


For the Love of Learning

Volume III: The Educators

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Chapter 12: The Educators

The most important question...has to do with what conditions of schooling are most enhancing of teachers' work. The workplace is the key, and we...argue that it is currently a workplace designed for people of a different age and for ideas of management and control no longer viable.

Michael Fullan and Michael Connelly
Teacher Education in Ontario:
Current Practice and Options for the Future, 1987

In this chapter, we explore one of our levers for change, what we term "teacher professionalization and development." There are four distinct parts to the chapter, corresponding to four important areas relating to educators:

Section A: Professional issues

Section B: Teacher education

Section C: Evaluating performance

Section D: Leadership

At all levels, the professional skill and commitment of educators are crucial to the success of school reform efforts.

In earlier chapters, we pointed to the need for a stronger, more focused, and more engaging educational system to take us into the 21st century. We noted the demographic shifts, the changing social fabric, new knowledge about learning and teaching, and the importance of electronic technologies. We have suggested how schools might change to better address such new realities.

In Chapter 6, we developed a set of principles about good teaching. Now we show how the conditions of teachers' work often constrain their ability to live up to these principles, and we suggest ways to overcome some of these barriers. We examine and make recommendations about teacher selection, preparation, and on-going professional development. We also address the important issue of performance evaluation of educators. Finally, we examine school and school-board leadership, describing the tasks, skills, and knowledge required, and the kind of preparation and professional support we believe would

ensure that principals and supervisory officers are well trained for leading schools and school systems into the 21st century.

We envision an expanded professional role for teachers and principals in the schools of the future, who therefore will need strong professional preparation and support. As schools draw more on outside resources, teachers will increasingly have to work with others who are outside the field of education. In addition to their regular classroom responsibilities, teachers will be acting as continuing advocates and guides for a small group of students, and will have greater responsibilities for assessing and reporting on student learning, including contributing to each student's cumulative educational record. Principals will, in the schools we envisage, play the leading role first, in sustaining the instructional focus of the school, and second, in building strong and effective community partnerships.

The key to success of the reforms is the professional capacity and will of educators. Significant improvement in schools will occur only if educators " teachers and administrators " are strongly committed to professional growth, from the beginning of their careers to the end, and if they assume collective responsibility for ensuring the highest quality of student learning. We also believe that educators should take more of the responsibility for setting the standards of their profession.

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