

LINK 4a: The forces impacting upon Australian schools and some implications for school leaders (Long Version)¹

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1. Introduction: A compass for a complex, changing, challenging landscape

Australian schools have always been seen as central to the project of nation building. However, since the start of the 21st century, the purposes of Australian schools have been placed even more directly under the microscope due to the impact of a number of trends, influences or ‘forces’, such as technological change, the increasing diversity of the Australian population, the growth of a knowledge-based society and the globalisation of the economy, cultures and environment.

Taken together, these forces are challenging the very nature of schooling (Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE), 2004). They are causing educational organisations and systems around the world to broaden and personalise curricula (e.g., DfES, 2005; Leadbeater, 2004a, 2004b, & 2005) and to rethink school structures (Marginson, 1997; OECD, 2001a; Hartley, 1997; Levin & Riffel, 1997). In Australia there has been a flurry of activity designed to broaden the curricula by foregrounding generic skills and capabilities (e.g., Government of South Australia, 2006; Tasmanian Department of Education, 2005). And yet this activity is proceeding in the absence of an ongoing conversation that joins together this context, its implications for the organisation of schools and the implications of both for school leaders.

The position taken in this chapter is that school leaders have to be part of this conversation. While none of us can know what the future holds, we *can* work to shape that future, to make sure that, as far as possible, what happens is what we want to have happen. Occasionally school leaders need to position themselves so that they are able to see ‘the bigger picture’; to detach themselves from the hurly-burly of the moment, gain a more distant view of issues that are close by and pressing (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). But care is needed. When lost on a highway, a road map is very useful; but when one is lost in a world where the topography, such as that provided by the education systems and structures that serve it, is constantly changing, a road map is of little help. A simple compass, something that indicates the general direction to be taken, is helpful, however.

The next section aims to provide just such a compass. It identifies and examines some cardinal points, or forces relevant to the terrain, and analyses some implications of

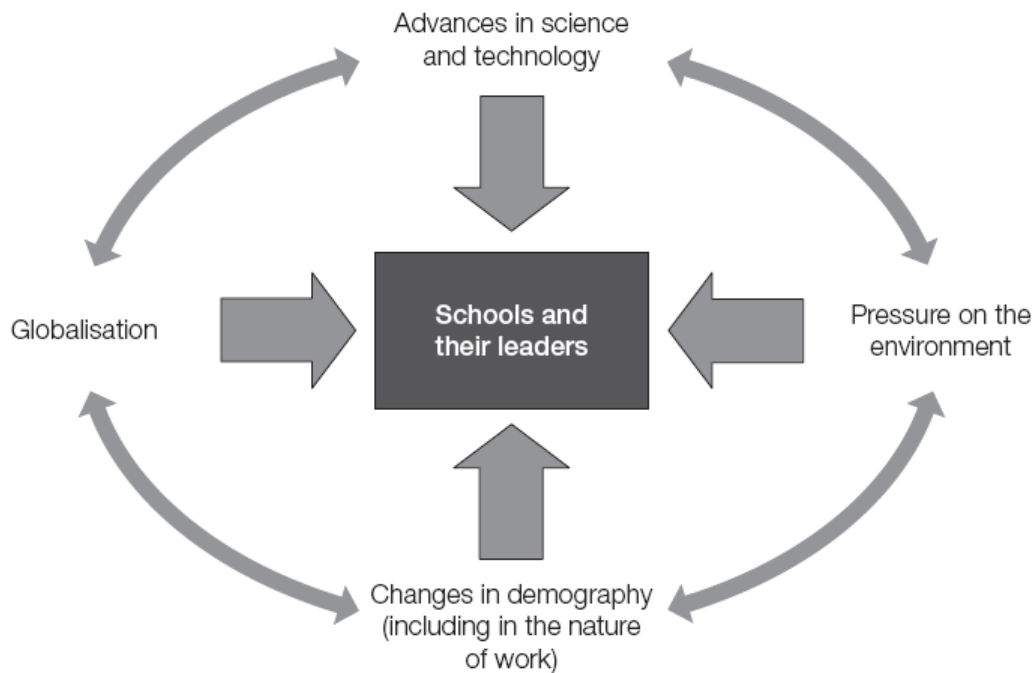
¹ Mulford, B., Edmunds, B., Cranston, N., Keating, J., Reid, A. (in press). Forces Impacting upon Australian Schools and Some Implications for School Leaders. In Russo, B. (ed). *Encyclopaedia of Teaching and Teacher Research*. N.Y.: Nova Science. ISBN: 978-1-61761-847-5

each for schools and their leaders. The forces are advances in science and technology, changes in demography, globalisation, and pressures on the environment. A second section examines these implications in greater detail under the three headings: the need to choose between competing pressures created by the forces, especially between constant change and continuity, dependence and independence, individualism and community and homogeneity and heterogeneity; the need to broaden what counts as good schooling, especially to include social skills; and, ensuring that the way schools are organised and run is consistent with both of these needs, especially through greater use of living systems, deep democracy, personalisation through participation, and networks.

All three implications urge far greater attention on the public purposes and processes of education than is currently the case. A third and final section takes these implications for school leader practice further by combining the material in the first two sections under the related 'public' concepts of social capital and communities of professional learners.

2. The forces

What are the forces that will shape the world in which we will live, work and provide education? In an attempt to introduce some structure to the plethora of literature in the area, this section will first examine two 'determining' forces (the 'north' and 'south' cardinal points of the compass) of the advances in science and technology and changes in demography (including change in the nature of work). These two forces are followed by two others (the 'east' and 'west' points), that is, globalisation and pressures on the environment. The speed with which all of these changes are taking place is seen by some (Sturges, 2006) as inevitable. The question is not how they might be avoided, but what we must do to adapt.



Although the forces are examined independently of each other, it is clear that these forces are interrelated. For example, advances in contraception have led to a lowering of fertility rates, and advances in medicine have led to increased life expectancy; both have had a major impact on demographic trends. Faster and cheaper communication and travel have impacted on globalisation. More people and the concomitant increased demand for fossil fuels has contributed to global warming, which, in turn, has had a major impact on the world's environment.

2.1 Advances in science and technology

Throughout history, technological innovations have redistributed power, enabled a tribe, a people or a nation to vie for and gain dominance over other groups. Fire, ferrous metal, farming and firearms are all historic discoveries that transformed nations and facilitated the transference of power. Modern examples include internal combustion engines, interchangeable parts, electrical energy and electronic components. Ever more efficient transport and communications, greater automation, the use of computers and even the wide-scale availability of medical discoveries, continue to impact massively on the world around us (Mulford, 1994).

The links between scientific and technological change and our world view have become increasingly clear. Automation and computers have facilitated data storage and retrieval at a very fast pace. Communication and transport systems allow us to be less time or place bound. Ease of travel facilitates greater immigration (including illegal). There are shifts in the demography of populations as a result of the combined effects of advances in, and growing acceptance of, contraceptives, work opportunities

(rural/urban) and longevity. Education, research on the brain and learning styles indicates a need for a much more varied approach to teaching than the standard teacher-focused format (Harris, 2006).

The pace of scientific and technological change has and will continue to increase exponentially. For example, increases in bandwidth will lead to a rise in Internet-based services. Access to video and television (Gilbert, 2006) will increase. Costs associated with hardware, software and data storage will decrease, resulting in the opportunity for near-universal access to personal, multi-functional devices, smarter software integrated with global standards and increasing amounts of information being available to search online (using everything from Google and Yahoo to the more recent development with Wikipedia, Blogger, YouTube, MySpace, SecondLife, and del.icio.us). Wikipedia's founder, Jimmy Wales, has defined Wikipedia as 'a world in which every single person ... is given free access to the sum of all human knowledge' (Harris, 2006, p. 10). These developments mean there will be far greater access to, and reliance on, technology as a means of conducting daily interactions and transactions, including in schools (Margo et al., 2006).

What will be some of the results of these advances in science and technology for school leaders? People will expect and demand immediate responses, customised solutions and access to information. Technology will enable customised learning to occur any time, any place. It expands the options and choices individuals and families have in all aspects of their lives, including education. Information and digital technologies could increasingly move the control of learning away from educational institutions and towards individuals (McREL, 2005). There will be less need to systematically acquire 'authorised' knowledge from, and sequenced and packaged by, experts. Knowledge/evidence will be increasingly constructed socially and in a non-linear fashion.

Advances in science and technology have resulted in pressures on both individuals and their organisations. These pressures have particular implications for schools and their leaders and require answers to several key questions - answers that are clearly located within the public arena.

- While the beauty of the Internet is that it connects people, will it remain free and publicly accessible? Will the 'digital divide' persist, thus ensuring the underprivileged in our society no longer miss out (the issue of equity)?
- Will attitudes and skills need to be taught to assist people to make wise choices in handling increased amounts of information and change? Anonymous information, like that contained within Wikipedia, is faux-authoritative and anti-contextual. The risk is in the aggregator (YouTube, Wikipedia, and search engines such as Google) becoming more important than the aggregated information, which lacks verification. There is also a danger in the blurring of boundaries between reality and unreality; for example, increasingly sophisticated computer games blur the distinction between entertainment and real life, or reality TV and talk shows.

- With the move to greater individualisation, fanned by technological advances such as mobile phones and MP3 players, will communities become more fragmented? For example, what will the impact of advances in technology be on our sense of security – will we feel more secure or more vulnerable to hackers, criminals and terrorists? An elementary level of trust is necessary for community. Where can such trust be established, if not in our homes and schools? How can schools act to support the development of trust?

2.2 Changes in demography

Changes in demography, including changes in the nature of work, are leading to an increase in the proportion of elderly and urban dwellers in the population. Developing country populations are increasing at a much more dramatic rate than developed country populations. Commentators have argued that the evolution of a massively increased urban/suburban landscape and developing and developed country populations has promoted a growing separation between people by income, class, and, to a lesser extent, race (Harris, 2006). There will be a more ethnically and socially diverse society and a different generation will move into positions of authority and power. Worldwide, the change of generation will further exacerbate changes in the nature of work.

The Australia Government's Department of Treasury Intergenerational Report (Costello, 2007) outlines the challenges Australia faces as our population inevitably and irreversibly ages. After 2010, the dependence ratio – that is the ratio of children and older people to people of working age – is expected to increase even more rapidly, as baby boomers reach aged pension age. This report highlights a number of 'public' needs, including: developing policies which make it easier for families to have children, such as workplace flexibility and support for families; increased engagement in the workforce of those who are marginalised, to increase participation and improve their self-esteem; and, policies that support increased diversity in the culture, language and ability.

Change in the nature of work has also become pervasive (Rankin, 2005), especially with the marketplace becoming the arbiter. The move to the service and information sectors as trade in manufactures follows agricultural commodities down the path of ever-reducing relative importance. It could be suggested that Australia will not succeed in the 21st century by focusing largely on exported goods, when more than 50 per cent of world trade is in services (including tourism and education). Added to this is the fact that the majority of Australia's exports will be to the most populous and fastest growing region of the world, the Asia-Pacific region. This is a region where some countries have leap-frogged right over the industrial period and are now operating in an information economy, where the most important resources do not come from the ground but from people. In these circumstances, the ability to work well with others, including those from other cultures, is the fundamental competency.

Some of the implications for schools, which derive directly from these demographic changes, include high levels of retirement among teachers and school leaders is

leading to shortages in supply. The teaching profession, on average, is likely to be younger than currently, less experienced and not representative of the broad ethnic composition of the population. In fact, the demographics of the current pool of teachers compared to the pool of students indicate the potential for cultural disconnection. Also, career advancement processes are likely to lead to the best and most experienced teachers migrating to the most privileged environments (Harris, 2006). With greater globalisation this migration could also increasingly be interstate and/or overseas.

Demographic changes to the population will mean that a different generation, those born from the 1980s onwards, the New Millennial Learner (NML), will populate our schools – as students and, increasingly, as staff. Linking demographic and technical forces, the Millennials are the first generation to grow up surrounded by digital media, and much of their activity involving peer-to-peer communication and knowledge management is mediated by these technologies (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Also called ‘Homo Zappiens’ (Veen, 2003), they are skilled at multitasking and controlling simultaneously different sources of digital information in a world where ubiquitous and immediate connections (for example, mobile phones and texting) are taken for granted. The changing ways that members of this generation can learn, communicate and entertain themselves may be the primary reasons behind the growing popularity of socially oriented technologies such as blogs, wikis, tagging and instant messaging. It is the first generation since the invention of television to have reduced its time watching television, due to the attention it devotes to other digital media, particularly the internet (Pedro, 2006).

New Millennial Learner (NML) consumption of digital media is less controllable than other older forms of media by parents or teachers. As the OECD’s project in the area has argued, there are clear implications here for traditional teaching and learning activities in schools with a need to move to more active individual participation (Pedro, 2006). New sets of personal and social values and attitudes may also be linked to these emerging practices. NMLs may be less willing to subscribe to the notion held by earlier generations that citizenship is a matter of duty and obligation (Bennett, 2007). NMLs favour loose networks of community action to address issues that reflect personal values using interactive information technologies such as blogging, gaming and MySpace (Bennett, 2007). This situation raises a challenge for schools as they seek to achieve their purposes. As an OECD expert in the area points out, will schools allow NMLs:

to more fully explore, experience and expand democracy, or will they continue to force them to try and fit into an earlier model that is ill suited to the networked societies of the digital age?

(Bennett, 2007, p. 8)

The demographic changes to the population will also mean that a different generation, by many accounts those born between 1961 and 1981, or ‘Generation X’, will move into the workforce positions of power and authority. Generation X is seen to be more

practical, sceptical and non-institutional than previous generations (McREL, 2005). Research on the new generation of teachers who are entering the workforce in the 21st century by Moore Johnson (2004) refers to their sense of ‘higher purpose’ in the workplace, a characteristic more prominent than in those of later generations. Moore Johnson found that in comparison with previous generations of teachers they are less accepting of top-down hierarchy and fixed channels of communication; less respectful of conventional organisations, generally more entrepreneurial than their predecessors, want a more varied experience, including outside the classroom, less likely to want to work alone, seek more frequent feedback about their performance; and are less intimidated by distinguishing themselves or taking charge and, more likely to expect (differentiated) salaries to reflect, in some fair way, their growth and success as teachers. It was also found that if systems and schools are not responsive to their talents and needs (for variety, responsibility and influence), they are likely to leave their school and the profession without concern.

As with advances in technology, several key questions need to be answered. Again, the answers to these questions are clearly set within the public purposes of education.

- How can we ensure increased engagement of the marginalised? It is worrying, for example, that deeper analysis of the first round of PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) revealed that disparities among students in reading, mathematical and science literacy were wider in Australia than in many other nations, favouring girls over boys, urban over rural, high socioeconomic over low socioeconomic, and non-indigenous over Indigenous (Lokan, Greenwood & Creswell, 2001).
- How can we engender respect for the worth and dignity of individuals and their cultural traditions? For example, how can we understand and live harmoniously with ideological and religious differences? The ‘war on terror’ has not only changed the way people travel but also the way some people of the world look at, and treat, people who look or act differently.
- How can we best develop attitudes and skills that will enable people to work in less hierarchical workplaces, to operate well with others, including in the technological networks of the digital age, and to be flexible and continually learning?

2.3 Globalisation

The world changes and Australia changes with it. Ideas about what exists elsewhere, what is possible, what is right and wrong, and about who does what to whom are no longer restricted to a geographic locality or a narrowly defined region. A global community is being constructed electronically and the availability of rapid and inexpensive transportation is reinforcing this condition on a personal basis. Increasingly there is nowhere to hide. Drinking cappuccino and Perrier water, eating sushi, or listening to American or British rock on an i-Pod while driving the Toyota over to McDonald’s dressed in our known-brand jeans are increasingly common

worldwide activities. We are enthusiastically travelling the world and indulging ourselves in using international food, music and fashion.

As the global influence of certain countries increases, issues facing these countries will also be issues for all, including for Australians and their schools. For example, India is the world's youngest country with 50 per cent of its people under the age of 25; by 2015 it will have 550 million teenagers. But India currently has 40 per cent of the world's poor, including a third of the world's malnourished children. It has the world's largest population of people with HIV/AIDS (more than 5.7 million). It has mass unemployment from the high proportion of its population who were engaged in now redundant rural farming practices. It has a severe water crisis. With 17 per cent of the world's population, India has only 4 per cent of the world's fresh water. Global warming is shrinking glaciers in the Himalayas, placing this water and the rainfall patterns on which agriculture depends at risk (Kamdar, 2007). Global citizenship will mean that those in schools will need to increasingly be aware of and be part of the solution to such issues.

The current generation of school children, wherever they live, will be forced to succeed in a multi-cultural, multi-faith, and multi-lingual world. Schooling, curricula, assessment methods, learning programs, student achievement data will be international and interchangeable (Beare, 2007). This last phenomenon is clearly seen in the increasing decontextualised international comparisons of academic performance in limited areas of the curriculum through programs such as the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

Globalisation has resulted in increased political intensification and simplification. Some suggest this intensification and simplification is a desperate attempt to retain control (Jones, 2006). On the other hand, and partly in response to globalisation, economic reform has sought to make us less dependent on states and governments and more dependent on economies, markets, prices and money – in brief, more directly dependent upon ourselves. Some researchers raise questions about such trends. For example, based on his research with 400 randomly selected middle Australians from five capital cities who shared their experiences of work, family and community, Pusey (2003) argues that these trends raise serious social, quality-of-life, family, public purpose issues. These are all issues which can impact on schools and their leaders.

The result of the commodification of everything has been an undermining of other more fundamental social resources for personal happiness, such as tension-free leisure, autonomy, effective personal communication, domestic felicity, good health, inter-generational relationships, meaningful work and friendships. Cooperation and collective action also have been undermined by, for example, competition and multi-skilling reduces interaction. Yet it is quality of life rather than material (money) income which people say matters most. (Pusey, 2003, p. 107)

2.4 Pressures on the environment

The pressures on the environment have been well documented. Factors such as the demand for fossil fuels and/or alternative sources of energy have led to a heightened awareness of threats to the environment and the need for responsible, decisive action to counter them. This awareness is resulting in a sharper focus on sustainability, the role of individuals within their communities and their impact on the environment (Margo et al., 2006).

The Australian Government's Intergenerational Report (Costello, 2007) highlights the fact that the country faces significant economic and quality-of-life problems from global warming, water shortages, desertification and soil salination. As the then Treasurer emphasised at the launch of the report, 'We must steward our environment between generations just as we steward finances.' But time may be limited. As Beare (2007, pp. 37–38) indicates, 'many commentators have pointed out [that] unless there is urgent action among the present generation on earth, we may be in the end-time of the planet, or of human civilization.'

Environmental forces raise questions for schools and their leaders. Again, these questions are clearly set within the public purposes of education and include:

- How can we learn quickly how to be responsible citizens of the globe, including being sustainable?
- What is the role of individuals within their community and their impact on, and stewardship of, the environment?
- How can we best encourage, develop and maintain sustainable schools and school leadership?

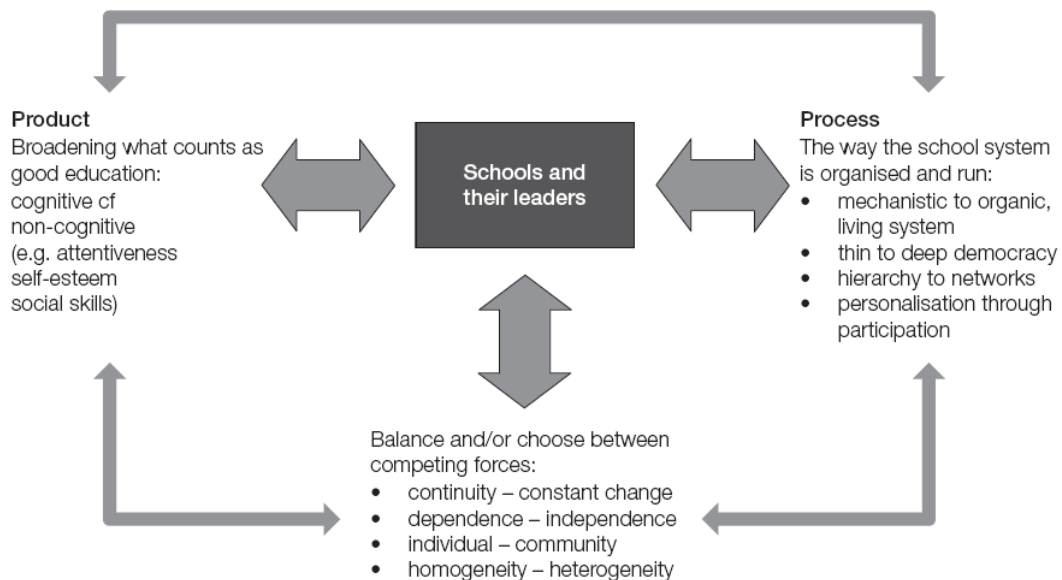
3 Implications of the forces for schools and their leaders

The four interrelated forces have at least three important implications for schools and their leaders: the need to make a choice between competing pressures created by the forces; the need to broaden 'what counts' as good schooling; and, ensuring that school processes are consistent with both these needs. It is argued that to achieve the best results in our schools the 'what' (products such as making choices and broadening what counts) and 'how' (school processes) need to be consistent with each other. This position is based on research that indicates that how school leaders treat teachers is closely related to how teachers treat their students and, in turn, a broad range of student learning outcomes (Mulford, Silins & Leithwood, 2004).

3.1 Choosing between competing forces

Schools and their leaders need to choose between competing pressures generated by the forces. These pressures, which cut across the forces, are at one and the same time for constant change and continuity, dependence and independence, individualism and

community, and homogeneity and heterogeneity. It is argued that for continued school success in the context of the forces just described, the choice must fall on the ‘public’ side of these responses, that is, continuity, independence, community, and heterogeneity (Mulford, 2003b).



Continuity or constant change

One element of recent times has been the constant change directed at schools: a stream of new movements, new programs and new directions. Unfortunately, some at all levels in education seem to be forever rushing to catch the next bandwagon that hits the scene. It is unfortunate because there is increasing evidence that many a school and school system and its students have been badly disillusioned by those selling the new movements (from ever-changing Ministers of Education and/or Departmental officials).

There is a view held by authors such as Peters (1987) that the main challenge in such a situation, a world of massive and constant change, is how to foster enough internal stability in people and the organisation in which they work and study in order to encourage the pursuit of change. Stability for change, moving ahead without losing our roots, is the challenge.

However, it is quite incorrect to assume that a school is effective only if it is undergoing change. Change may be in an inappropriate direction, for example, towards a facade of orderly purposefulness (Sergiovanni, 1990). Change may also involve the use of inappropriate measures of success, especially when they are merely procedural illusions of effectiveness (Meyer & Rowan, 1978). The difficulty of providing output measures by which education’s success can be measured has often led to the elevation in importance of ‘approved’ management processes. These processes include program planning, budgeting systems, school-based management,

charters/partnership agreements, strategic plans, and so on. Such processes contribute an illusion of effectiveness and become desired outputs in themselves, thus deceiving outside observers and many of those in schools as well. Such deception should have no place in good education.

In a changing world, it might be more helpful to remember Noah's principle: one survives not by predicting rain (or change) but by building arks. Amid uncertain, continually changing conditions, many schools are constructing arks comprising their collective capacity to learn, they are striving to become intelligent, or learning, organisations (Mulford, 2003c).²

Dependence or independence

A second fundamental issue relates to the imbalance between the competing factors of dependence and independence with the current situation favouring dependence. This situation is most easily seen in the overdependence many of those in schools place on 'leaders'. This view is frequently engendered by the overconfidence the 'leaders' have in their own abilities or importance.

Given the large number of recent Australian educational commissions, reviews, reports, position statements, and so on and the prominence of educational matters in the national media, there are a lot of people who want to tell those in schools what to do. This situation is unfortunate because many of those doing the telling do not seem to want to accept responsibility for their advice, are not around long enough to take responsibility for their directions and may even seek to prevent fair and open assessment of the changes they promulgate.

We cannot avoid change, indeed we may wish to seek, embrace and even thrive on it. Education is an integral part of our society and we must anticipate change as being one of the constants it will face. Whether these changes result in 'Frankensteins', or gentle, functional, collaborative and sustainable 'butterflies', depends largely on the response of those in schools. School leaders can continue to be on the receiving end, to be dependent, or they can choose to make a stand together, to be empowered, to be independent professionals, and to be leaders of democratic institutions proud to be serving their agreed purposes (see later sections).

Peter Hyman (2005), who left 10 Downing Street after many years as speech writer and advisor to the Prime Minister to work as an assistant to the headteacher at London's Islington Green School, relates his reflection on the same point:

Perhaps the biggest eye-opener for me on my journey has been how the approach I had been part of creating, to deal with 24-hour media and to demonstrate a decisive government, was entirely the wrong one for convincing frontline professionals, or indeed for ensuring successful delivery. Our approach to political strategy has been based on three things: momentum,

² See the later section on communities of professional learners.

conflict and novelty, whereas the frontline requires empowerment, partnership and consistency.

(Hyman, 2005, p. 384)

Individualism or community

It is said ours is a time when religious institutions no longer attract or have an impact on the young, families fall apart more often than ever before, some children are malnourished, drug addiction is a scourge and prime-time television programs are vacuous and educationally bankrupt. It is a time when advertisers and their clients have succeeded in not only rushing children through their developmental stages into a false sense of maturity but have also managed to link identity and status to brand names, and gang members; athletes, and narcissistic celebrities are the admired adolescent role models (Goodlad, 1994). It may be unreasonable to expect the schools to pick up the slack in such situations but if the family cannot and the school does not pick up the responsibility for our young, then who will? Who will counter, for example, the pressure inherent in much of our 'modern' society to act alone rather than with, or for, the community? We need to be reminded that change for the sake of change, including technological change, is not necessarily good; it must be tempered with wisdom, compassion and justice.

In the world described above, a skills crisis would indeed be bad enough but a values crisis would be devastating. The nine values for Australian schooling (care and compassion, doing your best, fair go, freedom, honesty and trustworthiness, integrity, respect, responsibility, and understanding, tolerance and inclusion – DEST, 2005) clearly need greater practical exposure. For example, turning back the tide of a 'virtual' existence, with its emphasis on individualism and encouragement to dissociate oneself from an increasingly challenging world, is vital for our future survival. For, as Peck (1987) has reminded us, a community is a place where conflict can be resolved without physical or emotional bloodshed and with wisdom as well as grace. A community is a group that 'fights gracefully'.

A generation that is unable to feel for others, incapable of creating the social trust that is so essential to maintain culture. And, as it is in the broader culture, so it is in schools. For example, it has been demonstrated that where teachers' trust in principals is undermined by perceptions of principal co-option of top-down system change initiatives, especially when unsupported by teachers, it results in teacher alienation and feelings of disempowerment, which can result in teacher resistance (Bishop & Mulford, 1999). Engagement in decision-making processes creates a sense of ownership and responsibility in stakeholders and preparedness to compromise and act within the agreed parameters within the community.

Homogeneity or heterogeneity

In looking for common denominators in successful schools, one strong indicator is the encouragement offered to the staff and students to do something radical, to take the

initiative, to take risks. If a system is too tight for this, there will be no search and no development, and without a developmental approach there can be no learning.

One lesson here is that reductionist approaches in education should not go unchallenged. Uniformity for schools and education systems in aims, in standards, and in methods of assessment is a complexity-reducing mechanism. While it may be far tidier administratively to have a single set of aims for all, a single curriculum for all, a single set of standards for all, and a single array of tests for all than it is to have locally developed approaches to school improvement, such homogeneity creates severe limitations to growth for schools.

Indeed research indicates that attempts to achieve homogeneity may backfire in terms of student attitudes to school. International research (OECD, 2004) shows, for example, that approximately a quarter of 15-year-old students across 32 countries 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that school is a place where they do not want to go. In countries such as Belgium, France and Hungary, where there is a high level of homogeneity in the education system, the proportion ranges from 35 to 42 per cent while in countries such as Denmark, Mexico, Portugal and Sweden, where there is less homogeneity, the figure is less than 20 per cent.

National researchers from the United Kingdom are:

beginning to encounter students expressing doubts about the genuineness of their school's interest in their progress and well-being as persons, as distinct from their contributions to their school's league table position. [The result is that] contract replaces community as the bond of human association.

(Fielding, 1999, p. 286)

Another UK study found Year 10 and 11 students' attitudes towards school to be uniformly negative. Most worrying in this study, however, was that teachers were beginning to be seen by their students as only representing other people's wills as they sought out the best means to adapt to the homogenising requirements of academic achievement, results and inspection:

every effort that a teacher makes to cajole the pupils into more work is interpreted as a sign of the teacher's selfish insecurity ... all appears to be done for the sake of the external powers.

(Cullingford, 2001, p.7)

3.2 Broadening what counts as good schooling

The forces and pressures increasingly permeating our schools show that in order to achieve their expressed purposes, it is critical that schools and their leaders clarify what counts as 'good' schooling. From the earlier analysis, these purposes could be seen to include:

For individuals:

- developing identity and quality of life

- developing attitudes and skills for handling the speed of change, including change through digital media which promotes multitasking and simultaneously controlling different sources of information through ubiquitous and immediate connections
- making wise choices from and judgements about the amount of information available
- being better skilled, flexible and adaptable and to be able to continually learn.

For groups:

- developing identity and quality of interaction
- preventing the fragmentation of community, including through the building of social capital, families and ensuring equity of access
- being better at understanding, living and working with differences and others
- understanding how to harness the popularity of socially oriented technologies and digitally networked societies
- countering a move from evidence, the rule of law, justice, and intellectual detachment
- learning to be responsible citizens of the globe, including being sustainable.

Measures of successful student achievement are increasingly being seen as wider than the cognitive/academic/individual. More and more they involve the public purposes of education. Howard Gardner understood the need to broaden what counts for good schooling with his conceptualisation of multiple intelligences. His most recent work (Gardner, 2007) extends this understanding by defining the abilities that will be needed in times of vast change as his five ‘minds for the future’; that is, disciplinary, synthesising, creating, respectful and ethical minds.

In practice, however, what is most easily measured seems to ‘matter’ most, whether this be through international testing, such as for PISA and TIMMS in mathematics, reading and science literacies, national and state testing or examination regimes, national incentive/disincentive programs such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in USA that demand standardised testing in a limited number of areas, or local system and school reports. Unfortunately, research shows that the result can be a narrowing of the curriculum, an increase in testing and teaching to the tests, and disadvantage for certain groups in our society (Jennings & Rentner, 2006), especially minorities and the poor (Rothstein & Jacobsen, 2006).

What is the situation in Australia? What do we value most as the outcomes of our schools? The agreed goals for Australian schools (Adelaide Declaration, MCEETYA, 1999, emphasis added) state that “schooling should develop *fully* the talents and capacities of all students”. A more recent report on the future of schooling in Australia by the States and Territories (Federalist Paper 2, 2007) reasserts the importance of the

Adelaide Declaration goals and their breadth. Included in the action plan of this report is also a commitment to

continue to work together to ... [explore] the possibility of a cycle of sample-based surveys of performance in areas not covered by the full cohort testing or international sample-based surveys in order to minimise any risk that the focus of assessment might limit the scope of curriculum in schools.

(Federalist Paper 2, 2007, p. 31)

Another source of information that helps us with an answer to the question of what do we value most as the outcomes of our schools is the research by Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) and the Business Council of Australia. These organisations have sought to discover what employers look for in workers in order to meet their current and future skills needs - skills such as communication, team work, problem-solving, initiative and enterprise, and planning and organising (DEST, 2002). One might assume that an increasingly service-oriented economy the emphasis on social skills will become ever more important in determining success. However, the ACCI believes that a mismatch currently exists between what employers want and what they are getting from the education system. ACCI contend that

Australia's education and training systems must provide people with the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to participate fully in Australian society – culturally, socially and in their employment.”

(ACCI, 2007, p. 18)

These multiple purposes of schools are common to many countries. One of the most comprehensive comparative studies in the area was undertaken by the National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales (1998) on behalf of the English School Curriculum and Assessment Authority. Its international review of 16 country curriculum and assessment frameworks found multiple aims with only two explicitly shared by all countries. These two aims were individual and social (citizenship/community/democracy) development.

Consistent with this argument to broaden what counts and is measured, especially to include public purposes such as social skills, is a range of impressive very high quality longitudinal research using data from the National Child Development Survey (Carneiro, et al, 2006; Margo & Dixon, 2006) and British Cohort Study (Feinstein, 2000; Margo & Dixon, 2006). This data base continues to follow all children born in the United Kingdom in a single week in 1958 or 1970. These studies have found that measures of 7 to 11 year-olds social skills (as reported by their teachers) were excellent predictors of staying in school post-16, less trouble with police by age 16 and teenage motherhood, higher performance in higher education, and higher employment and salary levels (to age 42). The Institute for Public Policy Research (Margo & Dixon with Pearce & Reed, 2006, p. viii) concludes that in just over a

decade, personal and social skills have become 33 times more important than at the start of the decade in determining relative life chances in terms of employment and wage levels but that “young people from less affluent backgrounds became less likely than their more fortunate peers to develop these skills”. Despite this evidence, these researchers go on to point out that national curriculum gives public purposes relatively little weight and that they are measured, recorded and reported inadequately by national tests and public examinations. As a result, public purposes, such as social skills, continue to be neglected by teachers and undervalued by pupils, their parents and the education systems at a time when in reality they matter more than ever. Cunha et al. (2005, p. 1) remind us that “remediation of inadequate early investments [in such areas of social skills] is difficult and very costly”.

From the results of their Tasmania research, Hogan and Donovan (2005) believe that not measuring the broader public outcomes of schooling will

result in underestimates of the net contribution that schools make to individual wellbeing and aggregate social utility and permits a highly stratified and limited measure of school performance, academic achievement, to monopolise the ‘allocation’ of students into social division of labour.

(Hogan and Donovan, 2005, p. 100)

They conclude that this situation is neither sensible, nor efficient, nor defensible on social justice grounds. Similarly, in USA, Rothstein and Jacobsen (2006) conclude that the

gap between the preferences that respondents expressed in our surveys and the educational standards established through political processes reflects a widespread policy incoherence [and that the current] accountability system consisting almost exclusively of standardized tests is a travesty and betrayal of our historic commitments.

(Rothstein & Jacobsen, 2006, p. 271)

3.3 The ways schools are organised and run

The position taken in this chapter is that the way schools are organised and run needs to be consistent with the pressures created by the forces on schools and the need to broaden outcomes. Schools and their leaders will need to move from the bureaucratic and mechanistic to organic living systems, from thin to deep democracy, from mass education to personalisation through participation, and from hierarchies to networks.

From bureaucratic, mechanistic to organic, living systems

Moving from existing ways of operating may be difficult. For example, research on the OECD scenarios for future schools (Mulford, 2008) shows that 96 per cent of Australian educational leaders believed powerful bureaucratic systems would

continue to have a role in schooling organisation within in the next decade. This was followed by 63 per cent support for learning organisations, 57 per cent for social centres, 35 per cent the market scenario, 31 per cent for a meltdown, and only 20 per cent for ICT networks. In terms of desirability 78 per cent of the Australian educational leaders favoured learning organisations, 75 per cent social centres, 29 per cent ICT networks, 22 per cent markets, and 22 per cent meltdown. A mere 8 per cent thought the bureaucracy scenario was desirable.

Of particular note is the huge gap between the likelihood (very high) and desirability (very low) of the bureaucratic system scenario. Overcoming this gap, that is, moving from what might be perceived as a dependence on, or feelings about the inevitability of, powerfully bureaucratic systems and schools to scenarios that are more reflective of desired social centres and learning organisations, will be a major challenge.

Wheatley (2005) employs two competing metaphors – ‘organisations as machines’ and ‘organisations as living systems’ – as explanations for both organisations and leadership that differ radically in their functioning and outcomes. The ‘machine’ metaphor encourages a view of organisation as a fixed structure of some sort, a structure consisting of parts that need to be ‘oiled’ if they are to function together smoothly. From this view, organisations require effortful monitoring, coordination and direction by someone, typically a ‘leader’.

Such leadership, aiming to increase employees’ certainty about their work (and increase the school’s level of accountability to government and the public) is mostly transactional. This means that, in the case of school organisations, teachers are assumed to be motivated by the promise of extrinsic, positive rewards such as money and status and by extrinsic, negative impacts such as school reconstitution and public shaming through the publication of league tables.

Transactional, command and control forms of leadership on the part of principals further manifests itself in the close supervision of teachers, specification of ‘the one best model of instruction’ which all teachers must use, centralised decisions about how time in the classroom is to be used, together with very long lists of curriculum standards or expectations which teachers are required to cover with students. Teachers are allowed little autonomy over their work in classrooms, their voices are, at best, heard weakly in school-wide decision making and yet they are held almost entirely accountable for student achievement (Day & Leithwood, 2007).

Conversely the organic, or ‘living systems’ metaphor encourages a view of organisation as a process, one of constant adaptation, growth and becoming that occurs naturally and inevitably in response to a strong desire for learning and survival. Descriptions of organisation-as-living-system bear a strong resemblance to accounts of organisational learning in schools (Silins & Mulford, 2002a; Mulford, Silins & Leithwood, 2004), to descriptions of work in professional learning communities (Stoll et al., 2006) and the OECD (2001b, 2006) scenarios for future schools preferred by Australian educational leaders, social centres and learning organisations.

Research arising from an ongoing eight-country research project, the International Successful School Principals' Project, and published in the *Journal of Educational Administration* (43(6) 2005) and in Day & Leithwood, (2007) strongly suggests that successful principals thought of their organisations as living systems, not machines:

One of the more remarkable results of our research was that even in the highly accountable policy contexts intended to deal with such uncertainty, successful principals assiduously avoided a command and control form of leadership. ... Our successful principals, on the whole, appeared to hold a deep, if tacit, conception of their organisations as organic, living systems, rather than as machines. ... If the organisation needed 'oiling', it was increased mutual trust, not more policy and regulation that was applied.

(Day & Leithwood (Eds.), 2007, p. 1).

From thin to deep democracy

Furman and Shields (2003) argue that there is a need to move our schools from 'thin' conceptions of democracy, based on the values of classical liberalism and on its concern with the right of the individual to pursue his or her self-interest plus the resolution of conflict through 'democratic' majority voting, to a notion of 'deep' democracy. Dewey (in Furman & Shields, 2003) saw 'deep' democracy as involving respect for the worth and dignity of individuals and their cultural traditions, reverence for, and the proactive facilitation of, free and open inquiry and critique, recognition of interdependence in working for the common good, the responsibility of individuals to participate in free and open inquiry and the importance of collective choices and actions in the interest of the common good.

Furman and Shields (2003) state that 'deep' democracy needs to be *practised* in schools. However, as a consequence of risk of chaos and loss of control from the forces on schools, the typical pattern they perceive is that students:

are expected to conform to hierarchically imposed decisions about what they study and teach and when, what the outcomes of instruction should be, how to behave and talk, and even how they look ... [In fact,] learning democracy may be one of the least experiential aspects of K-12 curricula.

(Furman & Shields, 2003, p. 10)

The results of a recent analysis of school principal training in Tasmania (Mulford, 2004) that compared policy documents with the actual experience of the Tasmanian Principals' Institute (Banfield, 2005) questions whether the same could also be said about the adults in schools within bureaucratically designed systems. 'Deep' democracy needs to be practised by them, but according to studies by practicing school principals such as Banfield (2005) and Bennett (2002) it may be the least experienced aspect of their working world, especially when it comes to their own professional development.

From mass education to personalisation through participation

A major debate currently taking place in the United Kingdom about the future shape of public services picks up on the confused contextual situation for those in schools. This debate is pitched into the chasm between the way public institutions work and how users experience them. For example, in the education sector it has been argued that efficiency measures based on new public management as reflected in:

[t]argets, league tables and inspection regimes may have improved aspects of performance in public services. Yet the cost has been to make public services seem more machine-like, more like a production line producing standardised goods. [And, I would add, increasingly create dependence on the system.] ... It is ... clear that the State cannot deliver collective solutions from on high. It is too cumbersome and distant. The State can only help create public goods – such as better education – by encouraging them to emerge from within society ... That is, to shift from a model in which the centre controls, initiates, plans, instructs and serves, to one in which the centre governs through promoting collaborative, critical and honest self-evaluation and self-improvement.

(Leadbeater, 2004a, pp. 81, 83 & 90)

Public services, such as schools and school systems, can be improved by focusing on what is called ‘personalisation through participation’ (Leadbeater, 2004a, 2004b, & 2005; NCSL, 2005c). Personalised public service is seen as having four different meanings:

- providing people with a more customer-friendly interface with existing services
- giving users more say in navigating their way through services once they have access to them
- giving users more direct say over how the money is spent
- seeing users not just as consumers but co-designers and co-producers of a service.

Across these four meanings, dependent users become consumers and commissioners then co-designers, co-producers and solution assemblers. In schools, learners (students and staff) become actively and continually engaged in setting their own targets, devising their own learning plan and goals, and choosing from among a range of different ways to learn. Additionally, across the four meanings, the professional’s role changes from providing solutions for dependent users to designing environments, networks and platforms through which people can together devise their own independent and interdependent solutions.

The ‘pay-off’ of personalisation through participation is believed to be increased levels of knowledge, participation, commitment, responsibility and productivity. Personalisation can be seen to be both a process and an outcome of effective public organisations, including schools.

From hierarchy to networks

Leadbeater (2005) believes that personalised learning will only become reality when schools become much more networked, collaborating not only with other schools, but with families, community groups and other public agencies. Arguably one of the best funded and continuous school networks is the Network Learning Group (NLG) with its hub at the UK's National College for School Leadership (NCSL). Its research findings about the advantages of networks over traditional hierarchically designed organisations can be summarised as follows:

- they engender greater degrees of sharing, diversity, flexibility, creativity and risk-taking; a broadening of teacher expertise;
- more learning opportunities available to pupils; and
- they result in improved teaching and student attainment (NCSL, 2005b).

The NLG research indicates that while there is no blueprint for an effective network, it is possible to identify the factors that successful networks have in common. They:

- design the network around a compelling idea or aspirational purpose and an appropriate form and structure
- focus on pupil learning
- create new opportunities for adult learning
- plan and have dedicated leadership and management.

Leadbeater warns, however, that the collaboration needed for effective networks:

can be held back by regulation, inspection and funding regimes that encourage schools to think of themselves as autonomous, stand alone units.

Leadbeater (2005, p. 22)

Rusch (2005) concludes that networks cannot be controlled by a formal system. She questions the role of the system in effective school networks, describing what is likely to be required by networks, as opposed to what is required by the system, as 'competing institutional scripts'. She characterises some of the differences as follows: structures are malleable in networks but fixed and hierarchical systems; conflict is open and valued in networks while it tends to be hidden and feared in systems; communication is open and unbounded in networks but controlled and closed in systems; and, leadership is fluid in networks while it is hierarchical and assigned in systems.

4. Social capital and communities of professional learners

Two linked concepts underpin the implementation advice being offered in this chapter, social capital and communities of professional learners. These two concepts, which are closely related to the public purposes and practices of education, are examined in some depth in the remainder of this chapter.

Knowing the definition of social capital will provide a helpful start, but it does little to assist leaders in dealing with the challenges in *building* social capital in schools. In addressing this task, the first part of this section concentrates on the three different forms of social capital (bonding, bridging, linking), the importance of each and a way forward in using them. This way forward involves those in schools seeing their task as developmental, *starting* with the building of social capital in communities of professional learners (the second part of this section).

4.1 Social capital

Social capital as an idea has enjoyed a remarkable rise to prominence in recent decades. By treating social relationships as a form of capital, it proposes that they are a resource, which people can then draw on to achieve their goals. It also serves alongside other forms of capital (such as economic, human, cultural, identity and intellectual) as one possible resource and accepted contributor to our individual, community and national well-being. International bodies such as UNESCO, OECD and the World Bank have engaged in extensive conceptual, empirical and policy related work in the area. The World Bank (Grootaert, et al., 2004, p. 3) concluded that social capital: “is most frequently defined in terms of the groups, networks, norms, and trust that people have available to them for productive purposes”. As well as this generally accepted definition, common distinctions are made among ‘bonding’, ‘bridging’ and ‘linking’ forms of social capital.

Bonding social capital: Within schools

Bonding social capital is interpreted as social capital that occurs among work colleagues within schools. It is the most developed area in the research literature. Being a valued part of a group is important for all those in schools. A review of research that examines the importance and challenges of being a valued part of a school (bonding social capital) for students and teachers follows.

Building upon the seminal work of Coleman (1994) on educational attainment, cognitive development and self-identity in American ghettos, the OECD (2004) has concluded that a general sense of belonging at school is so important for student educational, economic, social, health, and well-being success that it should be treated as equally important an outcome of schooling as academic results. Recent research supports this argument. In the rare large-scale longitudinal study reported earlier, Feinstein (2000) found that students’ peer relations, locus of control and self-concept were related to later life successes, such as employment and earnings. At a more general level, Field (2005) found that people’s social relationships play a vital role in their capacity for learning.

Research also links within-school bonding social capital to student academic results (OECD, 2004; Beatty & Brew, 2005; Hogan & Donovan, 2005; Sweetland & Hoy, 2000; Stoll, Fink & Earl, 2003; Marks & Louis, 1997; Somech, 2002; Mawhinney, Hass & Wood, 2005; Ross, Hegaboam & Gray et al., 2004; Mulford, 2003a; Mulford, 2007; Mulford, Silins & Leithwood, 2004; Silins & Mulford, 2002). This research

makes clear how important groups, networks, norms, and trust (in other words, bonding social capital) can be, not only for student feelings of self-worth, day-by-day enjoyment of school and academic results, but also for their later life chances. Bandura (1983) and Goddard, Hoy and Woolfolk Hoy (2004) have even demonstrated that the effects of collective teacher efficacy on student achievement were stronger than the direct link between SES and student achievement. These are powerful findings that contradict conventional 'wisdom' in our field.

Mawhinney, Hass and Wood (2005) sought to better understand how, under the pressures of accountability, school districts in the USA are undertaking research to support their development of strategic actions to foster organisational learning in schools. The researchers also examined districts' interest in the relationships among perceived conditions of professional learning, teachers' collective efficacy beliefs and student achievement. The researchers found collective efficacy, or group development, preceded professional learning communities. This finding clearly reinforces the importance of group development, or bonding social capital, as a first step in effective schools and their leadership no matter what the contextual pressures.

Mulford, Silins and Leithwood (2004) see bonding of social capital in schools as developmental. This is seen in their Australian research on organisational learning, which found this concept consisted of four factors, three of which were developmental – a trusting and collaborative climate, followed by a shared and monitored mission and, finally, taking initiatives and risks. The fourth factor was ongoing, relevant (that is, linked to the developmental stages) professional development. The developmental nature of bonding social capital is also seen in their conceptualisation of staff development. At the first or 'forming stage', staff are polite, they avoid conflict, and they are concerned about being accepted or rejected. At the second stage, 'storming', staff become involved in conflict because of concern about status, power and organisation. The third stage, 'norming', sees more cohesion between staff, as there is more affection, open-mindedness and a willingness to share. However, pressures to conform to the group (known as 'groupthink') may detract from the task at hand. Next comes the 'performing' stage, or 'work' stage. It is characterised by an increase in task orientation and an open exchange of feedback. The fourth stage is known as 'transforming'. This stage represents a refinement of the performing stage. It indicates that the staff does not just continue performing the same tasks well, that it learns from feedback about those tasks and how they are undertaking them and, if necessary, changes the tasks and/or the methods of achieving them.

Unfortunately, if left to their own devices, the staff may not progress beyond the earlier, less productive, stages of 'forming', 'storming', and 'norming'. The effective school leader clearly needs the skills to assist them to move through to the more effective later stages of 'performing', and especially 'transforming'. Understanding and being able to act in a targeted way on the stages of staff development can help school leaders better understand the intricacies involved in moving a school, or part of

a school, from where it is now to becoming truly effective and meeting its full potential.

Bridging social capital: Among and between schools

Bridging social capital is social capital that occurs among and between schools. This is a recent but growing area in the research literature, especially in the area of networking (see the previous subsection 3.3.4).

As was pointed out earlier, Leadbeater (2005) argues that personalised learning will only become reality when schools become much more networked but that collaboration can be held back by regulation, inspection and system funding regimes. In support, Hopkins (NCSL, 2005b) argues that:

traditional levers for improvement, such as tests and targets, are reaching the limits of their potential and the next phase of education reform will require new ways of delivering ‘excellence and equity [and that] networks [among schools] are perhaps the best way we have at present to create and support this expectation.

(Hopkins, NCSL, 2005b, p. 7)

Reinforcing Rusch’s (2005) findings in education (see section 3.3.4), a worldwide research study summarising the findings from productive private sector network arrangements (Kanter, 1994) identified three fundamental aspects of successful network alliances as benefits for all partners, collaboration and lack of control by the formal system.

Holmes and Johns-Shepherd (NCSL, 2005b) found that in the early days of school network development courting and aligning activities dominated and then, as the network emerged, the focus shifted to aligning and connecting. Courting involved getting people on board, building consensus and trust around a compelling idea and securing commitment. Aligning involved using the established trust to set parameters for collaboration, establishing working groups and securing resources. Connecting involved creating a critical mass of enthusiasts to participate fully in the network. Modelling some of the processes, uniting the senior leaders around the purposes, and encouraging low-risk created quick successes at the start.

Such research underscores the importance of bridging social capital. But, again, the advice is that the social capital constitutes the starting point, a necessary but insufficient condition for effective networks. There is a need to use it to develop an agreed set of priorities, a plan and a structure to sustain the network.

Linking social capital: Between the school and its community

Linking social capital is that occurring between a school and its community. While there is a long research tradition in the school–community area, it tends to be

unidirectional, concentrating on what the community can do for the school, rather than examining and reflecting on its multidirectional character.

Schools play a vital role in strengthening linkages within their communities by providing opportunities for interaction and networking, which, in turn, contribute to the community's well-being and social cohesion. The close links between the survival and development of schools and their communities have been demonstrated by a number of researchers. One example provided as evidence for this relates to the way in which many rural communities have failed to remain viable after losing their school (Jolly & Deloney, 1996).

One Australian research project (Kilpatrick et al., 2001), conducted for the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, confirms this relationship between school and community and its importance to both parties. The project examined through case studies the extent and nature of the contribution of rural schools to their communities' development beyond offering traditional forms of education to its young people in five best-practice schools in diverse rural communities across Australia. It also examined the ways in which leadership influenced the process. Rural school community partnerships were found to deliver a variety of positive outcomes for youth and for the community, including the provision of training that met both student and community needs, an improved school and community retention, plus positive environmental, cultural, recreational and economic outcomes. While these tangible outcomes are important to the sustainability of many small rural communities, the potentially more valuable outcome from the partnerships was the increase in individual and community capacity to influence their own futures.

Effective leadership for school–community partnerships was found to be a collective process consisting of five stages: trigger, initiation, development, maintenance and sustainability. Additionally, Kilpatrick et al. (2001) identified 12 indicators of effective school community partnerships. Underscoring all these indicators was the importance of collective learning activities including teamwork and network building.

The research evidence reviewed in this subsection has been clear in its strong support for all three forms of social capital. The outcomes are impressive, not least of which are improved student engagement and academic performance, plus improved later life chances and an increased capacity of individuals and communities to influence their own futures.

4.2 Communities of professional learners³

A message arising from the above research is that school staffs must learn how to lose time in order to gain time. By this is meant that an awareness of, and skill development in group and organisational processes is a first step in any effective change, especially in better achieving the public purposes of education. Instead of others trying to insert something new into a school's (or community's) culture, the school, schools or school and community, and especially the leadership, should first

³ As will be seen, the sequence of words/concepts is important.

analyse what it already has. They should first spend time trying to help that culture develop an awareness of and responsiveness to *itself* (Scribner, Hager & Warne, 2002).

Development can be seen throughout much of the research reviewed and is summarised in Figure 2.1. This research shows:

- teacher collective efficacy preceding communities of professional learners as well as the forming, storming, norming, performing, transforming stages of staff development (see column 2 in Figure 1)
- the trusting and collaborative climate, shared and monitored mission and taking initiatives and risks stages of organisational learning (column 3)
- the establishment, emerging, mature and disengagement or renewal stages of school networks (column 4)
- the trigger, initiation, development, maintenance, and sustainability stages of school community partnerships (column 5).

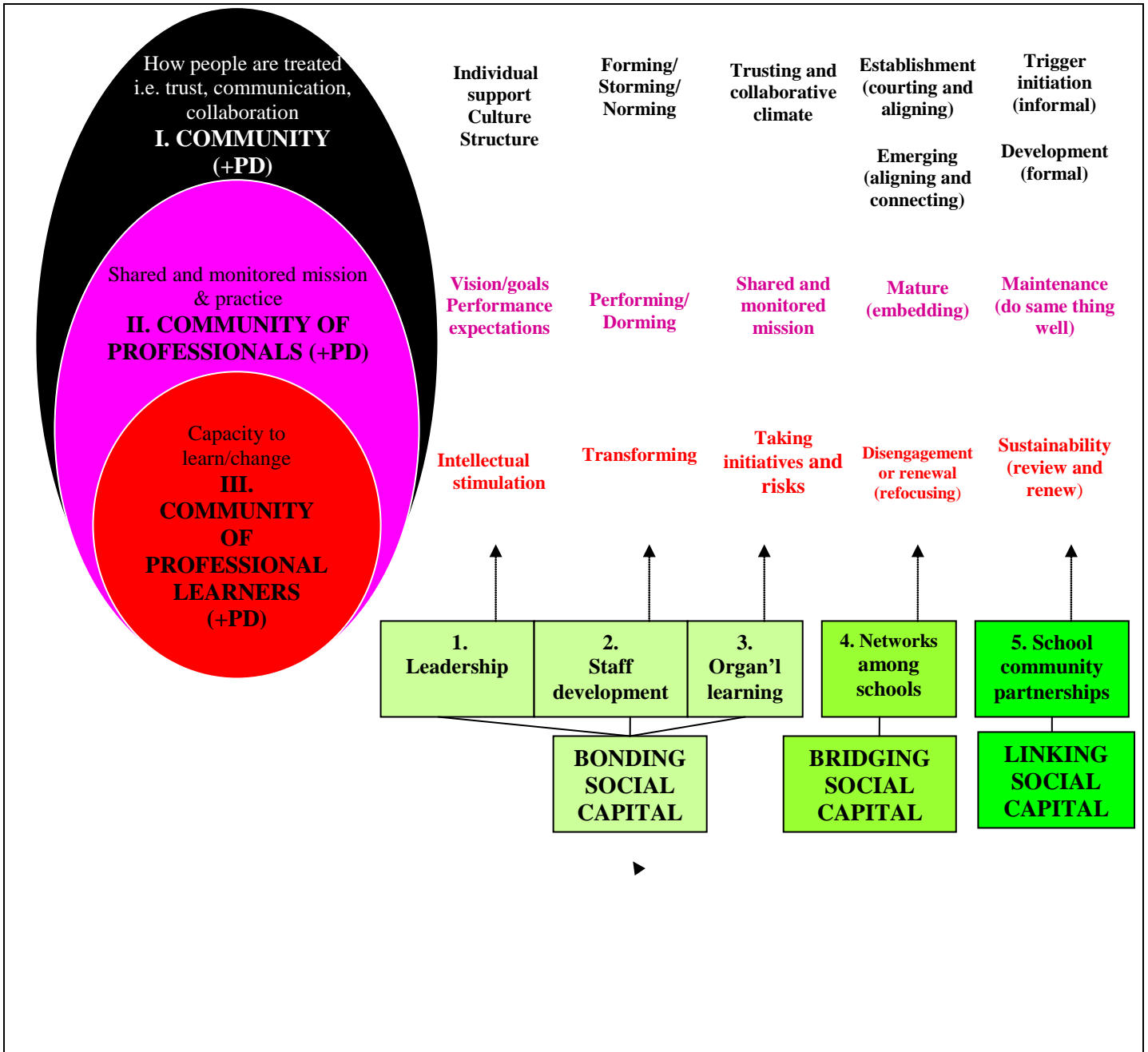
In column 1 of Figure 2.1, the factors that make up school leader transformational leadership are also conceptualised as sequential with individual support, culture (including promoting an atmosphere of caring and trust among staff and setting the tone for respectful interaction with students) and structure (including participative decision making, delegation and distributive leadership) preceding vision and goals and performance expectations which, in turn, precede intellectual stimulation (Mulford, 2007d).

In brief, the position taken identifies three major, sequential and embedded elements in successful school and leader responses to the forces and pressures that currently surround them. It takes the two elements in the definition of social capital, ‘groups, networks, norms and trust’ and ‘for productive purposes’, and extends them to include a third element of ‘learning’

Figure 1: Developing communities of professional learners

Developmental stages

Summary of research evidence in five areas with links to the three developmental stages and three types of social capital



The first element in the sequence deals with community (see oval/egg 1 in the nested, ‘eggs-within-eggs’ diagram on the left of the Figure 2.1 with the research evidence on the right hand side colour coded to each element/oval). It centres on how people are communicated with and treated. Success is more likely where people act rather than are always reacting, are empowered, involved in decision making through a transparent, facilitative and supportive structure, and are trusted, respected, encouraged and valued. It is a waste of time moving to the second element until such a community is established.

The second element concerns a community of professionals. A community of professionals involves shared norms and values including valuing differences and diversity, a focus on implementation and continuous enhancement of quality learning for all students, de-privatisation of practice, collaboration, and critical reflective dialogue, especially that based on performance data (oval II).

But a community of professionals can be static, continuing to do the same or similar thing well. The final element relates to the presence of a capacity for change, learning and innovation, in other words, a community of professional learners (oval III).

Each element of a CPL, and each transition between them, can be facilitated by appropriate leadership and ongoing, optimistic, caring, nurturing professional development programs (the '+PD' in each of the stages). Also, each element is a prerequisite for the other – as the diagram implies, they are embedded within each other with only the emphasis changing. For example, when learning is occurring, there is still a need to revisit the social community and the professional community, especially where there has been a change of personnel and/or a new governmental direction has been announced.

Using this analysis of bonding, bridging and linking social capital to understand the importance of, challenges to and developmental nature of communities of professional learners can also assist in better translating the forces impacting upon Australian schools into policy and practice. For example, it can help us:

- understand better and be able to take action on the intricacies involved in moving a school, or part of a school, from where it is now to becoming truly a place of ongoing excellence and equity serving individual and public purposes without those in schools being 'bowled over' by the forces and pressures for change that surround them
- target appropriate interventions to ensure more effective progression through the stages. In targeting interventions recognition will need to be given to the fact that it is a journey and that actions at one stage may be inappropriate, or even counterproductive, at another stage
- support the position that a school will need to be evaluated differently depending on the stage it has reached.

5. Conclusion

Changing schools and school systems so they become communities of professional learners serving public as well as private purposes of education will not be for the faint of heart. It will require many schools and their leaders to radically rethink how they operate. But unless these changes are made there would seem little hope of schools meeting, let alone prospering under, the forces and pressures that currently engulf them.

Clearly there is a need to achieve better balances in our world, including between learning what the political and bureaucratic systems require of individual leaders and their schools (see the next Chapter) and what practising professionals require of themselves, their colleagues and their schools (see Chapter 5). However, on the basis of the research provided in this chapter, this balance can best be achieved by groups of educational leaders, or professional collectives and alliances, setting, negotiating and delivering their own agendas. After all, as the evidence reported in this chapter points out and Lecomte and Smillie, (2004) confirm, participation in context, organisation and leadership, including policy making, not only enhances efficiency in implementation but also can contribute to public purposes and processes, that is to the creation of more pluralistic and democratic educational systems and societies.

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