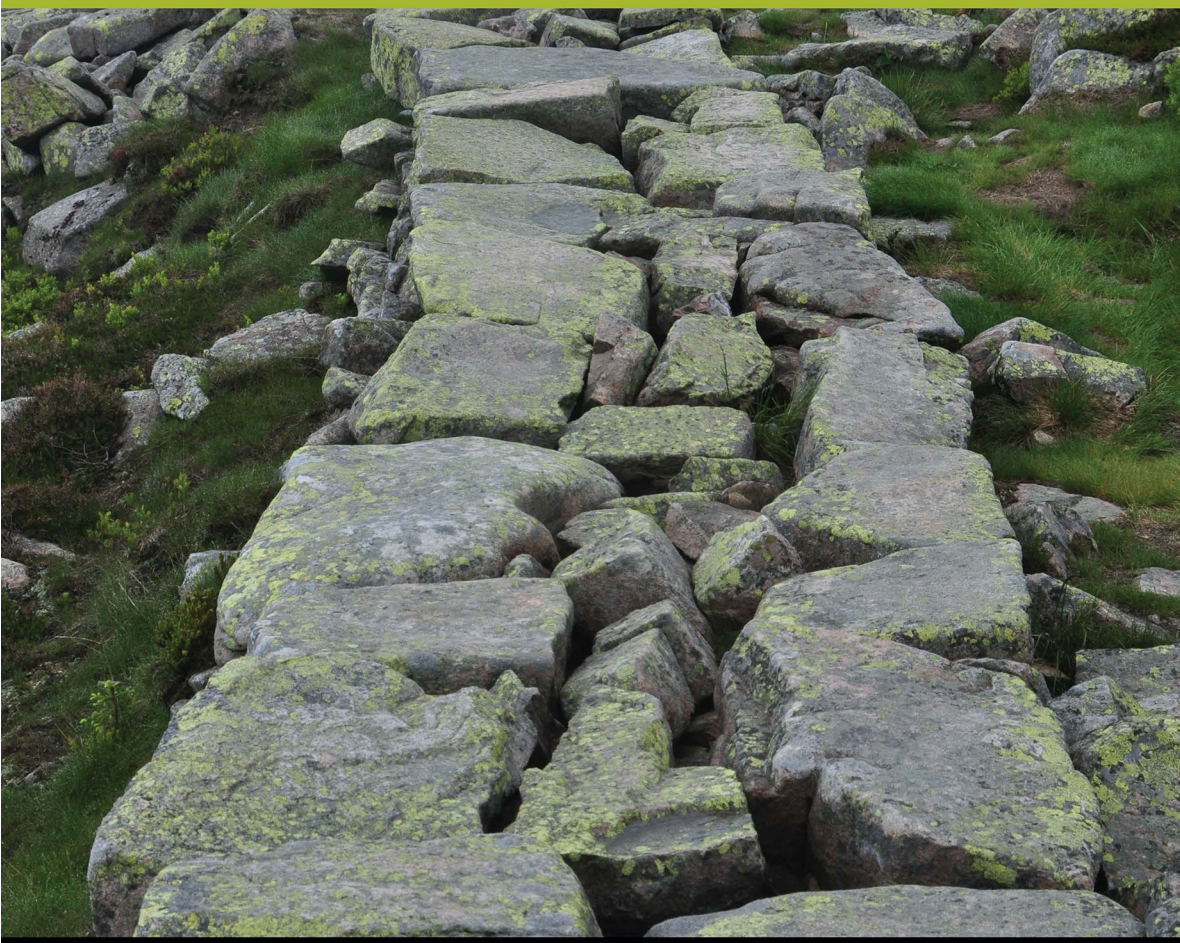

The Power of Responsive Educational Leadership

Building Schools for Global Challenges

Grzegorz Mazurkiewicz and John M. Fischer

ROUTLEDGE

THE POWER OF RESPONSIVE EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The Power of Responsive Educational Leadership examines how educational leaders might respond to global challenges such as the environment, technology, inequity, the health crisis, and the stability of democracy. It draws on models of educational leadership and development projects from around the world to explore how leaders might use the curriculum and teaching to help move their communities, regions, and countries in positive directions.

The authors argue that educational leadership needs to move away from authoritarian or transactional bureaucracy and toward leadership in a participatory mode that feels responsible for the children and adults in their institution and responsible for the society they all inhabit. *The Power of Responsive Educational Leadership*:

- Offers a comprehensive exploration of the multifaceted nature of leadership for learning
- Charts the key thinking and practices that engage with the principles of leadership for learning and the implications these have
- Provides a variety of fresh perspectives on the connections between education, schooling, and leadership
- Includes a range of internationally diverse case studies and vignettes

This comprehensive guide invites readers to engage in thinking about new directions for education today. The book will be a useful starting point for individuals who choose to engage in discussions and deliberations around what it means to be responsive. It will be invaluable for those who are working as principals and teachers or participating in education leadership development programs around the world and hope to work in various roles.

Grzegorz Mazurkiewicz, sociologist, teacher, and researcher, works at Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland. He has had a chance to experience and reflect on the educational system from different positions: student, teacher, academic, consultant, and project coordinator. He believes that education can change a world.

John M. Fischer, a Professor in Social Studies Education at Bowling Green, has served as the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. His work and research seek to investigate and improve issues around education reform with a focus on inequality, civic education, and democracy. He believes dialog across boundaries matters now more than ever.

'We are facing a number of serious challenges all over the globe and we need to search for adequate ways to deal with them when current approaches cease to be effective. Undoubtedly, education needs to be in the core of these initiatives. This is why the search for responsive leadership is so topical. This book is a valuable contribution to these efforts.'

Milan Pol, Professor, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic

'Mazurkiewicz and Fischer readily acknowledge the complicated nature of our world, the challenges facing humankind locally and globally, and the integral role that education plays. They urge all of us to take up the challenge of bettering our children, our schools, our world, and ourselves. That is what good educational leaders do—identify the challenges, see the possibilities, and realize the potential within all of us.'

W. Kyle Ingle, Professor, Educational Leadership,
The University of Louisville, Kentucky, USA

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FOREWORD: LEADERSHIP PROPERLY UNDERSTOOD

By J. E. C. MacBeath, University of Cambridge

What have Poland and the United States in common? While culturally half a world apart, they have educational systems subject to similar political priorities, susceptible to the same global trends and social pressures. Some of these may be attributed to transnational organizations such as the World Bank, UNESCO, and the OECD. All play a conservative role while at the same time offering alternative scenarios for radically different futures. The two highly experienced authors of this book, draw on their longstanding experience as world travelers, on deeply familiar terms with policies and practices which contain and constrain ambition and adventure.

This does not deter them from some radical propositions and a return to first principles. Education is what makes us fully human. Education provides the intelligence and motivation to change the world. It does, however, rely on a shared determination among key players to identify, address, and emancipate themselves from systemic inhibitions.

So, from the beginning, the role and purpose for this and the next generation is to contribute to the construction of a better society. It is an ambitious remit for schools but what is education for if not to imagine better futures, to seek out better solutions? And, for the adults of tomorrow to be the prime movers.

In the very last days of 2019, our visions of the future were dramatically reshaped. An infinitesimally small virus caused such destruction across the world that economies collapsed, income disparities magnified, and educational inequality rose exponentially. In the midst of this, a door was opened, admitting a debate that had previously been left to academics and heretics. What do we want from our schools and the role they should now play in preparing young people for an unpredictable future? Generation Alpha: the children of millennials, are the most racially diverse generation across the world, and one in which technology is simply an extension of their own consciousness and identity, with social media simply a way of life. They are both players and leaders in this very brave and very unpredictable new world. They are key participants in debates about climate insecurity, rapidity of technological change, and the range of skills required to both adjust and to lead informed decision-making, creative problem-solving, and above all, adaptability.

The reimagined future is one in which we tolerate, and even celebrate, dissensus allowing us "to work out the differences that exist while remaining open to how we might change because of those differences." This is because "we are responsible for each other and for learning." This might be described by the more academic term "reciprocal accountability." We hold others to the same standards as we expect of ourselves and expect our leaders to recognize their debt and service to their followers. The advocacy of the three C's—care, compassion, and concern sits in opposition to the language of "hard data," "rigor," and "accountability." Yet, it is possible to have all of these within a more equitable and enabling system but one which is radically recast to denote a mutual democratic accountability (the others side of caring), to encourage "rigor" as a shared commitment to what is best for children, and "hard data" as sources of information which are "hard" to measure but ultimately the most telling.

In relation to a recent translation of a book by the Swedish author Thomas Erikson, he starts with the question—why is it easier to converse with some people while apparently impossible with others? It is easy to see ourselves as "surrounded by idiots" (the title of his book) because we all live in different social universes: "We see what we do, but we do not see why we do what we do."

How much of school education asks us to consider why we do what we do? The authors ask. They argue for "another truth," one which challenges

what we "know" to be true but only because it has been handed down across generations; because that was what we were told from our impressionable early years and often reinforced by our teachers and by a curriculum which gave us a view of the world and series of events which led us inexorably to the immutable and self-justifying present.

The alternative future is for school to be a clinic for cooperation in problem-solving—"a base camp where we store all the needed equipment and methods of cooperation allowing young people to test them and learn how to use them." The image of a base camp is a powerful one. It suggests that schools should limit their aspirations, that they risk venturing beyond a classroom-contained view of the world. It advocates a departure from a compulsion of "coverage" which is more concerned with getting through a mandated body of information than stimulating a corpus of skills and dispositions. Extinguishing the spark or lighting a fire?

For our two authors, this is not a facile wish-fulfillment agenda. They recognize "five huge and difficult challenges." These are "the state of the natural environment," "the ability to cooperate," "inequality and a lack of solidarity," "the impact of new technologies and social media," "a crisis of democracy," and underpinning them all "a lack of vision" which when absent "create together an extremely difficult environment for humans."

"Our stance then becomes the mental model from which we enter each day and begin again the day's work toward some end and future state," they write. This means that "we stop thinking about leadership as about a set of skills and characteristics of the individual, and start to think about leadership as a set of conditions, as about the process of empowering people to achieve what they believe is worth achieving and what they want to achieve." Radical and achievable.

A final plea.

"Leadership, if properly understood and implemented, will mediate the basic tensions of democracy between the desire for strong leaders and the deeply held values of participation, egalitarianism, and diversity."

1

INTRODUCTION

Conceptualizing foundations of responsive educational leadership

Education for learning

Education can be more than the traditional image of the teacher (knowledge holder) imparting to the student (knowledge container). Education can be a means for becoming more human, for raising questions about the quality of our lives, and for working to improve the conditions in our communities. Education also challenges us and pushes us—whether we know it or not—to change reality and the world around us. In order to achieve a level of development that would allow us to change the world, to make it more rational and more just, people need to learn how to emancipate themselves from the system that educated them. Education should be designed in a more open and broader way, enabling people to think about the limitations and problems of the society, the society which created the educational system. Cognizant of complexity and the interrelated nature of the world's issues, we need educational leaders who lead in new ways. We do not need smooth repetition, but instead, rough rebels. An educated

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person should be able to define and solve problems, not simply function in an unfair reality.

Education meets multiple goals in our quest for life. Education supports our own personal development. It helps us define a successful life and live it. But on a grander scale, it helps us recognize our membership in humanity. Education helps to ensure the survival of society. And it protects the achievements we, as human beings, already have accomplished, the innovations that have propelled human existence forward and toward progress.

There is a need for a redefinition of educational leadership. There is also a need for a redesign of "school" and the processes of education. Educational leadership must move away from neoliberal, transactional bureaucracy[1] and toward leadership in a participatory mode that feels responsible for the children and adults in their institution and responsible for the society they all inhabit[2]. Møller has discussed the problematic aspects of New Public Management, including that the additional bureaucratic responsibilities reduce the focus on teaching and learning, as teachers take on duties from principals who are given new and expanded roles while increasingly being influenced by business management approaches.[3] Apple has discussed how "many of the rightist policies now taking centre stage in education and nearly everything else, embody a tension between a neoliberal emphasis on 'market values' on the one hand and a neoconservative attachment to 'traditional values' on the other."[4] When we look today more broadly at the interrelated and complex futures we face, we cannot help but ask about educational leaders and the roles they play. Who are they? What roles might school and education play in democratic societies? How might educational leaders act in ways that move their communities, regions, and countries in positive directions toward making our communities better? Ultimately, we argue, it is our stance, our value system that determines if we are moving society in a way that is more democratic, inclusive, and responsive to our real needs.

Our goal

This book is our effort to develop the concept of responsive leadership in education. We are working to take a global approach to conceptualize leadership by drawing on impactful works by experts on the climate crisis,[5] cultural diversity,[6] technology,[7] health[8] and environmental issues,[9]

inequality,[10] and democracy.[11] Each is a "wicked problem," "amorphic, contextually social and infused with uncertainty, ambiguity and contradictions."[12] And across a globe where communication is virtual and omnipresent we are, like Noddings, "…keenly aware of our interdependence."[13] We are accepting the call to think about educational leadership for the untenable now and an uncertain future. We hope this connecting of dots across important world challenges and across our local communities can contribute to the construction of a better society by working toward better schools. We also hope it supports the development of responsive educational leaders. We do this by arguing for a framework that helps leaders be aware of context and place, with actions focused on learning, development, and our realities. We ultimately believe that we must advocate for a transformation of schools, and a transformation in the preparation, training, and policies of educational leaders.[14]

When we say responsive, we do think of the word "responsible," but not in the sense of blame: responsive, rather, in the feeling of a sense of ownership, care, compassion, and concern for the needs of those who inhabit the communities of which we are a part; responsive, as in a response to the context of our worlds and the challenges we face. If we are to do this, it will take the collaboration of all those who help provide leadership in education—the school heads, or principals, the teacher leaders who step up to help guide the educational environment, and the students themselves who push for innovation and change.

We have already witnessed a range of conceptualizations of educational leadership. Over time, these have progressed from classical leadership styles to more transformative, professional, and instructionally oriented approaches. Back in 1992, Leithwood reflected on the transition of what was then called "instructional leadership" and the evolution to what would be called "transformational leadership."[15] It would not be an overstatement to say that there have been many attempts to determine a definition of leadership. Having said that, it is clear that the process of coming to a consensus on the precise aspects of the conception of leadership has not come to an end. It can be thought of as the process of influencing others, as a method of forcing submission, a mode of persuasion, an effect of interaction, a mechanism for attaining goals, a measure for building structures, a negotiation of power, a personality profile, or even a manner of behavior.[16]

While summing up the longstanding research of theoreticians, two academic approaches to defining leadership should be pointed out. In the first, leadership is shown as a process of influencing others for the purpose of achieving goals. In the second, it is defined by enumerating characteristic features of a leader, as if leadership was nothing more than just an appropriate set of features possessed by an individual. It can almost be described as a new hat you try on, and if you don't like it, you try on another.

The first approach regards leadership as a group process—leadership functions may only be fulfilled inside a group, and they have to be understood in the context of relationships. It is a paradox that the theoretical and practical considerations (i.e. educational leadership professional development programs) are usually focused on the individual and not on work within a group and the managing of relationships. While in the middle of interrogating the modern world and the intellectual and professional toolkit that we use for trying to understand that world, it is our obligation to abandon the belief that social differentiation and unfairness is inevitable. By accepting the need for cooperation and the need for real work together, we begin to understand the necessity for us to change our mental models of leadership. We perceive our joint responsibility for others and for the world.

One of the most important definitions of leadership comes to us from Thomas Wren.[17] He underlines the importance of understanding leadership as the relationships between leaders and followers and the impact those relationships have on more easily met social or group goals. The definition focuses not on the leader, but on the group as members of an organizational structure. The definition also propels us to focus on our multilateral influence, meaning that we all are continually mediating, communicating, and moving the organization on trajectories of our choosing.

Equality—all students receiving similar treatment and standardization in classrooms, is "insufficient in ensuring positive outcomes for all learners."[18] We cannot confound equity and equality. Inequities in "access, achievement, and outcomes"[19] demand that we bring a social justice focus to our work. In our lifetime, groups such as Educators for Social Responsibility have called for new roles for those of us leading in education.[20] Others have created strong models for how educators can and should be more involved in working to ensure our environment is improved.[21] More recently, Johnson has advocated for culturally responsive leadership

and even broadened that to include community-based leadership in order to fight inequality, racism, and intolerance.[22] Others have talked about inequality and its impacts on those at the lower end of the socio-economic scale.[23] They compel us to think about what it might look like to take up the call for a social justice oriented educational leadership?[24]

We must find a way to weave these threads together, to build a model of educational leadership that can react to the world of the 21st century. Responsive leaders will build relationships in schools so as to be aware of the issues in the community and work for the improvement of the lives and futures of their students while meeting the needs of all. This is a heavy load to carry. Responsive leaders know it is a struggle to change the system and still "conceptualize the possibilities for change."[25] Responsive leaders will be aware of the instructional culture of their institutions, and of the connections to the community, and build awareness around issues in need of attention around the world. The responsive school led by responsive leaders is our answer for a world being buffeted by forces destined to lead to our demise if left unchecked.

How do we begin?

In places around the world where we have worked and are working, we see individuals seeking better futures. From countries across Europe to countries within Africa, to the United States, and around the world, educational leaders are advocating for school and learning attack problems in democratic life, raise awareness about diversity, deal with the impacts of health emergencies, and raise the level of our response to environmental crises. In various parts of the world, we see schools seeking to become responsible for better solutions to issues of exclusion, cultural conflict, and shared space for all of our voices. It is a heroic effort, especially when one understands that it is not the schools that are responsible for the difficult situation we are in. Schools did not create poverty, disease, inequality, global warming and more. There is, however, a promise of the power of school.[26] School is not an island, and it alone cannot fix the problems caused by society, irresponsible leaders, wrong decisions, greed, and the cynicism of corporations. However, it might provide us with the tools that could support us in fighting the key challenges. That tool is our imagination and beliefs about the world as they are shaped in school. It is possible to agree in schools

about what kind of world we need and want, and we may start to prepare people for that future, with a value system, approaches, and competencies that will be needed. We need principals who begin their work to develop responsive schools by listening to and working with those who are firmly grounded in their local environments and yet aware of a global impact of their work. We begin by working this intersection between the global and the local, knowing that there is hope in the actions people are taking.

Learning makes a human. It makes us aware of the knowledge and achievements that have come before us. Responsive schools have responsive leaders who are taking those achievements as a baseline for innovation, question raising, and action seeking. Across our problematized histories,[27] and aware of the impacts conflict and oppression have had in our world, responsive leaders struggle to work through the "floating signifiers" that cause us to view others as exotic,[28] rather than part of a network of those seeking and working together. Can they see the other as worth learning from? Educational leaders know that they must deal with the here and now and work within a conception of caring, while also working toward a better future.[29] Around the world, in global and local contexts, through a post-colonial lens,[30] we need to think about power: who is involved, who is impacted, who is acted upon. Education, school, and learning can help us answer the issues we face in our times. Responsive leaders can help drive their schools to deal with global issues, build a healthy environment of care, raise awareness about the context and aims for education, and ultimately improve society and the human condition. The only way education may prove its necessity is when we learn what is relevant for us. It is possible that the value of what we learn will appear much later in the process, but responsive and responsible education is designed and experienced only when we observe reality with eyes and minds open. These conditions allow us to understand the world and our place in it.[31]

Many theorists involved in debating educational philosophy[32] have laid out critical issues in contexts both universal and local. They have pushed us to think carefully about what we are engaged in and what our actions mean. "With one eye on our students and another on ourselves, we attend to both the learning environment and the concentric circles of context in which our teaching is enacted. We commit to striving for true awareness of the larger world, to feeling the weight of it as we attempt to lift it up."[33]

Educational leadership is always about choices: how to interact with those around them; how to engage the community; how to respond to issues in the world and in the school. Their means of communication, decision-making styles, sense of the purpose of education, and self-efficacy around the competencies they should have and do have, become essential tools in the educational leader's capacity for success. Leadership is a process of communication, a conversation. We create what has been called a "bricolage,"[34] through which multiple voices write and talk about equality, justice, wellness, and fairness. They work to strengthen the ability to dialogue, the basic aim of which is creating space for opportunities, conditions, and support for deliberation.

At the end of the day, how educational leaders act makes clear how they conceptualize leadership. Responsive educational leadership is shaped and altered by how we conceptualize the roles school as an institution occupies in democratic societies. As an ambiguous and lived process, democracy is often viewed[35] as too complex and unmanageable for the world of education. Deliberation can be too cumbersome. Creating spaces for multiple levels of society to voice their opinions and their perspectives creates a visible space for this critical work. It opens space for dissensus and consensus, the often messy and uncomfortable work of living together. Gaudelli and Donaldson have discussed dissensus as a condition that "allow(s) us to work out the differences that exist while remaining open to how we might change because of those differences."[36] We are responsible for each other, responsible for learning. Schools and other educational institutions must reflect that fact.

Aims and purpose of education

Education, at its best, serves as an essential driver of society. It supports individual development and helps people build a successful life within society and as useful workers. It supports our development as citizens, but also as obedient members of society, and ensures that the heritage of previous generations is passed forward. School and learning ensure the survival of the society itself, and the sustainability of the improvements and achievements of that society, or at least we want to believe in it, sometimes so strongly that we ignore signs of failure and unfulfilled promises. Narratives and actions of governments, experts, and

citizens strengthen the idea of the necessary elements of education. They answer the question, "what is the purpose of education?"

"The question of purpose is the most fundamental one for the simple reason that if we do not know what it is we are seeking to achieve with our educational arrangements and endeavors, we cannot make any decisions about the content that is most appropriate and the kind of relationships that are most conducive."[37] Gert Biesta claims that the purpose of education is multidimensional because education tends to function in relation to a number of domains. He suggested three domains of education: qualification (the transmission and acquisition of knowledge, skills and dispositions), socialization (the initiation of children and young people in traditions and ways of being and doing - such as cultural, professional, political, religious traditions), and subjectification (the impact on the student as a person which decides the way in which children and young people come to exist as subjects of initiative and responsibility, rather than as objects of the actions of others).[38]

Accepting the multidimensional character of education, we want to underline its main, in our opinion, function—education's fate, its primary purpose: transformation of the unfair world in which we exist. Sensitive and vigilant to every sign of injustice, we learn how to react, how to respond to the conditions that restrain us from developing and improving our quality of life. We work to advocate for the emancipation of individuals in order to create group solidarity and cooperation in justified opposition with oppression, poverty, ignorance, and cynicism.

Across the emerging global and almost universal discourses in education, we learn from each other and still fight to preserve our individual uniqueness.[39] "Knowledge is treated as something that is used by causal agents of change, reflecting the purpose and social interest of different social groups of actors, institutions, or social forces."[40] Some argue that schools need to be carefully organized with standards, tasks, and recipes—measured by the day, the year, and the class. We are fighting against claims that education, if it is to succeed, needs to be managed in the sense of one person giving direction and others following. Evidence abounds that there are examples and means for pulling in multiple stakeholders in order to transform the educational environment, the process of learning, and the processes engaged in the effort to lead. This responsive leader is both aware of their context and aware of the importance of engaging all involved in it.

Ultimately, education is what makes us fully human. As Paulo Freire tells us, "Indeed, in contrast to other animals who are unfinished, men (sic) know themselves to be unfinished; they are aware of their incompletion. In this incompletion and this awareness lie the very roots of education as an exclusively human manifestation…."[41] And so, our definition of the responsive school and a responsive school leader flows from these thoughts. We are responsible for the world and it is not enough to simply be aware of that. Sometimes it might even be a painful process. We need tools. One of the most powerful tools is leadership, leadership in every sphere of life—especially in education. This conceptualization of leadership we define as the process of enabling people to work with all their competencies and strengths for the common good, helping them discover their skill and power, and supporting them in building dignity and respect for each other.

Getting actions started

We believe that there is a need for the redefinition and redesign of school, a redefinition of education, and the processes of educational leadership. We shift back and forth from awareness of humility and curiosity about what is happening in the world, to an assertion that we must be bent on moving the paradigm of educational leadership in a different way. And yet, we are aware of the complexity, struggles, and setbacks of political and professional challenges facing the eventual realization of long-lasting improvement and change. Education, according to complexity theorists, is a "dynamic open system" that can possibly be influenced by the context in which it occurs.[42] And so "…understanding education initiatives from a systemic perspective that recognizes them as development initiatives…"[43] lets us begin to think about how we can move to change the system one action at a time.

If one role for schools in democratic societies is to help prepare young people for active life, defined by a sense of inquiry, awareness of communication methods and styles, and awareness of how we interact with each other, then schools need to become more democratic in order to pass on such a democratic ethos. Democracy as a political philosophy is full of both possibility and conflict. Its daily functioning is both a promise and a threat, an unfulfilled ideal, yet purpose-filled and innately better than the other lesser options of autocratic, authoritarian governance. Within

democratic society, education serves many purposes. On the one hand, it can be a place of punitive indoctrination where lists of required "truths" are fed to students and learning is documented regurgitation or simple recitation of those memorized "truths." But on the other hand, education and learning can be processes for developing skills of inquiry, questioning, and developing the skills of analysis in which the "answer" is a broad-based concept or learning that has arisen from the experience leaders and the students themselves in the educational institution have helped to steer.

How we have organized the book

The next chapter of this volume, *Challenges Abound*, lays out global issues and conditions and what we see as their connection to educational issues that threaten the progress of humankind. In this chapter, we interrogate these issues and discuss how education serves two critical aims at the same time: individual development and the survival of the society as a whole. We push to recognize that education is changing and that change should lead to a reorganization of school and the teaching and learning processes. Educational institutions should focus on new issues by pushing to set educational priorities that seek improvement around challenges humans face. These include the climate crisis and the environment; diversity, equity, and social justice; the role of technology; and democracy itself.

In Chapter 3, *The Local/Global Pendulum: Context, Place, and Educational Leadership*, we lay out the context, examples of what educational leaders in schools are doing, and details about what we see happening in different parts of the world. What are people working on in different cultures? How are educational leaders working to play a role? Neoliberal and bureaucratic descriptions of leadership expectations push one way, but more professional, contextual, and responsive forms of leadership show promise in unique settings. We look at our experiences and work across the stages of our lives. Early experiences with curriculum development initiatives to improve democracy reveal both opportunity and the lack of simple solutions.

We talk about examples from various projects around the world, including struggles with European neoliberal initiatives to adopt the business discourse of accountability and evaluation; Kenyan and South African projects around defining the tenets of democracy and conceptualizing democratic life in the midst of the debilitating impacts of HIV/AIDS; support for

under-resourced and under-performing schools in the United States; projects working to build engagement and equity with diverse communities; development of educational leaders in Poland; work to share best practices around the quality of schools in Wales and Scotland; and the preparation of principals in different parts of the world. These projects provide small glimpses of individuals and their efforts to begin to impact their local contexts, knowing there will be reverberations around the world.

Chapter 4, *Building a Strategic Framework for Responsive Educational Leadership*, more fully develops our conception of educational leadership by providing our vision of a framework for positioning oneself as a responsive educational leader. We argue that by focusing on educational leadership and building a robust philosophical stance, we can improve the world around us. We believe that a framework centered on authenticity; distributed leadership; awareness of complexity; equity, equality, and social justice; democratic practices; taking of ownership; and building on reflection will lead to a responsive school. But how does responsive leadership link to collective instructional leadership approaches, the call for culturally responsive leadership, and educational leadership focused on the health and sustainability of our communities? We answer the call for description of what educational leadership should look like, and what we should do. By laying out processes in both classroom learning, in the governance of the school, and its relations with the community, a more responsive educational institution can emerge.

Chapter 5, *Actions Focused on Learning and Development*, lays out what actions might be taken as a responsive school leader starts to implement the framework discussed in the previous chapter into the context of teaching, learning, and the curriculum. These actions flow from an understanding that responsive educational leaders and schools can impact our human condition, that we have a moral obligation to place our humanness at the center of the aims of education. By involving stakeholders in goal setting, building organizational culture, helping teachers develop themselves, involving students, and building a curriculum centered on interdisciplinarity and experience, we build responsiveness. By building responsive leaders and cultures in our schools, we are more able to respond to existing and future "wicked problems" in our societies through deliberation, digital and media literacy, and reflection.

Chapter 6, *Using Responsive Leadership to Re-Form School*, focuses on how development initiatives and projects can bring about methods that create quality

educational environments, re-form the organizational culture of individuals in the educational environment, and build schools and programs that impact our realities. Focused on the strengthening of democratic practices, and a cycle of inquiry and Action Research, we argue for the development of space for the voices and reflections of those in the school and community. Careful attention to the development of groups focused on problem-solving, and the building of shared purpose, we conclude the chapter by stating that ultimately it is all about re-forming the aims and motivations of school. Re-forming the relationships and distributing leadership becomes essential in order to develop confidence and agency. By doing so, we build awareness that schools can influence society. By building community, better solutions emerge. Inquiry, self-evaluation, and reflection become important tools for the school, its work, and the aims of the community.

Finally, Chapter 7, *A Bird's Eye View: Everything Is Connected*, concludes and ties together this work by focusing on the transformation we believe comes into being as school and educational leaders adopt the mantle of responsiveness. Educational leaders for responsive schools are developed by focusing on taking action, centering on learning, building a participatory governance structure, respecting diversity, and accepting the stewardship of the school. Because it is clear that schools can influence reality and the future of human beings, we believe these responsive leaders will impact the challenges we face. However, schools cannot fix problems created somewhere else. We need to think and act on the policy level and include all social domains in the reform process. When we fear the consequences of the appearance of a new virus and the lockdown of a pandemic itself, we cannot narrow our thinking to only one part of the society, economy, and policy. When we struggle with negative consequences of the long-term neglect of the education we need, we will not succeed by focusing only on the work of teachers. As in the case of the world after the degradation of the environment, after dealing with the impacts of a virus, we need to see an interconnected and complex system and we need to protect the weakest and demand sacrifice from the strongest and the richest. To improve education, we need effort from everyone who is involved in and who benefits from the educational system.

Taken as a whole, we believe this volume lays a marker and pushes us into a future where school is one of the answers to the question, "what might be done to make this a better world?" Ultimately, the purposes for educating members of a democratic society (tolerance, sense of justice,

problem-solving, being community oriented) act as the starting point for conceptualizing an authentic education rooted in the community and helping define the world. We struggle and work to promote values in a democratic society that are inclusive of all the society's voices, people, and perspectives. Educational leaders, then, are by design always building engagement and setting rigorous expectations, with room to learn from failure. The world emerges as a reality in process.[44] And the responsive leader strengthens the lives of the school's students, the adults who inhabit it, and the very existence of the communities and world it serves.

Notes

1. Apple (2006); Møller (2009).
2. Biesta (2006, 2009, 2015); Murgatroyd (2010); Shotter (1992).
3. Møller (2009) pp. 174 and 176.
4. Apple (2006) see p. 21.
5. Klein (2015).
6. Johnson (2014); Frattura and Capper (2007); Crenshaw (1990); Carbado, Crenshaw, Mays, Tomlinson (2013); Johnson, Møller, Pashiardis, Savvides, and Veday (2011); Alston (2005).
7. Hargreaves (2019); Halpern (1997); Bowen (2012); Banister (2017).
8. Buchel and Hoberg (2007); Buchel (2006); Tonks (1993).
9. Rousell and Cutter-Mackenzie-Knowles (2020); Kemmis and Mutton (2012).
10. Milanovic (2010); Noddings (2005).
11. Green (1995); Gaudelli and Donaldson (2012); Rizvi (2003); Youngs (2019).
12. Jordan, Kleinsasser, and Roe (2014) p. 419.
13. Noddings (2005a) p. 1.
14. Moore and Young (2001); Stetsenko (2020); Middlewood (2002).
15. Leithwood and Poplin (1992) page p. 8 shows how we have been having this debate for some time. He sorted organizations into Type A—centralized, hierarchies, top-down decision-making; and Type Z—consensual and facilitative (p. 9).
16. Mazurkiewicz (2015).
17. Wren (2007).
18. Cramer, Little, and McHatton (2018) p. 484.
19. Ibid.
20. Carlsson-Paige, and Lantieri (2005).

21. Kemmis and Mutton (2012).
22. Johnson (2014).
23. Noguera (2017); Samel, Sondergeld, Fischer, and Patterson (2011)
24. McKenzie, Christman, Hernandez, Fierro, Capper, Dantley, González, Cambron-McCabe, and Scheurich (2008) talk about "a view that educational leaders need to become activist leaders with a focus on equity..." p. 114.
25. Mason (2016) p. 438.
26. Peters and Jandrić (2017).
27. Lynch (2012).
28. Roman talks about Stuart Hall's 1969 development of the term "floating signifier" and many of us struggling to meet and work with those in other environments around the world and labeling them simply as "exotic" (Roman, 2003, p. 279).
29. Noddings (2005a) p. 7.
30. Cary, Lisa J. (2006) "Postcolonial theories of knowing (sic) used to understand how we know and how we live." (p. 11).
31. Senge (2006).
32. Aronowitz and Giroux (1991); Freire (1998, 2001); Dewey (2008), Biesta (2006, 2009, 2015).
33. Ayers (2004).
34. Lévi-Strauss (1962), Di Domenico, MariaLaura, Haugh, and Tracey (2010).
35. Cogan, Grossman, and Liu, (2000); Gaudelli and Donaldson (2012); Rizvi (2003).
36. Gaudelli and Donaldson (2012) talk about the importance of language in helping us build civic society. And that both consensus and dissensus are "normal states of human affairs." (p. 53).
37. Biesta (2015) p. 77.
38. Ibidem, p. 77.
39. Gita Steiner-Khamsi (2004) has talked about this global educational policy and discourse context. "International agents acting on behalf of globalization have contributed considerably to constructing an international model of education at a discursive level." (p. 5).
40. Popkewitz (2004) p. vii.
41. Freire (1996) p. 65.
42. Mason (2016) p. 438.
43. Szekely and Mason (2019).
44. Freire (1998).

2

CHALLENGES ABOUND

Education in challenging times

Learning makes us human. We are born as members of a society but without the skills to survive in it. We have to learn them. We learn how to understand our role in society, and we learn the competencies needed in life. The learning process also make us aware of ourselves in local and in global contexts. And usually when our learning experience is positive, our motivation to participate in social life grows.

Education changes us and also enables us, aside from being a part of society, to modify the environment. When we change the environment, especially by using our brains and the skills and technology that we have invented, the conditions of life change, sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse. Education and culture enable people to develop and adjust to an altered environment faster than evolution would allow. To simplify the complex process of education, it is possible to say that it serves, at the same time, to support individual development, successful life within

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society, and survival of the whole society while protecting the achievements we already have. In general, education supports a human's ability to change.

The ability for humans to change is possible because, through the construction of knowledge, humans construct their reality. Our basic tools used in this process—education, learning, thinking, language, and communication—have to be dynamic and responsive, not conservative. Today, we are facing an important task—the redefinition and redesigning of schools in a way that will help us in continuing the process of learning for current and future benefits. There is a serious threat that without that change, schools will not be able to organize the teaching and learning processes needed to deal with new challenges, new realities, and new contexts. In order to redesign the schooling system for the benefit of all of us, a new social contract for schools and education is needed. Toward that purpose, we need imagination and cooperation.

Social reality is shaped by human interaction. We build structures of social life while communicating, negotiating, and acting[1]. When we agree that something is good or bad, it becomes good or bad and we start to act according to that statement. In this way, we may say, the world becomes what we think about it[2]. The way we think influences the way we act and, as a consequence, our actions determine the shape of reality. There is great hope and promise behind this perspective because it means that reality depends on us, and we may decide about reality. Should not school and the process of education provide us with values, aims, and tools that would allow us to build the best world possible? Instead of reconstructing the existing world, we should try in schools to inspire young people with visions of the future, visions that would give them language and skills useful as creators of a better reality, one which would answer to our needs and accepted values. To help schools to become places of authentic change, we need to answer the question about the aims of education—the famous "why?".

Others claim that the current models of educational leadership can suffice. In our opinion, we should not look for authorities or experts to answer questions about the aims of education alone; we should rather invite teachers, parents, students, and other members of the community to debate about the aims of education. We firmly believe that those aims stem from current issues, conditions, the challenges of current situations, and

from the values accepted by communities, but also from values that respect equality and equal rights for everybody, values that support democracy. It is necessary to understand the needs of contemporary societies, and members of these societies should participate in the deliberation process. The proposed debate will be simultaneously a learning process for all participating agents and an intentional process focused on deciding about the aims of education relevant to existing needs and desires.

We appeal to teachers to start touching upon topics that are important. Doing so is good practice and essential in order to meet the aims of education we should be pushing for.[3] Focusing on what have been called "wicked problems" should be characteristic of 21st-century learning and teaching.[4] It should be us, the teachers in the schools, who know the students and their problems, who are able to critically reflect on the contemporary world, who should propose areas of conversation and development for young people. Not media, industry, celebrities, or even gangs, but instead schools should be the places of ferment, passionate discussions, and projects that help to solve the problems of young people. Isn't it great to see how powerful schools are, when teachers and students together take on the power to decide? We do not advocate to monopolize public discourse by schools but we want them to inspire and lead. It is necessary to broaden the understanding of the role of schools. They should not be places where only young people prepare for their future life, but they should be places of life-long learning for everyone, the center of the cultural and political life for communities, a platform for social dialogue and democratic debates. School and education can no longer be a preparation camp for life, but instead it is life itself. We may start to work on it with the first task, organizing the global debate about educational aims.

Although, as we claim, nobody has a right to force any ideas on others; further in this chapter, we will suggest a few big issues that should be taken under consideration while thinking about designing or redesigning education and the creation of responsive schools.

Time to act

As humans, we want to believe in the potential of unlimited development and constant improvement of everything we have achieved so far. But is it possible? Maybe we have reached a borderline that we will never cross?

When we look at the contemporary world, we see chaos and hear conflicting messages. Values that we used to support have excluded some rather than included everybody. Traditional sources of information are failing us. People seem to be lost. We repeat, and thereby provide confirmation of, content that we do not trust or are even able to verify as credible. Experts, politicians, journalists—people who were traditionally leaders in public opinions—manipulate data and information for particular benefits, political economic, or other. They leave us in uncertainty and strengthen the conviction that everything is fluid,[5] that everything is only a case of interpretation. While a few decades ago, freedom of interpretation offered a feeling of revolution, today, in the era of fake news and lies, it brings misunderstanding and fear. It is difficult to decide who is right and who is not. With the same possibility of success, we may try to confirm opposite statements: that everything is better now, or never have things been so bad. The pessimistic perspective dominates, but when we compare accessible statistics, the opposite description of our condition becomes apparent. We feel bad about the condition of the world, but the development of medicine, new technologies, long-lasting economic growth, and the popularity of education, better health, and longer lifespans says something to the opposite. Criticism is winning, while disturbing messages about our planet and societies, about poverty, the economy, and predictions about challenges more difficult than ever, multiply our anxiety.[6]

The end of the 20th century was that time in our human history when we thought we had found the formula for undisturbed development—social, cultural, and economic—not only in certain countries, but across a global reach. Development was supposed to lead us to a world where all would be able to live a life according to everybody's needs and dreams. The end of the Cold War, the stable democratic systems in various regions of the world, acceptance of the values system standing behind the Declaration of Human Rights, and technological and economic successes supported the belief in the end of history as announced by Francis Fukuyama,[7] when he claimed that the future was bright.

Unfortunately, we were wrong. Events of the years that followed, like the war on terror, the great financial crisis, depravation of the natural environment, and even more rapid technological development, put us, in a very short time, in a situation where the memory of our optimism of the 1990s brings only nostalgia or a skeptical smile. We are in a difficult moment of

history. Yes, we have overcome multiple challenges in the past, but it looks like we have lost the inner compass that had once helped us to make reasonable decisions. Looking at public debates leads us to conclude that we are no longer able to agree on what is important, or even what is good for us.

The almost lunatic rate of consumption has become a religious-like act and the only way to happiness. A small remark on the need to decrease our rates of consumption creates unpleasant emotional sensations and protests. It feels like the right to consume has become the main human right and also an indicator of a person's value. We produce fast and cheaply, not caring about safety, quality, or pollution. We compete not caring about ethics. We grow without responsibility. It is really difficult to reflect on what is useful and beneficial in an authentic way. It is difficult to build healthy relationships and to organize our social life in a way that would provide satisfaction and at the same time, support a value system that would help to maintain a healthy democracy. Additionally, our mental and business models help to build an unfair social reality. In this environment, the new and growing challenges seem to be extremely difficult to overcome.

It is so hard today to look for commonly accepted rules and find stable points in social and political life. Cynical games played by leaders of public opinion, media, and politics have led us to a situation where it is almost impossible to determine what is true and what is not. The abilities of new technologies (which boost involvement in social media discourse) manipulate people in such a way that the manipulation cannot be recognized. Informational chaos creates passivity, fear, and disappointment, which in consequence inspires us to ask critical questions about how it is possible to shape the ability to use new sources of information for the public good and for the creation of a new kind of literacy in the time of fake news and cynical lies. The question is even harder to answer in the face of data telling us that, for example, in Poland, 40% of the population in 2018 could not understand what they read.[8] Or that 6 million (out of 38 million) Poles did not read even one book,[9] while a majority of participants in public life and voters take their information from social media.

How education is changing

Similar anxieties and discrepancies can be found in the world of education. On the one side, we see the centuries-old traditions, expectations, and

practices of a system of education created for vastly different times but still deeply rooted in our various cultural fabrics. On the other side, we have a fast-changing and expanding new story of learning in a globally networked world, marked by new opportunities and complex challenges, driven by the increasingly ubiquitous technologies that connect us. For the past decade, as all those changes continued to accelerate, we have been watching the growing disconnect between the old and the new worlds of learning. Unfortunately, the old world stayed mainly in the schools while new world started to grow outside of the school. The standard elements of schools such as the way we use time, our organizational structures, and how we think about teaching and learning at the core of the students' experience have stayed largely untouched within the formal system.

The challenges that we face stem from the lack of coherent narration and a lack of skills to understand reality. We cannot communicate and cooperate in order to design and implement complex tasks. Our existence is in danger because the challenges we face are complex. For example, our lifestyles and industries have left the natural environment in a catastrophic condition. We will become extinct or at least suffer greatly from the ecological disaster we have been creating. Numerous researchers and thinkers are sounding the alarm that it is impossible to allow people to live how they want to[10]—we need radical changes. However, to implement that kind of change, we need to think in a way that utilizes an interdisciplinary approach and acts across cultural and political borders. We need to learn to cooperate with people who we do not want to cooperate with. We appear unable to do it. Respect for diversity and the sharing of wealth and power should become our fate, but we do not know how to develop those habits.

Negative phenomena accumulate in a few areas[11] and recognizing them, defining the most impacted areas, should be the first step in designing a new "responsive" school. School always functions in a certain social context. The success of a school depends on whether the school's actions are appropriate to that context. When school is not focused on issues present in our contemporary time, the usefulness of school disappears. School needs to nurture ambitious goals and show what lays behind horizons, but at the same time school needs to be connected to important questions of the current moment and the needs of the students and their communities.

Teachers, as critical intellectuals[12], try to understand critical issues and inspire others to look, think, discuss, act, and be aware of the contemporary

world and its problems, questions, and challenges. Teachers show that all these aspects of the world are both interesting and important. They do not have to prove that schools can react to the world; they should instead try to design the world. We do not have to accept rules of the game; we, in schools, may propose our own rules by setting agendas and designing the curriculum. All that we want from schools is often outdated. We react too late or not at all to what is important. We do not have to buy the newest computers, as they do it in business; we need to support students in order to learn how to use the computers. In order to design the new "responsive" school we need to lead discussions that allow us to answer the question, as already mentioned, "why?" Why do we need to teach a particular issue or skill in our school? Why do we use that approach or method? Why do we set that expectation?

Gert Biesta emphasizes how educators carry an immense responsibility, and it is more than a responsibility for the "quality" of teaching or for meeting the needs of the learner. If education is about creating opportunities for students to come into the world and about asking difficult questions, then it becomes clear that the responsibility of the educator is a responsibility for the subjectivity of the student. Taking responsibility for the uniqueness of the student is not that we will know what will actually happen in the future as a result of the educational efforts and interventions. To engage in educational relationships, to be a teacher, therefore implies a responsibility for something (or someone) that we do not know and cannot know.[13]

Educational priorities

In the past, we were able, with varying levels of success, to develop various ways of surviving all kinds of crises and different forms of social, economic, and political turbulence. One of the most sustainable ways of dealing with problems was, and still is, education: a systemic process which prepares people to solve problems of a different scale, in cooperation with others, or sometimes alone. By believing in the strength of education, and believing in the possibility of building our future, we demonstrate our acceptance of the power educational leaders and schools hold over the improvement of our societies. We are concerned because of the lack of understanding of the important problems we face, and a lack of vision that would help us to solve those problems. Educational leaders

can fill this vacuum. Responsive schools can help to build understanding. Conservative approaches toward problems (doing the same things over and over again, just faster and more cheaply) will not work. We must work in schools to bridge the wide discrepancy between what should be done and what we, as a society, understand and accept.

For years, we used various models, systems, practices, and solutions in education that were shaped by real conditions. We prepared whole generations to work in an industrialized economy, to participate in societies, to fight in wars and rebuild the world when they ended. Those conditions, creating the context in which the educational system was functioning, lasted for over 200 years—almost until yesterday. The system seemed to be solid and confirmed. People trusted in their experience and felt safe in repeating previously tested answers. This is why, unfortunately, when we think that education may help us, we often implement well-known solutions that were used in the past. Although we know today that it is not enough to do the same, only in a "better" way, in order to change reality, we are still doing it. Does anybody believe that it is still possible to use the old model of school in order to support us in improving the "new" world?

Probably not, so we need to accept the necessity of radical change of school as an institution, as well as entire educational systems. Only in this way might schools be a part of the process of finding and designing solutions for the challenges of the contemporary world. Paradoxically, it is quite easy to accept that statement because the custom of change has been a part of the system for years: it was and still is almost an administrative duty to propose and implement change on a regular basis. Every new term and every new leadership team brings about new ideas and change. Educational change has become an old tradition. However, the changes that we face in education are closer to changes in governments brought about by elections. The carousel of changes circles around positions in the system, rather than rational, thoughtful, reflection over the needs of society. Because of that, these changes almost never bring the results that are expected.

We need to find a way to change schools, while avoiding situations where changes are introduced by and within an institution that should be changed but suffers from organizational and administrative impotence, societal rituals and practices, and fossilized power structures. It is necessary to change the inner structures in order to enable schools to change in a way that would support social change.

It will not be easy to transform our way of thinking and functioning in education. Neither will it be easy to change the way we think about societies. These two are and have always been intertwined. For example, industrial development, economic growth, and education, as we wanted to believe, were and are inseparably connected. There is, however, no evidence that economic growth stems from what people learn in schools, and nobody has proved that economic productivity enables quality change in schools. Despite this, we acted like the connection between these two was obvious and positive.[14] Governments and people promoted the conviction that higher degrees bring happiness and jobs, and that an individual investment in education will bring, as a consequence, higher financial gain. In some ways, it is already visible today that those promises cannot be fulfilled. Education plays a lesser role in vertical social mobility than future graduates want to believe.[15]

As we stated earlier, there is a certain capacity in schools. We define this capacity as the ability to shape social reality through the promotion in school of necessary ideas, the definition of contemporary challenges, and the adjustments in values we need. A key issue in any effort to change is the uneven distribution of political power and financial resources, which then inhibits the ability for true deliberation and negotiation about aims, processes, and actions.[16] Narratives, and teaching and learning tools aligned with the context of schooling should be understood as essential as a part of living in the contemporary global society. We need, as humankind, all possible support in facing the challenges of reality. And so we need to enable education to work toward these challenges. School will have meaning only when it is designed according to well-defined needs. The first step is to launch a process of reflection and in consequence to create awareness of the most important challenges. It should be mentioned, however, that the whole process, from diagnosis to visible results of the implemented solution, would take too long for the most burning issues, so recommendations for education should be implemented with political action starting today. We advise real involvement in education, involvement which invests in critical literacy, that provides students with a particular perspective in the world based on a very particular set of values.[17] We believe that, in this way, we will be able to construct a "responsible response,"[18] not just a reaction to the context.

Issues that matter

Competencies, knowledge, skills, and all other possible outcomes of education are, in the majority of cases, useful only in the current moment. That moment might be longer or shorter, but it is often only very briefly in real life that people actually use what they learned in school. Obviously, there is strong pressure on schools to build skills that might be important in the future, but truly useful education will help us in the here and now as well. Focusing on the future seems to be natural but it is very difficult from a psychological perspective. To work hard and actively on something that may appear to be useful years from now, seems to be a little bit artificial or even surrealistic. Perhaps it would be better to invite students to learn something that would help us now. Let's take a look at what we need right now. Data, information, indicators, and facts are everywhere around us. In the ideal world, it would be quite easy to apply all that information and knowledge to improve our reality. Education might be designed like a class in strategic thinking. In an ideal world, we would just need to follow a few steps: diagnose challenges, define interventions and tools, learn how to use them, and plan and implement. We may try to pretend that the world is stable and understandable and assume for a moment that we can follow these textbook steps. Let's forget about all the typical obstacles and try to diagnose the main areas of concern, and then in the next step let's devise interventions and invent the tools needed.

We need to abandon education that is designed for other times, for previous centuries, and organized like a greenhouse where students are fed information which they need to repeat to prove their own "learning." Zygmunt Bauman compared that kind of traditional education to ballistic artillery, where calculating angles and amounts of explosives made it possible to predict where a cannonball would strike. And that was an ideal weapon, Bauman claims, for positional war, where targets did not move. The same characteristics, however, become useless when the target starts to move in unpredictable ways. In this situation, the gunner (teacher) needs an intelligent, thinking missile, one able to change its trajectory of flight depending on the changing situation. This kind of missile cannot pause or stop the process of collecting and processing information. They learn in flight, they change earlier decisions, and they never fall into the habit of behaving according to previous instructions.[19]

The environment and climate change

The biggest challenge of our time is our survival in the natural environment. It seems that solving environmental problems exceeds our capabilities. The environment is in a state of terrible crisis due to human activity. Humankind needs to find out how to solve this problem because it is a matter of our existence. Only success in this area can give us hope that it will be possible to continue our happy life on Earth. Unfortunately, the problem that we see in front of us is complex and intertwined. There are more than a few sources of helplessness.

To really understand the seriousness of the situation, we need to understand different kinds of information and to accept that life and economy as we know it since the beginning of industrial era, based on maximizing production and consumption, is not possible any longer. In the 21st century alone, we have used 37% of the energy that humankind consumed throughout history.[20] Our problem is not only climate, but the whole global ecosystem. We are witnessing mass extinction and decreasing biological diversity. We are experiencing an ecological disaster that causes global warming leading to extreme weather and phenomenal rising sea levels and melting ice caps, which emit lethal gases into the atmosphere. What exactly is causing what? Industrial agriculture has become as equally dangerous as heavy industry and the burning of coal and oil. We are suffering from the pollution of air, water, and soil. Migrations, conflicts over access to water, hunger, and other conditions will render the Earth uninhabitable.[21] Along with decreasing traditional energy sources to near zero, we need to reduce the pressure on environment stemming from our demand for soil, wood, food, water, and the natural resources needed to manufacture computers, bicycles, and windmills. But our schools are blind or even ignorant to this context.

The UN Intergovernmental panel on climate change report[22] announced alarmingly that hundreds of millions of lives are at stake if the world warms more than 1.5 ° C, which will happen as early as 2040. Nearly all coral reefs would die out, wildfires and heat waves would sweep across the planet annually, and the interplay between drought and flooding and temperature would mean that the world's food supply would become dramatically less secure. Avoiding that scale of suffering requires such a thorough transformation of the world's economy, agriculture, and culture that "there is no

documented historical precedent."[23] We know from *The Carbon Majors Report*[24] that only 100 of the biggest corporations are responsible for 70% of the emission of gases. Among these giants are Exxon Mobil, Shell, BP, and Chevron. Some of these corporations were aware of the negative consequences of their actions as early as the 1970s. They were able to precisely predict all kinds of scientific indicators of the pollution, but they preferred to invest campaigns of doubt instead of in clean energy.

Anyone wanting to change the situation has to understand that interests of big businesses, national economies, and individual wealth work against the odds of solving the challenge of a destroyed natural environment, because in the existing mental models all solutions seem to threaten these interests. The free market economy is driven by individual demand. And both individuals and corporations strive to transfer costs to others while maintaining benefits for themselves. Solutions will be found in adjusting the ways of meeting our needs so that we bear our own costs, and in finding ways to put effective pressure on business institutions to do the same.[25] Change demands reversing the way humans think about development and production, and also the way political decision-making processes are organized. Right now, the existing economic model and the opaque network of economic and political interests are more powerful than the public good and the will of the people.

The problem of the catastrophic state of the natural environment is also cultural. It is connected to the style of life associated with Western democracy and prosperity. People see all decisions leading to a healthier world as limitations on their rights and freedoms. Declining growth is not an option: decreasing consumption levels is a sign of poverty and weakness. Consumption of oil and coal is itself a cultural phenomenon. Coal mines and coalminers influenced the social order. They are reflected in lifestyles, value systems, architecture, and the design of cities. These coalminers were and still are part of the culture: art, religion, role models, and everyday social rules. Every decision about using or not using coal as a source of energy impacts other areas of social life. It touches all human beings, although to varying degrees, at least for now. It is a global challenge that needs to be addressed now, globally and locally at the same time, and in a systemic and individual way.

Education and school will not "fix" it alone, not without serious social, political, and economic changes. But education and school should be a part

of the process, and may inspire, facilitate, and raise awareness. Building a culture of care for the members of the community and for the world around the school is essential.[26] School alone will not win this game, but it should be actively involved in order to inspire citizens to start to think and act, on the macroscale and politically as well. There is no chance of success if pro-ecological movements are not rooted in local communities. Although we need systemic solutions, we also need to act and accept general directions on the local level. People need to make changes to their lifestyles and devise initiatives that include demanding action from governments and big business. Young people have recently started a revolution alone, without any support from the educational systems. We need to support them. Schools have to equip these young people and everybody else with the needed intellectual competencies, social skills, and tools.

Today, researchers warn us of destruction if we do not make fast and deep changes to our lives. We have known this for at least 40 years but have not changed our behavior.[27] Our situation is getting worse at a faster pace than was predicted. The environment impacts our health and makes fighting disease more difficult. Pandemics, fresh water, access to health care, and quality foods are made more insidious by an environment that is in conflict with the hope of leading a long, healthy, fulfilling life. We need to immediately start conserving energy on a massive scale, switch to green sources of energy, keep oil and coal in the ground, stop subsidizing the coal industry, and levy more carbon taxes. We need to decrease methane emissions, stop massive deforestation, and support forest ecosystems. It is necessary to change the human diet and eat more plants while decreasing the consumption of meat and other animal products. We do not have the right to waste food. Instead of economic growth, people should start thinking about decreasing consumption and about projects supporting ecology and the biosphere.[28] Income or profit should not be the only priority; we need to look for alternative paths and consider their implementation. All of this requires changes in governing and managing. People should demand a different approach to economic thinking. We are capable of good work and we have workable solutions. Let's promote just a few of them: the idea of de-growth, carbon taxes, increased investment in renewable and nuclear energy and decarbonization technology, and one more: removing or significantly decreasing the amount of meat we eat. The last recommendation has become extremely important in the spring of 2020. Industrial

production of meat, lack of hygiene, allowing contact between wild and domesticated animals, and in general nonchalant and cruel treatment of nature has led to another epidemic, or rather a pandemic on a global scale.

Do schools have the luxury of remaining blind and ignorant? How can school help us to prepare to take-action? Technology is a lesser problem than people's beliefs, convictions, values, and common sense. This is understandable, as the needed change will demand suffering. Schools should prepare the intellectual and moral scaffolding for those needed changes in order to create social pressure and common understanding. This is why schools need to rebuild their curricula in order to stress the necessity of change in this matter, and also should change their pedagogies to make learning a social experience. Students need to learn and act at the same time. Yes, we need to allow young people to give their voice, while supporting them with information and competencies. It was devastating to watch students and teachers involved in online learning during the lockdown caused by COVID-19 working on business as usual (at least in Poland) working their way through curricula without seriously addressing the situation that has changed reality for all of us.

We need to accept the fact that every act of the industrial society leads to environmental degradation regardless of intentions; we must design a system where the opposite is true, where doing good is natural, where every day acts of work and life accumulate into a better world as a matter of course, not a matter of conscious altruism.[29] Environmental challenges should be priority number one in thinking about changes in education and the role of school, but it cannot be defined as the only challenge we need to take under consideration. Unfortunately, all the challenges we face today are, in a certain way, connected and influence each other.

Diversity

A second challenge of modern societies fighting to survive in a collapsing environment is a lack of ability to work and collaborate in our highly diverse social environment. Fear of diversity, fear of otherness and of strangers, blocks cooperation on local and global levels, among institutions and on an interpersonal level. Lack of trust leads to the corruption of social ties and also disturbs intellectual activity as people are unable to create attractive ideas that would have the potential to integrate.[30] When people are afraid

of the "Other," everything is more difficult.[31] The inability to cooperate is evident on various levels, locally, regionally, and internationally.

Difference is often negative: alien, stigmatizing, and stereotyping, it results in exclusion, discrimination, and racism. One aspect of diversity is the negative impact of the refugee crisis in the European Union on democratic political systems and an open and tolerant social environment. In Great Britain for example, even before Brexit, the strong discord toward liberal immigration policy among populist parties was obvious, but reluctance to deal with the consequences of migration was also significant. Fear of the invasion of "barbarians" is multiplied by other fears of modernity, for example, fear of the technological revolution and changes to the labor markets.[32]

When people cannot live in a diverse reality, they are often more open to nationalist ideologies and more willing to exist in homogenized, closed communities. Huge groups are excluded from benefiting from the common good only because they tend to the category of "the Other" because of the color of their skin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, and other factors. Obstacles created by these categories make cooperation across borders and between different cultural groups extremely difficult. We are reluctant to cooperate both with neighbors who are different from us and strangers who live in different cultures and under different religious systems or political conditions. Sometimes, it is not even about cooperation but about everyday interactions or kindness toward those who we meet on the streets. The ability to communicate and cooperate is one of the cornerstones of democracy. Without it, we will collapse as democratic societies. We need public spaces where we may meet a stranger and have a conversation with a person we do not know. Public life happens in all the places where strangers can freely meet face-to-face and learn mutual respect. Schools are public spaces and it is important to keep them public because they are among the few places where people from different social classes and of diverse identities can still meet, communicate, and cooperate.

Unfortunately, tribal cooperation, as Richard Sennett[33] calls cooperation among those who are similar to each other, will not help in solving critical existential problems. We need informal, open cooperation because it is the best way to experience diversity. In informal settings, there is a time for establishing communication rules and procedures. Results of long-lasting communication arise from interaction. It is not forced "from above." There

is an assumption that all sides will benefit from cooperation: we need to accept that every time somebody wins or loses, it happens together. We all win, or we all lose.

Without alliances across existing divisions and without interdisciplinary approaches to questions like those about the usage of oil and coal, the production of meat, access to education, medical care, gun control, inequalities and more, will never be answered and solved. As Yuval Harari says, "we are currently harassed by global problems, and we don't have global communities."[34] School might be a clinic for cooperation in diverse groups for problem-solving, a base camp where we store all the needed equipment and methods of cooperation allowing young people to test them and learn how to use them. Maybe it is difficult, but it is not impossible.

Inequality

The challenge of diversity and cooperation is directly tied to the third challenge we would like to point to, that of inequality and vanishing solidarity. There is also a link between unjust economic systems and ecological catastrophe. We can't solve one without solving the other. We will not solve them, however, by focusing on technologies.[35] The incredibly strong forces of globalization first promised a better future and later caused even bigger discrepancies, stronger competition, and more inequality. People started to move across a spectrum that they were not prepared for. Close proximity of cultures and people did not inspire kindness and solidarity but instead division and building fences and fear. The meeting and encounters of a variety of cultures, instead of making us richer, has made us less tolerant and more accepting of unfair differences. Tribalization and populism found multiple justifications for unequal division of wealth and unequal benefits for common work. New economic, managerial, and political theories were used to manipulate and lie while explaining poverty. The fate of the poor and the broken was described by stereotypical concepts in which the poor and the broken were blamed for the situation, not a systemic or global condition, but their laziness, lack of motivation or stupidity.[36] All of that has been supported by mass media and school as it exists today.

The price of inequality, according to Joseph E. Stiglitz, is paid in three ways: by degradation of market economies, loss of justice, and threats to

democracy. Crisis is manifested in the inability of the market to create growth and employment.[37]

During the pandemic, the wealth of billionaires is surging while millions face suffering, hardship, and loss of life. This is a grotesque indicator of the deep inequalities in United States and world society. Between March 18th and May 28th 2020, over 40.7 million people filed for unemployment benefits in the United States. This doesn't include the millions more who have applied for help as self-employed workers. Millions of people have lost the health insurance linked to their jobs. Over the same 10 weeks, the wealth of U.S. billionaires surged $485 billion. Two billionaires, Jeff Bezos and Mark Zuckerberg, have seen their combined wealth increase over $63 billion since March 18th. The surge in billionaire wealth during a global pandemic underscores the grotesque nature of unequal sacrifice. While millions risk their lives and livelihoods as first responders and frontline workers, these billionaires benefit from an economy and tax system that is wired to funnel wealth to the top.[38]

Jimmy Carter[39] sadly stated in 1979: "Human identity is no longer defined by what one does, but by what one owns. But we've discovered that owning things and consuming things does not satisfy our longing for meaning. We've learned that piling up material goods cannot fill the emptiness of lives which have no confidence or purpose." Of course, he was right 40 years ago, but the situation today is worse. Overconsumption is one of the most important values, and cynical corporations (and governments) convince us that what we are buying and what we own determine the quality of our lives. We have become a society of immediate gratification, and we are prisoners of the culture of consumption. At the same time, the public sector is collapsing, ties between people are weakening, solidarity is disappearing, and people in some sectors of society and regions of the world are living below unimaginable standards. It is important to talk about it in schools to help students become aware of both the real situation as it exists and the manipulation around inequalities.

Technology

This brings us to the fourth challenge that society is dealing with, and which schools could help to overcome. It is the development of technology and social media, especially their potentially destructive uses. There are

at least two major aspects of this area of development: changes to economies and labor markets, and changes to social relations. The first change is caused by robotization and artificial intelligence and the second by social media and the way we create our understanding of the world.

The first change has caused drastic changes in industry, in which the demand for human labor has decreased.[40] Although in the past there were numerous times when we predicted "the end of work," it never happened. We need to think about this now as a serious probability. Maybe we will always need human work, but the nature of that work has already changed. We often create jobs that have no meaning.[41] It is both an economic and a social problem. On the one side, the use of robots and artificial intelligence in all human endeavors promises high quality, reliability, compliance with procedures, and profit. On the other side, we will see competition with people, probable dysfunctions during production, and the rise of the "trash people."[42] And who will profit from the technological revolution? What kind of society are we already? What kind will we soon become? Will we be equal and free, or will we reinforce the hierarchical order in which elites will control the poor masses working themselves to death for starvation wages in order to be able to buy unneeded, low-quality products? Schools may help us to survive this uncertain situation, supporting the aspects of humanity that might be unreachable for robots—love, art, cooperation, and empathy.

The second change caused by development of technology and social media focuses on surveillance, and it impacts our ability to participate in society and be informed citizens. Development of universal education has produced high levels of literacy, but new technology and social media have undermined our ability to play the role of informed citizens. People today believe in fake news, opinions not supported by evidence, and empty accusations. And they reject science on a scale that makes societies easy to manipulate. At the same time, social media gives everyone a voice about everything and people use that opportunity often and aggressively. Murgatroyd[43] has argued that this generation will understand "the power of social networks, cloud-based computing, and technology…," but will they understand what such new aspects of our technological lives are doing to our humanity, or the possibilities of mobile technology to increase their involvement and engagement in the swiftly changing technology ecosystem they inhabit.[44]

Obsessive use of social media along with various state- and corporate-driven actions have led us to the end of privacy. Information collected through phones, computers, and virtual assistants reveals more about our private, social, and political lives than anyone may be aware of. Scandals like that surrounding Cambridge Analytica have revealed how the use of this data is inappropriate. Big data has some potential benefits for society, although without control over what is collected and who has access to it and how it is used, may bring more negative outcomes than positive.

We should be aware of the consequences of the crisis of information, which consists of four problems. This crisis risks making us collectively dumber instead of more intelligent and tearing us apart instead of bringing us together. The first problem is Content Shock: the amount of knowledge available to us is expanding so fast that none of us can possibly keep up. The gap between total collective human knowledge and our time to consume it grows wider every second. Much new information and many new skills we could learn are out there, but they're buried so deep that we don't even know they exist. The second problem is that of Echo Chambers: as groups grow in size, they become less stable and more diverse, eventually fracturing into subgroups. Each new group develops its own language and culture. While this improves communication inside the group, it makes it harder for knowledge to travel in or out. Each group develops an identity based, in part, on how it's different or better than other groups. Each group lives in its own echo chamber, which it believes is the "true" reality. The third problem is Constant Distraction, as our physical and virtual environments are surrounded by more and more content, whether editorial, advertising, or "fake news." This content is marketed specifically to our own inclinations, which proves a powerful distraction that can prevent us from pursuing more useful information or our own goals. The fourth problem is the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), pushing us to search for more websites, platforms, and newsfeeds.[45]

We are addicted.[46] Smartphones are different from everything else that came before them. They are a source of entertainment, social contacts, information, and access to different services. Young people admit that it is the last thing they see before going to sleep and the first thing they touch in the morning.[47] It makes them less mobile, less willing to leave the house, and more consumers than citizens.

Democracy

The last important challenge shaping our world is the crisis of democracy and a lack of vision for future developments. We are experiencing the end of a certain era, although we seem unaware of the situation. We are in the interregnum between liberal democracy and capitalism, and something we do not know how to name yet.[48] Could we be active in the process of deciding about our future? We need to be. We used to think that liberal democracy had become a stable element of human culture. Unfortunately, that was an illusion.[49] Liberal democracy has provoked various powers to act against it. Some have indicated that the underlying foundational tenets of the liberal international order are increasingly in danger and "that at the same time, democracy is under assault in many countries around the world."[50] Events of recent years such as the rise of Russian intervention in decision-making processes around Brexit and American elections, the rise of more authoritarian (to various degrees) governments in The Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and Turkey, and the unsure political future of countries like the United States, France, Italy, and Spain, have led to a dismantling of democratic order.

Anger and extreme polarization have led to an unexpected destructive synergy among peace, affluence, and technology. Anti-establishment movements have allowed populists to weaken political parties traditionally supporting democracy and the international order that led to decades of peace and prosperity, but also created an unacceptable gap between the elites and the masses.[51] Like the other issues discussed in this chapter, schools should be an element of grassroots pro-democracy movements and resist democratic decline. Can we reverse the pessimistic discourse about the collapse of democracy? Is it possible?

Building responsive leadership that acts

Critical thinking, problem-based learning, cooperation in groups in research projects, the ability to check the quality of sources and information itself, and action and activity outside of the classroom walls, these are all needed from schools. Instead of thinking about government structures doing everything for us, we need to take civic action. Instead of learning how the cell is built, we need to research on cancer treatments. Instead of reading about wars, we need to research social problems and conduct

interviews. Instead of passing on knowledge to their students, teachers need to help them to produce it.[52] We need to rethink the aims of education and methods of teaching and learning that would then allow us to build learning environments that enable young people to develop as aware, informed, critical, cooperative, empathetic, and responsible citizens.

These five enormous and difficult challenges:

- The state of the natural environment including the impacts of disease,
- Diversity, racism, and the inability to cooperate,
- Inequality and the lack of solidarity,
- The impact of new technologies and social media,
- A crisis of democracy, and lack of vision for the benefit of society,

together create an extremely difficult environment for humans.

These challenges have created almost unbearable contexts for educational leaders and schools. We have, however, over the years, devised different methods and structures in institutions that make our efforts to deal with these challenges more effective. School needs to be one of these. It is possible only if we adjust the aims and methods of the work done in schools. Amidst the signs of despair in the challenges, there are, however, attempts at change. There are educational leaders and schools taking actions that move communities and impact reality. The shift is possible. A future can exist where responsive educational leaders develop responsive schools that impact and improve our lives and the human condition.

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3

THE LOCAL/GLOBAL PENDULUM

Context, place, and educational leadership

Learning from others

Educational leaders face a world full of obstacles. As we encounter each principal in the diverse settings around the world, we are continually reminded of the hope and effort that most educational leaders put into their work. Some face significant lists of neoliberal-infused bureaucratic tasks.[1] Some of them state their concerns and grumble about the everyday enormity of the mundane aspects of their jobs. Some of them are silenced by the hierarchies they occupy. But in the midst of this, we continue to find educational leaders who are doing things we would describe as responsive. There are numerous individual principals and head teachers advocating for their communities and doing amazing things to improve the quality of life. They are intentionally moving their staff and students into the future, forward toward a better life. They seem to represent the more transformative[2] forms of educational leadership, but with something beyond the traditional definition we know. They sometimes represent professional models of

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educational leadership,[3] but even they have something beyond the competencies aligned with new professional management initiatives.[4] They seem to have the ability and competencies to be authentic and focused on learning and development. Many are aware of complexity and interdisciplinarity and that no problem stands apart. They do their work in a contextualized and reflective manner. And some lead in a distributed, participatory, and shared way that ultimately creates a democratic ethos in their institutions.

In various contexts, principals are doing important things that make their communities better. These educational leaders are setting out to take action and are striving to be responsive. All around the world, impacted by both local and global contexts, there are tensions about choices, reforms that have competing demands, and discourses that are evolving and changing as these leaders are pressed to do their work. Whether in Poland, South Africa, the United States, Lithuania, across the United Kingdom, or in many other wide-ranging places, education is viewed as both in crisis and the answer to "the" crisis.

Context and place matter

The role of learning environments, the context in which leadership, teaching, and most importantly learning occur, matters. What are the experiences of school leaders in these various environments and contexts around the world? Given the challenges discussed in the previous chapter, we know that context impacts the learning, teaching and curricula of schools. While education and school seem to center on preparing students to simply be able to function in our post-industrial society, "not only does such an education deprive young people of the knowledge they need to care for and appreciate the places in which they grow up; it also fails to provide them with an understanding of what place means in the lives of people in other parts of the globe."[5] For educational leaders, how do we carefully build confident principals working to be responsive, and how do we carefully build strong connections and relationships in the local context while remaining aware of the global implications of our work?

One theory, that of place-based education, calls for meaningful contextual experiences for students,[6] but it misses that context and place matter for educational leadership as well. To engage actively with the community and the broader society for our own professional development becomes an

essential task. Kemmis and Mutton[7] help detail how we need to be aware of the various dimensions that conceptualize and define our realities on the ground:

a. The cultural-discursive dimension (language—shaping people's "sayings" and thinking),
b. Material-economic dimension (work—shaping people's doings),
c. Socio-political dimension (power—shaping people's relations to one another).

In building connections to context and place, we construct the world for ourselves, our staffs, and our students. We need to be aware that everything in the context is not without struggle. Even things like classroom discussions or building-level deliberations can be sites of interruption, conditions of coercion, of "radical inequality and intractable conflict."[8] It is critical for the enhancement of authentic and contextual experiential learning that we question, interrogate, and increase our reflection about our contexts, places, and the worlds we inhabit. They form the basis for the very experiences that matter if we want to do something about the challenges in our communities and society. It is as if place-based experiential learning matters more for the principal and teacher leaders themselves. By enhancing their own professional development, they impact every student they touch.

"Wicked" problems face us in real life

The challenges we laid out in Chapter 2, the state of the natural environment, diversity and the lack of ability to cooperate, inequality and the lack of concern for each other, the impact of new technologies and social media, and the crisis of democracy all fall under the broad definitions of "wicked" and "sticky" problems facing human beings. What does it mean for students? Educational leaders in schools all over the world encounter these issues, but in ways that make them hard to simply solve by designing a singular policy, or by asking individuals to do only one thing differently. Some have talked about what this means for students in our classrooms. "Such wicked problems, when based on genuine community or organizational needs, require learners to develop skills and competencies and also responsibility dispositions which should be characteristic of 21st century

learning and teaching."[9] But what does this say about the competencies necessary for principals and other educational leaders?

It is important that we all are aware of the interconnectedness present in the challenges we face in our different communities. The problem-solving we engage in will need knowledge and more importantly skills that reflect the interdisciplinarity of the solutions likely to emerge. The sense of complexity underlying the challenges discussed earlier include both struggles of scale and what Mason describes as the "number of factors, proximal and distal, that have bearing, great or small, on student learning."[10] That complexity is reflected in our daily lives is not in question. That this complexity, in part, is based on the relationships across various aspects of our lives matters to a principal's work. Complexity and context "imply a conception of persons in constant interaction with the environment, the society, holistically conceived, which they inhabit."[11] We must both be aware of the complexity at the heart of the challenges we face and accept that we still have a responsibility to act.

It is becoming clearer every day that we live in a diverse world. It is a complex reality where initiatives in education lead people to work to advocate for institutions to move this way and that. We, the authors, have been engaged in this work for some time now. Early on, you might have been right if you perceived us as hopefully naïve. As educators, we had watched the seismic transformations (at least perceived at the time as seismic) in places like Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and South Africa. But did things really change at deep levels? Were they revolutionary or evolutionary? Over the course of the years of our work on projects and our own professional career trajectories from classroom teachers to academics and administrators, you might say we have become more hesitant and realistic (sometimes even pessimistic) about what we expect from societal transformations.

Watching Romania and Kenya through the prism of schools and teachers has shown both the struggle for real transformation and the amazing resilience of the human spirit to keep advocating to make our societies better. And so, our belief in the ability of responsive leaders to impact the local and global contexts they inhabit remains. We keep working with eyes open, paying careful attention to expectations, and supporting each other.

In this chapter, we will describe the local and global contexts of challenges and issues raised in our work. How do those in schools work to

tackle the sticky problems that are both part of the educational context and challenges facing the world? The reach of initiatives varies, but there are some trends that show that the work of targeting global challenges can happen and that it strengthens education as we pursue it. These trends include:

- Defining democratic life in their societies
- Shared governance and decision-making with staff and students
- Growing awareness of the crisis of the environment
- Building more inclusive and anti-racist school environments
- Confronting the negative and positive impacts of technology

We see impactful work for schools to be engaged with and helping to define democratic life in their communities. The growing number of schools willing to raise issues around shared governance with teachers, students, and community members. We see schools tackling awareness of, and taking-action around, climate and environmental issues. We also see responsive educators working to improve issues around diversity and inclusion in their communities and educational institutions. There is an unmistakable interconnectedness to what we see people working on. All of them represent actions that might serve as examples for others who want to develop the competencies of responsive educational leadership and responsive schools.

Educational leaders themselves define their work within various paradigms. Neoliberal, transactional, transformational, more business oriented—all are theoretical underpinnings to educational leadership with different answers for how best to approach the work. In every context, many principals face additional hurdles different from those of their colleagues. We are more aware of the importance of the environment, the debilitating impacts of inequality, and the dangerous implications of misused technology. Leadership in education has always been seen as a contested space.[12]

Anderson has discussed that transformative leadership styles seem most in line with what researchers in the recent past have called for. And yet our experiences have found examples of work that raise tensions around that paradigm, that argue it falls short and doesn't go far enough. As a set of actions, leadership has moved from the individual in the office sitting behind a desk to one of a more engaged instructional leader. Educational

leadership has shifted in significant ways, toward a more human-focused and shared struggle to build community with students, teachers, and other administrators. Responsive educational leaders are moving toward the development of daily operations and governance structures that are more participatory, deliberative, and open to the voices of those in the school and in the community.

Reflection and meaning making

Personal stories and lived experiences provide some insights and reflections around important work and transitions around the world. We are aware that our individual identities carry memories of what might be called dangers of our colonialist selves. We are forced, in our thinking and remembering, to confront questions of who was silenced in our work, whose identity was in danger of being erased,[13] and how power is reflected in both our national selves (as American and Polish) as well as the multiple aspects of our identities connected to our genders, socio-economic selves, and ethnicities. In each of our reflections, our perspectives and histories play important roles. By working across our differences and within and across the differences of the individuals we have encountered through our work, similar to Edwards-Groves and Kemmis, we try to "reach some kind of comprehensibility and shared understandings about each other's meaning making and values and also about how (our) personal understandings of notions of 'education,' 'pedagogy,' and 'praxis' have been shaped by local and national traditions of thought and practice."[14] Cross-national work, reflective of our interdependence on a global level and our shared commitments on a local level, can be no different.

Our beginnings

Grzegorz started his professional career in 1988 as a teacher in a primary school, and later continued at a high school. He worked as a physical education and social studies teacher, but he was always looking for opportunities for his own personal development. This resulted in him establishing strong ties with the Center for Citizenship Education (CEO) in Warsaw, Poland. His connections were closely related to different reform initiatives of that time. The 1990s in Poland were difficult but filled with a serious

dose of enthusiasm toward transforming state structures and institutions from a centrally governed communist system to an open, democratic and self-governing model. And while working with them, and as a result of a certain awakening he applied for and received a Ron Brown Scholarship[15] from the U.S. Department of State, which allowed him to study at The Ohio State University (OSU) in the USA.

John began his work as a middle-grades teacher (roughly grades 4–7 in the U.S. system). The majority of this teaching was at an International Studies school focused on interdisciplinary teaching and integrating the study of various concepts from around the world and throughout history into the curriculum for a group of diverse students of differing socioeconomic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds.

Grzegorz and John met in 1996 at OSU in Columbus, Ohio. We were learning a lot and doing curriculum development work with an abundance of interest and energy. John was a doctoral student at OSU's Mershon Center, focusing on democratization efforts, civic education, and international relations. He eventually moved to the Ohio Department of Education, in the Urban Schools Initiative office (where Grzegorz also did an apprenticeship). After returning to Poland, Grzegorz started to work at the CEO in Warsaw, where he was a co-creator and coordinator of the Learning School program which worked with Polish schools to improve their quality through group reflection and self-evaluation. In 2005, he moved on to The Jagiellonian University, in Kraków, where he works today. After completion of his Ph.D., John moved on to Bowling Green State University in Ohio and became involved in projects with under-resourced urban schools, and with Ukraine and Poland. Eventually, he moved into academic administration at the university level.

Grzegorz has always been involved in various initiatives and projects. He established a non-governmental organization (third sector or NGO) called the Association Expedition Inside Culture (EIC), and managed educational projects related to intercultural education and the preparation of young leaders. He also managed several Erasmus projects linking students and university faculty across European countries. He was the coordinator of the Jagiellonian Schools project, which focused on supporting schools struggling academically in poor regions of Southern Poland.

John's work expanded as he became more involved in a GEAR-Up project that targeted middle school students and worked to transform their

schools, support their teachers, and increase the quality and success rates of the students as they moved on to high school and then college. For 12 years, the project strived to increase the attainment levels of students and families in the East Toledo, Ohio community. As he did this, he also continued expanding his work in projects in Poland, Kenya, South Africa, and Ukraine. Most of these focused on support for more active teachers, experiential teaching methodologies, developing schools engaged in the community, and working through governance issues and conceptions of democratization that were culturally and contextually grounded.

In 2009, Grzegorz became the coordinator and substantive manager of a project called "Strengthening the Effectiveness of the Pedagogical Supervision System and Quality Assessment of School's Work."[16] The project aimed at reforming the system of school evaluation in Poland, as well as changing the pedagogical supervision system across the country. Although promising, the complex initiative did not bring the results expected. John also participated in this project, working to develop training programs and contributing to annual conferences by building links with other scholars and practitioners from around the world and across the United States.

During the second decade of the 21st century, Grzegorz also worked in Saudi Arabia, and Tajikistan, where he served as an advisor to major reform initiatives focused on teacher development, evaluation, and competency-based education.

A time of shifts

Now is a time of significant struggle for regions, countries, and communities trying to keep the successes and the struggles toward more democratic societies moving forward. Major events and political shifts occurred in the 1990s and at the turn of the 21st century. As educators, we watched new governing structures emerge in Central and Eastern Europe, the scourge of apartheid removed from South Africa, and broadening accession into the European Union, while the Soviet Union's authoritarian government fell apart, resulting in newly reemergent countries seeking more transparent and open societies.[17]

More recently, and maybe on a different scale, changes in the way we work, and in the way we interact with those around us, are also transitioning quickly. Growth in connections through technology and the internet bring

increased communication and awareness of what is happening around the world. But on a deeper level, societal changes are altering the very assumptions and underpinnings of life. Changes are occurring in "…the nature of work, in the nature of the labor market, in the way one lives citizenship, and in the unprecedented affirmation of personal and group identities."[18] How we are connected and what we connect over is changing rapidly.

Our experiences have shown ongoing struggles with access to fresh water for individuals in many parts of the world. We have also been made more aware of life in societies in which health and the environment have been and are a growing concern, whether regarding AIDS, COVID-19, SARS, or MERS. We do not have an environment that is safe from the threat posed by disease, or even one where we feel that we can trust those who are supposed to be in charge are actively working to deal with.[19] Murgatroyd[20] has said that we will be "challenged by new patterns of illness and disease…" as he discusses obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. But now, pandemics caused by viruses are adding even more severity and speed to the impacts of the changing health and environmental context. Greta Thunberg started her climate demonstrations in August of 2018.[21] As she rose to international prominence as a voice, a student voice, for the critical need for actions to improve the environment, she spoke to policy-makers in Katowice, Poland—the heart of coal country. She said that she did not come to "beg" world leaders to do something. Instead, like all of us looking, we should be able to see what the world is screaming out for.[22] Powerful messages of the protest against lack of freedom, respect and democracy, was also heard on the streets of Poland when during Autumn of 2020 Women Strike led anti-govermental demonstrations.

In this socio-political time and place, and along with the quickly changing manner of work and the structuring of our everyday life, we see continued struggles around what democracy looks like and pressures on the progress made during the democratization initiatives of the recent past. In countries in various parts of the world, we see respect for the strong tenets of democracy under threat. Hungary struggles to keep an open and transparent government functioning. People are marching in the streets again in the Czech Republic, and Poland's government in finds itself arguing with the European Union about the independence of courts and judges. Socio-economic pressures in South Africa, oil prices in Saudi Arabia, and regression toward a more authoritarian state in Russia all add to the struggle of individuals. In Great Britain and the United States, respect for minority

rights, whether based on ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or refugee status, is under threat. In various countries, a clear sense that election structures are under attack and increased threats of cyber interference are shaking citizens' trust in election results. If the system is not allowing the citizens of a country to have their representatives fairly elected without threats of cyber interference in the election process, how do we ensure that democracies function and survive? The United States has pulled out of climate agreements negotiated to try to do something about environmental issues and the crisis we find ourselves in. Ultimately, the question of whether the consent of the governed—the citizens—when they see the direction their leaders are taking their countries' policies, their courts, and their international agreements, is in dispute. Our communities, our nations, and the world are struggling with many things.

Influences on context

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) identifies four drivers for the increase of interest in evaluation policies in education: the demand for effectiveness, equity, and quality; the need for monitoring autonomous schools; the improved availability of technology that allows for large-scale assessment and the sharing and management of data; and a greater focus on evidence-based decision-making.[23] Many of these reflect positive steps toward building schools that are strongly connected to the needs of their community. They reflect systemic changes that are trying to give principals access to data, but do these individuals use the data to foster deliberations with their colleagues inside the school? And are the data collected about things that matter to a school working to build strong curricular connections to issues in the community, and the development of attitudes of tolerance and inclusivity?

Michael Apple and others[24] have described the policy and practice struggles that exist as a result of neo-liberal influences on education pulled from models of business. In many countries evaluation policies, rules that judge whether schools are meeting their aims, are firmly based on issues of accountability, performance assessment, regulation, and inspection. Their policies do not appear to be designed to broaden schools' interest in critical issues in the world, but instead are built on ideologies of neo-liberalism, managerialism, and economic competitiveness.[25] By ranking schools against each other, ignoring the differing needs of students

from lower socio-economic backgrounds and under-resourced communities, the policies tend to impel principals and teachers to narrow curricula and build fewer engagement and experiential educational opportunities, and discourage them from going out into the community to connect to local history and culture. And these conditions propel schools to function in discriminatory ways, intentionally or unconsciously working to reduce the number of lower socio-economic students, or the number of immigrant students learning the local language for the first time. This is the opposite of the kind of schooling that will help to build responsive schools.

Our efforts in schools have shown us that the words we use and the discourses we engage in represent and help construct our identities. At their best, the discourses of our communities help focus attention on the life we are leading, and the impact of issues on those living their lives around us. As one of the processes for "self-making,"[26] the actions we take and the language and discourses we use contribute to who we are becoming. We are always developing as human beings. Seeking to define concepts, action choices, and the means, we will use to measure the success of our actions all become processes and discourses we engage in. Bauman[27] examined how we have moved from a modern society based on and anchored to "material" hardware to a more "fluid reality" based in ever-evolving notions found in the virtual universe that includes the internet, software, and the shifting identities we hold in such spaces. A more "fluid and relative nature of social reality and modern identities" and a postmodern "liquid modernity" is how Bauman describes our evolving virtual realities. We find ourselves in an age where we are always consciously or unconsciously engaged in the development of our identities. They are fluid, intersectional, and multifaceted. These identities of our own making build the context we occupy. And yet, people that we encounter in every part of the world feel a sense of disquiet, a sense of being pushed off center, as we try to determine which issues or crises are important enough to struggle with.[28]

When we think about how to develop responsive educational leaders, the context and the lived reality matters. As we engage with educators around the world, the communities and the political environments they each live in become essential aspects of how we work together to make things better. At the same time, we believe that we create the world, we create our realities through how we make particular choices. We occupy worlds of our own creation. That is what gives us hope. These worlds are interconnected

on many levels. While we create the reality around us, we also need to become more aware of those pushing in the opposite directions, making choices dangerous for the environment, opposed to democratic life, or restrictive of diversity and inclusion. We need to be conscious of the imagined society and reality those same individuals are seeking to impose on all of us. If we seek to be responsive educators, we need to become more aware of the connections and deconstruct the situations, policies, and dictates we find ourselves in. We need to become more aware of the need for deeper solutions. More humane solutions connected to the community, designed to improve the issues the world is dealing with. No matter where in the world we find ourselves, our contexts matter.

Democratization, post-colonialism, and the AIDS epidemic

On the level of a local school in Europe, signs of hope exist in the internet discourses that promise welcoming and future-oriented education. Rosengaårdskolen, in Odense, Denmark[29] welcomes students and families to its website with promises that the school works to create "viable people, with solid roots in education, well-being, and learning"—prepared for life after primary school. They lay out their desires and expectations:

- We must learn and become as proficient as we can.
- We must prosper—everyone must have a friend.
- We must be able to engage in the world that surrounds us.

While John was working with others in this school as a partner, first-graders were heading to Bornholm to plant Christmas trees that would help develop the forest, and then one day, years in to the future, those trees would be cut down in order to fund student travel out into the world. Projects with students, like this one serve, many pedagogical purposes. Not only are students learning about how trees help the environment, they are learning about actions to take today that will have benefits far in the future. Long-term, lofty goals consciously working to build awareness of issues that exist in the world across inequality, difference, and the environment.

In another part of the world, and a few years later, one example of a project of educational leaders working to do something was in Kenya and

South Africa. Both were in the middle of the AIDS/HIV epidemic, South Africa was still undergoing transition following Apartheid, and both were dealing with echoes of their colonial past. AIDS at the time, serves as an example of our past experiences around the world, and of the scourge of pandemics and disease. Sadly, they are not new for the world at large. During the 1990s, Tonks[30] described, in the United States, the importance of educators fighting AIDS/HIV and viewing the health of their students as a critical part of their responsibilities. Much like coronavirus today, in the 1990s, "the shadow of AIDS was spreading throughout our national consciousness."[31] John had been involved in projects, led by doctor Patricia Kubow, connected to important global issues, such as democratization, even in places like Kenya, where at the time, it was unclear if opposition parties could ever win elections—a necessary measure of the strength of a democracy. In this project, given the context of AIDS/HIV and democratizations efforts, how would the participants define important components around cultural concepts of democracy, community engagement, and education in the midst of AIDS, and work to deepen democratic life in both countries. Of course, the presence of two individuals from the United States always deserves critique and questioning around issues of neocolonialism and careful reflection around how the project personnel reflect on their own actions and motivations. The Education for Democracy project[32] sought to listen to the voices of teachers and school heads. As a result of over a year of sharing of information, learning, knowledge, debate, and negotiation, a group of South African teachers from KwaZulu-Natal Province, as well as teachers from areas in Nairobi and Kenya's western province, helped to lay out a conceptual organizational framework for teaching about democracy in their local communities. Rather than viewing democracy as de-contextualized, the project directors worked with participants to develop concepts and understandings of how citizenship in these two democracies could be taught, and what assumptions would life in two very different societies need to look like in order to raise up the society and improve conditions for all.

Over the course of project discussions, focus groups provided critical viewpoints. In South Africa, one teacher stated that democracy "has to move—from statements—to do" [Teacher, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa]. They described how democratic education must work to get students involved in their community and society. As community was discussed, it was clear that the HIV/AIDS pandemic—an important global

issue at the time and still today—was forcing people to reconsider traditional cultural practices, the roles of women, and issues about governance in Kenyan and South African communities. Discussions with the teachers revealed a repositioning in their discourse of sex and gender equality as democratic issues. Merryfield and Tlou[33] have previously discussed how the curriculum of post-colonial African nations has moved away from the assumptions imposed by colonial powers and shifted to an African and national sense of identity, and conceptions of citizenship skills, knowledge, and habits of mind.

South African teachers often reminded the project directors of the concept of *umbuntu*—"I am because you are." Society, they said, needs to have respect for tradition, respect for individuals in the society, and a willingness to share responsibility for each other. In both countries, teachers voiced their concern that children misunderstand the notion of rights. In Kenya, teachers discussed similar concerns that children don't understand rights or responsibilities. "We need education first," the teachers in both countries told us. They wanted students to have a basis for confronting and investigating the communities they lived in. Broad global issues of democratization became curricular discussions around how students need to grapple with ideas so they can answer the questions, "Who am I, where am I going from here?" [Teacher, KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa].

Kenya introduced multiparty elections in 1992. Struggles and transitions within these democratic elections continued soon after the project. This election and subsequent ones in 2007 and 2013 have highlighted the fragility of multiethnic coalition-building in countries where the post-colonial history problematizes those both in and outside of power. And yet, a paradox exists. Despite the struggles to ensure democracy is functioning, there have been slow and continuous improvements in the lives of those who inhabit the country. In education, the same political struggles have raised the voices of grievance and led to improvements regarding tuition-based access to schools. New generations are impacted by the significant changes in, for example, tuition as an access-to-education issue. Educational policy in Kenya continues to push for raised expectations and rigorous standards, despite significant struggles for resources.

Individuals and organizations try to change their contexts into more positive, human-oriented environments. In this one example of a project involving educators from both Kenya and South Africa,[34] teachers and

administrators were identified as key individuals who could affect change, and participants were asked to define what human rights teachers and students should know and the rights teachers and students needed to be able to defend. In understanding how they might prioritize and define key aspects of democratic life, we learned about their cultural assumptions within their reality. Their lists spoke to both their awareness of the need to be able to define the human rights under threat in their communities, and also spoke to their belief that educational leaders, teachers, and students could do something to protect them.

Omodan[35] has talked about how curricular efforts in South Africa, such as the development of content under the "Life Orientations" umbrella found "learners presented with real-life matters that concern them as well as the societies in which they live." For the group of participants in our project from South Africa, they added to the list of things to be taught inherent rights including the right to have basic human needs fulfilled. For educational leaders in a part of South Africa where this has not always been the case, this was an important addition to the discussion and focus of their schools. They also added the conceptions of security, the basic dignity of privacy, and freedom of speech. They were leaders in their schools but had grown up through important struggles, and these had been life-long pursuits and goals: a just society, where each had their basic needs met, and the right to contribute, to speak, to learn, and feel secure. This project was just one example of how educational leaders: teachers, school district individuals, and NGOs working to target a particular global issue could assert their impact. In this case, democratization of their societies was the aim, but it could have been other challenges as well. Participants in initiatives build relationships with each other; they define what success will look like together, build the discourse needed to deliberate, and define the possible futures that their principals and schools might work to build.

What did we learn from this project and others like it? "The value of cross-cultural work with educators, especially in developing democratic school curriculum, is that it considers both the local and global knowledges of the participants. Those knowledges are brought to bear in their personal and professional interpretations within their respective cultural and political environments."[36] The voices of those in the school matter. They help define the discourse, expand conceptual understanding, and consider the real ways important work on issues such as democracy moves

into the classroom. Responsive schools are focused on critical global issues. Democratization, including in examples like the project described, needs to be contextualized to the locale. By sharing across national and cultural borders, projects help individual leaders in schools come to understand and question their realities. The projects also raise the possibilities of how the actions of educational leaders impact the world they live in.

Focusing on inequality and the need for participatory/ distributed leadership

A look at education and schooling in the United States again highlights the importance of understanding the context. In Ohio, where John works, over 600 school districts operate under local control with some being quite large (50,000 students +) and others very small (300). Large disparities in socio-economic status exist, as they do in other parts of the United States.[37] Access to resources and technology, and building of community engagement have involved significant efforts. The political environment has pushed for a reliance on test scores as the singular measure of success, and this threatens educators on a regular basis.

In the United States and other countries around the world, neo-liberalism in education has been identified as the basis of many irrational moves toward counting, ranking, testing, and re-ranking. With a trust in quality assurance worthy of a multinational corporation, schools and educational systems in many different locations, with different resource realities and historical standings in their communities, are pushed in to a self-reflective stance on whether they are good enough. How do they compare to that school across the country? Should their own communities should be pleased or angry, regardless of whether the criteria of judgement align with the historical conceptualization of schooling and education in the community. It is an educational context that deadens initiative and the real aims of education.

At the same time, there is a growing demand on public institutions and schools to use data in order to make informed decisions about their policies and practices. In reality, it means that we want them to collect and analyze huge amounts of different kinds of information. One of the outcomes of that situation was an increased interest in and demand for school evaluation. However, political manipulation and misuse of facts was

clearly present and the poorly designed process of evaluation had no impact on the reality in schools. How authentic might real reflection over data collected through a process more similar to a professional conversation than to symbolic oppression or even aggression be? John became engaged in one project that sought to build these professional conversations, a GEAR-UP project.[38]

The project involved work in two different schools: one a middle school (grades 6–8) and the other a comprehensive high school (grades 9–12). Programming was provided to students around self-efficacy, increasing access to experiential educational activities, and tutoring and support in content areas such as Mathematics, where the children often struggled. In the middle school, where a significant portion of John's efforts were devoted, the team worked to structure an approach along three lines[39]:

- First, work was put in to restructuring the school into teams of teachers who would focus on a group of the students, share planning efforts, and organize lessons and activities together. These clusters worked to build smaller school communities within the large school environment, as the teachers moved to a middle-school model of organization.
- Second was the development of student enrichment, including teachers developing a set of evidenced-based "benchmarks" that pushed students to self-reflect on activities that evidence showed supported their movement toward high school graduation and college or trade school.
- Third was a heavy focus on teacher professional development. Often co-led by the teachers themselves, it focused on teaching methodologies, increasing the understanding of the possible uses of technology with their students, and a deeper understanding of the pedagogical content knowledge in their individual content areas.

Ultimately, research on the project found that these students, given deep work with their teachers, their families, and themselves, were able to increase their high school graduation rates, and their numbers who went on to post-secondary education in colleges and trade schools. The findings of one study found a more complex story than what most of the literature had been saying. Students were taking many different and alternative pathways to graduation. They often took longer than expected, but many of them were successful over time. The project worked to once again show

that instead of a one-size-fits-all approach, real educational change needed to respond to the community of which the school was a part, use the resources of that community as a strength, and build on the persistence and resiliency that is already present in communities that are often perceived as struggling. This project taught us to listen, to commit to a long-term relationship with a community, and to help the teachers, principals, and staff members work with students and community members to help define success and push for the changes they need to build a more responsive school and a better society.

Looking at projects in parts of Europe and around the world provides some examples of what we can learn from each other. Many projects we have been engaged with have focused on evaluation of learning and evaluation of schools. Others have been around reforms in teaching methodology, especially expeditionary learning. Whole school reforms, national policies around principal development, and community engagement efforts round out the list. It has become clear from our work that educators can approach these efforts in a way that supports the local community and builds self-reflection and shared ownership. The choices are clear. Looking at what large transnational organizations are saying and looking at projects in small communities, both have something to tell us.

Fighting neoliberalism: Evaluation recentered on learning

At the policy level, many different perspectives exist. Some like Dale have argued[40] that initiatives around education in Europe are both a part of globalization and a reaction to it, what he cites as "Castells' paradox." The Lisbon Declaration and the emerging discourse of "competitiveness" means that educational institutions, are in part, in competition with the United States and Asia.[41] From the Bologna Process to the Tuning Project,[42] each aspect of this work across the EU "potentially makes a contribution to Europe as a "player" on world stage in which access to human resources, ability to control market rules and an ability to shape the pattern of the higher education curriculum."[43]

Our work has had a major focus on initiatives and partnerships across Europe. From Grzegorz's base in Poland, the projects he has been involved in work on three tracks: a project working to build cross national networks

focused on leadership and teaching methodologies, especially expeditionary learning; projects focused on evaluation and pedagogical supervision in schools; and projects focused on school culture and learning environments. In one of the long-standing projects, scholars across Europe contributed to an edited volume entitled *School Evaluation with a Purpose: Challenges and Alternatives*.[44] Over multiple site visits and virtual meetings, authors of the individual chapters laid out a framework for school evaluation that reflects more than a simple ticking of data points in order to rank schools.

Consequences or syndromes of illness come from assumptions about education that people had in the past, on the one hand idyllic and naive and on the other hand designed for the industrial revolution. In both, radically different, perspectives, we had black and white approaches and serious and harmful simplification in thinking about school. In that naive approach, we want to remember one classroom, rural, school with a teacher like a mother or father figure taking care of the group of children of different ages. Teachers had power over their work—did not earn a lot but were respected. This heritage of independence, privatization of practice, and isolation might still be found in classrooms behind the closed door, so distance to other teachers is still kept (although research shows that teachers' cooperation is better than isolation for students' learning[45]). In that industrial approach, we keep faith in assembly lines, business like management, and productivity. Both perspectives stop us from implementing cooperation, critical reflection, peer observation, exchange of experiences, and encourage competition and control. Both perspectives do not support a flexible approach to education and the building of responsive leadership. Both perspectives bring results that are disappointing and lead to the conclusion and conventional wisdom that we need to change existing policies.

The work of new projects focused on evaluation reflect important research and policy directions emerging around the world. Evaluation systems do not tend to include how recently greater emphasis has been placed on school self-evaluation,[46] although, often building on and incorporating external evaluation or, as described by Janssens and van Amelsvoort,[47] sometimes it is conducted as an element of, or in preparation for, external inspection. Evaluations commonly intend to serve the twin purposes of providing the authorities, the community, and general public with comparable information about curricular processes and educational results, while

also providing a basis for local decision-making and a platform for teacher professional development and school improvement. Several researchers and authors question if this is even possible.[48] On the other hand, other scholars suggest that external outcome-based evaluations can be combined with internal evaluations in fruitful ways.[49] Ways that support the self-reflection of the individuals in the school and contribute to the deliberations and debates members of the school community have regarding important issues in the school.

The erroneous notion of accountability, borrowed from the corporate world, has seemed to gain increased traction in the European context. In this form of school evaluation and data gathering, accountability is about the exercise of power[50] and is encouraged in schools where leaders and teacher leaders sometimes feel like victims of constant monitoring. However, projects such as iQuerel[51] raise questions about whether evaluation and reflection efforts can focus on more contextual and impactful issues. Education is complex and uncertain, and requires leadership and management knowledge, skills, and competencies to enable a balance of tensions, including increasingly competitive environments. There needs to be a way to gather data that meet national demands in differing localized contexts while ensuring that leadership is learning centered, and good practice is sought and adopted where it can be. Projects have shown that strong evaluation and reflection on the part of responsive schools can center on teaching and learning, but it takes policy decisions that respect this focus. Evaluation and reflection can build an understanding of how schools are facing the challenges we find in the world today.

In the European Union and across Europe, the development over the last 30 years of the education space has led to an almost "hybrid" of national and super-national policy directives trying to push education and its roles. As we watch programs such as Erasmus pull and push students, teachers, and university faculty across national borders, and as we see the pressures regarding the quality of education grow, reflection and self-evaluation in contextually aware leadership seems to be the answer to how to build schools that can work on the aims of education.

We need to be aware, however, that very often, some aspects of important educational practice are overlooked or marginalized in the evaluation models being used. Answering the question "What really

matters in education?" partners in projects such as iQuerel have decided that three major themes should be addressed: Ethical Practice, Learning, and Well-Being. The linking of these three themes reflected a desire to profile a different language in evaluation, a language that profiles the moral purpose and nature of education.[52] The "School Evaluation with a Purpose"[53] writing effort and initiatives, and others like it, gives us hope that projects can contribute to the development of truly responsive schools and leaders.

Experience and interdisciplinarity

In our work we have strived to build and support projects that focus on many of the challenges we have discussed. In each case, we have had to reflect on the complexity of the issues. An example of a project that focused on our understanding of the intersections of many challenges in the world is our work with EIC. The 20-plus years of work with this project, led by a range of individuals from different countries, has included work on identity, discrimination, leadership, interpretations of history, and has deepen our work with and understanding of the environment. By focusing on the local contexts of both home communities and new locations that groups of students are brought to as part of the expeditionary learning process, teachers and students learn that "commitment to the environment requires work—not just talk."[54]

One example of an expedition was the work focused on the environment and titled "Orange for Earth" to reflect both its environmental focus and the funding support from the Orange phone corporation and work with the "Our Earth" foundation and their longstanding "Cleaning the World" initiative. The work was "designed to familiarize Polish schools with the project approach and method of expeditionary learning and through this to induce change of acting and thinking about the learning process."[55]

Four hundred schools participated in the first step of working to clean up their neighborhoods. One hundred of the most active schools in reporting on their work and participating in online debates were chosen to a second stage where they conducted local projects across a range of four topics, including ecology. Twenty-five of those schools were chosen to send teams of students and teachers to participate in an expedition where they

researched a local community together in Northeast Poland, learned and shared about their own identities, developed leadership skills, and worked to strengthen presentation and communication skills. Again, reflecting on that experience and working on challenges will result in interdisciplinary projects that rely on a range of skills and that result in learning that can be applied to a number of issues. Almost 1,000 students engaged in some level of the project.

Kemmis and Mutton have reminded us that strong environmental education projects that they place under the umbrella of Education for Sustainability (EfS) "are necessarily directed at transforming existing cultural-discursive, material economic, and social—political orders and arrangements that hold non-sustainable ways of living in place…"[56] Projects like Expedition Inside Cultures Orange for Earth are wide-ranging, but they are one-time events, and are the efforts to follow up after the project is done worthwhile? Ultimately yes, but only if they lead to longstanding projects over many years and visible changes in the discourse and efforts of those in the school.

Developing principals for schools in the 21st century

In Poland, Grzegorz has also been involved in projects on a more systemic level. How to work with schools and their principals is often under debate. It is hard today to find stable points in social and political life and also look for commonly accepted rules about what to do and how to judge progress. The capabilities of new technologies (which boosts involvement in social media discourse) can manipulate people in such a way that concepts cannot be recognized.

Various efforts have been made to look at the work of educational leaders.[57] Negative opinions are shared about bureaucratic procedures and obligations, the simple yet complex issue of lack of time, and problems with sustainability of reforms and initiatives that appear to come and go. The principals also talk about their need to focus so much of their time on the administrative components of the position: organizing of the school, dealing with finances and budgets, and staffing—especially of teachers, working to identify data that might prove useful to problem-solving, and in this age of testing, dealing with the overwhelming frustration caused by frequent assessment.

Ultimately, in Poland, participants involved in a number of projects worked with others to develop a systemic response to the needs of educational leaders. The goal of one project, the "Leadership and Management in Education" program,[58] was to prepare a model for the education, improvement and management of educational leaders at various levels and to propose the main elements of the selection and development system of principals and other educational institutions. The project's proposed model of educational leadership depended on competencies and activities or tasks designed to raise the quality of the organization the educational leader will work with. Based on learning and professional development, as well as the development of learning organizations, the concept of rebuilding the school and systemically the education system, was broadly defined by six areas. The project brought clarity around the need to have schools and their leaders pay careful attention to the methods and approaches they might apply in the planning process.

Four main assumptions emerged around what is integral to the process of developing educational leadership: constant reflection on the context of education and one's own practice (activities); learning through experience and continuous reference to one's own experience; team learning through social processes and referring to values; and focus on learning and development of all participants in the educational processes. A constant focus on self-reflection and constant critical examination of one's beliefs and knowledge, according to the work of those in the project, needed to be a key assumption.[59] A model for the preparation, development, and improvement of educational leaders proposed in the program was developed, taking in to account these pieces of the framework.

The participants in this Polish project focused on development, change, and reflection on the activities that were undertaken. During the course, participants learned through experience, cooperation, and each other, referring to their own experiences and what is happening in the classroom. The content of the training resulted from critical reflection on reality, working to make values visible, and development of specific competencies.

The project leaders concluded that the development of educational leadership must follow a series of steps and focus on six competency areas. The question of how to prepare future leaders, but also how to improve those who have started their work, was central. A challenge that emerged

involved how to help those who had been performing the principal function for years. There also needed to be explicit work in the project focused on remembering the levels at which a learning organization builds itself.

The six areas that emerged were:

- educational leadership in theory and practice;
- leadership for individual learning and development;
- environmental leadership (for social development);
- leadership for employee development;
- leadership for efficient operation (strategic management);
- and self-development and leadership learning.

Working throughout Poland to develop responsive educational leaders serving in the role of principal/headmaster brought about, by the end of the project, new learning and understanding of how to culturally and politically contextualize systemic work to improve schools.[60] Intuitive leaders typically know one leadership model, the one that they use more or less consciously, but their subordinates know these models depending on how many different leaders they have had to work with. And what the subordinates know is closer to reality, because there is no one best model of leadership. There are many and they are built (or should be) dependent on the context, organization, values, potential, goals, and cooperation.

According to the project and its results, this should be the main goal of any training initiative in the field of educational leadership: raising awareness of how diverse the world is and how many ways there are that lead to similar goals. Instead of looking for a specific ideal pattern, it is worth focusing on creating conditions that enable people to build a path to leadership. It is important to find appropriate mechanisms, actions, and approaches to problems, to design and think about the hoped-for results, including thinking about the goals for the organizational culture.

Ultimately, what emerged from this project was an understanding that one should constantly try to involve all employees, while at the same time building trust and security. Those involved in projects need a sense of what you are doing and the long-term, ambitious goals everyone has in front of them. Open communication is crucial. It is also necessary to emphasize

that this is not about manipulation, but about authentic, inclusive work with everyone focused on difficult challenges and expectations.[61]

What we have learned: Toward a framework for responsive educational leadership

Historically, in a policy context of more and more globalization around educational reform, Steiner-Khamsi[62] posited that we are, and should be most fearful of, losing the "idiosyncratic conceptions" of "good education" or "effective school reform" and are gradually converging toward an "international model of education." The nuanced and complicated interplay between borrowing and lending is bringing about a convergence across international borders. This focus on what is happening in other countries, whether in Ireland, the United States, Kenya, or Poland may be a sign of the fragility of what we are engaged in. That there is a legitimacy crisis in the education system.

The contexts we each inhabit matter. The fragile nature of our democratic forms of governance is evident in the many events and aspects of life around us today. We find members of communities, the voters, indifferent to the role their actions play in determining the direction individual countries and the world in general will take on key issues. Discourses on television, social media, and all around us seem to work to silence voices of dissent, limit viewpoints and deliberation about critical questions, and label viewpoints that might hold promise in moving things forward as "left" or "right."

How do you convince individuals in schools, and other educational institutions, in an age of public accountability, and the rankings of schools in the media, that it is in their interest to become involved and make global issues, problems, and struggles *their* issues? It seems clear from the projects we have been engaged in that some educational leaders in school principal roles and teacher leaders have adopted a "responsive" stance. This responsiveness includes adopting a more critical lens to look at the school, the community, and the aims of education. As a result of our work in these various projects, we are inspired to think carefully about our goals, our assumptions, and the outcomes of educational work in the regions, nations, and states where we live. We can suggest moving toward education that is increasingly reciprocal. Building communities composed of stakeholders, peers, and people representing a multitude of voices in the deliberations schools engage in. By working to ensure that a range of voices share ownership in decision-making,

feel responsible for improvements, and participate, the entire school moves toward a more successful enterprise, a learning organization.

Ultimately, we are working toward a democratization of education reform, one where discourses of inclusion, deliberation, and democratic ways of being are at the center. The contextual aspects of education efforts in Poland, the European Union, and South Africa point to the possibility of real improvement, that despite setbacks, the time horizon in the distance tells us we can make things better. As Martin Luther King Jr. said, the future is a "long arc toward justice"[63] but we are filled with dread about our sense of the critical needs of now.

As we work to build responsive educational leadership and move toward more transformative and dialogic modes of leadership, a more democratic ethos is present at the core of meeting structures within a school or project. It is embedded in how initiatives are built. And it is even found in the assumptions about the methods, aims, and purpose of education. Significant change in education has evolved greatly over the last 10 years. Alston[64] has called for a struggle against the marginalization of those not often represented in educational leadership positions. Their voices matter even more in our emerging "network society."[65] As a result of this evolution toward this networked world, where assumptions and stories of leadership cross multiple boundaries, the dichotomy between what leadership is and what it needs to be become stark, and obvious.

Being responsive to challenges in our contexts and place

Responsive Educational Leadership is a stance, a framework, and way of perceiving the work of principals and head teachers. It is emerging from experiences that we and others have had in places around the world where educational leaders are doing the work. We have learned much from our work in projects around the world. Each reality has taught us more about how we might work together with educators in local communities to contribute to the improvement of society. We have moved away from a belief in unlimited development. Beliefs, for example that there is an endless supply of resources or of land for the next factory, or seen in the modification of the food production supply chain, all present at the end of the 20th century, to a set of beliefs more rational, situationally aware, development. Our awareness is increased by the realization of the impacts on us as individuals,

members of groups, and the people focused on improving the context and societies we inhabit. The challenge that we face is to listen better to those who are aware, possess the necessary scientific data, and are speaking to us. It is also our need to focus and develop skills that help us develop an understanding of reality. We cannot communicate and cooperate when we attempt complex tasks. Our existence is in danger because challenges are, in fact, complex—in need of listening, understanding, and cooperating. For example, due to our lifestyles and the growth of industry in our individual communities, the natural environment is in catastrophic shape. We will become extinct or suffer because of the ecological disasters expected. Numerous researchers and thinkers raise the alarm that it is impossible to continue to allow people to live in any way they want.[66]We need radical changes. However, to implement that kind of change we need to think in a way that utilizes interdisciplinary approaches. We need to act across cultural and political borders. We need to learn to cooperate with people we do not want to cooperate with, and we often are not able to do that. Respect for diversity and sharing wealth and power should become a reality and our fate, but we do not seem to know how to develop those virtues.

On the one side are the centuries-old traditions, expectations, and practices of a system of education and schooling created for another time but still deeply rooted in our various cultural fabrics. On the other side is a fast-changing and expanding new story of learning in a globally networked world, marked by complex challenges but with new opportunities. Change is driven by the increasingly ubiquitous technologies that connect us. But what might we do with them? And for the last decade, as all those changes have continued to accelerate, we are witnessing a growing disconnect between the old and the new worlds of learning, between school 100 years ago and school today. "Our schools remain largely untouched by significant evolution in how organizations and institutions can work in the 21st century."[67] Unfortunately, much of the old world has remained in schools and this new world has started to grow and further develop outside of the school. In this new fluid reality, the system, the way of using time, structures, and thinking about teaching and learning, at the core of the students' experience, have stayed largely untouched.

Negative phenomena accumulate in a few areas,[68] and recognizing them then defining the most impacted areas is the first step in designing a new, "responsible" school. School always functions in a certain social context.

The success of the school depends on whether the school's actions are adequate to that context. When a school is not focused on the present time, its usefulness disappears. School needs to nurture ambitious goals and show what lies beyond the horizons, but at the same time, it needs to be connected to important questions of the current moment and the needs of the students and their communities.

There are significant issues in each of our communities, and we cannot wait until we are in positions of power, or of control. Edwards-Groves and Kemmis wrote that "the notion of ecologies of practices provides a framework for understanding how education is locally constituted in sites, not only in a physical or geographical sense but also as a nexus of intersubjective spaces—semantic space, physical space, time and social space that always entwined one another and enmeshed with arrangements to be found at (or brought to) the site in which they exist, in site-specific ways."[69]

We are rushing toward a school with leaders that singularly focus on the urgency of today's tasks, and not the distant future. Instead of teachers feeling weak and powerless, we believe their actions matter, that they can respond to the context, and build a strategy of teaching and learning that is outward looking, aware, and focused. Teachers, as critical intellectuals,[70] try to understand challenging global issues and inspire others to look, think, discuss, act, and to be aware of the contemporary world. This world has real problems, questions, and challenges that need attention.

In many places, teachers do not connect and react to the world. They should try, through their interactions and initiatives, to design the world we should be living in. We do not have to accept the rules of the game; we, in schools, may propose our own rules through setting agendas and building curricula. Educational leaders can act by choosing to listen, by becoming aware, and by working across the vertical and horizontal linkages that exist in their institutions.

All that we seem to want from schools is often outdated: we react too late or not at all to what is important. To say it another way: we do not have to buy the newest computers, as they seem to do in business; we need to support students so they can learn what computers are, how and where they are produced, and how to use them as a tool in meeting our aims of education. In order to design the new "responsible school," we need to lead discussions that focus on answering the critical question: "why?": why do we learn? Why is our context so important? And why are the issues we face as societies,

so in need of action on the part of educational leaders? We have learned the importance of context. It has led to recommendations about actions, and, in the end, to policy changes and systemic evolution of education itself. Responsive leadership can only be a beginning, but a necessary one that helps us learn from our actions, initiatives, and projects while continuing to try to learn how to improve both education and our societies' abilities to deal effectively with wicked problems.

Notes

1. Apple (2006).
2. Avery (2004), Leithwood and Poplin (1992).
3. Avery (2004), Leithwood and Poplin (1992).
4. Møller (2009).
5. Noddings (2005b) p. 57.
6. Le Grange and Ontong (2015), Subramaniam (2020), McInerney, et.al. (2011) and Subramaniam (2020) have all talked about "place-based" education.
7. Kemmis and Mutton (2012) p. 193.
8. Cary (2006) p. 108.
9. Murgatroyd (2010) p. 267.
10. Mason (2016) p. 437.
11. Szekely and Mason (2019) p. 676.
12. Avery (2004), Leithwood and Poplin (1992).
13. Cary (2006) cited Pratt (1992) in talking about how *contact zones* 'occur when our colonialist selves meet/conquer/silence/erase other less powerful selves.' p. 108.
14. Edwards-Groves and Kemmis (2016) p. 80.
15. The Ron Brown Scholar Program began awarding college scholarships to honor the legacy of service of the late Secretary of Commerce Ronald H. Brown. Ron Brown was a figure of global prominence, respected for his intelligence, political savvy, and leadership. In April of 1996, he died in a tragic plane crash during a trade mission to Eastern Europe.
16.. Conducted as part of the Third Priority of the Human Capital Operational Program in the Polish government. It was funded the Jagiellonian University in partnership with the Ministry of National Education, the Center for Education Development, and the Evaluation Era.
17. Youngs (2019); Noddings (2005a); Harari (2017).

18. Stoer and Magalhaes (2008), p. 54.
19. Murgatroyd (2010) cited Gard and Wright (2005).
20. Ibid.
21. Kühne (2019).
22. Greenpeace, Polska (2019).
23. OECD, 2013, p. 13.
24. Apple (2006) and Popkewitz (2004).
25. McNamara and O'Hara, 2008; Møller, 2009.
26. Urrieta, (2007) 'conceptually, figured worlds provide the contexts for meanings for concepts of domains of action, for artifacts, and for action (behavior) and for people's understandings of themselves.' p. 110.
27. Bauman (2000).
28. Youngs (2019); and https://theconversation.com/where-people-are-satisfied-with-democracy-and-why-130979.
29. Rosengaårdskolen, Odense Denmark. (2020). https://Rosengaardskolen.aula.dk>.
30. Tonks (1993).
31. Ibid. p. 48.
32. Kubow and Fischer (2004).
33. Merryfield and Tlou (1995).
34. Kubow, and Fischer (2004) p. 10.
35. Omodan (2019).
36. Kubow and Fischer (2004) p. 8.
37. Milanovic (2010) p. 17–20, Noguera (2017).
38. Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs—a U.S. federally funded effort to improve performance of middle school students on attainment goals.
39. Fischer and Hamer (2010).
40. Dale (2009) has argued that these moves are both a part of globalization and a reaction to it, what he cites as 'Castells' paradox,' p. 25.
41. Dale (2009) p. 26.
42. Dale (2009).
43. Ibid.
44. Ottesen, Stephens (2019).
45. Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2013) p. 17.
46. Dess et al. (2011), OECD (2013).
47. Janssens and van Amelsvoort (2008).

48. Ault (2008); Skedsmo (2011).
49. Hargreaves and Moore (2000); O'Neill (2020).
50. MacBeath, Dempster, Frost, Johnson, and Swaffield (2018).
51. The International Quality Evaluation Resource for Education Leaders (iQerel) was a 3-year project, started in September 2014 and funded by Erasmus+ to support reflection on practice as part of the school improvement agenda. The project team aimed to foster and encourage a network of European school leaders and to critically examine how school performance is measured and how to engage practitioners in using data in a way that will support their work in an authentic, meaningful way.
52. Pring (2001).
53. Ottesen and Stephens (2019).
54.. Noddings (2005b) p. 62 talks about this work on the local as one of the basic ways educators can help students connect local and global interests.
55. Stoecker and Wachna-Sosin (2008).
56. Kemmis and Mutton (2012) cited Thomas (2009) and Wals and Corcoran (2006) as they talked about EfS projects and that they 'must be directed at changing things over and above knowledge and actions of individual people.' p. 188.
57. Fischer and Wachna (2004).
58. 'Przywództwo i zarządzanie w oświacie—opracowanie i wdrożenie systemu kształcenia i doskonalenia dyrektorów szkół/placówek' (Leadership and management in education—development and implementation of a system of education and improvement of school/institution heads).
59. Mazurkiewicz (2015).
60. Mazurkiewicz (2015) p. 40.
61. Ibid.
62. Steiner-Khamsi (2004) p. 3.
63. King, Jr. (1964).
64. Alston (2012).
65. Stoer and Magalhaes (2008) p. 48.
66. Klein (2016).
67. Murgatroyd (2010).
68. Mazurkiewicz and Kołodziejczyk (2017).
69. Edwards-Groves and Kemmis (2016) p. 90.
70. Giroux (1988).

4

BUILDING A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR RESPONSIVE EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Building a framework

How do we ensure positive change, well-being, and happiness in our societies without leaving anyone behind? How do those working in schools choose the best solutions among hundreds of alternative paths of development for individuals and humankind, and how do we successfully implement them? We need to ask these types of questions in order to be able to make decisions. If we want principals to be just and professional in making decisions that impact our lives and the shape of the world, we need a vision with an understanding of the context, awareness of our situation, and set of strategies for using our skills in designing necessary steps for our actions. As we said in the introduction, only we (people) are responsible for the world and as a consequence, we must be responsive to the issues that are shaping reality. We need to not only build awareness as part of the purpose and aims of education, but we must also develop the tools and methods to provide and support it. Responsive leadership will provide the means for

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the process of building up individuals, their competencies, and thriving, democratic communities that are not blinded by false idols and quick solutions. Supporting the development of the skills of those around us while respecting their dignity and innate individual and collective identities provides the tools for principals to use as a basis and source for solutions to the crises we encounter in the world.

A strategic framework can focus on those conditions and competencies that matter for educational leaders to be responsive. We propose that such a framework will better serve principals as they work to fulfill the aims of education and the promise of school. The conditions and framework are composed of the following:

- Authenticity;
- Complexity and interdisciplinarity;
- A focus on learning and development;
- Equity, equality, and social justice;
- Context and reflection;
- Distributed, participatory, and shared leadership;
- Democratic practices.

Leadership is built from many elements, starting with personal matters like self-understanding, identity and self-esteem, and relationships with the self, and later relations with loved ones and with people at work and on the streets. Leadership is about choices in life, decisions made from micro- and macroperspectives, immediate reactions in time and in place, and interpretation of social affairs and political, economic, and cultural choices. We are pieces of a gigantic mosaic in a certain socio-cultural context, possessing economic, human, relational, and cultural capital. While our perception is limited, our imagination and ability to interpret the world are not. Through years and interactions, we shape the reality of the various social institutions that we set up, such as value systems or mental models that we use every day. Institutions, and of course organizations such as school, are all shaped by our choices and actions.

We are responsible for this world, because we are its creators. Our basic tools are dialogue and interaction. We exist only in groups: others make us real, notice our presence, and give meaning to our actions. Individuals and groups give meaning to the world where they function. Knowledge

and the whole social world depend on human activity and are created in the process of human interactions, and they are developed and passed on in a particular social context. "Meaning" does not wait in various "objects" to be discovered.[1] "The meaning (and therefore understanding, knowledge, and truth) results from the interplay of object and subject, that is, of humans engaging with the world."[2]

The meaning of leadership, a dynamic and ongoing undertaking, emerges through interactions and by the granting of meaning by ourselves in a particular cultural, historical, and geographical context. It is important to remember that the notion that our world does not exist until we experience it is not an easy mental construct. The moment we accept it is at once rewarding and obliging—we have to take responsibility for ourselves and our own actions. Leaders have the responsibility to support people in their existential journey—in the first place convince them they have power, and in the second stage, help them deal with it. Power is not easy to have.

We have a power that we are sometimes not aware of. Our ability to transform information received into a message broadcasted outside, changes the world. We are inspired by external factors, but it is our minds, value systems, perspectives, beliefs, and skills which decide how we interact in the processes we participate in. The context we build decides about everything. This is a fascinating process of correlation, between how we change our environment and in response, how the environment influences our brains and hearts, our thoughts and actions. In dialogue, we will look for alternatives for societies, for education and schools, for leadership. Through dialogue, we may support values that we need. When we, as humans, are involved in dialogue we win; when we stop, we lose.[3] This natural conclusion is true also in the aspect of educational leadership—it will become what you want it to become depending on the environmental factors, and various variables like needs, dreams, and abilities.

Positioning responsive educational leadership

In order to find and maintain a course of action that allows schools to support individual and social developments, leaders of every kind have to deal with different tensions. Some of them are rational, some are irrational, some arise from inside the school, and others from outside. Some are connected with inclusion, some with exclusion. Leaders need to deal with issues of

democracy and autocracy, order and chaos, organizational and individual problems. Leadership uses imagination and tradition, implements change and maintains the status quo, analyses quality of performance and feelings. All of this almost at the same moment, with broad aims and also specific tasks in mind, and always in the end, leadership should be focused on people, good work, and a good life.

Around the world, we see different streams or paradigms in educational leadership. Gayle Avery[4] connected a number of theories and approaches found in the literature, taking under consideration the fact that in practice leadership is multifaceted and holistic, connecting various levels and spheres of organization and including many variables, among which are factors both internal and external to the organization. She proposed paradigms which can be distinguished from each other in different categories and integrated into one structure to demonstrate the complexity of leadership as fully as possible. In her perspective one possible approach is to divide that universe into four paradigms: classical (one leader or elite group whose power depends on the position taken, tradition, obedience, and strong emotions from fear to love), transactional (where the leader has access to rewards or punishment and skillfully manages and consults aims and tasks with subordinates; here the leader knows his/her people to a greater extent than in the classical paradigm), transformational (where the leader has powerful vision and addresses important issues and values, people join voluntarily, but when a certain momentum ends, the transformational leader loses power), and organic (in which people in the position of leaders change according to their competencies and abilities, depending on the main task of the organization or group). This is only one of the possible ways of painting the picture of the leadership universe.

Leithwood[5] and Poplin have written about educational leaders changing school cultures and their tasks and styles in order to meet the demands of what many would call neoliberal local, state, and national or federal stakeholders.[6] Principals decide how to act, what policy changes to make, and how to lead their schools in the midst of the challenges they encounter in their societies. They try to meet demands and stay afloat. Valentine and Prater[7] define transformational leadership as centered on important aspects, although they still seem to come up short. How do we think about and deliberate around what our communities, through their schools,

really need? As we think about the elements laid out by Valentine and Prater they appear to us as insufficient.

- Acceptance of group goals—but we need to consider how the goals are developed and their connection to community needs and global challenges;
- Providing individual support—but we need to consider if this is found just in models that place the principal above the teachers, as opposed to an environment focused on the group, and the development of everyone involved.
- Providing intellectual stimulation—but toward what aims in education?
- Holding high performance expectations—but measured how? Through corporate testing regimes and ranking lists, or measured by the impact of the school on the community and its quality of life?

We are left pondering whether transformational leadership in schools moves the community both inside the school and out in the community to redefine the aims of education, to focus on making society better, to link teaching and learning to self-development of the skills and competencies necessary for the world of the 21st century.

Collective or cooperative influences on instructional leadership places the principal in the role of working with their teachers on classroom practice and curriculum.[8] The approaches that view leadership as the process of working with and leading groups struggle when we look at the training most head teachers and principals receive. While the key focuses of leadership are centered on the relational context and working with groups, most training focuses on the personal development of the single, individual, principal or head teacher, and not on training groups to deliberate, plan, reflect, and gather information about their work and progress.

And culturally responsive leadership helps answer the question, how would a leadership style focused on identity look? In the context of a reconceptualized notion of democracy, we would see, instead of components of rational inquiry, a focus on public discourse and the supposed free exchange of ideas, and arguments for development of interdependence across differences. Instead of always pushing for consensus, developing a growing sense of the importance of mutuality and interdependence.[9]

Johnson has said in calling for culturally responsive leadership that principals should "Bridge school and community concerns, advocate for cultural recognition and revitalization, and position educational leaders as advocates for race equity and community development in diverse neighborhoods."[10] As we view this call from our perspectives on work in various parts of the world, we are aware that diversity varies in power relationships, in socio-historical contexts, and political motivations. Concerns for our communities and their shared humanity compel us to do something, whether, for example, the Roma community in Slovakia, the LGBTQ community in many places, or refugee communities in France.

The leadership we need

Many current leadership paradigms seem to be anchored in "tayloresque principles of efficiency, control, standardization, couched in language of test-driven accountability and deregulation measures…"[11] We are hopeful that instead, a responsive framework, composed of threads built on the work of Johnson, and Kemmis and Mutton, and aware of the conceptualizations of Avery and others[12] will work to find ways for principals to lead in such a way that they build an educational environment designed to develop the capabilities and voices of all in a community. We believe this will best help principals, teachers, students, and community members to learn and act around the challenges we face in our societies.

We recommend that we stop thinking about leadership as a set of skills and characteristics of the individual, and start thinking about leadership as a set of conditions, as about the process of empowering people to achieve what they believe is worth achieving and what they want to achieve. Traditionally leadership has been understood as a process of influencing others, as a method of forcing submission, a mode of persuasion, an effect of interaction, a mechanism for attaining goals, a measure for building structures, a negotiation of power, a personality profile, and even as a manner of behavior.[13] In a time of failing traditional narratives, of rising waves of doubt toward democracy and decreasing trust, we want to create a new myth of leadership that will help to prove wrong the dilemma of the assumption that power belongs to people who are, in mass, unable to govern well. Leadership, if properly understood and implemented, will mediate the basic tensions of democracy between the desire for strong leaders

and the deeply held values of participation, egalitarianism, and diversity. Leadership can promise a path to a viable, functioning democracy in our chaotic postmodern world.[14] There is clearly a need to break the domination of the classical paradigm where leadership is associated with strong individuals, elites, so-called charisma, and power. We need to understand the necessity of mass collaboration and a change of leadership style that may indeed manifest itself in a rejection of mythologizing of specialization and expert knowledge, of experience and control, in favor of cooperation, participation, and creativity.[15]

Leadership does not depend on the personalities of individual persons. It is more the quality of an organization or even society. As we talk about cultural or social capital[16], we may talk about leadership capital. Leadership, in this perspective, is a complex process constructed and experienced in groups. The shape of the process in a particular institution, community, place, or time, cannot be visualized or presented in sharp relief, with clear lists of elements or simple figures; it is more like a cloud. People move in it, on its borders, and around it. They are often not sure where they are in it. The metaphor of a cloud, in which we may observe a unregulated stream of events, attitudes, behaviors, actions, and values stretched along a continuum from an undeveloped, irresponsible, selfish, competitive ethos (represented by point C) to a developed, ripe, responsible, cooperative, and responsive one (represented by point R), offers the most inclusive and open definition of leadership (Figure 4.1). While moving inside and

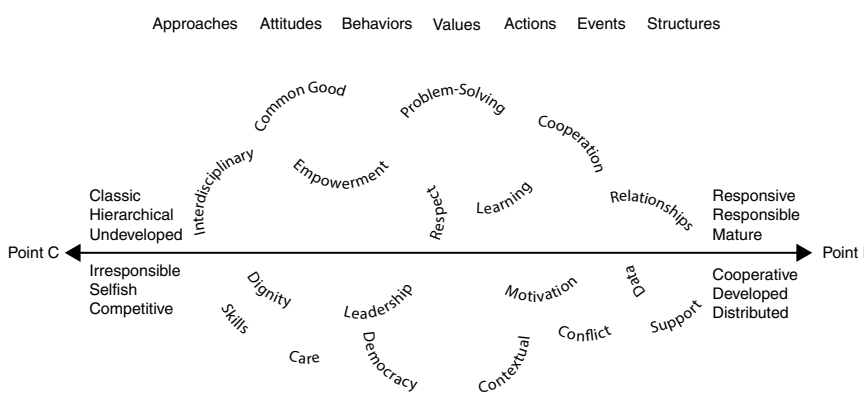

Figure 4.1 The Cloud of Leadership. ⏎

around the cloud, people make hundreds of decisions about various issues, decide about actions and behaviors, and participate and implement initiatives. Influencing each other people produce fabric—of social interactions and leadership processes. As we work to support educational leaders and schools that are moving toward point R on this continuum, we start to see groups focused on supporting each other. They seek the common good. They seek awareness and processes that lead to actions. With a fluid conceptualization, responsive schools in search of building such a reality do not hide from the complexity of the world around us. Groups of cooperating leaders do not have to define and practice the exact same model of leadership, but they use the same "material" to construct their own version of the leadership process. The leadership we look for, is about a strategy for designing the education that we need, education that is coherent with our values, and answers mutually defined challenges as well as challenges that are not defined, that uses resources and abilities we have developed in the past and will develop in future, and which sees people where they are with their needs and dreams. Leadership is a process that utilizes sets of competencies which might be learned, so we need to design a system that allows all involved to gain specific skills and professional knowledge, to understand roles and develop as people, and finally to build structures that enable leadership functions. Leadership is not an intuitive habit but a professional approach to decision-making, which supports professional development and learning of teachers and students, construction of learning environments, and opportunities for cooperation and participation.

Education is a human right. Schools have a moral obligation to secure that right. Leadership should allow us to reimagine education and democracy again and again but should also enable us to avoid reconstruction of failing mechanisms. Given the context in which we live, the fragile status quo, and the need for change, the key to success for people is learning. Educational leadership is responsible for this learning. The future of education and the future of the world depends on leadership. But, as we believe, a new paradigm is needed. New ecology is essential. Ecology, the science of the structure and functioning of nature which studies the interactions between living organisms and their environment and among these organisms, is needed. Today, the dominating classical paradigm of leadership pushes us to expect charisma, strength, power, and competition, and it is useless and toxic. Today, leadership generates a burden similar to that

of fossil fuels—we burn them because a minority benefits from it. We burn them because we have technology and procedures. We burn them because we are manipulated. We burn them although it kills us. Traditional leadership benefits only a few and poisons everyone, but it is supported by stereotypes and mainstream narratives.

Educational leadership is like the process of playing together in a jazz band. Musicians move through a song allowing each instrument to extenuate a particular part or aspect of the piece. The melody and the rhythm flow with the environment and the players. And the ultimate fully realized composition is both the result of the leadership of the jazz band leader, and the contributions of the various members of the group. Leadership is more closely connected to organizational culture than to lonely heroes acting on their own. It involves caring about emotional safety, relations, and engagement. It is built on self-awareness, reflexivity, staying in touch with people and the environment, and the ability to ask questions and state problems. It depends on group learning, teamwork, and cooperation. Leadership is strengthened through processes of decision-making and transparency, addressing diversity and a search for connectivity and networks. Leadership is about taking responsibility, because if not us, then who will do it? If not now, when? Like starting any musical composition, leadership in a school is like the leadership demonstrated by the jazz band leader. It is possible to simply begin.

A philosophical stance

How do we build a philosophical stance from which we can begin to answer the challenges in our own unique contexts? We do not seek to be prescriptive. It is impossible to offer one definition, one model that fits everywhere. However, we do seek to propose a framework, a set of conditions, to build a strategy that emerges from a philosophical standpoint that is not value-blind. These values or conditions are like bricks in the foundation of a responsive school. The meanings of the concept of leadership emerge from the individuals engaged in it. As such, "leadership should be defined each time all over again."[17] Individual leaders, each working to conceptualize how they make sense of the reality they exist in, help us move with purpose and act with awareness of the implications for our students and their future. These values help us build strategies that are

based on consistent deliberation. What might we do? What values push us to make this choice and not that one? We need to ask key questions to push an organization trying to build a working leadership model for a specific context or a specific group.

All work comes from a set of beliefs and moves outward based on a stance and a philosophy that we come to see as the basis for the world around us[18]. Our stance has ethical, philosophical, and political dimensions. What Stetsenko[19] describes as a value system and a set of ultimate goals—a "socio-political" stance. As each of these connected elements comes together they build a philosophy, an ethos. Political dimensions—which become clearer—are important to our own internal development and conceptualizations of leaders, leadership, and education. Our stance then becomes a mental model which we enter each day and begin again the day's work toward some end and future state. Educational leaders of responsive schools position themselves in a set of specific theories and beliefs. They act as educational leaders oriented toward the future and aware of the present. Positioning and development of our leadership identity must start by first positioning the self and our identity in the world. By reflecting on our essential humanness, and our awareness of the contexts in which we live and work, we help to remake the world we seek.

We need to find a way to change school and education on the transformational level, and yet avoid situations where changes are introduced and pushed forward by a sense of inertia inside the institution. Instead of inertia from past top-down initiatives, the work to transform schools, redefine learning, and reconceptualize the development of principals must be led by those living within the policy. Those educational leaders who deal with their work responsive to issues in the community and the world will move policies away from the simple answers of the past and toward the world we need. If not, we will find the transformational changes we need stymied as those in the institution become stuck within organizational administration. We must fight against power structures that do not support the responsive principals and head teachers we need.

There is clearly a need to redefine the classical paradigm of educational leadership. In too many cases, it is marked by the search for singular strong individuals—elites that stand out separate from the rest of us. They have what some have called "charisma," perhaps while ignoring the charisma

that is present and can be developed in each of us. Instead of a focus on power and personality, a focus on empathy, community building, and awareness is needed. As we look around our countries and across the world for new answers, and new models of leadership and schooling, there is no assumption that the work we engage in, and hope to move, is going to be better—more human, more democratic, more reaffirming—than what exists. Steiner-Khamsi, when discussing the contributions of the various individuals she is working with around the world, said these individuals don't "share the enthusiasm for an emerging international model that is supposedly more just and equal than previous models."[20] It should be remembered that it is not about a single international model, but instead a series of competencies that define the teaching and learning environment, the processes of re-forming the school, and the necessary work to reconceptualize policies around educational leadership. Like many scholars around the world, we find ourselves looking for ideas and new possibilities. But are we actually finding anything innovative? Are any of the innovations that might take place worthy of implementing?

Perhaps the work we have engaged in provides some answers. There is evidence from around the world of educational leaders working to develop an organic, responsive stance that positions a school to be engaged with the world. In this work, and across a range of projects, evidence has emerged regarding shared values or conditions that could be grouped into broad areas. These values lay out a framework for the formal and informal leaders of responsive schools, with the principal as one among many who care about the institution.

These individuals rise to leadership based on their competencies and knowledge. The individuals at school who serve in lead positions on initiatives vary based on individual knowledge, so not the same person takes the lead on everything. As principals look for and help develop the capabilities of each person, they also make space for each individual to lead at key moments. Their actions and relationships reflect the internal self-reflection they engage in. They are not afraid of confronting challenges and issues we hope to all engage in. Reflection makes it possible to develop leadership roles in the educational system, to develop the school functions for the situations we face.

Educational leadership is characterized by a sensitivity toward the people engaged in the process. This sensitivity manifests itself in constantly

searching for ways of building a community, a vision of the organization and a specific framework for the approach to the tasks in front of us all.[21] These conditions, "ways of building the organization," give us a lens through which to look at our own work and development. Authenticity, a focus on learning, the need for participation, time for reflection, respect for diversity, the seeking of equity, and, ultimately, the development of this work in a democratic environment become the basis for responsive leadership and responsive schools.

Responsive educational leadership is authentic

Authenticity is the first critical aspect of the framework (cloud) of an educational leader working to ensure that schooling and learning are connected and aware of the world. There are many aspects to this sense of authenticity. Key to it are confidence, trust, acting professionally, honesty, and openness. Leaders consciously design actions focused on personal development of themselves and their team. They engage in dialog with those both inside the school and outside.

Responsive educational leaders act with confidence stemming from understanding and accepting one's own identity and the context of one's own life. While they are rightfully full of doubt, they paradoxically act with the faith that everyone will move in ways that are based on internal agreements, processes developed by those in the school, and with a set of values that have emerged from the work of the leaders in the school building. These values represent the sense of authenticity discussed. Authentic leadership ensures credibility. For successful school work, credibility is like oxygen. If we allow boredom, dread and indifference to sneak into classrooms we lose credibility and destroy trust. If school does not react to the most burning issues, this is exactly what happens. Education that does not address, for example, the climate crisis or industrial production of meat, is as useless as cargo rituals.[22] As we often remind ourselves, we do not believe that schools can "fix" the challenges described in the Chapter 2, but educators cannot ignore issues that should be among the priorities of national and global policies. Professional educators have a moral obligation to create learning environments in which students learn and act in ways that will help them to engage in authentic initiatives (authentic leadership radiates on authentic activity).

During the lockdown of Spring 2020 students of all types of schools in Poland became involved in an enormous experiment: distance learning. The Ministry of Education demanded that teachers "cover" the obligatory curricula, as if nothing had happened in the world around them. Teachers adopted different strategies to be able to prove they were working according to often ridiculous bureaucratic expectations. Some of them sent homework, report cards, tasks, textbook sections to read, some asked students to watch educational films, and some met with their students online. In general, it generated anxiety, fatigue, and sometimes even anger. Schools did not react to the context; unfortunately, they only focused on satisfying the authorities' needs. Teachers did not help students to understand reality, did not support reflection, did not create their own approaches to the crisis, did not explain governmental decisions. Still, as if nothing had happened, Polish kids were learning the name of the highest European mountain or trying to memorize the date of the establishment of the European Union. The responsive school would allow students to discuss how the European Union is dealing with COVID-19 and why Polish teenagers are not allowed to leave their houses at all. Adults left young people to themselves, abandoned in the midst of curriculum standards instead of reality.

Processes in such educational settings should be based on trust, a trust that emerges from the professionalism of all the stakeholders in the institution. Professionalism meaning there are norms for one's personal behavior while in the school setting and working in the community. Professionalism in education also means the ability to learn the skills of working in a group and the skills of communication. The collaborative professionalism of teachers allows those in the school to focus on students, teachers, and organizational learning. It is not about storing information but about using it in critical thinking, analyzing and interpreting, decision-making and acting. Authentic collaborative professionals address real issues and support students in overcoming obstacles.

For those who have found themselves working together, they know the ways of setting agendas for accomplishing tasks. This professionalism is built on the back of individual interactions and the processes of the smaller groups in the building. The professional attitudes that teacher leaders, student leaders and the principal demonstrate are focused on respect for the choices individuals are voicing, the manner in which planning occurs, and the activities individuals choose to engage with. These choices impact

the daily learning taking place in the classrooms and in the activities that occur in the co-curricular environment as well. It will not happen without authentic collaborative professionalism.

Neoliberal and neoconservative policy efforts have been rising. Rules, they advocate, such as those that make a staff argue about how they will devote more time to mathematics by sacrificing teaching of the arts, or spend more days testing using corporate-prepared and contextually disconnected tests, disturb the aims of education. Michael Apple prodded us to remember that social altruism, behaviors by those of us in educational leadership that were designed to increase the care and well-being of others, "has roots just as deep in our nations, and its expansion needs to be expanded, not contracted."[23] This care for others, as we mentioned in Chapter 3, can be seen in cultural and national conceptions of *umbuntu* ("I am because we are") from regions in South Africa, and the tradition of *harambee* or community self-help in Kenya, or in the school in Denmark that works with students on a project that might last 10 years of their lives while bettering the environment. Caring for the community and those around us can be found around the world and in schools. It is a component of authentic educational leadership.

Authentic leaders assume that human nature supports our work rather than impedes it. People are capable and trustworthy. Authentic leadership supports democracy by firmly stating that people are able to govern, that they can create self-managed teams[24] and can learn. Authentic educational leaders are honest. They are reliable in their work to implement commitments, build social norms, and establish governance structures and rules that involve management without manipulation. This authenticity is built on integrity.

The authentic educational leader operates from a stance of openness. It matters that the small, everyday issues that occur in a school setting are transparent to those in the school building that they impact. It matters that the decision-making process around issues big and small is clear for all of the stakeholders. The first key to empowerment is unlimited access to information.[25] By acting from a stance of openness, leaders are ready for change, always looking for the options that will most improve their context. Openness in education is also a permission to fail: the awareness that failures are a natural element of learning, leadership development, and the functioning of the school environment. They give themselves and

those around them a chance to draw conclusions and plan actions for the future together.

Another issue is focusing on listening and speaking with individuals from all levels of the community. Responsive educational leaders engage in dialogue with those inside and outside their school building and institution. The act of dialogue underlies everything. It is the ability to initiate and maintain respectful relationships based on mutual exchange. It is listening and speaking, but also working to build a context in which ideas can emerge that might not have been there before. It is not asserting that a consensus or finding an acceptable solution for all is the ultimate goal of dialogue, but creating a new situation, building on diversity and strengthening respect. Dialogue is a pivotal element of education leadership as well as social life. In dialogue, people make sense of the world around them and recognize the other.

Active listening emerges as a critical structure for the strategies we should employ. "The desire to cultivate a society that can heal from its extreme divisiveness should be, at least, a starting motivation to debate a topic rather than to verbally attack a person with an opposing viewpoint."[26] Dialog is built on cooperation with external and internal stakeholders of the school. It is the act of communicating that hears the voice of the surroundings of the facility. Authentic educational leaders engage in dialog and welcome an honest exchange of opinions in the pursuit of awareness of choices.

Responsive educational leadership is aware of complexity and interdisciplinarity

Each of the challenges we have identified are simply those quite visible today. There will not be a future where new challenges do not emerge. It is the nature of human life. At the same time, it is clear as we have discussed that every challenge we face is full of sub-issues, deepened contexts, multifaceted and best conceptualized under the umbrella of complexity theory.[27] Imagine a system similar to the London Underground. Information and people moving in many directions. Each station is a part of the system, each needing attention if the system is going to meet its aims.

It is also clear that it is hard to change the system and impact the challenges that have existed for some time or that emerge brand new. Mason[28]

has raised issues around responding to challenges and the difficulty of changing the system as it exists. "If this is the power of the status quo to resist change, how and why does change happen?" We have to begin by thinking about initial steps, building capacity and awareness, thinking about sustaining what we start while carefully deliberating about implementation by self-evaluation and reflection.

Some have talked recently about who is best prepared to deal with the futures we see. "Breadth of perspective and the ability to connect the proverbial dots (the domain of generalists) is likely to be as important as depth of expertise and the ability to generate dots (the domain of specialists)."[29] The answer to complexity and the interdisciplinary nature of the challenges in the world is preparing teachers and students for lives in an uncertain and undetermined future. Hoping for unlimited possibilities, while being aware that our students will enter a world full of jobs that don't exist yet, with challenges already present and those still to emerge.

Referencing Darwin, Mason[30] told us to make "it," school, better suited for its environmental conditions. Make it ready to deal with the context and magnify the prevalence and influence of the characteristics that will impact its survival and the well-being of those inside the community in which it resides. School is an institution that organizes and coordinates people's actions. Sometimes these institutions function according to their inner rationality. We need organizations that care more about conditions of human lives than about monetary profit. It must become a learning and knowledge organism, a learning organization.

One of the five disciplines of the learning organization[31] is systemic thinking. It is a tool that helps explain and influence complex phenomena occurring in our organizations and surroundings. According to Senge, it is necessary for us to think about general patterns from a holistic perspective rather than about small, manageable elements. Educational leaders are not only aware of the difficult complexity, they also know how to operate in such an environment taking under consideration the possible, and delayed, effects of their own decisions. It is impossible, in real life, to divide tasks into smaller packages and deal with them one item per moment. In the interconnected world and in the complex world of education, we have no such luxury and we need to do "everything at the same time." They have to accept constant change and the lack of time but avoid making (usually counterproductive) changes under pressure. No one can do it alone.

Educational leadership invites others, it builds relationships and capabilities, and it understands complexity as a component of the challenges and interdisciplinarity of the necessary responses.

Responsive educational leadership is focused on learning and development

Strong responsive leaders at every level not only promote focus on the learning and development process, but also learn for themselves while providing a chance for everyone to learn—students, teachers, and members of the community. Learning organizations have clear goals that are broadly accepted. There is time to deliberate about the actions to be taken and then time to reflect on the learning process following the actions those in the school engage in. In every aspect of the institution, it is evident that the priority is the learning and development going on. In every element of the organizational culture, learning is a visible priority. It results in designing organizational functions in order to model the educational processes by, for example, asking questions, suggesting tasks and problems to be solved so that colleagues can learn and, in that way, make it possible for the organization to learn and develop.

A task of educational leadership is assurance that learners are learning under the right conditions. "Wicked" problems[32] demand that we support students by preparing them for problem-solving while looking at complexity. This happens by building an organizational culture that enables efficient design and creative environments. It happens when situations are created that are conducive to learning. Educational leadership guarantees everyone's support for their own development. It is, in fact, an important moral element of leading—assurance for the care, concern, and development of those in the school—an assurance of seeking an overall, high-quality education.

By caring for the abilities and development of the staff, the students, and the community, responsive leaders learn from and adapt to their current conditions. Those working in the setting begin to think about the most important question: What is the purpose of an action? By thinking about the existing paradigms in the school, and building supportive power structures, the focus moves away from the simple completion of a basic list of duties and tasks. A condition of professionalism develops where

individuals are aware of contexts, including political, social, cultural, economic, or ecological.

Responsive schools, through the work of student leaders, teacher leaders, and principals, are focused on personal development and learning. The community builds opportunities to develop each individual. No matter what stages of life any of these individuals find themselves in, there is an awareness of the need to continually learn, stretch their skills, and engage with new information. Making the most of your resources, talents, opportunities and gaining new enriching experiences becomes essential for the development of an authentic leadership style. It is the realization of the potential that people forming the school community can develop as they work to improve their reality. And educational leaders are aware of their role in shaping the conditions for the development of others. They are aware of the need to move from what Hargreaves calls professional development toward professional learning.[33] That leader focuses on the needs of people and facilitates discourse and debate on how we should learn.

As a way of building community, teachers are engaged in designing the learning processes that will play out in the school and its classrooms. Educational leaders draw on the best that has emerged about collective instructional leadership.[34] They focus on the development of curricula which are structured yet full of choice. Interdisciplinarity takes the tools, skills, and concepts of varied disciplines and says the teacher and students become important connector for the problem-solving focus on the work we do. And connections to the world outside the school become essential components of the experiential and motivational aims of education.

Principals must listen to those in the school. Teachers, who work every day with the young people, listen to them, deliberate with them, and know best what they need in order to help students learn. It is imperative that teachers and students be involved in the leadership processes that will guide the development of the school. Teachers need to be part of the system change we believe is necessary, but "change needs to be understood as organically enmeshed in webs of relationships whose feedback loops with other constituent and contextual factors compound each other to reinforce newly emergent properties and behaviors, whose influence will be compounded and thus become autocatalytic and self-sustaining."[35]

The school can become a self-governing organization if the educational leaders avoid the temptation to direct and solely manage the decisions around the learning process.[36] Educational leadership focused on learning requires an understanding of the teaching and learning process. A community that develops knowledge about how we learn and develop is the most important goal when designing leadership tasks. The measure of the professionalism of educational leaders is continuous learning and investment in development and hard work.

Responsive educational leadership is focused on equity, equality, and social justice

Educational institutions have long struggled to ensure that social justice is part of their culture and fabric. Work to ensure that all students in the school—ethnic minorities, immigrants, refugees, religious minorities, and all others - have equal access and a learning environment that respects and supports their development as unique individuals shows steps in the right direction. Equity means we are working to ensure access, learning, and the results of education are available to all.[37] However, some futurists describe a future where inequities and inequality are even more pronounced.[38] Education researchers have continued to point out the digital divide that will impact access to the necessary technology tools that will connect students to an engaged life and work opportunities.[39] We believe the answer lies in caring, in reconceptualizing the leadership of principals and the aims of schooling to build a more equitable society.[40]

As for principals, Johnson[41] has told us that principals need to work toward an ethic of care, to have high expectations, and to use their values and cultural knowledge while building critical consciousness. Individuals who seek to build responsive schools must work to ensure equity, equality, and social justice, all of which are essential for a supportive learning environment "where historically marginalized students have the opportunity to be prepared for access and success…" in life outside school.[42] As a key value in distributed leadership, these ensure there are equal opportunities for all people, although they are not identical, to participate, be heard, and have their knowledge and skills valued by the community. Social justice means the school and those in it seek to care for the social good and the social interests of the community. Respect for individuality and equality

in the form of support for the basic living conditions—resources, respect, recognition, love, strength—becomes essential.

We are facing a challenge of diversity not because we are different, but because that difference is often used to stoke fears and anxieties. With significant deficits in communication and cooperation, we lose the valuable potential capital of diversity and instead we see obstacles, misunderstandings, inconvenience, and often conflicts. Diversity, unfortunately, sometimes leads to inequality. The biggest problem lies in how we see diversity and inequality—it is neither natural nor deserved (e.g. believing somebody is not educated or motivated enough to deserve equality). Diversity means providing autonomy and respecting differences. Responsive leadership in such a setting means managing effectively by challenging inequities. Managing in this case is not agreeing with the values, language, or actions of exclusion, but rather attempting to respond to the needs of all students and all teachers while remaining aware of issues in the community. If it is the needs of the students or teachers, we should consider restructuring organization and providing curricula and redirecting resources to increase equal opportunities. Responsive educational leadership comes from facing difficult issues, even those that appear outside the mainstream. Leaders at every level try to use the potential of everyone, even those whose diversity at first glance seems to be an obstacle to the work of the organization.[43] Various perspectives, customs, and above all, values assist principals in approaching the situations that naturally arise in an environment of difference. In this way, we increase the school's ability to accept all possible students.

The responsive school is a place of resistance to injustice. Democratic strategies ensure that we are working together in "the mutual construction of meaningful knowledge and practice."[44] So, in the time of COVID-19, diversity and inequality are even bigger issues needing attention than before. Meaningful knowledge and practice are not fancy slogans, but necessities. We have to change the understanding of reality, we need to transform how people perceive well-known concepts, and we should build our approach upon a perspective in which diversity is a positive resource, not a burden.

It is a school that creates, as part of the aims of education, equality of conditions. The school ensures the opportunity to learn,[45] and pays attention to the how well the work of the organization is as teachers, staff, and students provide input. Reflection about the functions of the processes of the school

itself are always under review. Ultimately, the staff reviews whether they are ensuring a good education for everyone, positive conditions for each child in the community, and an unequivocal respect for diversity.

The acceptance of otherness and an openness to dialog with all aspects of the community helps to build positive attitudes toward others. Acceptance of people, expressed in providing feedback, reducing distance in our social spheres, and working toward trust, creates strength of community. Operating and developing processes on a basis of strong values such as the ultimate richness of diversity, helps the responsive school deal with the challenges that come when we express our differences of opinion. By seeking and implementing new ideas, working to change reality, and putting the key aims of development of individuals in the context of issues in the world, we build the framework for actions focused on an improved society.

We must come to understand that every individual in a school and in a community represents a number of identities and perspectives. This occupying of more than one perspective (e.g. Scottish Catholic female, Danish gay male, German-American Jew, African female) has been eloquently called "intersectionality" in English.[46] Focused originally on the multiple layers of identity black women with various sexual orientations have, the term highlights the multiple forces pushing against individuals. But it also shares the power of the multiple perspectives we bring to our lived experience, our unique contexts, and our learning. Diversity, a wealth of perspectives, also brings a range of possibilities for solutions. Maxine Green has written that "the hope lies in the possibility of our developing a vocabulary in which our many differences can be formulated…that these accounts can be offered from the vantage points of people's lived experiences…"[47] The diversity of individuals increases the range of creativity in school, and the school itself is a place where individuals learn to appreciate the diversity and uniqueness of individuals in the community, even if they have lived experiences and opinions completely different from those we ourselves harbor.

Responsive educational leadership is contextualized and reflective

Critical thinking about the context of the school and the state of the environment is an important starting point for building reflection in a responsive school. In building a process of engagement with students, teachers,

and community members, educational leaders at all levels are at their best when listening. As each perspective and idea emerges, they lead the group in a process of deliberation. After planning a process of decision-making and then planning actions, they do not simply rush on to the next issue, but instead allow space and time for real thinking and reflection about the impact the school communities' choices are having on the society.

The future belongs to generalists who can pay more attention to the contexts in which we are making decisions, develop systems thinking,[48] and consider how "seemingly unrelated developments may impact each other."[49] Responsive educational leadership leads to constant reflection on the conditions of the school's functioning and the accepted values of the institution. There is a focused effort to build awareness of the needs of the community which the school serves, the social tendencies of the community, and the intersections between these and the philosophy of the school. All of this work around reflection enters deliberations around approaches to the learning process and the reflection results in actions that are aligned with the context.

Reflexivity is the ability to reflect on actions and strive to accurately assess reality, to think about context in the cultural, material, and socio-political dimensions.[50] Those engaged in a school's work place themselves properly in time, in the "here and now." They look forward, participate in rational planning, and work through the intellectual processes that help apprise everyone about the context in which the school now finds itself. This situational awareness will free ourselves from cognitive stereotypes, or at least make us aware of the preconceived notions we bring to our work. The accuracy of how we perceive and assess the people and events around us becomes a skill to hone, but with the notion of the relativity of truth. We are aware that our perceptions of truth depend on many factors, even on our stage of development, as what is true for children is not always true for adults (by the way, should we allow hierarchies of truth and alternative facts?).[51] To distinguish between means and goals, individuals engage in the value of continuous checking of the accuracy of perception—with the understanding that we are often doomed in this area to distortions and mistakes.

Leadership in responsive schools is critical of reality. Critique after shared reflection on current practice, and reflections on the results from the ongoing efforts of the school, are a normal aspect of the process of

decision-making and the planning of subsequent steps. Marx understood critical thinking as focusing on human emancipation from the chains imposed by capitalism and colonialism, and identifying those chains and the steps necessary to humanize all relationships among persons and with nature itself.[52] Education leaders should seek emancipation as well.

Action research processes are one form of self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out.[53] By working to raise questions about key concerns in the community and world, to seek information, data, and knowledge about these concerns, and then draw conclusions about needed actions, educational leaders propel their school in a continuous process. Critical thinking demands understanding of the nature of analyzed problems and considers all possible alternative approaches and solutions.

Leadership and school should help people to engage in inquiry, to communicate in order to both develop a discourse of shared purpose, and to make explicit the assumptions and ideologies behind what we are engaged in. Only leaders who are authentic and "real," who make obvious their beliefs and daily lived experiences, can move these dialogues forward. They need to question beliefs and philosophies that are dominating our discourse among societies. They need to question the way their educational system works. They have to be brave and they have to be proud of the heresy they sometimes proclaim. The effort we engage in, this work toward common ends, is what Ayers calls "teaching toward freedom" when he wrote, "with one eye on our students and another on ourselves, we attend to both the learning environment and the concentric circles of context in which our teaching is enacted."[54] In responsive educational environments, there is a clear sense about the activities to be carried out in the school, the desire to search for new solutions, and the consent that errors will arise from trying to do something, and not from neglect.

Responsive educational leadership is distributed and participatory

An educational leader in a responsive school will act in a manner that creates the means for shared action and participatory governance of the

institution. It is distributed leadership where responsibilities and opportunities are shared around the building and across the vertical and horizontal levels of leadership that exist in the school. Leadership organized in this way ensures shared ownership of the goals, decisions, and impacts of the school.

Responsive leaders in these schools are open to cooperation, building a common vision, and seek the ultimate goal of high-quality education. As Mazurkiewicz has written, "A participatory leadership must be popularized and engage many people in the decision-making process, including a reinforcement of mid-level and informal leaders."[55]

This recommended state of the art will not happen easily. We work again in the midst of tradition, years of persistent rituals, mental models, and theories of leadership and management. As Ken Blanchard noticed, people are not willing to share ownership and take responsibility. They even feel abandoned or betrayed when they face new challenges and tasks of participation.[56] Participating in sense-making and decision-making is difficult. We are never sure if we are right. So, we look for authorities to reassure us that our words are rightful, our actions are constructive and wise. We are like young children who seek approval from adults, and this is an embarrassing feeling. Empowerment is not always welcomed by those who should be empowered. But, according to Paulo Freire, "responsibility cannot be acquired intellectually, but only through experience."[57]

Leadership is about creating a space for practicing participation and ownership. It is impossible to issue legislation or demand that something happen. It has to be designed. It needs structures, values, and actions that allow and support small steps every day. It is like learning to swim: you need to go into the water and try it. First, you feel the water, its texture, and temperature. Next, you think about your relationship with it, you try dipping in, immersing yourself. You think and try to regulate your breath and maybe lie down. It is not comfortable; sometimes people fear the water. Later you move; short, economical moves because you do not want to lose your balance. Sometimes you have somebody or something that helps you, stabilizes you, lets you float. And this way step by step, day by day, you move closer toward becoming a swimmer who can easily change between different styles, swim fast and far, dive and jump. Some of us become Olympic gold medalists. Others love to swim in a lake on a hot day or even better, in the evening. Why would we expect participation and

collaboration to be easier than swimming and for everybody to be involved in the same way? We need to learn and practice for the sake of the students, the schools, and education itself.

Quality education results from building trusting relationships, caring for the interactions within the building, and focusing on strong networks of support. By sharing power, responsive leaders gain more influence over the reality in the institution than when they try to change it individually. By doing so, they will create a democratic ethos, operate in an environment of freedom, focus on equality and social justice, and build a sense of credibility. All that happens, not in an empty space, but in the context of teaching and learning. The foundation of the educational process is to create an environment where choice depends on the ideas and initiative of the stakeholders in the school building and in the surrounding community. Choosing the path means choosing the methods and the content and having the freedom to decide about yourself. These are key conditions for learning. Learning without freedom is impossible.

Educational leaders working in responsive schools carry an ethos of credibility with them. Credibility is based on trustworthiness and it enables trust to arise in the school building. By relying on expertise from across the school and community, trustworthiness around the sources of information, the description of possible options, and the steady voices needed in the midst of decision-making about learning are all present. Of enormous importance is the realization of our need for deep contextual literacy, that we serve, according to Fullan, as both expert and apprentice at the same time.[58]

Credibility builds itself through integrity—a consistency of thoughts, actions, values, beliefs and expressed views and opinions. Like many aspects of this emerging framework, it is interrelated with honesty, reliability, and responsibility. It means the individual leaders in the school are people of character. And they focus on the common good, both in the local environment and for the broader world. Unfortunately, they need to work against fragmentation and skepticism, in a climate of cynicism, manipulation, and austerity. The crisis of democracy or even the idea of democracy, the experience for some of the threat of diversity (as it is presented by media and politicians) disrupts integrity and credibility. The notion of dialogue is questioned: what if we do not speak the same language, respect different values, and have different visions of the future?

Participation matters in a responsive school. It means first teaching and learning how to participate, and later expecting, allowing, and supporting the participation of everyone—co-workers, staff, teachers, students, parents, and members of the community—in the process of deliberation and decision-making. In an organization with responsive leadership people discover their talents, take responsibility more frequently, and are ready to be involved. Participation, however, needs responsibility—a very nuanced concept. It implies an activist stance. It is often perceived as having onerous consequences fostered by a sense of blame. In some cultural contexts, the sense of being a burden overtakes the positive aspects of acting as if we are part of a seamless fabric. We don't want to be perceived as needing others to feel responsible for us. However, it is our positive reality that tells us we are woven together and bound to each other.

Ownership, in the positive sense, means taking care of the well-being of all members of the school community, as well as the school as an organization. In the context of educational responsiveness, there is an implied set of activities, seeking to take action. The responsive educational leader is deliberate in taking action and taking into account the choices of others in their school community. It is a consequence of behavior in the context of external changes. Responsive leadership does not ignore or step away from conflicting expectations of other people and situations. These are the opportunities for dialogue, decision-making, and real leadership. It is a sense of acceptance for the educational leaders' own responsibility for making choices and helping the school make decisions. It is a step in personal and institutional development.

Ownership, on the part of all levels of responsive educational leaders, means acting with courage. It is what Roman calls a stance of "moral imagination and civic responsibility."[59] A readiness to take on challenges, based on the potential (knowledge, wisdom, freedom) that will come from feeling compelled to act. Good decision-making, even in adverse circumstances, and communication becomes essential. It is accepting the truth, hearing feedback, expressing one's beliefs and following them, being able to admit mistakes, but also being aware of the consequences of learning, and learning from those consequences.

Ultimately, what matters in a responsive school is the deepest sense of working together. Our definitions of collaboration and cooperation matter for those asked to trust the processes and leaders in the school.

Responsive educational leadership is democratic

If our ultimate aim is to build a society focused on improving the human condition, raising up the level of education, and ensuring that every student develops to their fullest capacity, then the responsive school and its leadership are compelled to function in democratic ways. Built on respect, participation, and leadership focused on servitude, such schools work to build the community inside the school that they hope to see outside in the society at large.

Acting in democratic ways implies principals will work to open up the decision-making process and share in the setting of the direction of the work of those involved. Democracy does not simply mean the political processes that are used in governance structures around the world. It is also seen in simple day-to-day means of functioning. Democracy is also not telling others what is true; democracy is deciding about it together. When we sit down around a table to begin a meeting or develop a process for raising concerns that need attention, we set out a democratic ethos. Amartya Sen perhaps said it best regarding the overall nature of life in a democratic environment:

> Democracy's claim to be valuable does not rest on just one particular merit. There is a plurality of virtues here, including, first, the intrinsic importance of political participation and freedom in human life; second, the instrumental importance of political incentives in keeping governments responsible and accountable; and third, the constructive role of democracy in the formation of values and in the understanding of needs, rights, and duties.[60]

Responsive educational leaders operate in an environment of freedom. This concerns not only issues of political freedom, but also personal freedom. There are no restrictions on the part of the authorities or society around what the community, working together, might do. It is possible to make a decision. There is an independence in thinking and management, the ability to combine choices that becomes one of the hallmarks of democratic leadership. Freedom is also autonomy in undertaking and managing initiatives, actions, and new ideas. There is clarity around the existence of an environment in which it is free to define significant parts of your work: decide what to do and how, and have a sense of control over the

management functions of the school and the learning environment. There is both independence and the need to take in to account responsibility, whether for culture, the environment, or social opinions.

Bravery, self-esteem, resilience, and humility are needed when teachers share their resources with students in order to support students' growth. The essence of education is a desire for freedom but this desire lies across the beaten path of education. The ultimate aim of education is an emancipation of the human being, which might be quite painful for educational leaders. Their success means that the educated person should start to question the system, the society, and the school which educated him or her. We have created an unjust world, so people who suddenly see reality (thanks to education) have a moral obligation to dream about change for a better world. The best teachers will have to face the question from their best students: why? This question of "why?" is a postulate of the need for a radical change. The irony of that fact resides in the fundamental rules of democracy.

Even the definition and general practices of democracy might be contextual. As a participant in a project in South Africa said,

> ..should one standard or understanding of democracy be imposed on everyone? My answer is "No!" First, in order to succeed, democracy needs to be responsive to the circumstances of every given group. Second, the pace of change or democratization of societies and institutions is very important. For democracy to succeed everybody, or at least the majority, should not feel left behind.[61]

Starting from a perspective of respect, responsive leadership demonstrates regard for each person and his/her values. Each individual's profession is recognized for their contributions to the overall good. Recognition and acceptance of otherness, and concern about the same meaning of different attitudes and views are essential. Granting everyone in the school the same rights without distinction regarding race, origin, religion, language, age, disability, and position provides the opportunity to listen and learn from each other. Leadership's task is to build an atmosphere of mutual respect in schools and institutions, ensuring that everyone is treated equally well without distinguishing their differences. We work to ensure that every student, teacher, and staff member has their needs met.

Participation is one way to ensure everyone is involved in the functioning of the learning environment and the community as a whole. Readiness to involve others by creating mechanisms for participation is important. Supporting small budding grassroots activities of school-related entities helps encourage students, teachers, and community members to engage with issues and concerns. They are encouraged by sharing information, providing consultation, cooperation, and co-governance.

Democracy is also the participation of all school entities in the process of determining goals and concepts for school development and the implementation of changes. A prerequisite for sustainable development of each individual and the school itself is the equal commitment of all stakeholders at school to learning and development.

Eventually, responsive school leadership needs to operate within an ethos of servitude. This means acting for the benefit of others. It also means emphasizing increased service to all those around us and promoting a sense of community. The principal who is guided by the values of democracy puts the common good above particular interests. The role of school leader, principals, teacher leaders, and student leaders is then to support other entities at school in overcoming obstacles that prevent them from fulfilling their goals, their work, and their duties.

Summarizing the framework for responsive educational leadership

What might this work look like? If we work to keep education focused forward, on the future, we are forced to insist on a praxis which has as its goal a reality different from today. "In this future, school should be an institution that invests in students and teachers offering a chance for full development and for the wise planning of future life."[62]

Responsive Educational Leadership draws together the significant work-related responsiveness that has been written about in regards to the environment and sustainability, culturally responsive leadership, experiential education, dialogic leadership, and other areas of leadership work around global challenges such as the environmental crisis, racism, inequality, technology, democracy. Each of these streams of thought and impactful authors has based their work around critical global issues including inequality, social justice, technology, health and wellness.

We do not seek to repudiate our history and important streams of thought in educational leadership. It is, however, clear that we need to move deeper, farther, and connect stronger with the world outside of school. We cannot ignore that for many years now neoliberal and neoconservative ideologies "have been ascendant, moving across regions, national systems, and institutions."[63] Many others have been working in communities and struggling to change the trajectory of society related to the aims of education, the forming of schools, and conceptions of leadership.[64] Even our students have important things to say to us. Instead of the neoliberal and neoconservative borrowing from business to imply what the aims of education should be, we seek to highlight the possibilities and strengths of pulling together these different streams in order to conceptualize what holistic and responsive educational leadership can look like.

We are aware that each of these choices and possible actions do not emerge in a vacuum. The members of a school community hear about an initiative in Australia, a process being used in schools in Kenya, and student-led action in the United States, and think about how it impacts their students, teachers, and community. You can't just export or import a reform or collaboration strategy.[65] Instead, the responsive school leader, whether principal, teacher, or student, works to build a strategy, a stance, an ethos that is responsive, aware, and action-oriented for their community (Figure 4.2).

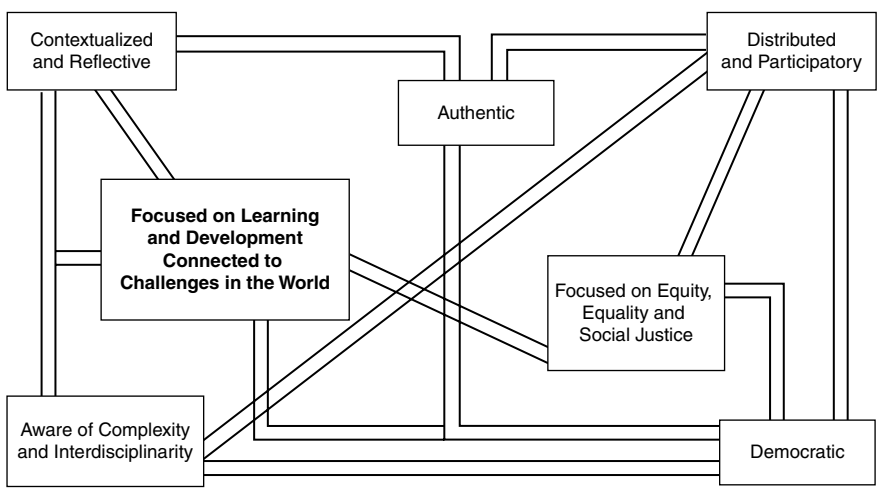

Figure 4.2 The Framework for Responsive Educational Leadership. ⏎

Ultimately, we have settled on the metaphor of a subway map—one you might find in London, or Prague, or New York. While at first glance, it is a maze of lines and connection points whisking from station to station, the totality of educational leadership is a set of competencies, a system of organizing or professional life that draws on authenticity, democracy, equity and social justice, complexity, learning and development, and participatory shared ownership to always increase awareness of current conditions, of "how the trains are running" and the "well-being of the passengers and crews." The system, made of people, responds to challenges and prepares for the future, always looking for the best way to achieve the aims laid out for it.

If we are to achieve such a vision, then teaching and leadership must be nested in in "a social mission that transforms the world and our lives."[66] The school and the members who toil inside it work to develop skills of global intelligence. Rizvi has told us that do this we must engage in "…the development of a moral imagination to view the world through the other's eye, and a commitment to build cultural bridges across regimes of fear and suspicion of others. In the end, it involves a range of values central to democracy: reason, compassion, and respect for human life."[67] This resonates with David McClelland's conclusion that nonacademic abilities like empathy typically outweigh purely cognitive talents in the makeup of outstanding leaders.[68] Crossing cultural borders, whether that means listening and engaging with the community outside of the school, working to build teams across our individual diversities and intersectionalities, or reaching out to understand an issue in another corner of the world, becomes the ultimate step in developing a framework for a responsive school and responsive leadership.

In order to exchange ideas, processes, images, and questions, we have to be decisive and operate from a set of conditions, values, and stances that encompass developing our own authenticity, building processes of distributed leadership while remaining focused on equity, equality, and social justice, and always seeking to be reflective. An important strategy then is to build this framework in order to develop understanding and relationships. It is both a means of personal and social change.

Teachers and educational leaders are cultural workers. They "read the word and the world"[69] and engage students in various key ways by nurturing the skills of critical thinking and working to build an understanding of our identities and intersectionality within an interconnected world.

Recognizing the world by naming it is a powerful process which might be used in constructive ways, but it also may create a false conviction that labeling something has enriched our understanding of the particular phenomenon. To know the name does not mean to know the subject. We need much deeper processes. We work to build action agendas while remaining aware of "our relationships within and across spaces of difference (e.g. gendered, classed, and raced)…"[70] Responsive educational leaders, as a group, must adopt an active attitude toward the constantly changing tasks in front of them and decide what is really important. With a focus on the learning process and development of everyone in the school, choices focused on the values of the school become clearer.

By working with these conditions and this framework for responsive leadership, schools can be created that focus on the real problems of their communities that engage teachers, students, educational leaders, and members of the environs of the school in authentic and substantive deliberation. Martin Luther King famously said, "We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."[71] Educational leaders can work to improve their schools, strengthen relationships with the teachers they have built relationships with, and ensure there is a voice for everyone in the institutional structures of education.

There is a certain capacity in schools, an ability to shape social reality through promoting the necessary ideas, defining contemporary challenges and adjusting values, altering narratives, and refining teaching and learning tools which are coherent with the context of schooling, which should all be understood as a context of living in a contemporary global society. We need, as humankind, support in dealing with reality, so we need to enable education to work toward these challenges. School will have meaning only when it is designed according to well-defined needs. The first step is to launch the process of reflection and as a consequence, to create awareness of the most important challenges we face and the actions we should take.

Notes

1. Berger and Luckman (1966).
2. Ospina and Sorenson (2006) p. 189.
3. Freire (1998).

4. Avery (2004).
5. Leithwood and Poplin (1992).
6. Ibid. p. 5.
7. Valentine and Prater (2011).
8. Ylimaki and Jacobson (2013).
9. Farber and Armaline (2009) p. 44.
10. Johnson (2014) p. 150.
11. Kretovics (2009).
12. Johnson (2014); Kemmis and Mutton (2012); Avery (2004).
13. Smith and Piele (2006).
14. Wren (2007).
15. Gobillot (2009).
16. Bourdieau and Wacquant (2001).
17. Mazurkiewicz (2015).
18. Stetsenko (2020).
19. Stetsenko (2020) p. 1.
20. Steiner-Khamsi (2004) p. 4.
21. Mazurkiewicz (2011).
22. *Cargo culting* was a specific phenomenon and later a general concept. The specific phenomenon was the belief which began among Melanesians in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that various ritualistic acts such as the building of an airplane runway would result in the appearance of cargo via airplanes, even though they did not have a specific reason to believe that airplanes would land on their site. The term was then debated as a more general concept in anthropology and sociology. More recently, 'cargo culting' is a general term to describe the adoption of a technology or practice based on the observation that it has been used elsewhere, without understanding the motivation for its use elsewhere. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cargo_cult - access June 2020).
23. Apple (2006) p. 24, Apple discusses that both social altruism and collective sensibilities have deep roots.
24. Blanchard (2007).
25. Ibidem.
26. Manninen and Mulder, Jr. (2019) p. 37.
27. Jordan, Kleinsasser, and Roe (2014).
28. Mason (2016) p. 438.
29. Mansharamani (2020).

30. Mason (2016) p. 438.
31. Senge (2006).
32. Murgatroyd (2010).
33. Hargreaves (2019).
34. Donohoo, Hattie, and Eells (2018).
35. Mason (2016) p. 439.
36. Hoyle and Wallace (2005).
37. Cramer, Little, and McHatton (2018).
38. Harari (2017) described how some estimates describe the poor as rising in their standard of living, but becoming, at the same time, even more behind the wealthy in society, p. 353.
39. Banister (2017).
40. Noddings (2005a).
41. Johnson (2014) p. 148.
42. Kretovics (2009).
43. Mazurkiewicz (2015).
44. Semali (1999) p. 110.
45. Noguera (2017).
46. Carbado, Crenshaw, Mays, and Tomlinson (2013) and Crenshaw (1990).
47. Green (1995).
48. Senge (2006).
49. Mansharamani (2020).
50. Kemmis and Mutton (2012).
51. Rivage-Seul (2018) pp. 5–6.
52. Rivage-Seul (2018) p. 26.
53. Kemmis, McTaggart, and Nixon (2014).
54. Ayers (2004).
55. Mazurkiewicz (2015).
56. Blanchard (2007).
57. Freire (1974) p. 1.
58. Fullan (2006).
59. Roman (2003) p. 282.
60. Sen (1999) p. 11.
61. Sibusiso (2004) p. 45.
62. Fischer and Mazurkiewicz (2008) p. 17.
63. Apple (2006) p. 22.

64. McKenzie, Christman, Hernandez, Fierro, Capper, Dantley, González, Cambron-McCabe, and Scheurich (2008).
65. Hargreaves (2019).
66. Fischer and Mazurkiewicz (2008) p. 17.
67. Rizvi (2003) p. 25.
68. Goleman (2014).
69. Fischman (1999) p. 557.
70. Michalenok (2004) p. 56.
71. King, Jr. (1964).

5

ACTIONS FOCUSED ON LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The center of work

The actions of educational leaders always need to be centered on the basic work of school: teaching and learning and supporting development. Over the past 50 years, the principal's role has both changed and remained the same. We've witnessed a global deluge of reforms and at the same time we see disappointing results of these movements and realize that they brought very little change. Yes, it is possible to select very positive examples of the transformation of individual schools, but, systems, ways of teaching and learning, and approaches to education are still similar to those from the past. These approaches are not the ones needed today. The understanding of knowledge and assumptions about curricula are still centered on a fragmented reality. We divided what we know into smaller parts (to make them possible to digest) and we use them to feed students as incompetent and dependent items. Later, we test them in artificial ways in order to categorize human beings into groups of more and less able and skilled. We treat teachers as the only source of "wisdom" and give them absolute power

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over students. They model this treatment and sometimes treat students in the same way authorities treat them, without respect for their capabilities and power. We put students into buildings that block communication and cooperation instead of enabling it. The majority of classrooms, by arrangement, force students to look at the backs of their friends and not their faces.

We need to change these conditions in order to change schools into democratic and socially just places supportive of learning, where difference is seen as an asset not a burden, where the natural environment is treated as a treasure not a resource to be exploited, where technology is used for learning not manipulation, and where democracy is not a utopian dream but everyday practice. Schools have to be a community that allows all members to learn and develop with equal rights. Schools cannot reproduce privilege for the few. The first basic action for principals is to open the processes of learning to everybody by helping them to learn to think critically, to cooperate, and communicate in effective ways.

The classroom level is the beginning, the start of the democratic and responsive revolution. After this shift (the change in classrooms), it becomes possible to think about learning throughout the school and the community. Processes for the transformation of the school include curriculum and pedagogy, both of which influence school cultures and structures. It is an invitation for all leaders and teachers to reflect and debate about classrooms and processes in the classrooms. We are not naïve. It is not easy to implement the framework we've described, but if we are going to begin, we must begin in our classrooms.

In this chapter, we do not intend to tell individual educational leaders what they should do about a specific question, problem, local issue, or global challenge. Instead, we lay out actions and processes that based on our experiences, we (the authors) believe will help to transform the school and its learning processes. By focusing on developing our voices, building experience, and with a deep awareness of complexity and interdisciplinary challenges for society we build our pedagogy. The goal, ultimately, is contributing to the well-being and improvement of society. In this chapter, we present a number of areas of action focused on learning and development, as well as examples from projects that have existed in various contexts. They are organized under a set of two broad themes including teaching focused on learning and development, and working to respond to challenges in the world. Each theme has important aspects that we believe provide areas to begin with, to focus on, and to strengthen when leaders work to be responsive.

Curriculum

For responsive educational leaders and responsive schools, the actions they take develop the enacted, socially constructed curriculum of the school. What does the staff emphasize? What aspects of pedagogy do the learning objectives demand? And who is represented in and heard in the sources and tools of knowledge construction? Curriculum resists definition because the term is used to imply so many different things including conceptions of how we organize time in school, the textbooks and documents that are used to guide instruction, and the goals laid out by both ministries and occupational groups.[1] The leadership style which a principal adopts and implements must, in their role as curricular instructional leaders, be composed of methods, tools, and processes that help to develop school and classroom environments and develop the creation of curriculum that teachers and principals together will create and implement. How the principal works to lead the collaborative curriculum development of the staff will result in the real work of the school and the learning of individuals who make up the building and community. This is like walking on a minefield dealing with issues of dominance and oppression visible during every school day and in curriculum, teaching materials and methods.[2]

We are aware that fixed solutions, models working in other contexts, and great ideas that sell courses, lectures, and books won't really help us in the educational world. Responsive leaders and teachers should take a careful look at all the positive reform movements, as well as good working examples, and start to use them as a set of building blocks that might be moved, transformed, and exchanged. Every day, and in every school, the professionals working there should build their own culture, spaces, and habits as they build their learning environments and curricula. This is not easy, but it is the only way that the world of education might be transformed into a place of responsive, valuable tools for designing the future and supporting the needs of all involved. Looking at ourselves and our contexts and needs, we may choose from different approaches, strategies and techniques, those that our professional opinion infers might work for us, and quickly modify them if not.

In this way, with inspiration from the principal, from contact with ideas from across our countries and abroad, from the voices in the community,

and educational leaders' personal experiences, people may change educational systems. It will happen school by school with energy, creativity, and wisdom. These changes, as we remind ourselves constantly, must include local knowledge. By keeping teaching focused on learning and development, and working to ensure our professional development planning, our meeting agendas, and our self-evaluation, efforts move forward. With learning and development at the center of everyone's goals, while consciously responding to the challenges in the world, education serves its ultimate purpose: changing people for sake of the society.

What is important in this work is that education cannot point only toward the future, but also needs to build awareness of the reality right now and look carefully at the present time. We need real support in our everyday struggle. We need information that explains what we see. And we need skills that allow all of us to deal with the everyday issues of now, not only preparation for the future. Nobody would survive any kind of "camp" aiming at a distant future that never allows us to try to do something important. Why would we expect it in a classroom?

We have learned a lot from the experts, researchers, educational writers, speakers at conferences, our colleagues involved in education, teachers, and principals that we have worked with. It is almost impossible to claim today that someone has discovered a new idea or created a concept for better education all by themselves, alone. Living in a global network, with a constant feed of other people's thoughts, opinions, conclusions, findings and reflections, we create one organism drawing from an infinite source of human creativity. It is wiser today, instead of inventing new models, to collect and test the usefulness of the solutions already experimented with somewhere.[3] Our set of assumptions about learning, assumptions about influencing the learning environment, and assumptions about the processes of teaching and learning for individuals or groups, includes inspirations from many places and creates a demanding framework for educational activities:

- The environment has to be learner-centered, highly focused on learning as the central activity,
- The environment has to be structured and well-designed, although still with ample room for inquiry and autonomous learning,
- The environment provides multiple sources of support (not only from school),

- The environment allows self-reflection and offers useful feedback,
- Assessment should support learning. Learners need substantial, regular, and meaningful feedback,
- Relationships have to be profoundly personalized, sensitive to individual and group differences, prior knowledge, motivation and abilities. Recognizing individual differences makes learning effective, while emotions and motivation are integral to learning,
- The expectations have to be inclusive, including the weakest learners. Stretching of all students is a rule,
- The environment has to be a social environment because learning is effective when it takes place in group settings, when learners collaborate as an explicit part of the learning environment and when there is a connection to community. The social nature of learning decides about the educational processes.[4]

We cannot wait until the day students become decision-makers; they are already deciding. Students, as well as the whole school community, need to understand that they should work for a better world, not simply prepare to enter it eventually. Learning needs to include "doing things." Instead of reading about pollution, students need to be actively involved in action preventing and reversing pollution. They should not simply be lectured to about the dangers of social media, but instead they should monitor the language of hate (and learn how to evaluate the credibility of the sources of information). They should not read about hunger, but instead cook for homeless people (and learn about a healthy diet and lifestyle, and at the same time take part in a public debate about wealth gaps or public interventions). Focusing on methods that create a quality educational environment connected to real life helps to re-form or even re-design the school and the leadership processes that happen inside it. In doing all of this, those in the school build democracy one voice at a time, one decision at a time.

Developing learning within collaborative instructional leadership

Motivating the school, its staff, and the students in it around a laser-focused commitment to teaching and learning becomes one of the most essential areas for actions and processes in a responsive school. In order to secure

the input of teachers, community authorities, parents, and the students themselves, it must be clear that the underlying purpose of education and of this school is to help all involved learn and develop. Responsive educational leaders work to motivate those around them and help to understand the challenges of learning. They collaboratively lead the instructional work of the school working to carefully draw on the strengths and knowledge of the teachers in the building.[5] These leaders seek to ensure that the school is focused on learning—learning that leads to unchaining critical thinking, independence, and creativity; learning that allows for and works toward emancipation. Not just learning focused on passing tests, not making the school climb up in different rankings or types of competitions, not proving that all administrative standards are fulfilled. In order to do that, responsive leaders first work to ensure that goals for the building are clear and broadly accepted. In every aspect of the organization's activity, it is clear that teaching, learning, and development of everyone in the school are the key aspects of their goals.[6]

When we look at educational leadership in different parts of the world, various models appear. The countries of Scandinavia have a history of framing school leadership around "first among equals."[7] Teachers are the primary leadership for the curriculum, but the principal is an active participant in deliberations. Listening to and working with teachers to develop the curricular response of the school helps shift some of the talk from "rights" to "needs" and in an environment that seeks to build a community of care.[8]

Responsive educational leadership needs to keep problem-based, interdisciplinary teaching and learning at the core of the school. To do so, we believe these six elements need to be present (Figure 5.1):

- Work to fulfill the moral obligations of leadership;
- Build the organizational culture;
- Engage the stakeholders in the school and community in goal setting;
- Help teachers develop themselves;
- Create space for student involvement;
- Strengthen awareness of interdisciplinarity and complexity;
- Increase the use of experiential and expeditionary learning techniques.

By building these capacities in the staff and students, the responsive educational leader is then ready to respond to challenges in the world by

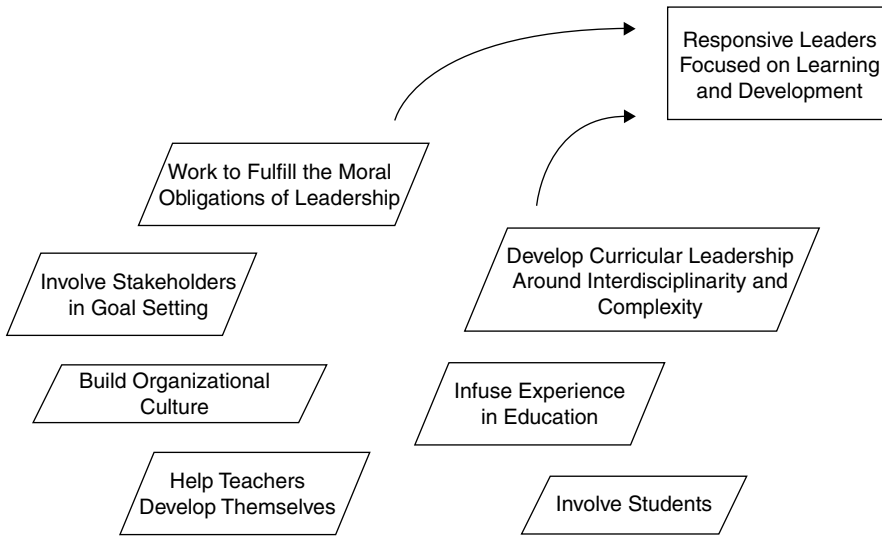

Figure 5.1 Focus on Learning and Development. ⏎

working to create a curricular environment where teachers and students are provided the space and capabilities to:

- Strengthen a sense of identity in students and teachers themselves;
- Engage in deliberation in the classroom, across the school, and in the community;
- Develop digital and media literacy;
- Engage in problem-based/problem-solving pedagogical models.

As members of the community build an understanding of their own identities, and a safe and welcoming environment is created in the classroom, the actions that take place need to merge with those in the school and community. They cannot be proposed or imposed in a hostile climate. They come from dialog and deliberation.

Work to fulfill the moral obligations of leadership

Every group or community attends to securing their basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, or security. When their basic needs are met, what emerges is a need to understand the world.[9] An ability to explain natural phenomena, such as processes that take place in the group, or the reasons

for existence and dying, becomes one of the expected qualities of the leader. As basic needs are met, concern for the moral well-being of the group emerges. People with a vision and a strong sense of understanding, and others who share a clear sense in the rightness of the vision and its ability to draw our attention, emerge as important. Michael Apple has raised the importance of discourse that highlights moral purposes in education and the nature of what we know about learning today.[10] These moral purposes drive the commitment of principals to the broader common good. At this moment of the group's development, we want to have a sense of the reality around us, a sense of the world.[11] The moral obligations of leadership propel us to help develop a vision of the future, and then it becomes essential to plan the actions necessary to work toward it.

The educational leaders in a responsive school are infused with values of authenticity, trust, honesty, openness, equality, social justice, credibility, and confidence. Our internal beliefs about why we act and from what stance we strategically plan become drivers of the changes we need in schools and skills that principals need to hold. We are aware that initiatives related to education and development occur in the midst of a "regulatory process through which systems adapt to contextual or environmental changes…"[12] And leaders need to be aware of the manner in which systems work to ensure their sustainability and survival, sometimes in direct conflict with the changes everyone believes should happen. In fact, our moral imperatives often push us to challenge the very systems of which we are a part.[13] Principals work to build a plan of action embedded within values and focused on building a community of impact that propels the work on the challenges we face in society.

Build a responsive organizational culture

The responsive leader tries to do careful work around the organizational culture of the school. By doing so, the staff of the school work to provide learners with the conditions needed. A learning-focused environment happens through the creation of a strong organizational culture. Projects and initiatives around the world have shown us that one way to develop organizational culture is to build and design a large number of groups of varying sizes that meet in governance structures. The staff and students work through agendas, including planning processes, responding to needs

of short-term and long-term goals, and reflecting on the impacts of actions already taken. These groups are both horizontal, composed of job-alike, task-oriented groups with representatives from similar levels of the school, and vertical, reflective of the hierarchy of the institution.

Those who advocate complexity thinking require us to understand that policies need "to address not one nor a few factors, but the integral and complex network of interrelated factors that influence each person's capabilities."[14] In groups with representation across the vertical levels of the organization, and in groups that reflect the various categories of stakeholders (students, teachers, community members, parents, administrative staff, administration of the school), a culture is developed where each group tackles a piece of the work and action planning, but all of the groups keep central, securing a functioning and operational curricular plan and design. This curriculum provides a structure for teachers and students in the classrooms and focuses on learning, development, and the creation of environments and situations conducive to experiences both inside and outside the school building.

Changing the culture of the school means that a focus on learning needs to be on the agenda of meetings, a core part of discussions, and a part of the organization. We need to consciously work to seek structures that "promote interaction across racial and ethnic lines…"[15] that might be visible or hidden in a building. The everyday struggle with the daily reality around basic questions like what we will do in a classroom—what will we study, how will we learn, in what way will we secure students' involvement and passion, how will we relate what we learn to our students, what resources will we use—needs to become the most important thing we talk about. These are the discussions that should be happening, instead of debates about clothing, students on breaks, the lunchroom, and whether the computer is working. Teams of teachers, when they are confident that they can make a difference in the school can have an enormous impact on the school climate and achievement by working to set high expectations, deliberate over evidence of impact and build common conceptions of progress.[16] Leaders influence the agendas, and by doing so, the individual groups center their work on issues of teaching and development.

How do we help principals build longstanding processes and a culture centered on support for teaching, learning, and development? After specific goals have been facilitated by leaders across various levels of the school and

with input by those in the building and in the community, a culture of vertical and horizontal teams can be developed. Work is done by the various teams to move toward completion of tasks. What might this look like? Driving out of the Rift Valley in Kenya, or across Malopolska, Poland, you can see how the work of individuals in schools is interconnected by discourse, hopes, and dreams. If we look at what education leaders are doing in places like Kisii or Migori, or in the work of schools like that in Zabrze, Poland, these individuals have made the choice to build the culture of the school around curricular choices focused on democratic life. Attention to the interrelatedness between local community issues and broad global issues occurs in the midst of reflection that concludes that not everything is going as they have planned and there is still much work to be done. While many have advocated for educators to "struggle with the intersections of culture, curriculum, and democracy,"[17] they have done it with growing awareness that real change needs to be ongoing, that it faces speed bumps and setbacks, and needs to continually move forward.

In one project,[18] the teachers in a curriculum development initiative were put into teams focused on themes that had emerged in their planning process. Each team then worked to develop age-appropriate lessons under a theme. Specific concepts and objectives were the first task. After drafts were completed, a curriculum crosswalk was conducted looking for relationships across the lessons, strong details connected to the themes, and equitable coverage of the concepts the entire group thought were essential. Each team reviewed the work of the others in a "critical friends" model. Final drafts were created and then shared with individuals across the educational hierarchies in each region. Their comments were then synthesized into the final versions of the materials. The work was marked by a focus on constructive review, the development of consensus understandings of important concepts, and team ownership, but with shared responsibility for the quality of the materials.

We see, in initiatives like the Education for Democracy[19] project described here, a resulting organizational culture that helps the teachers and schools of a region or area, as an institution, become responsive to their fellow teachers, the students, the community, and the issues in the world that need attention. These teachers viewed the HIV/AIDS crisis as driver of the need to reconceptualize teaching about citizenship, democracy, and the cultural histories of their communities. In summary, the organizational culture is open and shared, the goals for the curriculum are interconnected

with the context in which education is taking place. Each individual, at every level of leadership, develops an ability to identify, grow, and develop the potential of others. We work to develop a culture where participants see their personal success as a leader, whether they are the chair of a working group focused on improving inclusion, or a teacher leader charged with heading a group of teachers in a particular content area, in nurturing the success of the students and teachers they encounter. These responsive leaders are aware of the conditions in their context and together with a group create a problem-solving focus that involves everyone.

Involve stakeholders in goal setting

One action we would propose to improve process of teaching and learning is to bring together groups of individuals in the school. While in a planning meeting with them, begin a process for setting goals for an upcoming period of time, maybe the upcoming year. With a group of teachers, leaders in the school, and student leaders, give stakeholder groups an opportunity to contribute ideas and their perspectives. Conversation always allows us to see (sometimes even to understand) different points of view, perspectives, ideas, assumptions, and dreams. It is important to talk about various issues. Discussion about goals is among the most important. In both roles, as leaders and members of every group, we should be aware of the necessity of the conversation and should be able to start and facilitate it. It is really good to have a "toolbox" of different techniques. There are many ways to work through the development of goals, but one successful way from our experience involves the following steps:

- *Step 1*: A broad set of themes or categories is generated (e.g. student learning, diversity and inclusion, supporting people in the building, building engagement with the community, finances, the building and grounds of the school). It may be best to have these themes identified ahead of time or brainstorm them during a meeting.
- *Step 2*: Using any kind of technique, like sticky notes, ask various stakeholder groups to generate three notes: strength; short-term goal; long-term goal about a theme or topic. It is important to get everyone's perspective on the things that are going well, the actions we might keep doing, and the problems getting attention.

- *Step 3*: Have the same small groups take a set of the ideas (or sticky notes) from one of themes or original broad categories and sort them into stacks. The stacks of ideas should also be grouped by each sub-heading: strengths; short-term goals; long-term goals. For each set of items, develop summary statements laying out what the school is doing well, and what problems need attention.
- *Step 4*: On a large chart paper, post the summaries of the strengths, the short-term goals, and the long-term goals. Work to have various groups of stakeholders participate and give each person colored dot stickers to place on five items they agree with. Think about requiring a choice in each of the sub-heading categories.

The aims of education, and the purposes for learning what we advocate for, stem from both past knowledge and current issues, conditions, and challenges connected to the situations we see in the world. They are constructed in the dynamic and cultural process of the specific context. The aims of education, and the values raised and accepted by the community, inclusive of equality and equal rights for everybody, constitute democratic life. By working with goal-setting processes like this one, responsive leaders hear the ideas and concerns of those in the school and in the community.

Help teachers develop themselves

Another set of actions a principal can take related to teaching and learning is a focus on the strong development of teachers in the school. We know that many schools and the teachers in them are historically a part of "command and control models of school systems… outdated for the knowledge intensive organizations."[20] When we think about the perfect teachers for a responsive school, and the roles and models of a professional teacher, important conditions need to be the focus of the work teachers and principals engage in. Three elements need to be emphasized: a deep awareness of their own identity and attitudes; an awareness of the theories and the limitations that determine the way they function in the world and at school; and a willingness to serve others in the process of growing and developing. The combination of these three habits of mind might be called "intellectual sensitivity."

Principals work to help develop responsive teachers. Teachers aware of their context design activities that seek to improve the life of each of their

students and lead to a better society and world. Social change then becomes understood as a main goal of the pedagogical work of the principals, and teacher leaders. Administrators, teachers, and students become involved in projects inside and outside the school that touch real life problems, and they look for sustainable solutions. As they develop their skills, they inspire others to make an effort for the public good. Such an attitude is defined by a willingness to be an educational activist.

A scientific, evidence-based approach to the process of teaching and learning is strategically planned, so that it enables constant revision of the knowledge possessed by students, as it focuses on mastering the methods and skills that are research-based and effective with their students. Those leading the development of the teaching environment participate in the active and independent (autonomous) construction of their own profession through research, dialogue, and cooperation with others.[21]

Space for students to be involved

As those in the school build a culture focused on learning and development, our experience in projects has shown us that the students in the school cannot be left out of the work. A longstanding work by Hess and Torney has pointed out that children proceed through a process of political socialization, the development of values, attitudes, and behaviors, in consistent patterns. The ages from 8 to 14 seem to matter most and this highlights why we must pay attention to what students are involved in and what they are experiencing in schools.[22]

"Doing democracy" in schools and classrooms is a marriage between deliberation and action. Student engagement in the interplay between global challenges and education in school can be seen in the large international media presence of individuals such as Greta Thunberg, but it is also seen in the smaller local discussions in a superintendent's cabinet in Huron, Ohio, or a student assembly in Kraków, Poland.

Students have always had thoughts about school, teachers, and learning. We would like to share a snapshot from the past. Grzegorz's father, who was also a teacher, started his career in the 1950s. A few years ago, after his father's death, Grzegorz found a file with different documents. Among various papers, Grzegorz found an evaluation form—a few pages by an anonymous (female) student written in high school at the end of the fifties or beginning of sixties. Only this one item brought evidence of school

and teaching. Probably this particular student wrote something that was important for Grzegorz's father and he kept it for years. In the survey, the student was asked to complete six open-ended questions. Two parts are enlightening for the work we are engaged in now.

Q. What do you expect from school?

A. For the first reaction I would answer: I do not know, but because I know you (my teacher) and how you treat us I will write honestly. Maybe it will be stupid, please forgive me, but I never answered this kind of question before.

So, I expect that school will provide me with certificate. I understand that it depends on me, but also from school. I also learn how to behave on a street or among people and I hope I will become a useful person in the future. When I look how young people behave (especially boys, those who do not attend school) I would say they are spoiled and also neglected. When you compare them to those who study they are just hooligans. Youth in school are different. They are polite and happy. This is the impact of the school. They are concerned about the consequences of bad behavior, and in this way, they are used to being good and stay this way.

Q. And what do you expect from teachers?

A. Above all I expect understanding and good treatment. I rarely meet a teacher who can understand students and take care of them. I met many teachers. What did I notice? First of all: pride, conceit, superiority, irony. Teachers were once young too! Some have received punishment from their own teachers. Are they now taking revenge on us? Why did they choose this profession? To teach? I would like justice from teachers. If a student is weak and did not answer well during a lesson, then the teacher does not need to prove to the student that he/she is stupid. You don't have to test the student every lesson and ask questions in the way so that the student doesn't understand what's going on. If the teacher doesn't like the student, he doesn't have to show it to him.

As is easily seen in the answer to the first question, Students mainly accept the directions of school. But they also need to be treated in a way that allows them to participate and share their perspectives—a message from the past, like this one from the 1950s' communist Poland is still powerful.

As we think about the real work of impacting the environment or building an anti-racist community, we understand more and more that the things we

say, the actions we take, and the relationships we build do not exist without the actions of students.[23] They need to be involved in the planning of the learning environment and the development of a culture of action. "Students need to be taught to think and speak with subtlety and depth, to listen to others. They must be inspired to become more attentive to global issues and to cultures that they have been taught in the past to consider as remote, and disconnected from their everyday life."[24] Through responsive educational leadership, a community of learners is formed by the engagement of mind and emotions, previous experience, and sensitivity to operating conditions and toward other people. At the same time, the plans for actions that are developed reference the values that will lead to an improved society. As John MacBeath says, "the voice of students, a, treasure within," is too often ritually silenced.[25]

It is impossible to work for a democratic universe without the involvement of those who are responsible for it. Students are not a material for molding future citizens, neither are they persons with deficits that might be fixed by school; they are already full human beings and citizens. Taking the right to participate as equals away from them is the primary reason for the failure of educational institutions. It is necessary to recognize the full potential of young people and to unlock their intellectual involvement and socio-emotional literacy. As humans, we learn from intellectual, emotional, and social experiences, and we need to address these in school by investing in the competency of reflective practice.

At the same time, those in schools need to support young people as they learn how to manage and develop, with positive feelings and well-being. It is necessary to create a supportive learning context that enables students to value their educational experience. Learning occurs only when students believe that it is a meaningful experience for them and then decide to be involved in it. It will not happen when the situation in school does not satisfy their emotional needs. To involve students, teachers have to focus on relations: students are motivated when they believe teachers treat them like people and care about them personally and emotionally.[26] We need to free up space so we hear the voices of our students.

Develop curricular leadership aware of interdisciplinarity and complexity

Responsive educational leaders need to explicitly work to build their awareness of complexity, and their understanding of how interdisciplinarity is

enacted in the curricular environment they are working to create. Some have called for all of us in education to position and define our challenges as "wicked." These wicked challenges or issues have both local and societal faces and ramifications. And given that the curriculum—both explicit and implied—and the schools themselves largely reflect the structure, content, and knowledge that "standards are based on eighteenth century beliefs and intuitions,"[27] we need to be realistic about the necessary change and systemic redefinition we are seeking.

Interdisciplinarity engages students and teachers in the challenge of finding the best tools, and the best information-no matter what field or discipline they originate from—to put to work on tackling a global challenge or community need. Jacobs[28] has told us that we operate within a set of guiding questions around issues of curriculum and what our classroom content will look like. We are always making choices around topics, issues, problems, and themes. Our answers are often connected to many individual disciplines, and demonstrate how we will often see links and connections. Focus on relevant and dynamic themes for investigation and many of them will be interdisciplinary.[29]

Wicked problems, by their nature interdisciplinary, require responses that are both systemic and long-term and responses that come from many points within the system of education and society itself. No one thought woman's suffrage and rights would be expanded, and then they were (although they are still not universal). No one thought diseases could be eradicated, and then some of them, like polio, were. No one thought we could clean the air and then reactions to the pandemic and its impact on economic life showed that we can. Wicked problems in education need wicked responses. In doing so, we suggest that "decision-makers require more tentative and contextually driven" responses and actions,[30] in building curricular leadership while being aware of complexity.

Infuse experience in education

In thinking about teaching and learning, we work for a broader, more universal perspective that allows us to avoid the "education factory" in order to utilize a more natural, ecological, metaphor of the organism, a learning organism. And when we read the OECD report *The Nature of Learning*,[31] we were struck by the similarity of our professional inquiries to the concept of "learning environments." The authors of

the *Nature of Learning* address the learning environment or ecosystem as something more aggregated than the individual or particular learning episodes taken in isolation from the learning context, in which learners and lessons are located. A "learning environment" is focused on the dynamics and interactions among four dimensions: the learner (who?), teachers and other learning professionals (with whom?), content (learning what?), and facilities and technologies (where? with what?). Such dynamics and interactions include different pedagogical approaches and learning activities in the learning time.[32]

The next step of the school transformation is working on designing projects, learning tasks, problem or inquiry-based initiatives, service learning, workshops, and activities focusing on gaining skills and knowledge needed for dealing with challenges. By working to ensure that skills related to critical thinking and design thinking are infused alongside space for creativity and entrepreneurship, the use of authentic learning tasks[33] become an important tool. Not in the distant future, but now in their realities and lives. This is not the most important step; it is not the step when "teaching and learning" happen. All steps are equally important. In our educational journey, the steps are similar to building a plan for the journey, collecting equipment and energy resources; this step is like traveling and the last step is like looking at pictures, thinking about our experience, and planning the future.

One way this might look when all of this is put together is seen in our work with Expedition Inside Culture (EIC).[34] Increasing use of methods of teaching and learning grounded in experiential learning and expeditionary learning is an important tool to use. Experiential and expeditionary learning have a rich tradition in youth and adult education. Work has been done around the world through our own interpretation called *Expedition Inside Culture*. The Expedition Inside Culture Association is an organization formally established in January 2003, and it's based on the voluntary work of its members. It has organized numerous international educational projects for youth and adults from Poland, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Turkey, Ukraine, and the USA. EIC designs the learning process and mobility of the groups in different places and settings, while always working to utilize expeditionary learning approaches in teaching leadership, developing tolerance, and increasing openness and understanding.

At the same time, the association works with teachers to help them to improve their teaching, making it more authentic and connected with real life experiences, and also with young adults to support their understanding of contemporary societies and the idea of life-long learning processes. An objective of the EIC association is to help youth and adults learn how to live in an increasingly global society without the hindrance of stereotypes, and with generally greater (inter)cultural awareness. EIC seeks to help people become prepared and involved in shaping the future of society while developing key competencies and an active approach to real life problems.

And so, responsive educational leadership keeps learning and development at the center. Ultimately, responsive educational leadership ensures support for the development of all people. The focus is on teaching and development. Leadership does have an important moral aspect: providing high quality education while contributing to the improvement of society. It results from encouraging participation and cooperation, sharing the same vision, reflection on daily practices, and analysis of data and research results. Leadership also comes from the work done to build relationships of trust and taking care of interactions with each other and working to build a sense of community alliances. We are in this together and our work will make the school and society better.

Responding to challenges in the world

Projects and initiatives have continued to launch and grow that help link principals, teachers, and students with issues in their local community and the world. Participants volunteer and signup because they agree that challenges exist in the world. The participants in projects we have been engaged with have talked about how these challenges seem daunting for a small classroom full of students and teachers, set in a unique context, working to learn. It is daunting to take on improving their community as part of their mission, and improvement of the broader society as part of their vision. However, this line of thinking—raising doubts about their efficacy—by some teachers and principals, belies the reality that our small actions, our choices, and our ways of thinking can, in fact, have a significant impact on improving the conditions and realties we face now and in the future.

Perhaps this falls within new conceptions of citizenship education. It is learning that does not simply fit into the course sometimes called "civics,"

but it is the effort to build responsibility across the curriculum and throughout the school.[35] Recent examples related to education have included the educators' responses to the AIDS crisis in South Africa, the response of young people across Europe to the climate crisis, and student activism on gun violence in the United States. The students, and their teachers and principals, help us model activism that underlies the call "for a more complicated conversation that centers on interdisciplinary intellectuality, erudition, and self-reflexivity."[36]

Education is changing quickly as structures, systems, and arguments around the aims, pedagogical choices, and forms of instruction evolve. And as we wrote in Chapter 2, at the same time, the environment is under more and more pressure and the reality of a climate crisis and its impact on communities becomes clear. The growing diversity in ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, and sexual orientation forces us to confront our engrained biases and personal assumptions. Inequality grows starker as a result of a consumer-based economic system that rewards the few at the expense of the many. Technology remains two-headed, with one a tool for access and improvement in many aspects, and the other that of a beast of intrusion, exploitation, and manipulation. Ultimately, it is democratic life that appears under threat and on shaky ground. What actions will responsive educational leaders take to ensure the increasing severity of the issues, and problematic conditions associated with each of these areas become points of investigation, inquiry, problem-solving, and solution-seeking by teachers and students and their communities?

The principal's responsibility is to help lead those in schools to understand the connections between the school and the society. It is important to help everyone involved in school work to understand that the challenges in our world, and our reaction to them, are critically important for the education of students. But they are also, most importantly, critical to our survival as humankind: as successful healthy societies; as happy families; and as individuals. Houser has termed this "ecological democracy,"[37] the ideological perspective that considers personal freedom, social equality, and popular sovereignty, putting it in opposition to "…the problematic tendency toward individual minimalism at the expense of community identification and civic participation."[38]

Too often people who want to focus on the important issues in society hear instead that the main task of school is to secure the children's success,

understood as good test results, admission to the next level of education, preparation for the labor market (by some, understood as giving them a CV that will find them a well-paying job), and the maybe production of an obedient "citizen" who will praise their own country and its army above all others.

Unfortunately, that is not true. We need learning and education that is free of state ideology, that critically deconstructs racism, xenophobia, antisemitism, homophobia, hate, gender inequality, and more. We need learning and education that teaches critical thinking, problem-solving, autonomy, cooperation, and more great skills needed in our modern societies. We need learning and education that will allow us to take active participation in promoting new laws, preparing draft proposals or letters of support, that will allow us to construct a device that will the clean air in a room, develop a vaccine, or build an algorithm that helps count the homeless in order to help charities feed them.

We propose that everyone focus on more important, interdisciplinary, authentic educational activities, not just geared toward tests, but learning and development connected to the challenges in the society and around the world. The task for responsive principals is to help teachers understand that here and now, teachers all need to move away from, almost forget, the information that they themselves studied, learned, memorized, and polished to pass on to the next generations.[39] They should instead start to reset the understanding of their roles. Teachers are no longer the singular holders of a secret trove of knowledge. Instead, teachers are becoming more experienced partners in learning. Teachers are working to "construct knowledge in knowledge factories." As a result, it is teacher leaders who need to advocate, who need to start to design and propose a learning environment where the newest research data about the learning process is applied. Learning environments need to be built where instead of relying on what we have always done, we put into practice what scientists are discovering about the brain, the mind, and learning, so we can tackle the challenges we face (Figure 5.2).

Strengthen a sense of identity for students and teachers

How do we begin to connect schools to actions targeting the challenges we face? A first step is the explicit work involved in coming to greater awareness about how we each position ourselves and our identity in the world.[40]

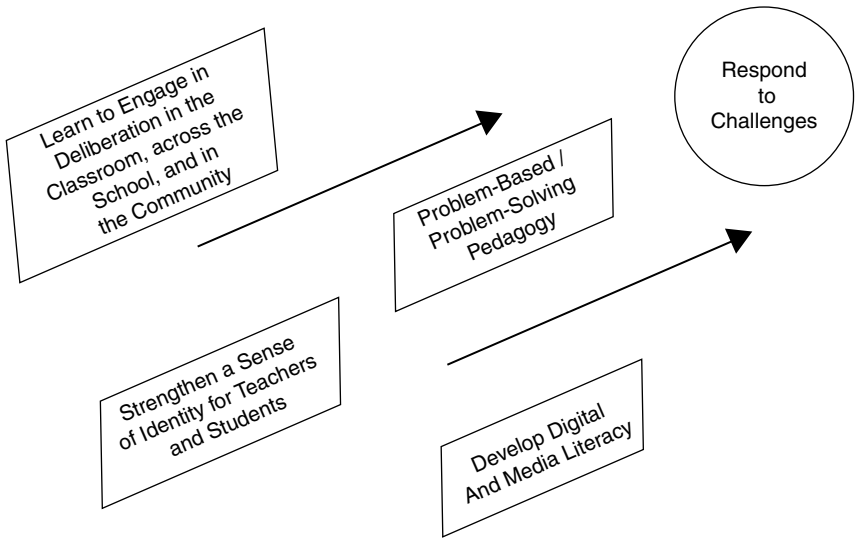

Figure 5.2 Responding to Challenges in the World. ⏎

It is impossible to learn in a state of psychological instability. Feeling safe, engaged, and motivated is necessary for learning. To be aware of the student's own identity is essential, as are having secured a sense of self-esteem and healthy relationships with the surroundings. The expansive wealth of diversity across our communities and around the world asserts the need for us to deeply reflect upon and question our personal biases and learned assumptions. Work on the global challenge of equity and social justice is focused on difficult topics and expectations. Like other challenges we have mentioned, "the social nature of wicked problems makes them intractable."[41] Johnson[42] has advocated for working with teachers to develop critical consciousness, affirming the perspectives of students from all backgrounds and groups in the society, developing a sense of agency, and strengthening constructivist teaching that takes students where they are and moves them toward meeting goals.

For us this is just as true when working with students from Romania who are debating what others will think of them as it is when working with teachers from communities struggling to educate refugee children. The difficult ability to conduct anti-racist conversations in an organization can only be learned through constant practice. Diversity requires transparency, coherence, and equality. It is necessary to look at what happens on the

periphery of the organization, not just in the center in a group that clearly accepts what is happening at school.

In our work through Education for Democracy, EIC, Orange for Earth,[43] and other projects with schoolteachers in varied contexts, and with principals in various settings, the work needs to start with careful attention to who we are. Working through a process of inquiry and problem-based learning helps each of us face the difficult questions of our own identity and our own beliefs, which both become more vivid as we engage in social interactions across differences, and across positions, in the community. While working with students to help them be aware and understand their own identities, we should also try to help them:

- Discover and share their own history and story in all its complexity,
- Become aware of the local history, key events, and days on the calendar, cultural customs and artifacts, and think how they are similar or different to theirs,
- Become aware of regional and national history including events that have led to strong disagreement, think about what has happened in other places and how what happened here might have been impacted or impact what happened elsewhere,
- Develop communication skills including working in groups, participating in open discussion and debate, becoming aware of non-verbal communication, giving presentations, writing reports, and providing feedback,
- Participate in cooperation, cross-cultural interaction, and deliberation around important concepts.[44]

It can be achieved through methods, actions, and activities as simple as asking each member of a class to think of three questions that will help them get to know each other, our backgrounds, and assumptions better. After writing down the three questions, participants ask and record the answers of each person in the room, develop summary statements about the variety of answers, and report to the broader group about what they found out. These kinds of activities might begin to create a school or group culture. As students and teachers become more aware, the culture developed by the group is seeking to have them "read outside their comfort zones and encourage them to use their imagination to challenge themselves

first and others later."[45] What don't I know? What do I not understand? What questions do I want to ask? All reflective steps that become important. Principals might encourage teachers to work like this in their groups and with students. The culture of reflection might be built from the first activity in school: thinking about who I am, what I am doing here, who is here with me, and what baggage I have brought with myself.

Learn to engage in deliberation in the classroom, across the school, and in the community

Another step in thinking and working with the challenges we see in the world is dialog and deliberation. It is not necessary to select only one or two key areas, but it is helpful to decide about the priorities in schools, connecting these decisions to the local context and preferences of students. This is a time for a series of debates among teachers themselves, and students in groups. It is even important to invite the involvement of the whole school community in order to answer the question: in which direction do we want to move the practice of education of this particular school?

Deliberation, dialog, the art of conversation takes explicit work to develop the competencies that prepare us for the nuances of what Gaudelli and Donaldson discuss using the Latin terms of dissensus and consensus.[46] There are a few aspects of deliberation that stand out: focus on deconstructing arguments rather than attacking people, actively listen in order to understand what the other person is putting forward, understand that changing your mind shows you are growing, accept that criticism is not bad and that genuine care matters.[47] Controversial and complex issues will come up, but maybe the group will only decide about extracurricular activities, additional projects, a stream of curriculum—a common theme that will go through all subjects. A cluster of subject areas in the classroom might become the focus of an interdisciplinary initiative or the school might go deep into this or that and decide to make a challenge such as concern for the environment a school subject. There are numerous possibilities; the only thing needed is imagination, creativity, bravery, and later time, discipline, and work.

We are going to need to be able to share and critically analyze the stories we share about the history of the places we inhabit. At the same time, we are going to need to grapple with what role we hope technology will play.

Smart phones, mobile technology, and even AI are changing the way we gather information and the way we debate with each other. Technology can create "opportunities to change the processes whereby learning takes place and knowledge is used in discovery, innovation, and the development of understanding."[48] Our students live in a world where opinions and "facts" are shared via text message, posts, and videos. A curriculum needs to be constructed in a way that recognizes that reality.

As a result, it is maybe even more necessary to involve teachers and students (regardless of their age) in this great lesson in basic skills that are needed in a democratic society. Active listening, critical reading and learning, and how to ask a question of someone in the community are all important. Research data collected in 2007 showed that students who engaged in civic engagement projects with their teachers improved attitudes about democratic life and predicted future behaviors more likely to benefit life in an active democracy.[49] Participating in acts of deliberation and thinking about the values behind others' comments and concerns strengthens the potential support for the deepening of democratic life. The stance and philosophical framework of the responsible school is built on the foundation of democratic life.

Develop digital and media literacy

Another step in tackling the challenges we see in the world, after reflection on identity and building the skills of deliberation, needs to be growing awareness that economic, business, and consumer development cannot continue unaware of the implications and hidden values found in our technological world. Awareness of what role digital tools have in our communities needs to grow, while also working to understand how the source and perspective being put forward matter in our lives.[50] Gaining an understanding of our reality and situation causes us to pause and take a deep breath. As we think more about our context and reality, and what it means for our future direction, we become aware and open for learning.

As a society, we have seen a move away from belief in the unlimited development occurring at the end of the 20th century. Big groups within societies have come to understand that production and consumption and growth, understood as income no matter how it is achieved, are toxic. Thanks to this, we have moved more toward a more complex understanding, situationally aware, conscious of the impacts of development.

This "development consciousness," as we might call it, helps us be knowledgeable about the impacts of our choices and actions on other human beings, the planet, and our futures.

Students in a study of middle graders who engaged with their teachers in civic engagement projects were able to interpret information coming from a variety of types of sources.[51] In Estonia,[52] ICT teachers and leaders work toward what they have called "digital competence," which includes both digital safety and specific work with digital media in order to better understand it. As information bombards students across multiple social media platforms, they need to be able to analyze the information coming at them. The same goes for the teachers and staff in a school. The impacts of the challenges the world faces, on individuals, members of groups, and the environment around us are not always visible. Often, they emerge over time and grow in their importance. Teachers, as public intellectuals, should help students to understand their situation from even political perspectives.[53] One activity that can contribute to generating awareness and new knowledge about consumerism and its impact on all of us is to look at online advertisements or print magazine covers and advertisements from various parts of the world. Have the participants answer questions such as:

- Are there universalities in wants and needs around the world?
- Are advertisements or magazines directed at one particular group, for example, women, different in different parts of the world or within a country?
- Do any advertisements fail because of what the company chose not to consider? For example, why would an advertisement in Canada that shows a young girl cleaning her brother's room cause controversy?

Once the group has generated their answers, design and implement a media literacy campaign for the other students in the school. What cautions or warnings would the class recommend for others to pay attention to? What lenses should we use when trying to understand an Instagram meme, a Facebook advertisement, or a commercial in a magazine or on TV? Teachers and students need to know that "no technology resource is completely bias-free, so our skills as digital citizens need to be honed, challenging us to be creators instead of merely users."[54] Having students think about how to answer these questions and teach others in the school or community about them will help them all become more media literate.

Problem-based/problem-solving pedagogical models

Responsive educational leaders design their actions to create an atmosphere of engagement, inspiration, and curiosity, where interdisciplinary lesson (unit) plans are prepared, activities and various educational processes are created, and invitations to learning based on questions not answers are distributed to students. All of this can help students and teachers navigate through the chaos of current challenges. To navigate means defining problems, finding solutions, and learning methods that will help to implement solutions in real life.[55] This is the moral obligation of leadership. Critical thinking and emancipation are shaped when a climate of freedom is supported. One of the best ways to do it is by allowing students to enjoy freedom in finding important problems, burning questions, and intriguing answers.

A set of studies found positive effects on student learning from instruction, curriculum, and assessment practices that require students to construct and organize knowledge, consider, alternatives, apply disciplinary processes to content central to discipline (e.g. use of scientific inquiry, historical research, literary analysis, or the writing process) and communicate effectively to audiences beyond the classroom and school. Small group inquiry approaches can be extremely powerful for learning, but to be effective, they need to be guided by a thoughtful curriculum with clearly defined learning goals, well-designed scaffolds, ongoing assessment, and rich informational resources. Assessment design is a critical issue in order to reveal the benefits of inquiry approaches for group effort and individual learning, as well as for promoting the success of learning. If one only looks at traditional learning outcomes, inquiry-based and traditional methods of instruction appear to yield similar results. The benefits of inquiry learning are found when the assessments require application of knowledge and measure quality of reasoning. And the most important feature of inquiry-based and problem-based learning is that their goals are broader than gaining knowledge—these approaches aim to enable students to transfer their learning more powerfully to new kinds of situations and problems and to use knowledge more proficiently in performance situations.[56]

Problem-based learning is a "…systematic teaching and learning method which engages students in complex, real world tasks…"[57] Pedagogy centered on this model focuses on the use of important questions to guide the

instruction and curricular planning in the classroom and school. Often, however, the work around problems stops at defining and investigating them. We would advocate for a deeper problem-based pedagogical model that goes that next step and propels us to implement possible changes, build solutions for the very problems we are investigating.

Murgatroyd has said, "By focusing on wicked problems in health, environment, or community, some of the related social functions of the school could be met through a problem-based approach to learning."[58] Do not teach students about trees that produce oxygen; help them to learn about the process of photosynthesis. Do this and then help students learn about planting trees, learn how to find a way to obtain a legal permit (if needed) for that planting, and learn how to organize and conduct campaigns for collecting money and planting trees with others around the school or in other places. Involve the community. This is what responsive teaching and learning can be.

We have wanted to believe for some time that industrial development, economic growth, and education were and are inseparably connected. Responsive leaders invite teachers, parents, and students to a very difficult discussion on their beliefs about school. The resistance will be strong because although there is no evidence that economic growth stems from what people learn in schools, and while nobody has proven that economic productivity enables quality changes in schools, we have acted in the past like the connection between these two was obvious and positive.[59]

Governments and people have promoted the conviction that a higher degree brings happiness, a better job, and that individual investments in education will bring about better results, as well as ultimately higher financial profits for businesses. In some ways, it is quite evident today that those promises cannot be fulfilled. Education plays a lower role in vertical social mobility than future graduates want to believe.[60]

Learning and development means reconsidering the aims of schooling

This chapter has forced us to think about how to begin to implement a framework of responsive educational leadership. In doing so, we have worked to create a curriculum space[61] where responsive educational leadership is

curriculum, the context, intended knowledge and skills, and pedagogy underlying the work of learning and development in school.

By engaging in the areas of work laid out, principals invite teachers, parents, students, and members of the community to contribute to deliberations about the aims of education. This focus on challenges faced by our societies and the individuals who live in our communities becomes the central point of curricular leadership, the "focal point through which learning occurs."[62] Everyone is brought into deliberations, but not to reach consensus. Instead, their thoughts and concerns bring us to better understandings.

It is a difficult demand, especially when working in schools that often have a limited sense of freedom and struggle with the conviction that they must submit to bureaucracy. But we have to recognize that "schools are in the process of preparing young people for jobs that do not exist which require skills we do not fully understand and which use technologies which are in the process of being invented."[63] There is no other path today.

What was the fate of horses during the industrial revolution?[64] How did the horse's role change when the steam engine became the driver of our societies? What will our world look like in the lifetime of the students in our schools? And how must school respond to those possible futures? We have learned the importance of context and action. Our work in projects around the world has led us to think about what comprises the framework of beliefs and competencies of those we see in disparate parts of the world. The framework for responsive educational leadership, comprised of authenticity, complexity, and interdisciplinarity, grounded on equity, equality, and social justice, contextualized and reflective, connected to challenges in the world, distributed, participatory, shared, and democratic, becomes the basis for a sense of urgency and an unequivocal call to action. Doing something in the face of our uncertain futures can lead to large-scale change and the redesign, or re-forming, of school as we now know it.

We do not believe that responsive educational leaders can be told exactly how they should react to the issues they see in their classrooms and the connections being built to impact issues in the community and world. They must contextualize their choices. But then, they must have a tool box of processes, communication tools, and ways of developing their organizational culture. Based on our experiences, we (the authors) believe that there are leaders and schools around the world successfully doing responsive work.

Responsive leaders and teachers should take what looks like it would work in their context while finding ways to build networks of support through projects and initiatives. Each time they do, they will find schools and professionals also working to build their own culture, spaces, and habits along with their learning environments. Through these actions, we can all work to become responsive educational leaders.

Notes

1. Gaudelli (2003) cited Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, and Taubman (1995) to make the case around the many-sided conceptions of curriculum. p. 144.
2. Bowles and Gintis (1976).
3. Dumont, and Istance (2010); Hattie (2009); MacBeath (2012).
4. Dumont, and Istance (2010); Hattie (2009); MacBeath (2012) pp. 53–54.
5. Ylimaki and Jacobson (2013).
6. Mazurkiewicz (2011).
7. Møller (2009) has talked about the flattened hierarchy where the principal has unique and special authority but as an equal. (p. 171).
8. McIntosh (2005) talks about the work all of us have to do in order to mend the social fabric. p. 25.
9. Harvey (2006).
10. Apple (2006) cited Pring (2001).
11. Harvey (2006).
12. Szekely and Mason (2019) have talked about French philosopher Edgar Morin and his work around complexity thinking. p. 674.
13. Ibid. "This regulatory process is a dynamic that emerges from the interactions among the systems' constituents and between them and their environment." p. 674.
14. Szekely and Mason (2019) p. 676.
15. Johnson (2014) cited the work of Nieto and Bode (2011) when pushing us to be aware of this need.
16. Donohoo, Hattie, and Eells (2018).
17. Fischer (2008) cited Giroux (1988), hooks (1994), Freire (2001), and Darder (2002) in encouraging educators to seek solutions and answers but to be cognizant of the context and systems in which teaching and learning is occurring. (p. 13).
18. Kubow and Fischer (2006).

19. Ibid.
20. Murgatroyd (2010) p. 260.
21. Writing about critical intellectuals (based on Giroux), educational activists (Apple, MacLaren), and cooperating professionals.
22. Hess and Torney-Purta (2005).
23. Kemmis and Mutton (2012) talk about "sayings," "doings," and "relatings" p. 196.
24. Rizvi (2003).
25. MacBeath (2014).
26. Rogers and Renard (1999).
27. Ibid.
28. Jacobs (2010).
29. Ibid. p. 34.
30. Ibid.
31. Dumont, and Istance (2010).
32. Ibidem.
33. Murgatroyd (2010) p. 267.
34. The organization's philosophy of work is based on experiential and expeditionary learning as a methodological approach. During its years of operation, the association has trained about 500 young teachers and youth leaders from ten different countries in expeditionary learning methods and also in leadership, public activity for tolerance, and democratic involvement.
35. Noddings (2005c) p. xiii.
36. Cary (2006) p. 1.
37. Houser (2009) p. 207.
38. Bell, Lawless, and Daniels (2011).
39. Of course, not really—students will still gather and interact with the information, the knowledge of facts, but it is more important that they are using them, not just transferring them from a source to a worksheet.
40. Martin, Bright, Cafaro, Mittelstaedt, and Bruyere (2009).
41. Jordan, Kleinsasser, and Roe (2014) talk about how identifying dilemmas as wicked helps us to think about long-term needs when working around educational issues and decision-making in an educational environment. p. 416.
42. Johnson (2014) cited Villegas and Lucas (2001) when referencing how to help teachers become culturally responsive teachers. p. 146.

43. Orange for Earth was a project sponsored by Orange phone company for schools, which wanted to be involved in initiative focused on ecology and civic education introduced through expeditionary learning method.
44. Mazurkiewicz, Baciu, Ciolan, Fischer, Preslan, Stoecker, and Żmijewska (2007).
45. Manninen and Mulder, Jr. (2019) p. 34.
46. Gaudelli and Donaldson (2012).
47. Manninen and Mulder, Jr. (2019).
48. Murgatroyd (2010) p. 262.
49. Fischer (2008).
50. Simmons (2018).
51. Fischer (2008).
52. Banister (2017) p. 121.
53. Giroux (1988)
54. Banister (2017) shared an example of a Latvian teacher's work. p. 122.
55. Barron and Darling-Hammond (2010).
56. OECD (2010) p. 200–201.
57. Chen and Yang (2019).
58. Murgatroyd (2010) p. 274.
59. Carl (2009), OECD (2017) p. 100–101.
60. Roth (2019).
61. Cary (2006).
62. Murgatroyd (2010) p. 267.
63. Robinson (2006).
64. Harari (2017) p. 315.

6

USING RESPONSIVE LEADERSHIP TO RE-FORM SCHOOL

What might school become?

Strong leaders build a strategic framework that ensures that all voices are heard and critical issues in the teaching and learning process are the focus of selected processes and actions in the school. Through the strategic framework proposed in Chapter 4, we advocate for development of a stance focused on a process of strategic thinking: not a traditional model of strategic thinking based on a neoliberal business model; not strategic thinking based on so-called efficiency choices; a strategic thinking model that has us consider choices and their impact on the society and the world around us; strategic thinking that measures things that matter: Is everyone healthy? Do all students and members of the community feel safe? Do the students feel listened to at school?

The framework we have proposed is authentic and focused on learning and development; it is grounded in equity, equality, and social justice; it is contextualized and reflective, with distributed, participatory, and shared

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leadership; it is aware of the complexity underlying critical issues in society, but also aware that the responses will necessarily be interdisciplinary, and with principals at their core, based on a democratic ethos and way of being. But how does that mean we should act? Our assumption is that our concepts of school and education itself are going to change as we proceed in the 21st century. Ensuring they change in a manner focused on the broadest range of positive impacts for all in society is the challenge of responsive educational leaders.

In this chapter, we discuss methods to create a quality educational environment, re-forming school. Responsive leaders move toward a transformation of the system of education so that it more fully contributes to the society around each of us in our unique contexts. Successful efforts are best seen in a process embedded in a cycle: problem posing, data collection, designing methods and procedures, and moving into an action phase focused on problem-solving. The authors' initiatives in various parts of the world have been founded on a consistent belief that working through a project and beginning actions focused in schools needs important components for responsive educational leaders centered on problem posing, data collection, and designing methods and procedures for problem-solving. When a principal begins working with her or his staff and students, time is devoted to building a sense of solidarity across the group, and to develop the communication patterns and skills we are going to have each individual draw on. In a responsive school, there needs to be space for each individual to share their identity, their understanding of the context and place, the wealth of knowledge they bring to the work of the school, and the initiatives being undertaken. All of these are important. Sharing discussion and reflections about our histories, the context of the work we are all engaged in, and our cultures—both personal and institutional—becomes important because it helps us develop a shared discourse, and a shared sense of aims and goals.

Responsive leaders need to be sure that the work they are going to do together is strongly connected to the community, what Cary describes as "peeling back the layers of discourse that frame our lives and the lives of others."[1] How we each see and experience the community impacts our work in the school. This metaphor, like that of an onion whose shape and use becomes clearer as we remove the outer layers, helps press us to look below the surface, to find the useful. Those connections to the

community matter ultimately to each of our successes and the long-term fidelity to the implementation of the initiatives each leader and school is embarking on. As responsive leaders are working with their staffs and students through the inquiry process of raising questions, proposing answers, and planning actions, it is important that we remember the time horizons necessary. None of this will be quick and it will take a real promise of shared effort. Long-term commitment by the principal with the teachers and students matters. For example, as work began on the Eastside of Toledo, Ohio, or in an Erasmus project working with schools in Ireland, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Spain, Wales, and Scotland, principals and teachers want to know that the principal, the other teachers, the staff, and the students are in this together. They are committed to each other. Their goals need to reflect a desired change that might take a few years, but once started will have action steps that are clearly headed in a direction that will modify the educational experience in the building.

A critical action at the beginning of any work between a principal and the teachers and students is to ensure there is constant reflection, no matter where we are in a very non-linear process. These three broad components, the questions that arise from the challenge or problem, our potential answers and the biases they reflect, and the proposed actions themselves, all require the constant refrain of these three questions: What is working? What are we wondering about? What keeps us awake at night with worry? We are always conscious of the need to return on a very personal level to the staff, students, and community members. What are they feeling? How do they share ownership of the decisions and the strategic actions to be taken? How does the planned work connect to their wants, needs, and beliefs about the future? Providing them space to reflect, react, and think about what they will personally do becomes essential to the final step, laying out the next challenges for the future.

Every issue, global and local, becomes a series of steps big and small for the people in the building. Some steps are significant pivots, for example, when access to school suddenly became free in Kenya, or when the not-so-imaginary Iron Curtain came crashing down and freedom of movement and changes toward democratic governance required quick and significant rewriting of specific content subjects and curricula. Some are the perceived minor changes that, in fact, turn out to be major. For example,

the inclusion of a book depicting an LGBTQ family and focusing on the love they have for each other, their children, and their everyday lives, or the push by a group of students to eliminate single-use plastic water bottles after an analysis of the trash coming out of the school over the course of one week. Sometimes it is as simple as inviting members of the community into the school to talk to teachers, staff, and students about their lives through a model such as the "Human Library"[2] and in this way discover our shared humanity.

As planned initiatives in a school come to an end, laying out goals and the challenges for the future are important. The responsive principal leads discussions about what this collection of individuals in the school want to define as impact. How will each individual proceed with the subsequent steps and their own personal efforts? Principals need to be clear that an initiative is not a one-shot deal; it is something we have come to together on, and for which we will hold each other responsible. If successful, the principal has developed a culture where work in school seeks to impact the conditions and trajectories of challenges in the world. Similar to what others have talked about, we face the important question of just what is the aim of education, and "what is the role of schools in preparing young people to see themselves as part of this larger whole that includes not just their neighborhood, community, or country, but the world?"[3]

We will not always succeed, but responsive leaders make promises to support each other and work to support a sense of self-efficacy of those involved in an initiative while recognizing our shared agency, our ability to do something, to reach for an imperfect but better future. Projects and initiatives act reciprocally. The principal and staff reach out to build something with the community and it echoes back to strengthen the lives of students in the school. The important efforts are done with the community and not with this or that group. And always, at every step along the way there is evaluation and reflection—following planning sessions, after actions are put in to motion, and when the flow models of future impacts begin to generate data to help give us a sense of where we should go next. Whether working with a small group of high school students talking about their future lives, major school improvement efforts, or nationwide initiatives around the development of head teachers and principals, work has led us to a more human oriented and person-centered way of moving

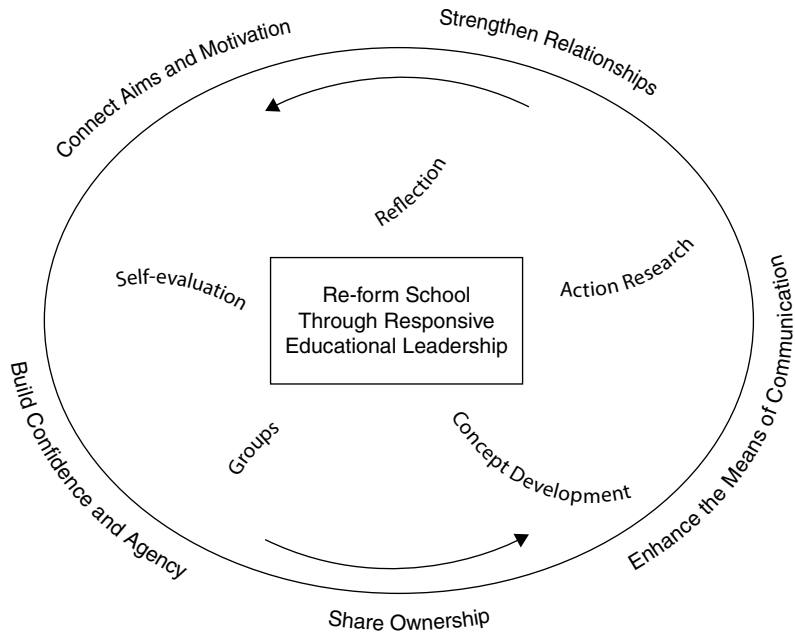

Figure 6.1 Re-Form School through Responsive Educational Leadership. ⏎

forward. As we begin to talk about taking-action, it is important to think about the themes and suggestions in the context of such a project or initiative (Figure 6.1).

Developing initiatives and educational projects as responsive leaders

A reconceptualization of traditional evaluation is essential to the style of leadership we are advocating. Feedback to the students about their learning in the classroom matters. Feedback to the teachers about their teaching and the work they are engaged in to connect with and respond to the community matters. Like formative assessment in the process of learning, developing initiatives in the school takes time, humility, and curiosity.

Our work with initiatives and projects has revealed a few key things that help to ensure the success of projects: commitment to reflection and time for thinking, forming groups of individuals across vertical and horizontal levels, and paying conscious attention to the development of the skills of

group work. Termed by some as the "capability approach,"[4] this focus on individuals is important. Their actions are the drivers of systemic change, and for us this demands special attention. Focusing on concept development and shared discourse, using action research, and, as mentioned earlier, paying special attention to methods of self-evaluation and reflection, will lead to change in the school.

The importance of reflection

From the start, we need to think about how the principal will engage the broader group in thinking about and listening to different perspectives about their efforts. How does a group look inward? How does the group think about their motivations? Investigate the impact of their work. Reflection is one important tool. Methods for reflection can be applied to different contexts and groups of individuals. Perhaps the most important method involves making time for reflection and critique an essential component of any initiative. Time becomes the challenge. A final circle discussion making room for each participant to add their thoughts can take a large amount of time. A gallery walk of posted sticky notes can help us see what others are thinking about the work.

Reflection has been defined as thinking deeply about the conditions of the functioning of the school, the community's needs, social trends, philosophy, approach to the teaching and learning process and assessing how the activities of the school and those in it determine if they are more than adequate for the context.[5] Reflection is a key step in deepening learning both for individuals in the school and for the organization itself. As responsive leaders, educators and educational leaders work with those around them (teachers, students, community members), and work with reflection has been an important component of the success of the projects we have engaged in.

There are many specific processes to engage a group in reflection. Our goals when working with a group revolve around developing three things: a space where individuals feel free to raise issues; patience, so we make time for each person to talk and contribute to the discussion; and active listening skills, so that the participants are talking *with* each other and not just *to* us as facilitators of the session.

To focus on what we have all gained from the experience, a reflection session is held with the group. From our experiences, careful time for reflection needs a few specific components and processes:

- If it is a large group, identify individuals who will lead smaller group discussions concurrently. The facilitators know about their roles ahead of time, and understand their work is to listen and ensure notes are taken,
- The reflective questions are based on the problem at hand,
- Chart paper and markers can give the group more of a sense that others will hear and see their ideas, reflections, and opinions, as notes are taken in front of everyone,
- Small group facilitators each assemble a group of participants, chart paper, and a reflective question or topic like: What resources will support student resiliency in this community? How might students better access the individuals, groups, and support systems?
- Given the complexity of opinions, give each participant a chance to add thoughts or criticisms and record them on to the chart paper. This often involves slowly going around the small group to give each a chance to share. If someone wants to pass, they may, but promise you will come back to them,
- Display the charts with notes from each groups' discussion when the whole group gets back together. This also serves as another means of communication of opinions and ideas across the group. It also validates that we the facilitators were listening to them and value what they had to say.

By talking with each other after completing a professional development activity, a culture of support and inquiry is developed by the group. Over time, they get better at listening to each other. They also get better at sharing their knowledge, beliefs, and opinions. They come to know each other more deeply and the activity supports their development.

Responsive educational leaders are able to understand the needs and emotions of others through careful listening and asking for the generation of input. But they're aware of themselves as well, and are conscious of their opinions and thoughts about the direction for the tasks at hand. Working to listen allows them to serve people without fear of losing their

own prestige, and with the conviction that success will not be achieved without full commitment from everyone. Such leaders act primarily for the benefit of others, support them in their development, and care for their well-being.

Develop groups

A second method that can be applied at different levels, and in different contexts, is the forming of strong and varied teams or groups. Doing this helps ensure voices are heard and participation is increased. Forming groups of individuals across vertical and horizontal levels means making sure that some groups include representatives of various stakeholders and levels of decision-making in the school. For example, vertical groups might include the teacher leader or principal, a few teacher leaders, teachers of various grades, students, staff members, and members of the community. Horizontal groups might have all of the history teachers, or a group of student leaders from various organizations in the community. Paying conscious attention to the quality of the development of the skills of everybody in the group work is important. We noticed that development of skills is possible only when people feel good about themselves and comfortable within a group. The groups succeed when they are interested in the task and motivated to learn. The sophistication of the method, the expertise of the teacher or instructor, and the teaching materials used are always less important than the participants' involvement and their awareness.

The processes of the responsive educational leader build connections and interactions in both horizontal and vertical ways throughout the organizational structure. Horizontal, meaning engagement with those who are around them in like positions, in leadership in the community, and in charge of moving various projects and actions forward. "Interconnected, horizontal, and coolly supportive of people far and wide"[6] in the institutions that comprise schools, regional structures, and organizations.

Vertical communication and structures are also important, as there is a need to be able to advocate structures to central regional offices and governmental structures. Skills of vertical leadership become crucial when institutional discipline is needed—there are times that rules become essential to the functioning and well-being of the participants in

the learning process. These vertical efforts involve a sense of, and respect for, hierarchies. "Leaven the structure of the vertical bureaucracy with a more respectful and empowering culture of horizontal networks."[7] It's interesting that some of these ideas emerge. Ultimately, the individuals in the school building, responsive educational leaders, need to seek a "Both/And" when it comes to vertical and horizontal leadership processes, communication, and actions. We cannot deny the existence of hierarchies, and we cannot deny the need to work against the worst tendencies of those hierarchies.

A simple group activity involves the participants beginning their work together by dividing a piece of paper into four boxes. In each box, a picture is drawn. The teachers and staff talk about something connected to their own identity, and then maybe something connected to their family and friends. They share something about the work or studies they are engaged in, and they deliberate around the goals and aims they have for the group. By pairing up, talking through the different areas, and then sharing reflections with the broader members of the group, a shared sense of belonging and purpose begins to emerge.

If we are going to build the culturally responsive leadership that Johnson[8] called for, "….work with teachers, parents and the larger community to develop curriculum frameworks, pedagogical practices, and organizational structures and routines that are consistent with the cultural orientation of ethnically diverse students and their families," a focus on the ecosystem that is the school will spark awareness of developing the capabilities of all involved.[9] And health issues, inequity, and democracy challenges also come to the same essential point. Responsive leadership needs to build groups by building the skills of each member of the group.

According to David Jaques,[10] a group exists and is stronger when certain conditions exist, including the group is conscious of their existence as a group (e.g. "the community engagement working group"); members join and stay with a group because it satisfies some needs or gives members psychological rewards; each member of the group contributes to the definition of its aims; members are interdependent, meaning they are affected by and respond to any event that affects the group's members or their work; and members interact, and through that influence and respond to each other through communication.

Concept development

One idea-generation method, our third method used in various projects, is called "democratic concept development."[11] It involves a topic, say, what do we mean by tolerance, and then sub-questions connected to the topic, like what issues have emerged in our strategic planning discussions around tolerance? What activities are occurring in our classrooms that work to develop skills and attitudes of tolerance in our students? Small groups of participants each take a sub-topic and on a large piece of chart paper do the following:

- Write down the sub-topic and give it a title
- Define the situation and gather data or information about it
- List possible next steps and work we are currently doing
- Identify three specific goals and data that will measure progress.

After this is done, the facilitator displays the chart papers and asks each participant in the broader group—each with a marker in hand—to walk through the gallery display and write comments, notes, disagreements, and suggestions on the chart papers. Finally, the work finishes when each original group takes their chart paper, synthesizes the comments and suggestions, and proposes a final set of new actions and goals.

Wood and Butt[12] remind us that with wicked problems in the midst of complexity, the concept of "emergence" matters. "The process by which interactions in systems (or sub-systems) lead to change, not least in the development of new ideas and ways of working." This specific effort to develop understanding of the concepts we are struggling with results in a broader shared discourse and vocabulary that strengthens our ability to communicate and makes it plain where the group might be trying to understand an issue, topic, or goal of the school. The development of a shared discourse in the school among the staff helps change how we work and focuses us on the goals we have set.

Action research

A fourth method or set of methods, bigger and more sophisticated, is to introduce Action Research to both students and groups of school personnel. The broad rich philosophy and tradition of Action Research has been talked about for some time.[13] Action Research helps us to focus on the perceptions

and results of the work and the environments we inhabit in that world. It is a process and method of inquiry focused on people and actions. It is a methodology centered on moving and affecting changes that come about for all who are in contact with those realities. Action Research is a distributive and theoretical stance for purposely looking at and reflecting on the world around us in our institutions, workplace, and community. According to Kemmis and McTaggart,[14] it is a form of collective self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices, and the situation in which these practices are carried out.

The processes in Action Research inquiry are centered on self-reflective cycles of inquiry. Noticing a problem and planning change. Data gathering by acting and working with tools of observation, survey, and quantitative data points to understand the change. As the individuals involved work through the analysis stage of the process, conclusions and theories about what is occurring and what we might do emerge. Findings and assertions emerge and lead to implications for the school and community. Finally, reflection and evaluation lead to new questions and starts the process over again. In reality, the process might not be as neat as this model. In practice, the processes of Action Research are more fluid, open, and responsive. Ultimately, it is an effort to bring our identity and our educator lens into a process of dialog with those in our institutions, workplaces, and communities. Action Research serves as a means of critique and improvement around actions taken, policy decisions, and engagement practices by those same entities as they continuously change.

Self-evaluation

Self-evaluation processes for the school are an important tool for responsive educational leaders. Reflexivity becomes important in a "responsive" school. It is at its essence an awareness of the self and our connections to the actions we are taking in a particular context. Through reflexivity and self-evaluation, the school as a community and an institution evaluates itself in spite of or in opposition to what are often state-sanctioned, political, and removed "success measures." Self-evaluation is being aware of the roles we ourselves play in constructing reality and the situations we find ourselves in.[15]

Reflection among the leaders in the school, in cooperation with the teachers and students, becomes especially important when the school is trying to deal with a challenge that is complex, multifaceted, and hard to untangle. "Wicked problems require acute observation and continual curiosity."[16] We need to reflect on our work and leadership traits, the contexts we find ourselves in, the manner in which we act, and the ways we influence each other. What are the components of the issue, question, or task at hand? What are our personal commitments? From what theories are we operating? What biases do we have? What value-laden perspectives do we hold? How do we develop a common vision of what is needed?

The responsive school engages in significant work on self-evaluation. Not evaluation efforts that involve a list of requirements that demonstrate transactions have been accomplished in the structures of the state educational law, but instead, evaluation that focuses on a critical internal look at how the school and its community are meeting the aims of education. What are the successes of the school in meeting the goals and purposes for education that have been set out through the process of listening and dialogue with the community?

The capacity to implement responsive leadership in a school

Responsive leadership is aware that we are, in fact, re-forming "school." This work includes reflection, self-evaluation, and planning for the future. But it does not mean that re-forming is accomplished through just one change or one meeting agenda. It is a long-term commitment to "extend our own concept of justice and when it is endorsed by others, we should work to make it a reality. But we should do it together."[17] Leaders think about transformation as a series of short cycles that are repeated constantly. The re-forming never ends. With every cycle, we are at once better, more aware, more adaptive, and more visionary. Our life, our work, our passion and love, our dialogue evolve all the time. Nobody would consider terminating such actions at a certain moment, so why would we want to do it with school?

The efforts in a responsive school include methods in evaluation and reflection, where those in the school think about what might come next. A cultural issue that impacts evaluation is the language and understanding of

important terms. Concept development helps to build and nurture group language. In order for evaluation to support the development of a school, a specific understanding of the process is needed. Focusing on the composition of groups and ensuring they are broadly representative helps with this.

Self-evaluation is usually perceived as an aspect of accountability—as part of finding whether an institution has attained an expected level of effectiveness. In the Polish language, evaluation loses its meaning and is synonymous with the term accountability. Language that better suits the Polish educational reality focuses on the empowering nature of evaluation—this helps education professionals by giving them the space and opportunity to help themselves. This understanding of self-evaluation provides professionals with power, and a voice. This idea is reflected by Simons,[18] who emphasizes that evaluation should be an invitation to development, through which we strengthen teachers, students, parents, society members, schools as organizations, and finally democracy in a broader social context. What really helps in the successful implementation of evaluation as a developmental process is conceiving of it as an autonomous, reflective, and participatory process, supported by a value system that enables agency and transparency. Evaluation should be based on such values as democracy, transparency, partnership, trust, openness, professional equality, mobility, and continuous learning.[19]

Accountability is morally and politically situated, not merely technically and procedurally "delivered." A broader sense of accountability, understood as shared responsibility, cannot be provided by a delegated mandate to a set of outside experts or data managers. Even young people can and should be involved in such processes.[20] We are realistic to know this is not easy. We are not talking about simply pulling a rabbit from a hat. The glue, however, the connections that will move us toward impact and success are found in feedback and a conceptualization of the entire school as the learning environment. The formative assessment that lies under the surface in our discourse with each other, in our development of the skills of working in groups, and in how we continually collect information, raise questions, and stay on the path to better answers will move us in the right direction.

All of the processes discussed in this section can help responsive leaders build strong, problem-solving oriented environments, and they include methods for reflection, strengthening the use of groups, the use of concept development methods, engagement in action research, and work with

teachers to ensure that teaching and learning is grounded in experience. Expedition Inside Culture, a long-standing project we have been engaged with, is just one group around the world that is working to find ways to move strategic thinking into action and doing the work of responsive educational leadership. Underlying the work is a focus on critical thinking on the part of all involved, which is important if we are going to sharpen the skills of deliberation and develop a problem-solving ethos in the school.[21] Halpern described critical thinking as "thinking that is purposeful, reasoned, and goal directed."[22] This skill of purposeful, critical thinking is demonstrated when in the midst of the responsive school environment we practice both idea generation and reflection on the results of our actions.

Working together, building awareness, and seeking "responsive" schools that engage in actions that connect education to the real work of broader societies is possible. This is what we need to engage in the re-forming of school. It is seen in what we do on Monday morning in the school building, how we talk with the members of the community we engage with, and how we accept the reality that educational leadership matters.

Responsive leadership leads to re-forming school

The responsive school exists when individuals work to collectively take-action across all levels of leadership—head teacher, principal, teacher leader, student activist. Each comes to realize they have influence on the society and on the community around the institution. It is focused on learning and development, not on tracking whether all the rules and regulations are followed. The responsive school touches on topics that are important. The individuals in the school respond to important challenges. We might say it is a requirement for such a school and team of school leaders to visibly take a risk by connecting the work of their school, teachers, and students to one or more challenges such as the environment, disease, racism, invasive technology, inequity, and others that we have talked about and that exist in the world today. When individuals in the community are learning with and in schools, and a supportive network around the school exists, stronger relationships develop. Those in the school know what challenges they want to aim toward. They know they need time to create, develop, and support the functioning of the learning environment. We need a learning environment that allows all members of the community

and network to take ownership and responsibility for both individual and system learning.

Murgatroyd[23] has written about models of what school systems might look like when faced with the imperative to change. Three broad patterns appear:

- "Factory" models set targets, focus on accountability.
- "Load-up strategy" schools just add more to the curriculum.
- "Innovation strategy" schools deal with the broad system curriculum, but provide teachers with wide latitude and choices.

The most positive, in our opinion, these innovating or responsive schools according to Murgatroyd foreground "exploration, creativity, curiosity, and instilling values."[24]

Others have talked about forms of school in which ownership and responsibility might be seen as the process of the transformation from a static school, separated from the external world, focused on fulfilling bureaucratic aims and working in the Prussian system, to a dynamic learning environment, connected with multiple networks, focused on learning and creation of knowledge through involvement in various projects aimed at solving real life problems, using flexibility of organizational formats and learning methods.

It should be the responsive educational leaders (principals, teachers, and student leaders) in the schools, who know students and their concerns and problems, who are able to critically reflect on the contemporary world, and who should propose areas of conversation and development for young people.

In this ferment and in these discussions, we find the strength of education and its institutions. It is great to see how powerful schools are, together—inclusive of teachers and students who can work together to take actions, to take the power to decide what students should spend energy on and direct their focus on. Although, as we claim, nobody has a right to force any ideas on others, our work has shown that there is indeed a process that must move forward for those engaged in real action to be able to build engagement with the community. This process involves demonstrating transparency, shared ownership over the work, and a pattern of shared effort. Communities and groups respond, and the process of working together moves ideas forward and lets new concepts emerge.

Re-forming by connecting the aims of education and motivation

When you approach the entrance of Riverview High School in Sarasota, Florida, over the door, their mission statement lays out what they have publicly promised they are working toward. "To provide a learning environment that nurtures a passion for intellectual curiosity, that promotes global understanding, independence, and innovation, and that is committed to a tradition of academic excellence and social responsibility."[25]

This statement of their mission lays out the aims the educators inside the building have sought to target. The words mean something and are hard to live up to. They place a marker that the leaders of the school are trying to reach. Others, such as a large group of educational leaders and researchers spanning many countries and connected to the Pedagogy, Education, and Praxis (PEP) Network[26] are working to create spaces for transformation. They are, as they put it, "investigating the nature, traditions, and conditions of pedagogy, education, and educational praxis and how they may be understood and developed in different national contexts and in various educational settings."

In initiatives that often involve only a few people at the start, we can see attempts to redesign and reconceptualize education in a society, refusing to accept the "as it is today" and instead working for an "as it should be." Bannister[27] talks about a colleague who agreed to share her work targeting gender issues in schools in some areas of Nigeria. Focused on literacy and the use of technology and mobile devices as a tool of reform, the work centers on attacking the literacy gap that exists between boys and girls by working specifically to propel the society toward free, safe, and quality education. By using the support of mobile devices, help and advocacy is provided to teachers and young girls working to change the current conditions and levels of literacy, and "school" is re-formed.

Motivation and emotion are essential to education. Without an emotionally stable situation within the group and for every learning individual, the learning process is very difficult or sometimes even impossible. People first need to feel safe, they need to be sure that they are secure and can trust the others involved. Fear and anger block the possibility of deep and effective learning. Moreover, when learners are bored or feel incompetent it also hinders learning. In schools we usually focus on facts and skills to be developed, so the models commonly used to design teaching and learning do not capture all of the complexity that students bring to their learning.

Human beings are interdisciplinary in our approach to life. It is school that forces our thinking into segmented, often disconnected, boxes.

Students over the years develop their motivational beliefs: cognition about the self in a domain or context. Through the use of tools such as "essential questions" in problem-based learning models, teachers help provide a structure of organization and direction for the teaching and learning that will happen in the classroom. For example, on the walls of Marshall Elementary School,[28] in Toledo, Ohio teachers have laid out what they will developmentally work on.

3rd Grade: "What is the Safest Environment for an Endangered Animal?"
7th and 8th Grade: "Making Change in the Community."
Driving Question: "How Can I Make A Change in the Community?"

Teachers and others in the school refer to the knowledge and opinions that students have about how their motivation functions in different subjects, and how different teaching practices affect their motivation. Students use their motivational beliefs to give meaning to learning tasks and situations and to their social and community context. These beliefs might be positive or negative and are based on direct experiences in the context. However, they are also based on observations about how others perform and what teachers have to say. Communication from everyone in the environment helps determine the choices students make, how much effort they will invest, and how long they will persist in the face of difficulties.[29]

Re-forming relationships in the school

In the light of the above, another step in the re-forming of school and moving toward a responsive school has to be designing and implementing the processes of providing a learning environment built upon healthy relationships. At schools in Zabrze and Kraków, Poland, within an Erasmus initiative called "Inclusive Education" teachers and students engage in workshops and discussions focused on equal access and inclusion. They talk about the conditions of relationships that support the process of learning. Decisions are made that focus on key issues in the school. It's not simply deciding the music that will be played at a dance, but working on issues that have a real impact.

As in Kemmis and Mutton,[30] relations supporting learning and development are saturated with trust, security, involvement, cooperation, and creativity without fear of making mistakes. It cannot appear out of thin air. It is impossible to order it. It is nothing that teachers may impose on someone else or lecture about. It is minute-by-minute, day-to-day work of people involved in different activities. We cannot learn how to swim without entering the water, and we cannot learn how to relate with people without entering interactions, cooperation, relationships.

Re-forming the means of communication

If we are going to engage responsive educational leaders to re-form school, the means of communication is another essential in the process of school transformation. It chronologically might happen at the same time as reconsidering the aims of education, but it should involve thinking about the methods and means of communication in the school. Kemmis and Mutton[31] describe this as the "social-political dimension" because it reflects the importance of working through power relationships and structures to think about how those engaged in the work of the school relate to each other. Ultimately, this impacts how we interact with each other and how we construct our relationships with and within the world.

Designing and implementing various forms of group reflection, debates, conversations, dialogues, work in groups, talking walls (walls with goals, data, charts from discussions and status of actions) and more allow people to understand the issues they face and the role of those in the school in working with these issues.[32] The learning community in a particular school needs to be aware of the specific context they function in and to prioritize their actions. In simple language, they need to understand and agree upon what and why they need to learn, and in this way prepare to then decide how they will do it.

We also understand about the importance of building the cultural capital of a community.[33] One way to do that can be seen in the work of Texas borderland schools. Their work with the bicultural nature of the community is seen in their attentive use of Spanish as a means of communicating with parents and other members of the community. It is also seen in Cardiff, Wales, a demographically diverse city where the schools are full of students of different ethnic origins. Teachers decided to improve

the teaching and learning of foreign/world languages partly as a means of showing respect to the mother tongues of the students in the school. Students in the school who can speak a particular language are assigned the role of language leader. Their role is to promote their languages by teaching basic words to the entire school population.

The means of communication, both in schools and among educational leaders and the community, continues to change. As educational leaders, we are grappling with the possible changes that could come with technology and mobile devices. There could be positive outcomes that raise the ability of teachers and students to be engaged both in the school and with the community,[34] but we also have to caution against the negative impacts of surveillance and the dangers of artificial intelligence supplanting the relationships and communication that arise among human beings in the school.

The way we speak across school, our interactions with parents and community members—whether they come from ethnic majority populations, newly arrived immigrants, or struggling, lower socio-economic families—matters in humanizing communication. For example, we have much to learn about positive models in multilingual, multiethnic, and multinational communities. But strong models do exist, and they focus on both formal and informal communication, consider work schedules when planning meetings with families, and access when sending information and communication home via technology.[35]

People working to function as responsive educational leaders need to attend to of the ability of their staff, their employees to learn and adapt to present conditions. The staff then starts to consider the paramount question of the operating aims of their organization; they start to think critically about the structures of power and binding paradigms, and not only about the procedures functioning in an organization. A condition for professionalism is consciousness of various contexts, political, social, cultural, economic, or ecological, that exist in every institution, and are thus present in schools.

Organizational culture in an educational institution, like all in organizational cultures, needs to be carefully nurtured, and focused on transparent communication and action. The organizational context is developed through intentional steps on the part of those in the institution.[36] In building the culture of the school, we need to pay careful attention to how we work and communicate. Our way of working is influenced by the culture of the group, the climate of the institution, and the design of the teams

or groups. Responsive leadership practices, the ways those in the school develop plans and design tasks for members of the team, and even the roles individuals will play need to be developed and defined with the people on the teams. All of this will matter to the motivation of the teams.

Ultimately, it is the way we communicate both horizontally and vertically that determines the ability of the school to really build actions that connect and contribute to the reality around the school. "Taking the time to listen and genuinely understand someone on the other side of a debate, even if not ultimately coming to an agreement, makes it difficult to hate that person or to paint him or her as an immoral caricature."[37] So, it is not just a reorganization of hierarchical structures, although it is clear that reconceptualizations are needed in those as well, but a re-forming of the school based on encouraging teachers and students to work together with responsive educational leaders.

It is about re-forming the school so that those who manage schools adjust the learning process to its context. This is the postulate of developing responsive educational leaders to think about how to energize debates about pedagogy (teaching and learning), and not just law, finance, or regulations. To think about how challenges in the world are complex but still in need of attention. By re-forming the school so leadership is shared and given to students and to teachers, giving them space for their voice, freedom, and appealing to their motivation, reminding everyone that teachers have unique knowledge about the teaching process and the school itself as an organization. Involvement in the process of introducing changes grows and will give everyone a chance to diversify the career trajectories of teachers and others in the building.[38]

Re-forming by distributing leadership

Re-forming the school means distributing leadership. This does not mean simply off-loading accountability tasks to others in the building; it is a careful rethinking of "a dual, or hybrid, approach in which formal leaders and informal experts are recognized for the leadership contribution they make."[39] There is constant support and even a demand for the participation of everyone in the school environment in decision-making and dialog.

Møller [40] has pointed out advantages and disadvantages based on his work in Scandinavian schools. The model he observed had principals relinquishing many duties in the school in order to share duties in the system

with their principal colleagues at other schools. "The advantage is that the principals distribute their leadership energies, experiences, and knowledge between their own schools and others"[41] bringing more communication across those colleagues. While warning that the duties in the school that the principal then leaves behind for the teachers to do can lessen the focus those teachers have on the key role of the school—teaching and learning.

However, when done well, the decisions made and the deliberations that occur define the direction for the activities of the school. Wicked problems demand shared thinking and improved decision-making across those in the school.[42] The talents and strengths of those in the community emerge and become clearer as they participate in the life of the institution. The desire by everyone in the school to take on more responsibility and share ownership for the activities and outcomes of the school, its teachers, and its students, becomes more present.[43]

It is obvious that educational systems all over the world are extremely intricate and changes made only on the level of an individual school may not bring the expected results. In some contexts, it may even hurt the school itself. We, as a global society, need distributed leadership if we are going to support responsive educational leaders. We need to argue for distributed decision-making, understood not as delegation or increasing the number of traditional leaders, but as shared power, involvement in decision-making power, and accepting responsibility for decisions made on every level of the system. Starting from the particular school (organization) through local and regional authorities, to the central/provincial or state ministries, to national governmental levels, we need to invite a new leadership style, and then try to connect it to the wide network of citizens, activists, and professionals. The change will happen when we create this deepened world wide web of educational leaders.

Educational leaders of responsive schools develop and use processes that help them to share ownership for the actions of the school, its students, and the learning process. They ensure the processes include interaction with those inside and outside the school. They also ensure that while acting with confidence, they make room for the voices of all involved to help determine what direction the actions of the students and teachers will take.

Distributive leadership is action-oriented. It is both formal and informal in the manner in which expertise becomes recognized. Both formal leaders of the structure and informal leaders found in classrooms, teachers'

workrooms, and student groups work to make space for the voices of others in their midst.[44] Strategies for distributive leadership focus on building a process that works to define tasks and, most importantly, broadly involve other voices in the decision-making. The context of the institution and its functioning involves both formal and informal discussion and deliberation opportunities. There is shared ownership of both the processes of deliberation and, ultimately, ownership of the plans. It is where we see the "answers" to key questions underlying the work of the group. Stetsenko has said "This entails that any activity—and any acts of being-doing-knowing (as dimensions of social practice) including research—is always carried out as an activist endeavor, that is from the standpoint that entails an authentic subject position."[45] In other words, every act we take has us moving toward a goal or endpoint, a final state that we believe will be an improvement, an innovation, an imagined future.

Re-forming school is preparing conditions for fulfilling the aims created with input from those in the school. When we know what we need to learn and why we want to learn, so we understand in what way our new competencies and knowledge will help us to face challenges that we find important, we need to plan the process of teaching and learning. The learning community should strive to understand what resources and competencies are needed to make learning possible, and later design a learning environment and processes that enable all of us to learn what is needed. If we compare re-forming school to an experiential learning expedition, we may see that this step is like preparation for a trip into the field: we need to think about everything that might be necessary for data collection, for learning and for self-evaluation and reflection.

Re-forming schools by building confidence and agency

Re-forming a school by building processes focused on action means developing an ethos of confidence and agency. The conscious consideration of various viewpoints of the members of institution and the community matter. The biggest power of principals lies in the fact "that they control the narrative of the school."[46] As Donohoo, Hattie, and Eells have said, is the story of the school going to be testing schedules, compliance, and concerns about ranking tables? Or is it going to be about learning, high expectations for the community, and developing a clear sense of what "impact"

means? The work of the group, teachers, students, and the principals must be based on trust, a trust that is comprised of cooperative professionalism. This ethos or institutional culture functions through individual contributions and voices. Distributed leadership means respect for the development of choices, and it takes into account the individual decisions and actions that each of us have to make, and works to listen to the voices of the many in moving the school forward.

The development of institutional processes that support distributed leadership—action teams, meeting agendas, regular communication—by responsive educational leaders means the development of positive attitudes toward interaction and contact with others both inside and outside the school setting. Acceptance of people—expressed in providing feedback, reducing distance, and trusting—builds a set of institutional values rich with diversity of thought. The development of this leadership ethos helps focus the group on challenges, the seeking of new solutions, and the use of new ideas. Ultimately, this is what leads to a changing reality and real development around the aims and purposes of education.

The community and the school should be seen as reciprocal resources for broadly, and more narrowly, conceived notions of learning.[47] For educational leaders who seek to re-form the school, to be connected to the world, dialogue becomes a key tool. It requires us to think and talk together. We assert the importance of listening to each other. In this way, we generate new ideas, interpretations of the world around us, and understandings of perspectives we all have. But it also generates ideas and perspectives that are new, that we were not aware of, that we did not know that we, or those around us, possessed. Dialogue uses the power of our multiple identities to create a wisdom greater than just one person might have. This process of inquiry helps us reflect and allows new possibilities to emerge. [48]

As we think about the aims of education, ultimately, it is an act, a process, a set of philosophical stances that make us fully human. As Freire tells us:

> Education as the practice of freedom—as opposed to education as the practice of domination—denies that man is abstract, isolated, independent, and unattached to the world; it also denies that the world exists as a reality apart from men. Authentic reflection considers neither abstract man nor the world without men, but men in their relations to the world.

> In these relations, consciousness and world are simultaneous: consciousness neither precedes the world nor follows it.[49]

How do we act, given the context of the world around us, so that we move things forward, seeking innovation, but innovation that actually improves things? We shift into a mode where we are doing what Melanie Walker called "as-if-spaces."[50] These are the spaces where we act and move and interrelate with others in such a way as to be the way we believe the world should be. We "behave the way we want to live."

Responsive educational leadership is critical toward developing a democratic reality. By sharing power, educational leaders gain more influence over reality than when they try to change it individually. Leadership is the ability to use all resources—even those that emerge from "otherness" and diversity. The principles of autonomy help us to treat differences as a reinforcement for the strong act of building community, and not as a burden. This is the key principle of diversity and a strength of responsive leadership.

Educational leaders, those who emerge, no matter what their actual position, as the voice, the conscious of the school, occupy an essential dynamic. Those in the school need to respond to the issues that have impacted the young people in their classrooms. One important action is to carefully consider and talk through the beliefs, actions, and even the rationale they identify as drivers for the change that society needs. By moving in these directions, we develop and build the "responsive school."

Transforming systems begins by re-forming school

Using strategic thinking, intentional processes, and interdisciplinary actions, we begin to re-reform the school. As we think about actions and the following steps, we do not think about prescriptive, specific tasks that responsive schools should take in reaction to this local challenge or that global issue. We do not pretend to have the answers to a specific need in the local community. Instead, we want to fight against simple answers. "Complexity thinking characterizes classrooms and pedagogy as a more holistic system, with large numbers of variables linking together in a non-linear, often unpredictable, fashion."[51] If we are to help ourselves as educational leaders to build the school we need, with a culture of action that is willing to take on the challenges in the world, then we need the elements we are discussing here.

Yes, we want responsive educational leaders to think strategically, but it is the everyday choices and decisions around actions centered on the learning environment that matter. Educational leaders have to simplify complex needs and move to instead think about what agenda items will be at their next staff meeting. They need to think about what plans need to be discussed and made with student leaders ready to facilitate at their next student organization meeting. They need to find ways of sharing ownership with teachers as they think about what the focus of a team of individuals they are working with might be.

In an organization with a high leadership potential, there is conviction about the rationales for actions to be taken, and a desire to search for new solutions. The necessary mistakes—inevitable over time—arise from trying to do things, not from ignoring issues, disregard for the needs of the community, or a lack of motivation to make things better.[52]

Educational leaders of responsive schools use tools of deliberation, processes of decision-making, and careful attention to their own development and the development of those around them. They do this in order to build a community in the school and build strong connections with the region and people outside the school in which they come in contact. Actions related to developing our awareness and understanding of key concepts of life in a democracy must in themselves be democratic. How leaders work with others in their schools and in the systems and institutions around them must reflect the kinds of deliberation and decision-making we hope to be the hallmark of society. A focus on what those we are working with know, their knowledge base, helps to identify the understandings these individuals bring with them into the school. Ultimately, by working to share these initial understandings, the group comes to shared working definitions and concepts that can be used in their discussions and discourse.[53]

Focusing on building community strengthens the development of society. It means that first we develop leadership traits in ourselves and others. The responsive educational leader is aware of her or his role in shaping the conditions for the development of others and the need to support others in their own development. The educational leader knows the development opportunities that exist in others, including students and teachers, around them. He or she seeks out those willing to engage and be a person of action. In their discourse, in what they focus on, and what they think is important, they find inseparable connections.[54]

There is no single scenario or prescription for responsive educational leadership. There are metaphors, ideas, contexts, and mental models. We are definite supporters of abandoning the idea of school as a metaphorical machine or factory in favor of the concept of living organism, an important re-forming of school for the future ahead. The metaphor of a living organism invites thinking about an organization as a process requiring constant adaptation and development, resulting from a desire to learn and survive. Leadership, on the other hand, concentrates on building relations through a common sense of meaning, exchange, learning, focus on purpose, and an awareness of the necessity of change.[38]

Responsive educational leadership for the 21st century emerges from cooperation, solidarity, and respect for others. It comes especially from the potential inherent in groups of people, not from the singular abilities or charisma of one person. Leadership needs to involve as many allies as possible. Leadership itself is learned, constantly developed, and acquired. Its specificity results from the context and both the responsibility for the context and the response to it. That is why it is so difficult to establish one leadership pattern. The leader of the jazz band senses the goal of the piece of music, develops the talent of the musicians in the group, and then helps to ensure that each instrument and every musician leads and contributes to the making of beautiful music.

Principals and teachers are constantly surrounded by people. It is necessary, we believe, for them to make conscious choices to ensure that they are participating in the social network through which people create reality. Making professional, social, and in a certain way political, connections is one of the most important activities teachers can be engaged in. It helps to prevent all of us, principals included, from becoming isolated. It also provides the opportunity to discuss big ideas and practical issues with others. Good principals, just like good teachers, do not work alone. They need to be a part of a professional learning community for both individual and team professional growth, and also for learning skills needed in a healthy democracy. In order to support the building of a better world, to assert that the challenges in the world can be made better, principals need to support the values of respect, fairness, compassion, honesty, and care. In other words, they need to implement a holistic approach to social justice that is responsive and leads toward that better world.

Notes

1. Cary (2006).
2. Expedition Inside Culture Association (2020), https://expedition.org.pl/index.php/pl/projekty/101-eic/dzialania/do-edycji-pl/79-zywa-biblioteka-2019. Access 20.04.2020.
3. Carlsson-Paige and Lantieri (2005) p. 107.
4. Szekely and Mason (2019) remind us to push for what systems can do while still advocating for "capacity development" page p. 670. They continue that the "capability approach asks about the real opportunities with which society has provided individuals to choose and lead the lives they have reason to value: their capabilities." p. 676.
5. Mazurkiewicz (2011).
6. Mannivell (2017).
7. Ibid.
8. Johnson (2014) p. 149.
9. Szekely and Mason (2019).
10. Jaques (2000).
11. Fischer (2004).
12. Wood and Butt (2014) p. 677.
13. Góral, Jałocha, Mazurkiewicz, and Zawadzki (2019).
14. Kemmis (2008).
15. Bloor and Wood (2006), Popkewitz (2003).
16. Jordan, Kleinsasser and Roe (2014) p. 423.
17. Noddings (2005a) p. 9.
18. Simons (1989).
19. Mazurkiewicz and Dorczak (2019).
20. Fielding and Moss (2011).
21. Halpern (1997) "the use of those cognitive skills or strategies that increase probability of a desirable outcome" p.4.
22. Ibidem.
23. Murgatroyd (2010) discusses that this is, of course, an oversimplification. However, he also indicates that it does see, to fit "the strategic intent of change leaders." p. 263.
24. Ibid.
25. Riverview High School, S.arasota, Florida, USA https://www.sarasotacountyschools.net/riverview.

26. Edwards-Groves, and Kemmis (2016) they continue by describing how this work has to consciously network and build discourses across the world and past an Anglo-American paradigm, p. 78.
27. Banister (2017) p. 86.
28. This message was visible during a personal visit to the school and is also on their website.
29. Dumont and Istance (2010) pp. 91–94.
30. Kemmis and Mutton (2012).
31. Ibid. page 193.
32. Lawson and Alameda-Lawson (2012).
33. Carpenter, Young, Bowers, and Sanders (2016).
34. Murgatroyd (2010); Banister (2017).
35. Carpenter, Young, Bowers, and Sanders (2016) p. 52.
36. Balzer, Brodke, and Kizhaketthalachal (2015).
37. Manninen and Mulder, Jr. (2019) p. 32.
38. English, Pap, Mullen, and Creighton (2012) pp. 101–107.
39. Jones, LeFoe, Harvey, and Ryland (2012).
40. Møller (2009).
41. Ibid. p. 174.
42. Jordan, Kleinsasser, and Roe (2014).
43. Mazurkiewicz (2011).
44. "...a dual, or hybrid, approach in which formal leaders and informal experts are recognized for the leadership contribution they make." Jones, LeFoe, Harvey, and Ryland, (2012).
45. Stetsenko, Anna (2020) p.6.
46. Donohoo, Hattie, and Eells (2018) p. 43.
47. Fielding and Moss (2011).
48. Inquiry that is reflective and generative, sees the self as part of the whole; intended to create, deepen, and build relationships, understandings while moving to action. Based on Isaacs, 1999; Scharmer, 2009, Coleman & Deutsch, 2012.
49. Freire (1996) p. 69.
50. Walker (2010).
51. Wood and Butt (2014) p. 694.
52. Mazurkiewicz (2011).
53. Bakhtin (1993).
54. Halpern (1997) "The development of mind, thought, and language is simply a nexus in which it is impossible to separate one from the other." p. 4.

7

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Everything is connected

Introduction

We have attempted in the previous chapters to describe and explain concepts of responsive education and responsive leadership. Our success as writers could probably be defined by a reader who understands and agrees that we are talking not only about the world of education but also about "the world" itself—our global society built upon diversity of people, structures, and processes. Being aware of the autotelic value of education, we also see education as a process that frees and builds our humanity and personality, allows us to be important and valuable members of a society, and defines the meaning of our lives. At the same time, education equips us with tools for thinking and acting. Thanks to this impactful process, education give us superpowers—we are able to imagine a better world and then to proceed to build that world. Education gives us the power to change the situation we were born into and in which we exist. Some may be disappointed by the extremely slow pace of changes, while others might be

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terrified with the revolutionary scale of transformation that they witness. Scientific discoveries, cultural earthquakes, radical changes in lifestyles and value systems, and more, have resulted from education and social processes that are daunting. But the lack of change over the lifespan of the individual is equally threatening and demotivating. Which of these emotions—disappointed or terrified—are mirroring "facts" and which have resulted from manipulation or fake news? We will not be able to clearly sort through the media we are inundated with, but we may try to develop the abilities needed for independent and critical thinking, careful observation, respectful reflection, and dialogue. By doing so, we, educational leaders working to be responsive, might help people become free, and emancipated.

In this chapter, we conclude our effort to call for responsive educational leadership. While we continue to point to the importance of our contextual space and time, we believe we can dialogue, deliberate, and ultimately learn from each other across our countries and around the world. By focusing on teaching and learning in the classroom, responsive educational leaders can work with teachers to shape the contours of our educational practice. We believe these principals will lead a re-forming of school into a responsive organization working to react, rejuvenate, and help lead the actions of the community in tackling complex challenges. By diving in to the wicked problems we face in the world, responsive educational leaders ultimately must act to transform the system of education in all of its myriad policies and pieces. By focusing on taking action, building participatory governance and policy making structures, and insisting on connections to the society around the school, education led by responsive educational leaders can influence reality and the possible future of humankind.

We do not deny the complexity of the political and professional hurdles that lie in front of a systemic transformation. We do not ignore the inherent struggle at the heart of the realization of transformational systemic change. And we do not claim to have all of the answers. Humbly, the scholars and educators working on how to help schools tackle the issues of the environmental crisis, those working to build culturally responsive pedagogy and culturally responsive leadership, to deal with inequality and buttress democracy, all have deeper, and more detailed proclamations of what the work might look like in each of those specific areas. The responsive educational leader needs to draw on all of them and then work with their teachers and students to weave the fabric of their school.

The mystery and paradox of education that we have tried to underline in this book is that those who participate in authentic education become critically conscious individuals who start to use the intellectual tools that they were able to develop in order to examine the system and the society in which they were educated. Teachers need, with bravery, to be ready for a moment when their students will turn toward them surprised, and speak up with a conclusion about the state of the world and the need for change. The educated person who has become emancipated is an indicator of the success of the educational system, the principal, and the teachers. The educated and emancipated person starts to question an unfair, inequitable system. Education should allow all of us to open our eyes. Education should support the desire to design a new world, and it should offer tools that might be useful during the designing and implementing of these plans.

Responsive education is education in motion. We should not stop for a moment in the search for radically utopian aims and for better solutions. We should never think that we have found the answers. We need to think about ourselves as a flâneur, a person on a trek, one who is never settled and walks through the world with a light pack. Their stance is of one ready to observe and learn, eager to change position if it is needed. Our world changes so fast that we have no luxury of slow-to-emerge solutions. In order to build the education that we need, we have to observe and discuss; we need to plan and change constantly. We need educational leaders and principals who are responsive and acting.

Sadly, for now we are lost, wandering in a fog. The tools that we once used to understand reality are outdated. The paradigms, systems, models, procedures, and algorithms that we created to be able to move the world, and to move around the world, are no longer clear or settled. Various kinds of scammers and liars are trying to impose their visions of the world, exploiting people's fears, prejudices, and stereotypes.

Zygmunt Bauman says that we are living through a time of interregnum, in which old systems like democracy and capitalism are not working as well as in the past.[1] We need to think about something else or at least think about a radical transformation of the systems. The earlier we see and accept it, the less dangerous the moment of change will be. If we avoid the effort of deliberation needed in order to design a new reality, the crisis will be deadly. We need to change now. We hope responsive educational leaders, using the strength and impact of education, will help with this.

We believe that school today is a school of connectivity and relationship. We live in a world that depends on connections and cooperation. We are aware that education cannot be organized in isolation because education is a process that needs to take under consideration all of these perspectives and influences. Yes, when we encounter something unknown we feel insecure, but when we start a conversation this foreignness, this otherness, fades. Even if a conversation is not the most positive experience, every real encounter lowers the level of uncertainty. So, schools can and should help us to manage the process of developing relationships, building the skills of conversation, and energizing the power of reflection. The ignored or uneducated, the ones we have failed, are truly not able to live in a democracy (even if some around them seem to). They will always fail to use an opportunity because they will instead establish false aims that are easily manipulated. To educate means to improve student and teachers' immune systems. This is the canary in the coal mine, the sound of an alarm screeching in the night.

Our sense of time, the notions of a future that is far off or a past that is long ago, disrupts the reality that we live within a continuum. The past began yesterday, and the future begins tomorrow. Education should support thinking about the future, but education was one of the sectors that has suffered the most. Education as the "business" of teaching, learning, and the bringing up of young people, what in German is called *bildung*, has struggled. But also, education as a means of improvement, change, and development has suffered from decisions taken in the face of global challenges. As a clear example, as COVID-19 strikes around the world, we have been seeing struggles with technology, relations, and motivation, while on another level, we see passivity and indifference. And although thousands of teachers have been involved in the heroic effort of maintaining relationships with their students, it is individuals—thousands of them—dealing with the crisis, not a systemic plan clearly supported by governments, or a set of clear actions. What we are witnessing is more about survival than about creating new a reality.

But we do not have time. To understand what we mean by "we do not have time," we may consider at least three possible interpretations. The first we know all too well, and we experience the answer every day. We do not have time because we have too many obligations, duties, things to do. We cannot work because we have too much work. Sadly, how well we know

that state in education! So many responsibilities that teachers are not able to do anything. That state is toxic and it is caused by us, with too many priorities and the inability to select what is really important. The second interpretation is even more frustrating: we do not have time because processes in education need time to mature and need time to enable people to think and ask questions. How can we use education as a tool that is so demanding of the investment of time? Might we find something easier or even cheaper? And the third interpretation of this statement about time: we do not have time because the most dangerous challenges will not last long. After a certain moment, the natural environment will not just die slowly over a number of years, but it will start to collapse as quickly as the glaciers of Antarctica.

The uncertainty of challenges

Our conclusions and our experience reveal to us how everything is blurred. What we see today might change tomorrow. The preparation needed to respond to challenges is, in fact, the preparation to accept a mindset of realism, an acceptance of the ever-changing nature of the issues we face. People around us are asking: what is this thing we call a "good school" that we are looking for? Unfortunately, we need to know *why* we need education in order to answer this question. And this is not easy to answer. It is not about collecting information or acquiring important skills. Neither is it about improving economic results or turnouts in elections. We want to better people, to help them find a way toward self-development. We want people who can lead full lives of purpose that they define themselves. And we want them to live in better world—these are the aims of education that we choose.

We need to think very deeply when we ask about the characteristics of a good school. We need to accept the fact that we are not able to predict what might happen tomorrow. We need to think deeply and to be flexible. Who could have predicted the situation caused by COVID-19? Who could have prepared to answer the question about good schools during a pandemic? Nobody. And this is why questions about the next issue or challenge should be asked all the time. The challenges of the era should be out there "lying on a table" and we should always be talking about them. Racism? Inequality? Technology? What new challenges are coming? What

long-standing, intractable problems still systemically haunt us? This is not a sign of our lack of preparation, instead, it can, optimistically, be a sign of our readiness for wise and rational change.

Very often, people want to do "something" in order to go back to "normal," to the warm and safe feeling of knowing what is going on. The environment and epidemics (similar to previous signals given to us by nature which were not so strong) have shown us that regardless of all the decisions we have made in response to any challenge, there is no way back to the "old normal" and that we must recognize the need to change. We must recognize that the "old normal" was not just, and was not equitable for all. We need, more than ever, a positive ideology and a more vividly drawn conception of utopia, but we suffer from an inability to mark the horizon for our roadmap into the future. In numerous countries, traditional schemes of public management and policy have failed to establish effective strategies for dealing with new situations in almost every sector of public life. And, at the same time, maybe we failed in our effort to imagine a better future when we gave up and stopped thinking about challenges that have in the meantime, become no less worrisome. We risk the yoke of enduring pessimism, but our humanness always says we have a choice. We can move forward and advocate for change.

There is no doubt that challenges continue to grow and impede the work of principals and teachers. There is no way to discount the reality of inequality that might exist in a community, of the existence of corruption that eats away at democratic structures. The first step for a school is to come to an agreement that what we see is our reality. We work to interrogate the reality, and then work in order to make the situation better. We develop a responsive school. School exists in a social environment. When those in the school turn away from the challenges that exist outside the school doors, the purpose of education atrophies. It is the overarching commitment to improving the community, and the work to improve the lives of students in our contemporary world that fulfills the purpose of education.

Complexity theory tells us that there are multiple facets and connections to each issue in the world and their interactions with school. "Complexity theory was initially developed within the physical sciences to describe and explain systems which are too complex to understand, or model, through linear computation, but which are not purely random."[2] Change is not easy. It is, however, natural and essential. People sometimes try to avoid it by

all means available. Paradoxically, in recent years, we were sure that the pace of the change we were experiencing was extremely fast, but at the beginning of 2020, it occurred to us that we were wrong: the pace of change caused by the outbreak was unprecedented. Change in education is slower, much slower, but necessary. We want to believe that education can be a tool to help us in fighting against the odds. We should change education to react to changes in the external world, but also in accordance with our dreams about the future. Schools are, at least in our imagination, places where we design the future, where we prepare conditions for a new, better world. Unfortunately, it does not yet work this way—something went wrong. Education still does not fulfill its promise. Schools, instead of changing the world, instead reproduce an unfair reality.

Structure and policy as essential drivers

Policy-making in our experience is often seen as a process trapped in a maze that only turns in on itself. But Bell and Stevenson talk about traditional notions of policy-making in education as having certain logical characteristics. In order to understand how educational policy shapes and is shaped by the actions of those who have the responsibility for implementing it, certain dimensions need to be added to the analytical framework. These take account of both how the content of policy emerges from the economic, social and political factors, explore more fully the consequences of policy and focus in more on the processes of moving from policy formulation to policy in practice. The proposed addition to this has four levels: the sociopolitical environment from which policy, based on the dominant discourse, is derived; the strategic direction which emanates from the socio-political environment and which broadly defines policy; organizational principles which indicate the parameters within which policy is to be implemented; and operational practices, based on the organizational principles, that are necessary to implement the policy at the institutional level and to translate such policy implementation into institutional procedures and specific programs of action.[3]

As always, there are discrepancies between hopes, assumptions, and impacts of educational policy on schools. Groups of researchers defined the salient consequences of policy agendas in England, which have had a power influence over schools and classrooms and should be subject to rigorous

critique and challenges.[4] The list of consequences that might be noticeable include:

- The seductive power of managerialism, which is built on the argument that schools should be more tightly managed, more transparent and more easily held to account, and what leads to often unanswered questions: Accountability for what? What is measured, by whom, and in what ways? How do we disentangle the school effect from that of communities, social agencies, private tutoring, and social and educational capital of families?
- The conflict between control and autonomy that depends on the impossible to contest the notion of "successful" and "failing" schools.
- The resilience of the positional power and hierarchy in schools.
- The pressure for stronger individual leadership that might be practiced only by heroes.
- The lack of space for independence of thought, both in classrooms and among teachers.
- The de-professionalizing the effects of policy and practice on leaders and teachers. They need to follow standardized recommendation and gain prestige only when recognized by school inspections. The culture of compliance had impacted school and teachers.
- The constant pressure on delivering immediate results. Educational leaders felt the half of all demands fell into category of urgent but not important, experiencing tyranny of the urgent.[5]

Since the 1980s, two contradictory tendencies have increasingly come to dominate official policy-making in education. On the one hand, there has been a growing emphasis on the role of the quasi-markets in provisions publicly funded education, centered on the discourses and practices of choice, competition, and devolved decision-making, which positions parents and students as consumers and school and universities as small businesses competing with each other for students. And on the other hand, there has been increased emphasis on more direct forms of central state regulations of educational institutions and teachers who work in them. The second tendency is manifested in the construction of systems of accountability, inspection, and performance monitoring. Both marketizing and centralizing tendencies draw on languages and practices borrowed from

business that relate to ideas of efficiency and productivity. Teachers' work became highly regulated effectively in corroding the quality of their work and working lives.[6]

Now, in our daily life, we find officials in ministries of education who believe that all policy-making takes is to send a letter out to principals and local government officials. Mason told us that "Implementing policy change in highly centralized education systems is difficult enough."[7] Government officials stand behind a podium and say that a new process will be implemented starting immediately. It does not have to be this way. Policy-making can be a process of dialogue, listening, and input. Policy can result from a decision-making process full of layers of consultation, aware of the context of the various communities, and pointed at the shared aims of education. It can be something other than traditional notions of managerial, hierarchical, top-down pontification. It must be better.

Responsive educational leaders can propel systemic transformation by working to develop and impact policy. Principals, aware of the impact of education, and confident in their agency and ability to act, have the power to assist minorities demanding actions for the sake of the environment, the climate crisis, a fair society, and the status of democracy in the midst of an often unaware, ruling majority. But we need to change the public discourse in a very short time.

Among the different obstacles we see is the fragmentation of reality. Different groups see education differently, use different language and tools, and look for different kinds of solutions. This is one reason we have been looking at the problem of education from different perspectives in every chapter: from theoretical points of view, from practical perspectives of teachers and principals, and from the angle of policy. "In the sense intended by complexity theory, decentralized education systems are understood as complex because they are dynamic open systems constituted by incredible scale."[8] In order to prepare coherent approaches and create the effect of synergy, we need to integrate all those views and start cooperation across boundaries, we propose looking at the educational system from a bird's eye view and thinking about policies that might be implemented to support the change we need.

In the past, we used to turn toward state institutions for help in times of crisis. Today, when the level of trust is extremely low, the task of those institutions is more difficult, but it does not mean that they are needed less.

Could school really help societies in overcoming global crises? Do they have the potential? Do they have the ability to reform themselves in order to change the world? One possible answer is "yes," but it could just as easily be "no." It depends on our willingness to think not only about school, but about society as well. We will not "fix" schools without "fixing" society.

What we see in some realities is different. It is difficult to understand the relationship between schools, processes, and outcomes of education, and on the other side society, if we do not understand the mechanisms ruling social interactions and life in school. To understand education, we need to understand its broad social context, political and economic systems, social stratification, institutionalized inequality, power games, levels of development, and dominant ideologies and trends. These relations are the results of a long-lasting contract between schools and societies: schools promise to deliver certain outcomes, while society promises the framework, resources, and trust that allow for the functioning of the school. But maybe this contract should be renegotiated, as school is not able to fulfill promises, while society lays down unachievable expectations made within toxic paradigms. We may, however, navigate new waters where education, instead of answering harmful demands, may start to play the role of the compass, proposing its own themes and direction, defining alternative tasks and the needed skills. In order to free education from narrow mental models, we should try to design policies which have a chance to support educationally responsive leaders.

Policies that contribute to a revision of the aims and purposes of education

First, we call for policy that would allow revision of the aims and purposes of education. We are waiting for policies that will put the most important issues of the contemporary world at the center and allow them to be discussed with all interested parties. We need to redirect the attention of the public from the ritual and silly games focused on political elections, the past, and the selfish interests and aggression against everything that seems strange. We need policy that will focus on important issues, just to recall them in random order: climate change, environment, public health, dangerous viruses, inequality, poverty, lack of cooperation, effects of the development of technology and social media, and the crisis of democracy.

We need to reject policy that works on us like a painkiller allowing us to forget about the pain, the real problems. For now, we seem more interested in the beauty pageants of politicians concerned more about their political future instead ofabout lethal global threats.

After months of the pandemic, instead of a new order, new solutions, new designs for social, political, and economic realms, we are discussing how and when we can go back "to normal." We need politicians who understand what policy is and how important it is, but we do not want to look at them and wait for a reaction. We want to encourage people to put pressure on them and we also want to loudly state that politicians failed us so often that we can imagine policies without politicians, civil policies, climbing bottom up through debates in public squares, in parks, libraries, and in schools. Yes, we will need structures as well but let's start with the process of deliberation around aims and purposes. Which will be beneficial? Should we learn the specific competency that some call "climb the balcony[9]" and others "freeze the moment[10]"? In other words, do we stop doing what we are doing with the highest motivation, involvement, and conviction, and instead look around trying to understand what is really going on.

Policies around control of the curriculum and freedom to innovate and respond

Learning and development in schools is composed of classrooms of teachers and students collectively led by a principal in order to buildup and occupy a curriculum space.[11] The power of responsive educational leadership lies in the ability of the principal to center the focus on teaching and learning. Teachers should insist students experience real-life situations. They must not spend 12 years in a closed classroom or in front of computers; they need to learn while working on real problems with real people in the real world. They also need to learn how valuable diversity is and how possible it is to learn to cooperate across social, class, ethnic, and cultural borders.

The school needs to be radical in exploring issues of diversity and inequality, even against powerful forces in our societies. It is quite natural that state structures often seek a different kind of education promoting selfish nationalistic points of view. But although we may have lately seen a certain popularity for nationalism, it has become outdated and has no energy and

creativity for what is needed in solving today problems. Enclosing ourselves as a group of similar people, building bigger walls at our borders, will bring catastrophe rather than salvation. We know that education is political, teaching and learning is political, and running a school is political. This is why schools are so important. Populists, those who will not help us solve the terrible challenges, will, however, with appropriate language, distort our understanding of history, and claim ownership of singular values. To overcome the crisis arising from misunderstandings around diversity and inequality, we need schools with curriculums prepared to work with youth around these issues. To move on actions needed by the environment, we need a curriculum that provides space for teachers and students to make choices, raise questions, and propose answers.

Education needs policies that give control of the curriculum and freedom to innovate back to the principal and teachers together with the revision of the methods of education and schooling (experiential). We need policy that supports and builds the schools' role in an evolving democracy to ensure equity, equality, and social justice. School is no longer the machine to keep discipline and obedience. Our modern societies always demanded discipline. It was the army that served as the model example of using discipline for its smooth functioning. The school accepted various subordination procedures developed in the army. Michel Foucault[12] emphasized the political utility of various techniques for controlling and manipulating society. Schools were and still are a link in a chain of procedures focused on isolation, segregation, and order, designed for the army, with its hierarchy, plans, time management, buildings, and equipment. They were designed as highly specialized mechanisms and even teaching and training factories. Surveillance had become an important economic factor, an integral part of the production process, combined with political power. Exams were introduced to categorize students according to their abilities and behaviors, which categorized their place in the social stratification. The obsession with controlling time influenced pedagogical practice and a vision of life in which learning was separated from adult life and work.

Every educational leader must be aware that it is expected that he or she makes a conscious effort every day to master cooperative professionalism. As we stated at the beginning of this book, the challenges are enormous, and we need special measures to confront them—new approaches and ideologies, new pedagogy, new curricula and methods, new relationships,

new designs, architecture, and social ecology; new, responsive, schools. And we need all of this quickly: remember, we do not have much time.

Policies around the revision of the methods of education and schooling

Teachers and students in a school work to help solve problems in the local context and contribute to solving related problems in the broader society and around the world. This experiential, problem-solving focus is a visible priority. By flattening vertical leadership hierarchies, respect and prestige is gained by instead building strong relationships with others not based on a position or a title.[13] Classrooms themselves are complex environments. "Complexity thinking characterizes classrooms and pedagogy as a more holistic system, with large numbers of variable linking together in a non-linear, often, unpredictable, fashion."[14] Respect for autonomy and diversity is a key underpinning of the culture of a school as an institution. The methods we use for teaching help us achieve this goal. The ability to find roles for everyone, to respect the varied beliefs that they bring to the institution, to use all the resources is evident. Divergence from the mainstream and diversity itself are an asset, not a burden.[15]

We can change educational culture through policies by moving from focusing on deficits (what we do not have) to supporting development. We should stop using methods that allow our schools to treat people as a uniform and standardized crowd where one model fits everybody. Instead, we should turn to methods that allow people to choose, to decide, to ask questions, to cooperate, to search for data and information, to guess and make mistakes, and finally to do it all in real life, dealing with real problems. School could be a center of local life where youth and adults meet to learn together and solve what is important for them. For now, school is often a storage place for children for the time when their parents work. This cannot last.

The dusk of the human race is evident within the timeframe of the individual life. We do not know the fate of the child starting his or her education right now, but we know that his or her life, due to the state of the environment and the climate crisis, will be extremely difficult. And unfortunately, when we cross the tipping point (it will happen when methane is freed from beneath the ice caps, the Gulf Stream ceases to circulate and flow, or a new even more deadly virus attacks us), everything will collapse

like dominoes. What can be done in school? We need people who understand the situation, with productive mental models and habits, who are able to think and cooperate, are ready to change lifestyles, and are open to radical solutions like forbidding the production of meat or burning coal. They can learn all of this in schools when we organize them differently and where policy makers realize that curriculum is always "in development" and that it must provide the freedom to innovate and respond.

Policies around the development of principals

Developing responsive educational leaders and principals will in part be based on the policies that determine the requirements to serve in such a position. Debates about where leaders come from have always existed. Are they simply identified as the principal because they have been in our midst? Do they emerge as the hero in the middle of a crisis? Are they blessed from on high, tapped, and then suddenly given titles that confer authority?[16] All of these imply a hierarchical leadership, one starting at the top and working down. If leadership is instead dialogic and distributive, then the value and work of leaders emerges from action; it develops from learning.[17] We have read many times about the need for a redesign of the preparation of principals. During the ongoing HIV/AIDS crisis in South Africa, Moyo and Smits[18] have summarized their research as saying leadership training is inadequate for the context of South African schools, and lacks management skill development focused on how to deal with health and disease. The same could be said about other challenges we have discussed and in other parts of the world.

Responsive school leaders are always working on themselves at all stages of life, making the most of their resources, talents, and opportunities and gaining new enriching experiences. They are working to heighten the potential of the people forming the school community in every aspect. Today policies need to help principals understand that school has the capacity to change into a democratic entity. School principals and supportive teachers are able to change it. The development of a climate of trust and support is important. What principals need is training on how to build it. As the work of school focuses on teaching and learning, responds to challenges that we see around the world, and works through a constant cycle of reflection on actions, the school itself re-forms. Ultimately, the methods

used to create a quality educational environment strengthen democratic life in the school and community and transform the system of educating students and ourselves.

There are policies related to effective school management and training for both those working as principals and training to become one. Principals awaken the aspirations of students, parents and employees, and give them support. This contributes to better teaching results, leading to solving real problems. School leaders today must become those who ensure effective student learning and employee development.

When we look at how principals are trained in many places, there is a clear sense that change is necessary. Building the right system of education, development, and improvement of educational leaders requires a clear definition of their responsibilities and providing them with adequate opportunities for development throughout their entire careers. Principals need help to raise their awareness of the conditions in the culture of the school, their key role in school learning, and improving the quality of work in the school. The aim of programs, we suggest, should prepare a model for training, improving, and supporting educational leaders at various levels. The aims need to include careful attention to the main elements of the selection system, and development of a pool of individuals from diverse backgrounds in the education system.

Those calling for educating leaders for social justice have advocated that "when school leaders complete their formal preparation programs, they must meet the requirements of (sic) the definition of social justice."[19] The definition focuses on increasing student achievement, raising critical consciousness. Doing it by educating leaders in "intentional, heterogenous learning communities" that reflect broad diversity.[20]

Programs we have been involved in define the main values in the principal development program as centered on care. By doing so, the development of principals increases the chances for educational success of individuals, groups, and organizations. A principal development program needs to be an invitation to a learning-centered, collaborative, educational leadership model. The individuals who join these programs need to develop their understanding of the concept of re-forming school, of reconstruction around education.

Within a strong principal development program, coaches support participants in development, modifying their activities depending on the needs

of the community and the capacities being focused on. The most important work is focused on strengthening the skills of working as a group, deliberating, and making decisions. Looking for information, seeking experts in the community, and finding ways to build relationships between the school and the community become important capabilities.

Policies should require participants to work through various learning spaces, as well as to see simulations of the world of the school through workshops, group presentations, exercises, simulations, discussions, and similar activities where participants and colleagues perform various tasks serving both school development and leadership acquisition experiences. The next area of focus involves self-reflection, and the reading of various articles that connect these individuals to the literature about leadership: the centrality of learning and development with high expectations for all students, culturally responsive leadership, leadership focused on the environment, and awareness of the roles of technology now and in the future. Program participants should spend time reading and accessing experts in theory and practice, writing and reflecting in their own learning journals, answering questions inviting reflection about what they are experiencing. There also should be explicit activities and space for collaborative discussions and work with critical groups of friends, smaller groups in which participants support themselves in performing tasks or solving problems.

When designing changes in the training process, we clearly emphasize the need to change priorities: from leadership training to leadership development, moving from a focus on the single person to a focus on how that individual builds relationships and works with groups and teams; from short-term interactions to a recursive process of experience in the community, and then back to discussions and time for reflection with critical friends and facilitators. We recognize that this is not easy and it is very difficult to organize. It is however, essential. We need to work in programs to try to deconstruct the capabilities possessed by the participants, their mental models. We push them to build their awareness of social capital, develop empathy, instill attitudes centered on taking-action, and building the belief that the principal should serve others. Policies for strong principal development programs help educational leaders discover their needs, values, priorities, and work with them to strengthen their modes of action.

Policies around education in a post-industrialized, capitalist society

One of the contemporary challenges pointed out in Chapter 2 is the influence of new technology and the impact of social media. We need policies that reflect their impact on education both in the near term and in the coming future. We are surrounded by technological wonders. We communicate, we travel, we learn, we play, we buy, and we work with technology as if geography, time, or other barriers do not exist. Robots and artificial intelligence (AI) can diagnose terrible diseases or do surgery better than doctors, find a new antibiotic or dangerous virus earlier than the World Health Organization, track down a person or a money transfer better than secret agents, and more. The development of the capabilities of technology is accelerating. We are impressed, sometimes awed. We use everything, sometimes without thinking about the ramifications. And we pay the price. This will probably be a shrinking labor market for those who have jobs based on mechanical repetition, concentration, and precision. People will need to relearn how they fit into this emerging world. Machine learning and automatization will bring enormous financial benefits. Scientists and activists already warn us about even greater inequality, and ask the important question: how will we share these benefits? The highest price for technological development is change in our personalities and in our societies.

In this post-industrial context, social media and its algorithms know us better than we do: they are a substitute for real friends and they select our hobbies and identify the politicians we trust. Robots will likely take our jobs. Schools and leaders may help us to create and maintain healthy and useful relations with technology, but it needs a human touch, and we need to design those relations in a way that will be beneficial for us. We need to be more human and start differentiating ourselves even more from artificial intelligence. Schools need to help us accept that AI is better than us in several areas and we should not compete with it.[21] School needs to teach us to adapt and focus on honing skills fit for the historic context in which we live. We can't just add another task. We need to redesign education.

Policies need to reflect these changes and the ones to come. The process of teaching, of school, and of leading will change as well. One of the traditional roles for schools has been to pass on information in a textbook or other prepared resources from the teacher to the students. How strange does this sound today? How awkward is it to think that maybe it still

happens in classrooms? Why would anyone try to do it today? We suffer from content shock caused by permanent access to information, where the richness of data, information, opinions, and facts is more disturbing than informing. We lose attention and limit our capacity to understand and use it. Collective knowledge mixed with lies, misunderstandings, and manipulation is increasing every second, and this prevents us from learning. The aim of education should be modified: students in school should not acquire information, but by using pieces of information learn *how* to use them, how to judge them, and how to analyze them. We are fragmented as societies, we live in echo chambers, but in schools, young people still have a chance to experience society in its wide diversity, exchange experiences and perspectives of different social classes, and see how other people organize their lives. We need policies that start to talk about the aims of education in this world we are building.

Again, these technological changes are too complex of an issue for schools to face through education alone. Principals need policymakers who turn the attention of society toward the challenges we face. As societies, states, and humankind, we need actions on multiple levels, but we also must expect that principals and teachers will launch programs that support the development of students, for example, around technology. Independent and critical thinking, understanding the ethics of the Internet, the ability to venture outside of an information bubble—these are, at the very least, what may be developed in schools. These skills should help the student to be a self-aware, purpose-driven, focused, curious questioner, a creative thinker, collaborative, and finally able to work through uncertainty and solve problems.[22] When we understand the challenges, we may prepare for them, and then design the solutions. Education that ignores challenges is useless. Education that ignores the challenges we face in our communities and societies will not accomplish the aims that we, as human beings, need to accomplish.

Policies that support and build the role of schools in fulfilling the promise of democracy

There is nothing too revealing in stating that democracy is at risk. Democratic states both old and new are confronting a complex set of political, social, and economic challenges. Leaders have difficulty in a complicated time.

We live in an era of radical insecurity. Our traditional tools to understand reality and to predict the near future do not work. Experts told us Brexit would never happen; they also claimed that Donald Trump would not win, and politicians reassured us that democracy was stable. Liberal democracy may be perverted in two ways. Democracy may become illiberal, especially in places where the majority of the people support subordination of independent institutions to the fantasies of executive power, or limitations on the rights of minorities. In the second way, a liberal system might be undemocratic even when regular elections are organized, which happens when a political system is so depraved that elections rarely lead to transformation of social views into public policy.[23]

New challenges have emerged, exposing the urgent need to ensure resilient democracy, and these are: 1) advocating for social justice in democracy—equity and fair opportunities of expressing the needs and views of the disenfranchised and the political opposition; 2) addressing the eruption of hate and discrimination as performed to and toward citizens; 3) equipping citizens with knowledge, skills, and approaches—including an ability to evaluate disinformation, verify the reliability of sources of information, and critical thinking to make sense of the world around us—that would empower them to act in the new and challenging political and economic reality.[24] Francis Fukuyama noticed a deficit of respect. In our world, many people feel unnoticed. They need to struggle through every day in their social and work life. They experience something that is not a democracy, or at most perhaps a toxic democracy. Schools must play a part and that means the principal has a role. Democratic principles, "habits of the heart," need to be pushed even further in the face of the urgent responsibility that citizens and governments have for the disenfranchised: solidarity, equity, and inclusion have to be considered critical building blocks of democracy now.

We wrote earlier: "if one role for schools in democratic societies is to help prepare young people for active life (…) then schools need to become more democratic." But it is important to recognize that educational leadership is shaped by its wider environment and by the power relations therein. The nature of that environment will be formed by a multiplicity of factors unique to each institution—these may range from local "market conditions" to the impact of global economic pressures. What is certain is that within education, across phases and across continents, the policy context impacts decisively on shaping the institutional environment.

Understanding and anticipating policy therefore becomes a key feature of leadership—understanding where policies come from, what they seek to achieve, how they impact on the learning experience and the consequences of implementation are all essential features of educational leadership. Key practitioners in schools and colleges, rather than being passive implementers of policies determined and decided elsewhere, are able to shape national policy at an early stage, through their involvement in interest groups and professional associations, or their position in government policy forums and think-tanks. It can be more accurate to describe a process of policy development, rather than use the more traditional term of policy-making. Sharp distinctions between policy generation and implementation can be unhelpful, as they fail to account for the way in which policy is formed and re-formed as it is being "implemented." The crucial role of human agency in the development of policy must be recognized. Policy is political: it is about the power to determine what is done. It shapes who benefits and for what purpose, and who pays. It goes to the very heart of educational philosophy—what is education for? For whom? Who decides?[25]

Schools and teachers cannot work on social change alone, especially under the burden of previous and current social and educational policies. The public sector and public space have been privatized step by step. Space available for communities to gather and interact has decreased, while space for consumption has increased. Freedom of citizens is being limited day by day, supported by the narrative of safety. The atrophy of solidarity is painfully evident. Technology is increasing the gap between the included and the excluded. The rigid rules during the time of coronavirus have not helped. This is not happening by accident; this is a result of policies and decisions of our governments and other public bodies. Every innovative leader, trying to respond to reality in an active way, has to be aware of the nature and strength of mental models and the power of language used to justify passiveness and discourage any change in the public discourse.

The links between democracy and education are implicit in most historical and philosophical accounts of democracy. Education is instrumental for the ideal society in which citizens would develop their own potential. What has happened to education that our societies have today turned toward anti-democratic emotions? Although we will not analyze this problem here, we find it obvious that the struggle for democratic education has to be central to thinking about educational systems and institutions. For the

sake of democratic society, we need democratic schools and our imagined responsive school gives a chance for that. Again, we appeal for broad public discussion about the aims of education, about educational policies and decision-makers, about curricula and teaching and learning strategies.

Systemic change

All of the policy proposals we have discussed, and the work that would support their implementation, presuppose a system of education open to change. Systemic change is not easy. Senge has told us that "two particular systems thinking skills are vital: seeing patterns of interdependency, and seeing into the future."[26] If we are going to be successful developing responsive educational leadership, we must pay careful attention to the system and the change it requires.

We need to ask all kinds of questions if we want to know the capacity of the system to introduce responsive education: What is the approach to education? What are the values surrounding the curriculum, assessment, and pedagogy? How do they affect resourcing and organizational structures? Why was a policy adopted? On whose terms was the policy adopted? On what grounds have these selections been justified? In whose interests? How have competing interests been negotiated? Why now? Why has the policy emerged at this time? What are the consequences? Asking these questions should be a starting point in finding aspects of policy: context, text (content), and consequences.[27]

General social structures, political and economic systems, stratification, and institutionalized inequalities impact social ideologies and structures of dominance according to which educational systems are built and later organizational schemes and curricula are designed. It is quite easy to notice that this level of social life does not work as we would want to see it work. Could anyone expect that an education system tailored according to dominant structures would support change? The second level of social life includes institutions like governments, churches, companies, families, media, and schools. On that level, specific dilemmas and problems are solved, while questions about the structure of the institutions and accepted theoretical concepts and ideologies are answered. These answers, beliefs, directions, and orders are also implemented and influenced by the third, interpersonal, level of social life. The processes, interactions, gestures,

rituals, habits, which determine our everyday life, equally impact life in schools. Expectations of teachers toward students, toward each other, toward men and women, children, different occupations or social roles are shaped through them. Thousands of interactions influence the final shape of the school reality.[28] It is important to keep all of this in mind while designing changes.

Aside from fragmentation, there is another basic obstacle to change. It is the mental model, the paradigm in which we function. The classical paradigm of leadership is based on individuals and elites. Education is understood as a competition for individuals and their better future, not a better future for our societies. Politics is run as a manipulative machine to secure the next term in office. Economies are managed only to make the wealthy wealthier and the poor poorer. The paradigms according to which society, the economy, leadership, and education are organized are toxic, almost as toxic as fossil fuels. What we do in education, by strengthening these mental models, assumptions, and beliefs, is as harmful to the world as the burning of fossil fuels.

We need to change the paradigm of education. It should be done by us, the citizens, not by politicians or experts. "Because of our human intentionality (limited, of course, by infinitely many constraints), we can make things happen intentionally rather than randomly."[29] Deep change requires legitimacy through the process of deliberation and participatory decision-making. Not through referenda or elections, but through painful, albeit democratic, negotiations. We as society are not sure what kind of schools we need, but this is not a problem. There are quite a few and varied proposals that might be analyzed and which should be considered. But deep change can come when we reach the state of a critical mass, system change, "when new properties and new behaviours emerge as a result of sufficient complexity (sufficient scale of and diversity among constituent factors and the exponentially greater number of connections among them)."[30]

The main responsibility of a leader is supporting others. Not demanding hard work or controlling it but supporting others in the performance of tasks and helping them be aware of their own potential, their scope of power and responsibility, so that they can participate in the process of making decisions and be ready for co-leadership. Stewardship, what we might call *systemic stewardship*, requires and, in return, creates trust and support structures, where the main visible priority is eagerness to help others,

and the hierarchy is flat and respect is gained through relationships, not positions.[31] Being in service requires directing people and organizations toward the implementation of the vision and long-term success, as well as the perception of the goals related to the community and the environment.[32] Principals do not work alone, but in a group that is able to take on leadership responsibilities depending on the situation and needs. Educational leadership can be a group experience and a democratic experience if leaders understand that their task is to reveal the potential of others, so that they are able to fulfill their responsibilities in an autonomous and consistent manner.

Protest and dialogue: The fabric of reality

It is worth mentioning that among the hardest obstacles to overcome when introducing changes for a better world and better education, is the way we ourselves act in order to solve problems. We work in isolation and even in competition with each other. We work to show who is better, who should be selected for promotion, and who is the loser who doesn't deserve it. We should never be allowed to turn the deliberation process into a fight, even when we come from different standpoints. We also should not allow our best debates and idea generation sessions to remain behind closed doors. We need universal, serious talk about the value of democracy, solidarity, and justice. It is necessary to talk about why we need school, what goals those in school have to achieve, and how it should be done. Educational leadership can help to find answers to these questions, but also to the environmental problems, inequalities, various crises, and issues connected to diversity, the economy, and democracy which were raised at the beginning of the book.

We, as human beings, need democratic societies in which engaged citizens work together to implement tasks that contribute to sustainable development and social cohesion.[33] We need to push for democratic principles and ensure that solidarity, inclusion, and equity will be critical building blocks of our world. Ensuring social justice in democracy and fair opportunities (including access to a clean natural environment) for everyone regardless of their gender, age, race, ability, ethnicity, social class, religion, sexual orientation, wealth, or health has been a challenge for years, but it is a critical task for our survival. It should be also remembered that the

majority has no right to abuse power to violate the basic rights of a minority. Democracy requires ensuring the articulation of the voice of the disenfranchised. Unfortunately, oppression of and discrimination against minorities is a global fact. In a world where different groups and even governments use aggressive language and systems, and also try to excuse authoritarian actors and nationalistic approaches with slogans of security and law and order, the realities we face can haunt us. We need broad programs of advocacy and education focused on fundamental democratic principles.

Education, through schools led by responsive educational leaders, has the potential to become a site of resistance against inequality and anti-democratic values through the implementation of good practices and learning. It will only be effective, however, when politicians and teachers stop defending their interests and start authentic dialogue with marginalized groups.[34] It would be also beneficial to see transformations going on below the surface, among new generations. To be effective, we should assume that people prefer to do things for their own development and for the good of others, and not just to keep their jobs or earn money that they may use for consumption of unneeded goods. People no longer want to work in organizations built like the old factory or the prerobotic assembly line.[35] However, we are imprisoned somewhere between the fear of the unknown, fear of making a mistake, traditional mental models, and solutions that may have been useful in the past but have ceased to be today. Having said that, what we seek as a better world is not a utopia. It will always be in the process of becoming.

For years, we worked in the business of improving education. But are we sure *why* it needed improvements? What has happened to education and how have we started to think it needs improvement? Inevitably, we need to agree that the entire 20th century was an arena for bureaucratic developments and managerial instruments imported from industry. In order to manage the process of teaching and learning, different techniques were implemented and the quality of education was tied to procedures and standards that minimized operating costs. Knowing that we, as humans, decided to walk this path now behind us, we should understand that we may choose a different path today. Governments, the people, made decisions that led us to the point we are now, so it should not be difficult to expect governments to make decisions again. In the past, basic arguments against ideas considered "too bold" and "too rebellious" were based on information about organizational and intellectual deficits, and of course about financial scarcity, with

the universal response of "how will we pay for this?" Today, in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic and our environmental crisis, these arguments are no longer valid. We must find new ways to center on our societal, political, and economic realities, as well as education and school.

Reflection and transformation

Writing this book is difficult for us on an emotional level: despite our very positive and life-long personal and professional experiences, we carry a bitter conviction that something is going wrong. We have addressed many negative phenomena and pointed out situations that in our minds are destructive for both society and education.

This is not to say that nothing constructive has happened. For years, numerous initiatives were launched from the top down or, less often from the bottom up, in order to improve schools and educational systems, but rarely did they bring about satisfying results. Somewhere along the way, in the process of change, aims were forgotten, directions blurred, action disappeared, and people became disappointed. Sometimes reforms reversed the positive outcomes of previous actions.

One of the critical moments in the life of one of us was the peaceful transformation of Poland in 1989: Grzegorz's world changed dramatically, in a way he could not have even dreamed about. The country where he was born and raised changed from, in metaphorical terms, a prison to a democratic state. In the autumn of 1989 when he was allowed, for the first time in his life, to leave Poland, his first trip was to Vienna in Austria. This left in him a lasting memory of leaving a dark empire—symbolized by dark streets of a border town in what was then Czechoslovakia—into the light, symbolized by the bright streets of a nearby Austrian town bustling with people walking in the October evening. And although we are writing about leadership and education, this memory is not irrelevant, as it gives us the hope that anything and everything is possible.

We decided to cite Grzegorz's memories from the 1980s when he was in high school in Zabrze, a city in the industrial region of Upper Silesia:

> During my high school we lived through the transformation of society. In the walls of the school I experienced a short 'Solidarity' carnival. But then the dark night of martial law, and finally the nightmare of boredom and a lack of universal rationality. It was the context of my learning, maturing,

> becoming human. My high school was a training ground for life, a place where I learned about the rules governing that unfriendly world in relatively safe environment. The social and classroom boredom was rarely interrupted by anything encouraging intellectual activity, or any other kind of activity. The monotony was colored by breaks spent in the men's toilet and inter-class sports. Among the cultural events that helped us to survive the time were provocative books to read and rock music to listen to, at home or in concert (Polish eighties bands were an important element of our lives). American literature, poetry and Polish rock music inspired us intellectually. Once a year there was a cinema festival called Film Confrontations. Loves and love allowed us to practice traditional social roles, although we didn't know they were traditional, and we were convinced of our uniqueness. Only a few of us devoted ourselves to political discussions, which were mainly informal, because when I tried to talk politics in class, principal (who taught that class) would say, with pain in his voice, "Grzegorz, please let it go ...". I have never blamed him for that. I was just grateful that he didn't throw me out of school when the opportunity arose, and patiently endured visits from the SB (the political police) and my meetings with them in his office. I did not know that I was participating in a game of pantomime that would end in a few years. He was convinced that this would be his sad reality forever. The school, unfortunately, did not differ much from what was happening outside, but it was a safe place and only a few teachers failed our trust.

Our lives have been full of steps forward and steps back. They have seen numerous transformations on both the policy and practical level. Looking back, we notice that like the majority of people we (the authors) were attracted by the idea of "eternal happiness in the democratic paradise,"[36] which we developed after collapse of Iron Curtain and communism in 1989. And like the majority, we are disappointed today, when we see that it never really deeply happened. It is also clear for us today that expecting a well-deserved rest after all that hard work was too naive. The work for democracy never ends: if you want to live in democratic, open, tolerant, environmentally wise society, you need to be active in promoting and securing it in every minute of the day. Your value system and policies need to be transparent and obvious to everyone. In building an educational system that supports change, however, it is useful to be aware that unfortunately in the long-lasting tradition of educational reform some elements almost always reappear, regardless of the previous outcomes, historical

moments, geographical place, or philosophical paradigm of the initiative. The elements are the strong conviction of the necessity of reform on the side of those who recommend the reform, and then, on different levels of understanding and involvement among participants in the implementation process—and the discrepancy between plans and the reality of change.

In this book, we ask for a change, being sure that it is needed, but we are not proposing anything spectacularly new. We appeal to knowledge, values, and beliefs and we refer to well-known facts and theories. We are not proposing a solution; we are asking for a reaction to the current situation. We beg for the involvement of everyone who sees the necessity of action, and we expect to end education as it is right now. We know that it is not easy. We are aware of the rudimentary obstacles.

Because it is time to act differently, we should encourage ourselves and others to raise our heads and look around, to use heresy, to contest the belief that it is "as it should be." Let us bet on those who dare to question the status quo. Encouraging conversations, encouraging contestation of the existing order and engaging in building a new one is a risky and certainly not very effective activity. But there is no room for continuation of existing policies or for quick solutions. We need to reorganize ourselves so that we can decide what is happening around us. Self-organization requires effort, time, and determining what is most important. The truth comes together in dialogue.[37]

Dialogue as a tool

A democratic society is one in which the goal of education is not imposed from the outside but is subject to constant discussion and deliberation.[38] Responsive leadership that makes use of the tools of dialogue strengthens the organizational culture and the ability to develop internal policies and practices while working more systemically to influence the policies and practices that exist. "Effective leaders must cultivate open-mindedness in order to continually challenge their own favored views and to learn how to embrace multiple points of view in the service of building understanding and commitment."[39]

Conducting the conversation, developing the skill of discussion, cannot be solely the task of the education sector and those of us in schools. We need to involve larger social groups and their leaders, citizens, organizations,

associations, politicians, and finally a global society that can possibly show the political will to include education in the mainstream of considerations regarding the future of humanity. This conversation should be led by people from inside educational areas: educational leaders and teachers, who understand the needs of modern societies, see the need for school transformation, and are not afraid of the responsibility associated with leadership.

Principals have choices. How will we approach those outside the school and interact with the community? What modes of action research and inquiry will we use to investigate issues in the society and their connections to the curriculum we are always building in the classroom? How will we connect the work of the student in a desk to the issues we find in the world? The ways in which we communicate, practice decision-making, and make visible our understanding of the purpose of education is what will develop a sense of confidence. Leadership is a process of communication, it is an ever-present dialogue, the goal of which is creating a space for the opportunities, conditions and support for curiosity, a search for solutions, and developing a sense of our common humanity.

We are essential to each other. We share ownership for our learning. Classrooms, schools, and other educational institutions must reflect those facts. In this way, the postulates of Paolo Freire[40] regarding dialogue, which claim that dialogue is not a way of exchanging information, but an existential necessity, will be secured, because it is through dialogue that we create reality and broaden our sense of humanity.

People create reality, so only people are responsible for the quality of the world. Social, political, legal, and all other kinds of interactions help us to build our reality. Every social process, as well as leadership, happens when a community develops and uses shared agreements to create results that have collective value.[41] In order to understand complex reality, we need to accept its social and dynamic character. In a world of multiple perspectives, all actions and rules should be based in the appropriate context. People need to make the effort to interpret reality and create an understanding of what it means to them. It is irrational to look for objective measures of phenomena or for intervention of someone wiser than us. The meaning is not waiting in objects, events, or actions, but it arises from interactions and interpretation. The connection between an object and its meaning is fluid, under the influence of language and relations,[42] so we need to take responsibility and ownership over reality through negotiating meaning with others.

We have tools which can be used in the process of creating meaning and reality. Reflection, education, critical thinking, awareness, and dialogue are accessible, although not commonly used. Dialogue is a rare commodity in today's world. Societies are polarized, and the language of public debate sharpens, limiting exchanges with the "opposition camp" to hostile polemics. But dialogue as an act of creation cannot serve to dominate one over the other. Dialogue cannot exist without love for the world and for people. As an act of courage, love cannot be sentimental; as an act of freedom, it cannot be manipulated. Entering dialogue, you cannot expect to end up in a certain, predetermined place; you need to accept that the outcome of a dialogue is unknown at the beginning. Two or more parties bring their expectations, plans, values, and actions to the table, so it is impossible to reach an outcome expected by only one of the involved groups or individuals. So, dialogue cannot exist without humility. Dialogue breaks down if the parties lack humility. Dialogue requires faith in humanity, faith in the ability to build and rebuild our world.[43] It should lead us toward the primary aim of education: emancipation of the human being in order to change the world for the better.

Promises and hope

We suffer because our cupboards are bare of good ideas. We are afraid to admit that, and we are also reluctant to experiment or move against the mainstream. The system of education, the educational world, usually punishes individuals for the failures experienced by innovators, so the majority does not want to risk experimentation. We are not recommending launching risky initiatives; instead we expect reflection, data analysis, and conversations about costs and benefits of any action filtered by local conditions and context. The development of policies in education supportive of responsive principals needs to be developed.

We have already recommended that we should stop thinking about leadership as about a set of skills and characteristics of the individual, and start thinking about leadership as a set of conditions, as about the process of empowering people to achieve what they believe is worth achieving and what they want to achieve. And as we also mentioned, teaching is not about passing on information and testing the reception of that information, but about relationships, creating a supportive environment and helping

in acquiring certain skills along with the needed values that add sense to every activity. And we need more time to discuss the element of the policy supporting the development of educational leaders.

We want to underline the awareness of leaders who are inspired more by their own intrinsic motivation. Leaders need a deep awareness of their own attitudes, theories, and even limitations that determine the way they function in the world and at school, and a willingness to serve others in the process of growth and development. That awareness might be called intellectual sensitivity, the connection of our efforts to a critical thought and perspective while looking on the contemporary world. By developing this we help leaders to become public intellectuals—people who understand the complexity of issues that societies deal with, their roots in the specificity of ideologies and value systems, the outcomes of the accepted assumptions and solutions, and also the character of the interventions needed.

Building on conclusions based on reflection around the world, professional leaders accept the necessity of activity for social change understood as a main goal of pedagogical work. They involve schools, teachers, and students in different projects inspiring others to make effort for the public good. Inequality is simply not accepted. Like Noguera has told us, "...strategies aimed at reducing disparities in achievement will never succeed if they do not address the blatant denial of basic educational opportunities and the unmet social needs of children."[44] Leaders are a certain kind of activist, an educational activist. Policy that allows leaders to become critical public intellectuals and educational activists should also support them in becoming cooperative professionals. Educational leaders need to develop a scientific approach to the process of teaching and learning that enables constant revision of what we claim as knowledge, mastery of skills, and autonomous construction of each leader's definition of their profession through research, dialogue, and most importantly today, cooperation with others.[45]

Policies that support principals in building awareness of the world will require all of us to think carefully about the work we engage in in schools. A strategic framework must center on the conditions that are essential for the principal, the teachers, and the students in a school to be responsive. If we are to be successful in reconceptualizing the aims of education, the conditions in which we choose and act must evolve. The conditions and framework are the elements of a hoped-for reality in schools, an opportunity

to live in an as-if space.[46] The framework for *Responsive Educational Leadership* proposes specific work by principals to:

- Build the capacities of authenticity
- Center their work on learning and development
- Focus on equity, equality, and social justice
- Contextualize and reflect with those around us about the work
- Develop distributive, participatory governance
- Deepen schools' involvement in and mirroring of democracy

There is no single, best, scenario for the development of educational leadership, and there will never be one. Policy focused on supporting the improvement of educational leadership should accept the ambiguity and uncertainty that overwhelms everyone leaving the beaten path. It is obvious that it is difficult for people to fully understand a new way of working if they have never tried it before. We will need to accept that learning and training have to happen while practicing educational leadership, so every initiative needs to sketch a support system for those already practicing educational leadership. They will need to learn how to work differently than they are working now, and do it as they work. Policy should allow more time for reflection over emerging new ways of doing things. We want responsive leaders who are able and mentally ready to cooperate, who focus on relations and care, who can work in an environment allowing participatory leadership and support the ownership of everybody involved. We want responsive leaders who support development through group reflection and decision-making impacted by the context of the institution.

Respecting autonomy and differences while dealing effectively with challenging inequities are important elements of leadership. To help leaders not be afraid of diversity, policy needs to allow openness to different perspectives, opinions, and ways of achieving goals. Policy cannot concentrate only on one right solution or way of delivering results. If we want to help societies thrive as a result of the strength of diversity, we need to nourish diversity in schools. Effective co-existence is not about ignoring differences, but about using them to broaden the perspectives we bring to the process of brainstorming solutions to intractable problems.

Learning is a social process. It takes place in a group through acts of communication, interaction, and cooperation. It is also a democratic process,

in which everyone has the right to make decisions about how it will take place. The learning that takes place for educational leaders occurs in the workplace, where important things happen in innovative partnerships, cooperation networks. Research matters and leaders have to learn to use data and evidence for the effectiveness of some practices and to work with various potential partners. Above all, we need to continually remind ourselves about the importance of the context, the societal, linguistic, political, historical, and cultural location of leaders' activities. At the center of this work are especially the values that support the vision of open, democratic, responsive education for all students —education of the highest quality and available to all.

Democracy is often viewed as too complex and unmanageable for the world of education. Some argue that schools need to be managed, managed in the sense of one person giving directions and others following. If one role for schools in democratic societies is to help prepare young people for and be involved in active life, then schools need to become more democratic in order to pass on a democratic ethos. Democracy as a political philosophy is by most examples, limited. That is, not all decisions are those of the government, in fact many of the finest democratic documents are those that deny the government the right to make choices and set directions, and instead insist that it is the work of the people.

Schools face similar issues to each other. They might try for a year to get different social service agencies to work within the schools, for the common good. But even with the ultimate goals that are served by working together, everyone is afraid of losing their funding, concerned with protecting their turf. But what would happen if they just went in and entered into discussions across institutional boundaries and worked to make the lives of students better? Or what if they walked away because one side or the other did not want to be there? Would the outcomes be different for society?

On a higher level, a national level, there needs to be an ongoing discussion that defines what we mean by democracy and what is implied as a result. Will we know the democratic choices when we are confronted with them? Will we know the common good when it is laid out in front of us? Or are we destined to work only in self-interest and in the self-interest of the institutions of which we are a part? Again, we come back not only to a conceptual question, but also a question of the purpose for education.

Toward the future

When you walk through the door of a responsive school and meet the students, teachers, and educational leaders in the building, it is clear that they are struggling to answer the call to take-action. They are working to understand how their studies and the work of learning build awareness of the world around them. By becoming more open to others voices and working to listen, principals engage the community. And in this process of engagement, a continual effort at self-evaluation functions. Reflection about their process of deliberation and dialog is a part of the fabric of the place. Critiques and voices are gathered, accessing voices in the school, from the students, and in the community. Responsive schools and their leaders recognize they have agency. They can act with confidence and be willing to fail while trying. When this school is working well, it is the hope for improvement in our societies. It is the center of a transformation, a systemic effort to problem-solve related to challenges in the world.

As we look around the world, the contours of responsive leadership come in to view. The practices, attitudes, and capabilities need to become a part of the system of education. Policy changes, decision-making authority around teaching and learning, and decisions about how we develop the next generation of responsive educational leaders all become the final pieces of this complex puzzle.

By listening and engaging in dialog, we allow new ideas to emerge, and new understandings to develop. The broad community—those in the school building and those outside it—engage in discussion and debates around the purposes of education and how we tackle challenges in the world. But how do we scale up these actions across a region or a country? How do we work with others to provide support and build impactful networks? While always remembering how the work we engage in needs to look on the ground, in the unique contexts each of us inhabit, moving toward responsive leadership means we need to also be working to develop the focus on learning and development across systems, regions, and even countries.

Someday, the next student—possibly named Marianna, Siyabonga, Juan, Emma, Kai, or Ciara—will stand up and say we have a problem in our community, and we need to do something about it. We hope their school, their teachers, and their principal will be prepared to listen. Principals in

the school will be ready to work with those in the classrooms and the community to investigate, deliberate, and act. It is the promise of education. It is the promise of *Responsive Educational Leadership.*

Notes

1 Bauman, Bauman, Kociatkiewicz, and Kostera (2017).
2. Wood and Butt (2014) in citing Mitchell (2009).
3 Bell and Stevenson (2006) pp. 11–12.
4. MacBeath, Dempster, Frost, Johnson, and Swaffield (2018).
5. MacBeath, Dempster, Frost, Johnson, and Swaffield (2018) pp. 6–13.
6. Gewirtz and Cribb (2009) pp. 157–159.
7. Mason (2016) p. 437.
8. Mason (2016) p. 437.
9. Parks (2005).
10. Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, and Flowers (2004).
11. Cary (2006).
12. Foucalt (2009) pp. 131–157.
13. Mazurkiewicz (2011).
14. Wood and Butt (2014) p. 694.
15. Ibid.
16. MacBeath (2004).
17. Svenja, Kaplan, Eckhard, and Bayer (2012); Jerrim Sims (2019).
18. Moyo and Smit (2017).
19. McKenzie, Christman, Hernandez, Fierro, Capper, Dantley, González, Cambron-McCabe, and Scheurich (2008) p. 117.
20. Ibid. p. 117.
21. Harari (2017).
22. Orme (2019).
23. Mounk (2019).
24. Ibid.
25. Bell and Stevenson (2006).
26. Senge (2006) p. 39.
27. Bell and Stevenson (2006).
28. Sadovnik, Cookson, Semel and Coughlan (2006).
29. Mason (2016) p. 438.
30. Ibid. p. 439.

31. Mazurkiewicz (2011).
32. Bezzina and Madalińska-Michalak (2014).
33. Houser and Kuzmic (2001).
34. Lynch (2012).
35. Godin (2008).
36. This phrase indicates our bitter cynicism which had appeared when we understood how naive our expectation was.
37. Tischer and Żakowski (2009).
38. Biesta (2006).
39. Senge (2006) p. 41.
40. Freire (1998).
41. Ospina and Sorenson (2006).
42. Crotty (1998).
43. Freire (1998)
44. Noguera (2017).
45. Apple (2012); Giroux (1988); MacLaren (2003).
46. Walker (2010).

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