education that will accord them Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness; that whenever any public school becomes destructive of preparing students for these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it.

In essence, the reason we have public education is to enculturate students into the values of our democracy! To summarize Thomas Jefferson, public education has two corollary purposes: (1) to provide for an educated citizenry to participate in decisions about promoting the future good of our democratic society, and (2) to allow for leadership in a democratic society to develop from the merits, abilities, and talents of the individual. Leadership in a democratic society should not be accorded based on family privilege, economic wealth, religion, race, or group privilege (Lee, 1961).

The central question for all who educate is:

> What should we be doing in our schools, our curriculum, our placement and our scheduling of students, our allocations of resources, and our teaching to give every child his or her inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness? What is just, what is fair, what is democratic?

American schools are indeed better than they have ever been in reaching all students. But the challenge of American schools is not primarily that of achieving economic superiority in the world or of focusing on subject area achievement. The challenge is to rise to the far more demanding and crucially important standard of educating all students to be knowledgeable, proactive, resourceful, and responsible members of our democratic society.

Public schools must ensure a democratic threshold of learning experiences that give all students the knowledge, skills, compassion, and understanding to participate in human affairs. It is these requisites for democratic living that we should be returning to in determining decisions about standards, assessments, curriculum, professional development, placement, and grouping of students, as well as the ways that adults themselves function with each other. The supreme irony of public schools is that the only institution in the United States with the explicit purpose of preparing students for a democracy often operates in ways that demonstrate the lack of belief in such collective participation. Most schools do not include faculty, students, and parents in democratic decision making. Indeed, in many cases, where formal leaders wish for such involvement, many faculty, students, or parents would rather not be involved. Schools in the United States all too often operate in accord with dependency and hierarchical relations, not democratic ones. How can we as a country continue to sacrifice the lives of young men and women to protect and extend democracy as the best

way of determining the common good while we stand unwilling to use the same beliefs in how we make decisions and set standards about the learning of our youth?

The Good School and Moral Principles

Few will argue with the central purpose of education introduced above, but if we begin to reflect seriously on it, then it leads to a set of moral principles that present a distinct challenge to conventional practice. These principles are in direct conflict with the essentialist philosophy, narrow curriculum, and restricted learning that accompany the standards and high-stakes emphasis of today. Let us, therefore, consider 10 moral principles that, taken together and taken seriously, foster development of a school much more likely to prepare students to use their education well in contributing to a better society.

Compassion

Truly effective leaders and teachers are fired by a spirit of compassion for all other members of the school community. Compassion should not be interpreted as maudlin sympathy, but rather as genuine empathy combined with a concern for the overall well-being of colleagues and students. In a "school of compassion," there is a great deal of interpersonal communication intended to understand the personality, needs, concerns, and interests of others, as well as commitment of time and energy to assist individuals to realize their human potential. Leaders are more concerned about the growth and development of individual teachers and students than just the latest composite test report. Teachers first teach students, not test objectives.

Wholeness

Authentic compassion for students leads to the realization that one cannot separate different aspects of student growth. The good school is concerned with all levels represented in Bloom's taxonomy, not just comprehension and application as typically measured by high-stakes tests, and certainly not just the narrow test objectives such instruments usually encompass. In addition to concern for cognitive growth, the good school is committed to students' physical, emotional, creative, social, and moral development. Not only is growth in all of these areas necessary for the development of the whole person, the different domains of learning are interactive and interdependent; growth in one domain is enhanced by growth in the others. The principle of wholeness applies to adult members of the school community as well. For example, the school needs to concern itself with teachers' pedagogical growth but also with their physical and emotional well-being, and with their creative, social, and moral development.

Connectedness

Schools have an obligation to break down artificial barriers to natural relationships in students' lives and learning. For example, the education provided to students must be relevant to both their present and their future, not focused on one at the expense of the other. Connections between different content areas must be made. And, the world of the classroom needs to be connected to life outside the school, including the local, national, and world communities (National Commission on Service Learning, 2002). The principle of connectedness also means that members of the school community should not be restricted to a single role. Administrators, teachers, and students should all engage in leadership, teaching, and learning, albeit at different levels and with different emphases.

Inclusion

Inclusion, as a moral principle, combines the beliefs in equality and equity. It begins with equality; all students are of equal worth as human beings and as members of the school community. A belief in equality leads to a commitment to equity. Those who have physical, cognitive, emotional, or social disabilities need special assistance, including extraordinary measures if necessary, to enable then to remain members of the community and to lead fulfilling lives as students and later as adults. Additionally, the good school *reaches out* to all categories of students, for example, from low socioeconomic backgrounds, minorities, migrants, international students, non-English-speaking students, gay and lesbian students, and even students with serious behavioral problems.

Justice

Teaching about social justice certainly has its place in the school curriculum, but here we mean *providing justice* as a means of facilitating teaching and learning. Justice includes holding teachers accountable for effective instruction and holding students accountable for learning, but in an *educational* context accountability ought to mean the provision of feedback on one's performance and assistance for improving future performance, not the issuing of rewards and punishments.

At its core, justice means treating members of the school community in a fair and consistent manner. By being just with students, educators to some extent can counter the injustice that students may have been dealt by their families, communities, or the larger society. By modeling justice, educators can teach students to treat others justly. Such justice, repeated daily, can facilitate student learning in all areas and eventually lead to a more just society. Justice must also be provided to all adults in the school community. Adults who are treated justly learn better how to treat students justly. A school will very likely provide its students no more justice than it provides its staff.

Peace

Student misbehavior is one of the major school problems reported by supervisors and teachers. Especially troublesome is misbehavior that interferes with the right of other students to learn. Worse yet, in recent years there has been a frightening increase in student violence. Perhaps one way to approach this problem is to change from a school characterized by "effective student discipline" to a "school of peace." Moving toward this vision will require that supervisors, teachers, and students develop or enhance communication, collaboration, and conflict management skills. But it also will require that administrators, teachers, and students develop new self concepts; that they begin to view themselves not just as leaders or teachers or students but as *healers* and *peacemakers*. For those who argue that we cannot afford to spend school time learning about healing and peacemaking, our response should be that considering the growing incivility in our communities and schools, we can no longer afford *not* to engage in such learning.

Freedom

Learning and freedom—freedom to dream, to explore, to take risks, and to learn from failures—go hand in hand. Educators need freedom to grow professionally, and likewise, students need freedom to develop to their full potential. Granted, students and adults function at varying stages of development and thus possess varying capacities for responding to freedom. For some, freedom may need to be introduced gradually, initially presented as restricted choice. But it is the *directionality* of the school's efforts that is the important thing; all members of the school community should be moving toward increased freedom of choice in what they learn, how they learn, and how they demonstrate learning. This is a particularly difficult principle to accept for those who equate school reform with external control, an ironic phenomenon in a democratic society.

Trust

Consistent efforts on behalf of compassion, wholeness, connectedness, inclusion, justice, peace, and freedom can lead to trusting relationships among members of the school community. Trust is both a product of adhering to the other principles and a requirement for those principles to flourish over the long run. Authentic learning is based not only on the transmission of knowledge and skills but also on personal relationships, and trust is the ground on which those relationships are built. For all its importance, however, personal trust is not the only type of trust present in the good school. There also is trust in the moral principles to which the school is committed—trust that these principles, if adhered to, will result in a better education and more fulfilling lives for students and a better future for society.

Empowerment

As a moral principle, empowerment certainly includes involving members of the school community in decisions about matters that affect them. But it goes beyond this standard definition. It also means changing assumptions, norms, roles, and relationships that act as barriers to educators' and students' growth toward self-reliance and self-actualization. It includes not only an invitation to become involved in decisions concerning leadership, teaching, and learning, but also to acquire the information and skills necessary to engage in effective decision making in each of these areas. Finally, empowerment means instilling in educators and students a commitment to facilitate the empowerment of *other* members of the school community.

Community

We've referred to the "school community" throughout this book. The good school is a community of leaders, teachers, and learners, with individual members assuming all three roles. *Community* itself can be a moral principle if we understand the term as a group committed to the overall well-being, growth, and development of each member. An authentic community will develop values, norms, relationships, and practices consistent with this common purpose. Community members will engage in collective and individual actions for the well-being of both the community and its individual members. Collegiality and collaboration become a way of life. An additional aspect of community is *celebration.* The community celebrates its progress toward its vision, but also engages in anticipatory celebration of what it wants to be—it celebrates the future!

Priorities

Following the moral principles outlined above does not mean that a school ignores legislated standards of learning, externally mandated teacher evaluation systems, or high-stakes tests. What it does mean is that educators realize that schools need to go well beyond these well-intentioned, largely ineffective, and often counterproductive efforts to ensure that all students experience the growth and development necessary to become contributing members of society and to lead fulfilling lives. Educators in the good school realize that leadership, teaching, and learning based on moral principles offers the best chance for students to reach their human potential. What we are talking about then is a question of priorities. Educators committed to moral principles believe that if we base school reform on those principles, we will optimize meaningful student learning. They also realize that in some situations, the most efficient or immediate means of meeting external, simplistic measures of student learning may contradict moral principles. In such situations, they are prepared to choose the long-term good over expedient compliance.

Applying Moral Principles to a Moral Dilemma:
No Child Left Behind

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was enacted for the purpose of holding schools accountable for their students' academic progress and eliminating achievement gaps among student subgroups. NCLB mandates annual testing in reading and math for grades 3–8 and at least once in grades 10–12, with annual tests in science given once for grades 3–5, 6–9, and 10–12 beginning in 2007. States must set adequate yearly progress goals for districts, schools, and student subgroups, and use the state tests to determine whether schools are making adequate yearly progress toward 100 percent proficiency for all students by 2013–2014. NCLB requires state assessment results to be disaggregated by economic status, race, ethnicity, and limited English proficiency. The act mandates that all teachers be fully certified and licensed for the subjects they teach and that paraprofessionals have at least two years of college or pass a "rigorous" exam.

Districts and schools that meet or exceed adequate yearly progress goals or close achievement gaps are eligible for "State Academic Achievement Awards." Districts and schools that fail to reach their adequate yearly progress goals are subject to "improvement, corrective action, and restructuring" measures. Failing schools must allow students to transfer to a "better" school within the district and the district must pay for the students' transportation to the new school. Districts with schools that fail to meet standards for three out of four years must use a portion of their Title I funds to purchase supplemental educational services for eligible students. Eventually, failing schools may have their staff replaced or be taken over by the state.

At the surface level, NCLB seems to be a positive approach to problems facing public education today. After all, everyone can agree that all students deserve a quality education, achievement gaps among groups of students should be eliminated, and districts and schools should be held accountable for student learning. On closer examination, however, several aspects of NCLB are problematic. First, NCLB is severely underfunded in general, and the additional funds provided to poor districts are far from adequate for assisting poor schools to meet NCLB mandates. Second, the long-term requirements of NCLB may be impossible for most schools (including many effective schools) to reach. Some experts predict that as many as 75 percent of all schools eventually will be placed in the "needs improvement" category (Olson, 2002). Third, the strategies that NCLB uses to measure student progress are seriously flawed. NCLB does not provide for measuring yearly progress of the same group or subgroup of students. Neither the size of the achievement gaps among groups nor the size of gains by underachieving groups are relevant when determining adequate yearly progress. Finally, the primary tool for measuring student progress under NCLB, the high-stakes test, has produced a number of negative effects that have called into question its use as the sole measure of progress.

Most teachers do not believe that high-stakes testing is an accurate measure of student learning or school effectiveness (Reese, Gordon, and Price, 2004), yet they are under intense pressure to meet state testing goals (Brighton, 2002). Due

to this pressure, many teachers spend more time than they wish teaching minimal skills and test-taking strategies (Jones et al., 1999; Reese, Gordon, and Price, 2004). The teaching of higher-order thinking and problem solving tends to be de-emphasized (Jones et al., 1999). As a result of the pressure to improve test scores, teachers become stressed and anxious, even when their students do well on the test (Jones et al., 1999). They feel frustrated and disappointed when students do poorly (Reese, Gordon, and Price, 2004). The negative effects of testing on their teaching and their students make many teachers feel powerless (Costigan, 2002). One study concluded that standards and high-stakes testing now is the number one reason experienced teachers leave the profession (Tye and Obrien, 2002).

Teachers are not the only educators negatively affected by high-stakes testing. Well-respected principals have been dismissed without warning solely due to low scores on a single set of tests (McGhee and Nelson, 2005). School counselors, who often coordinate the administration of state tests, report that testing has negative affects on their role as counselors. Many believe their role in testing inhibits their ability to provide counseling services and damages their relationships with teachers and students (Brown, Galassi, and Akos, 2004).

The most important effects of high-stakes testing, of course, are the effects on students. There is a growing body of evidence that improved scores on state tests do not mean increased student learning (Amrein and Berliner, 2002), and a narrowing of gaps on state test scores between Whites and minority students may actually mask increasing gaps between Whites and minorities on other measures of student learning. (Klein, Hamilton, McCaffrey, and Stetcher, 2000). High-stakes testing does not increase students' motivation to learn (Reese, Gordon, and Price, 2004). Rather, the test causes stress, anxiety, and fear among many students (Brown, Galassi, and Akos, 2004), and the constant emphasis on test preparation can cause student burnout on testing (Reese, Gordon, and Price, 2004). The effects of testing on low-income minority students has been especially negative. Test prep materials and drill have replaced the normal curriculum in many schools serving primarily low-income minority students (McNeil, 2000). The oral drill, worksheets, practice tests, and frequent review that characterize test preparation for many minority students is reminiscent of the "pedagogy of poverty" written about by Haberman (1991) more than a decade prior to NCLB. This type of instruction leads to students' passive resentment and poor performance. It is not surprising, then, that graduation rates of African American and Hispanic students have decreased considerably during the era of high-stakes testing (Haney, 1999; Horn, 2003; Madaus and Clark, 2001).

It is not difficult to identify serious conflicts between the moral principles of the good school described above and NCLB. *The principle of compassion* calls for us to be more concerned about the growth and development of individual teachers and students than the latest set of test scores. *The principle of wholeness* requires us to teach the whole student, not just teach the narrow proficiencies typically measured by high-stakes tests. *The principle of connectedness* calls for connecting content from different subject areas and connecting students to the real world, not for the narrow curriculum and the artificial world of test preparation that

NCLB has led us to. *The principal of inclusion* is inconsistent with the pedagogy of poverty that forces low-income minority students to spend their school days in repetitive drill on minimal skills. *The principal of justice* cries out against the triage strategy used in many schools in which teachers focus intensive efforts on "bubble students" while spending less time and effort on students either likely to pass the test or perceived to have little chance of passing. We could go on. NCLB as currently written, despite the good intentions of those who made it the law of the land, contradicts all 10 of the moral principles described above.

The problems with NCLB that we have described place supervisors and teachers across the nation in one of the great moral dilemmas of our time. They cannot simply declare NCLB immoral and refuse to help students prepare for their state's high-stakes test. This course of action would put their students at a disadvantage, help to bring down sanctions on their school, and eventually result in their dismissal, after which they would no longer be of any value to their students. On the other hand, large numbers of supervisors and teachers believe that NCLB is doing many of our children more harm than good. Is it not wrong to simply comply with a system that has such negative effects? How should educators who believe that NCLB is harmful to students respond? Brighton (2002) notes that many teachers respond to this dilemma by attempting to "straddle the fence" between what they believe to be sound instructional practices and test preparation strategies. This approach attempts to create a balance between best practice and test practice. Although we believe there is some merit in this approach, we also believe that supervisors and teachers have a moral (and extremely difficult) obligation to directly confront the harmful effects of NCLB and work for changes in its provisions. Therefore, we propose both short-term and long-term strategies for educators to address NCLB, with both strategies carried out simultaneously.

Short-Term Strategies

These short-term strategies are intended to help schools meet the requirements of NCLB in ways that are consistent with the moral principles discussed earlier. The first set of short-term strategies is suggested for all schools:

• *Develop Curriculum:* Embed state standards and test objectives into a comprehensive curriculum that includes more holistic and meaningful learning opportunities. Brighton (2002) notes that standards can be integrated within meaningful units of study and used as scaffolding for larger concepts. Once the curriculum is developed, the larger curriculum goals rather than the discrete standards and test objectives must remain the focus of teaching and learning.

• *Do Not Eliminate Nontested Subjects:* Subjects like social studies, art, health, and physical education are important aspects of students' education, and thus schools have a moral obligation to include those subjects in their curriculum. Moreover, schools that maintain a rich curriculum tend to do better on high-stakes tests than schools that narrow the curriculum to tested content (Reese, Gordon, and Price, 2004).

• *Strive for Authentic Instruction:* Authentic instruction, including "higher-order thinking, deep knowledge and substantive conversation" as well as "connection to the world beyond the classroom" (Wehlage, Newman, and Secada, 1996, p. 32) results in increased student learning as measured by both standardized tests and authentic assessment (Marks, Newmann, and Gamoran, 1996). Authentic instruction can lead to significant improvement in academic performance for lower-performing as well as higher-performing students. Many of the "best practices" discussed in the literature are consistent with authentic instruction. These include "concept-based instruction, interdisciplinary connections, student-generated topics of study, authentic assessment, flexible grouping, and differentiated instruction" (Brighton, 2002, p. 31).

• *Make Extensive Use of Formative Assessment:* In effective schools, teaching is planned and modified based on ongoing and extensive gathering of informal data on students' daily progress. Teachers observe students' classroom performance, review student work products, engage in diagnostic discussion with students, and revise instruction accordingly.

• *Differentiate Instruction:* The one-size-fits-all drill and kill that many schools resort to in order to prepare students for the high-stakes test is neither good teaching practice nor an effective way to raise test scores. Teachers need to use a variety of instructional strategies to meet different student needs, including multiple strategies within the same lesson.

• *Limit Test-Taking Practice:* Students who are not taught test-taking strategies are placed at a disadvantage to students who are, so some preparation for taking a high-stakes multiple-choice test is necessary. The preparation needed, however, is a far cry from the common practice of using the test format day after day in lessons and assignments. Schools need to set limits on the amount of time and materials used to teach test-taking skills.

• *Provide Professional Development:* School-focused professional development possessing the characteristics described in Chapter 18 is essential to the improvement of teaching and learning. All professional development programs should include a teacher induction program as well as ongoing professional development assisting teachers with curriculum development, authentic instruction, informal assessment, differentiated instruction, and so on. Professional development also should deal directly with how to address the conflicts between NCLB and best practice.

The strategies discussed so far apply to all schools. Let us now consider additional short-term strategies that are especially relevant for low-income districts and schools.

• *Recruit and Retain Quality Teachers:* Provide incentives, resources, and rewards to attract and keep high-quality teachers in schools serving low-income students.

- *Develop Partnerships:* Collaborative partnerships are important to all districts and schools; however, schools serving low-income students must make special efforts to develop collaborative relationships with parents and other community members. This includes parent and community participation in school leadership and school improvement. Partnerships with higher education and business are other key ingredients for school improvement.
- *Focus on Analysis and Improvement:* Rather than pressuring, threatening, transferring, and dismissing principals and teachers in low-income schools with poor test scores, district leaders should collaborate with school personnel to complete a thorough data-based analysis of why scores are low, and work with the school to plan and implement a long-term, data-driven school improvement plan. A variety of data (not just state test results) should be used to plan for school improvement, and continued data gathering and analysis should guide ongoing school improvement efforts.

Long-Term Strategies

We believe that the short-term strategies outlined above will do much to ameliorate the harmful aspects of NCLB, improve test scores on high-stakes tests, and most importantly, improve student learning. However, when attempting to follow moral principles that lead to better schools, amelioration of harmful policies is not enough. We believe that the stakes for public education and public school students are so high that K–12 supervisors and teachers need to become directly involved in efforts to change public policy. They will not be able to do it alone, but will need to become part of a coalition of K–12 educators, parents, university educators, and enlightened businesspersons and policy makers who recognize the critical need for change. Members of this coalition will need to educate the general public, the corporate world, and politicians on the need for change, and push directly for new legislation at the state and federal level. Specific changes that should be on the reform agenda include the following:

- The development at national and state levels of more realistic long-term school improvement goals, with the involvement of various educational groups in the establishment of these goals
- A shift from reliance on the high-stakes achievement test as the sole measure of school effectiveness to the use of multiple measures, with the examination of the local school context a critical part of the assessment process
- Higher-level learning as a measure of student progress (for example, assessing students on their ability to solve real-world problems)
- Measurement of academic progress of the same groups and subgroups of students over time, with gains by the same group and subgroups used as indicators of school improvement

- Requirements to separate research-based teaching methods and school improvement strategies from ideological-based methods and strategies; to fund research on teaching/learning using a variety of research methods; and to promote teaching methods that are supported by multiple types of evidence gathered over time
- The provision of adequate resources for smaller school units, smaller classes, and professional development programs to foster high-quality teaching
- The provision of additional resources to low-income schools, allowing those schools to bridge the gaps with wealthier schools in quality of professional staff, physical facilities, and instructional materials
- The provision of additional resources, including adequate time, for underachieving schools to gather and analyze data on the causes of underachievement, and to plan and implement long-term school improvement programs focused on specific improvement targets

The use of moral principles to guide us toward "good schools" across the nation, as illustrated by the recommendations above, does not consist of embracing romantic abstractions. Rather, the road to the "good school" includes concrete actions to do what we can to improve schools within present limitations while we work together with others to remove these limitations and empower schools to be all that they can be. We will close this discussion of NCLB with two questions for readers to ponder, either individually or in dialogue with one another:

1. What can I do in the short term, either by myself or in collaboration with others, to protect students from external factors that are interfering with student learning?
2. What can I do in the long term, either by myself or in collaboration with others, to change external factors that are interfering with student learning?

Conclusion

SuperVision and instructional leadership are foremost about the ideas of goodness, purpose, and the hope for all of our students. We have provided knowledge, technical, and interpersonal skills, and domains, structures, and applications for achieving a purposeful school dedicated to the continuing improvement of teaching and learning. Please remember that competence without clear purpose results in directionless change, and purpose without competence provides inefficiency and frustration. We hope that you, the reader, in whatever role of instructional leadership, will add coherence and congruence to the education of all students in your own schools and districts. After all, this is the primary reason for why we chose to be educators—to practice what we believe.

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