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DEVELOPMENT

CHANGING TEACHERS, CHANGING TIMES

teachers' work and culture in the postmodern age

ANDY HARGREAVES

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Andy Hargreaves

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This book is dedicated to my mother and late father. Although denied the benefits of the education they merited and deserved, they always appreciated its value. After my father's death, my mother unhesitatingly supported my own education through and beyond the compulsory years, sometimes at considerable personal sacrifice. Sacrifice is one of the most unfashionable yet underrated human virtues. For my mother, and those of her sex, her class and her time, it was the supreme way to care. Especially for those who give it, sacrifice needs no repayment; only acceptance and redemption. It is to those who have sacrificed themselves for their children's future, and to my mother in particular, that this book is dedicated.

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Series Editor's Introduction

In Britain and Australia, they call it teaching. In the United States and Canada, they call it instruction. Whatever terms we use, we have come to realize in recent years that the teacher is the ultimate key to educational change and school improvement. The restructuring of schools, the composition of national and provincial curricula, the development of benchmark assessments – all these things are of little value if they do not take the teacher into account. Teachers don't merely deliver the curriculum. They develop, define it and reinterpret it too. It is what teachers think, what teachers believe and what teachers do at the level of the classroom that ultimately shapes the kind of learning that young people get. Growing appreciation of this fact is placing working with teachers and understanding teaching at the top of our research and improvement agendas.

For some reformers, improving teaching is mainly a matter of developing better teaching methods, of improving instruction. Training teachers in new classroom management skills, in active learning, cooperative learning, one-to-one counselling and the like is the main priority. These things are important, but we are also increasingly coming to understand that developing teachers and improving their teaching involves more than giving them new tricks. We are beginning to recognize that, for teachers, what goes on inside the classroom is closely related to what goes on outside it. The quality, range and flexibility of teachers' classroom work are closely tied up with their professional growth – with the way that they develop as people and as professionals.

Teachers teach in the way they do not just because of the skills they have or have not learned. The ways they teach are also grounded in their backgrounds, their biographies, in the kinds of teachers they have become. Their careers – their hopes and dreams, their opportunities and aspirations, or the frustration of these things – are also important for teachers' commitment, enthusiasm and morale. So too are relationships with their colleagues – either as supportive communities who work together in pursuit of common goals and continuous improvement, or as individuals working in isolation, with the insecurities that sometimes brings.

As we are coming to understand these wider aspects of teaching and teacher development, we are also beginning to recognize that much more than pedagogy, instruction or teaching method is at stake. Teacher development, teachers' careers, teachers' relations with their colleagues, the conditions of status, reward and leadership under which they work – all these affect the quality of what they do in the classroom.

This international series, Teacher Development, brings together some of the very best current research and writing on these aspects of teachers' lives and work. The books in the series seek to understand the wider dimensions of teachers' work, the depth of teachers' knowledge and the resources of biography and experience on which it draws, the ways that teachers' work roles and responsibilities are changing as we restructure our schools, and so forth. In this sense, the books in the series are written for those who are involved in research on teaching, those who work in initial and in-service teacher education, those who lead and administer teachers, those who work with teachers and, not least, teachers themselves.

This book is my personal contribution to the series. The purpose of a series editor's introduction is normally not just to describe a book, but also to show its profile and prominence. When the book in question is one's own, this is obviously difficult. Instead of evaluating the text, therefore, I shall endeavor to summarize it, and to outline some of my purposes in writing it.

"The rules of the world are changing. It is time for the rules of teaching to change with them." These are the closing sentences of *Changing Teachers, Changing Times*, a discussion of the changing nature of teachers' work and culture in a rapidly changing postmodern world. The analysis presented is broad in its scope, provocative in style and continually grounded in richly described examples of what teachers think, say and do.

My argument is that our basic structures of schooling and teaching were established for other purposes at other times. Many of our schools and teachers are still geared to the age of heavy mechanical industry with isolated teachers processing batches of children in classes or standards, in age-based cohorts. While society moves into a postindustrial, postmodern age, our schools and teachers continue to cling to crumbling edifices of bureaucracy and modernity; to rigid hierarchies, isolated classrooms, segregated departments and outdated career structures. The book describes seven fundamental dimensions of the postmodern social condition, and the challenges they pose for teachers and their work. I hope readers will find that my analysis of this postmodern context of teaching has theoretical originality, but also clarity. The subject of postmodernity is too important to be left to academic intellectuals, to be written about in esoteric, inaccessible ways. I have therefore tried to set out the postmodern agendas for teachers' work for a broader audience, without compromising their intellectual richness.

Drawing on intensive interviews with teachers at all levels, this book portrays what happens when society changes but the basic structures of teaching and schooling do not. Teachers become overloaded, they experience intolerable guilt, their work intensifies, and they are remorselessly pressed for time. More and more is added on to existing structures and responsibilities, little is taken away, and still less is completely restructured to fit the new expectations of and demands upon teaching. My book sets out to give a practical and realistic sense of these working realities of teaching, as teachers experience them now.

It also addresses some of the attempts to restructure teaching; their benefits and their drawbacks. Teacher collaboration can provide a positive platform for improvement. It can also degenerate into stilted and unproductive forms of contrived collegiality. Administrators can challenge the restrictive culture of teacher isolation and individualism, but inadvertently eradicate all semblances of creativity and individuality with it. Teachers can sometimes get extra time away from their classes to plan and prepare with one another, but may have less control over how they use it. Secondary schools might weaken the traditional boundaries between the balkan states we have come to know as subject departments, only to see other boundaries, and self-interested sub-groups emerge in their place. In this sense, my book sets out to take a hard-edged look at actual efforts to restructure teachers' work. It is an analysis that is neither cynical nor sentimental, but realistically grounded in the words and work of teachers' currently experiencing changes of this kind.

Changing Teachers, Changing Times is a book that respects and represents teachers and teaching, but not sentimentally or self-indulgently. It is a book written for teachers and those who work with teachers, and a book for researchers who want to understand teaching better.

Andy Hargreaves

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Preface and Acknowledgements

This book is about how teaching is changing and about the choices and challenges facing teachers as we move into the postmodern age. It sets out to provide an accessible yet rigorous account of postmodern society – the kind of society we are now entering – and the distinctive changes it is creating and will create in teachers' work. It does this by giving a careful and respectful hearing to how teachers themselves are already experiencing change in their work. Teachers' words and teachers' work are at the heart of this book – a book that seeks to build bridges between the daily lives of teachers and the profound social changes taking place all around them. It calls for an understanding of these complex social, indeed global changes; and of teachers themselves.

The way most of us have experienced and understood teachers is in terms of what, for good or ill, they have done for us or indeed to us as children. As adults, however, only a few of us have had much opportunity to understand and appreciate what it is that teachers have done to them by other people.

For many years now, in classrooms and in staffrooms, I have studied the working lives of teachers. With children I have been a teacher, and with adults, I continue to be so. I have taught teachers and worked with teachers. My next-door neighbors are teachers, my wife is a teacher, a number of her relatives are teachers, and some of my best friends are teachers. In one way or another, formally and less so, I spend a lot of my time listening to teachers talk about their work and their world.

Notwithstanding the adverse comments people sometimes make about teachers talking "shop" whenever they meet, even at parties, engaging with teachers about their working lives is not an uninteresting task. On the contrary, beneath the stories and the gossip, and often right there within them, teachers' lives are packed with complexity and surprise. Learning about teachers' working lives is a continuous process of unending discovery. At one level, there is so much diversity. The concerns of older teachers are often different from those of younger ones. Secondary teachers see their work differently from elementary or primary teachers, and teachers of some subjects differently from teachers of others. Men teachers tend to view what they do differently from women teachers, teachers in one country or system differently from teachers in another, and teachers in the present differently from their counterparts in the past.

Just as fascinating is the fact that behind all the variations and vicissitudes among teachers' working lives are a number of profound and persistent regularities of teaching that define what most teachers do in most educational settings, most of the time. That teachers work largely with age-segregated classes; that they teach mainly alone, in isolation; that they ask questions to which they already know the answer; that they assess and care for their students without having their students assess and care for them: these are some of the most fundamental and indeed sacred regularities of teachers' work. In a world experiencing and encountering rapid change, however, these regularities are now coming to be questioned. If they are to be questioned effectively, one of the most central regularities of all that must be addressed is that of how teachers are treated; for in the main, teachers have not been treated very well.

In England and Wales, policymakers tend to treat teachers rather like naughty children; in need of firm guidelines, strict requirements and a few short, sharp evaluative shocks to keep them up to the mark. In the United States, the tendency is to treat and train teachers more like recovering alcoholics: subjecting them to step-by-step programs of effective instruction or conflict management or professional growth in ways which make them overly dependent on pseudo-scientific expertise developed and imposed by others.

Measures like these are disrespectful. They fail to show regard for teachers' professionalism in terms of their ability and duty to exercise their discretionary judgments in the circumstances and with the children they know best. They are also impractical. By dealing only with issues of knowledge, skill and compliance in trying to make teachers more effective, they fail to deal with other vital influences on the nature and quality of teachers' work. These are the teacher's *purpose*, which drives what the teacher does; the kind of *person* the teacher is, in their life as well as their work, and how this affects their teaching; the *context* in which teachers work, which limits or liberates them in terms of what they can achieve; and the *culture* of the teaching community and how teachers' relationships (or lack of them) with their colleagues can support or subvert them in their efforts to improve the quality of what they offer to their students.

This book is about these influential but often elusive aspects of teachers' work – about the personal, moral, cultural and political dimensions of teaching. It examines these aspects and their implications for teaching in the context of times of rapid and far-reaching change within teachers' work, as well as in the world beyond it; postindustrial, postmodern times when the fundamental regularities of teaching and teachers' work are being questioned.

The argument I develop here is built upon an understanding of teachers themselves, and of how they experience their work and the ways it is changing. It rests on many hours of listening to teachers who have generously given their time to talk about their working lives. Here, I owe particular gratitude to the Ontario teachers in 12 elementary schools who participated in a study of teachers' work and uses of preparation or planning time, from which much of the evidence in this book is derived. Chapter 10 draws on data collected in a number of secondary schools whose teachers were either anticipating or already experiencing immense changes in their work in the context of a government mandate to restructure Grade 9. My thanks go out to these teachers also, for sharing their perceptions so honestly and openly at a time of unsettling change for them. Rouleen Wignall worked in half the schools in the elementary teacher study, contributed to the analysis, and co-authored the final report. Bob Macmillan worked with me in one of the secondary schools reported in Chapter 10 and contributed substantially to the analysis of how teachers were experiencing change in that school. I am grateful to both Rouleen and Bob for their continuing colleagueship and support, and to Bob for permission to present some of our joint work here as part of Chapter 10. My former graduate student, Betty Tucker, has also kindly allowed me to draw on some of her data about teacher Employee Assistance Programs in Chapter 7, and I would like to thank her for this too.

Many people have given me intellectual support and stimulation in developing the ideas and analyses that comprise this book. David Hargreaves first drew my (and many of my colleagues') attention to the importance of teacher cultures as long ago as the late 1970s. Judith Warren Little, Milbrey McLaughlin, Ann Lieberman, Leslie Siskin, Sandra Acker, Bill Louden, Peter Grimmett, Jennifer Nias and Peter Woods have deepened and extended my understanding of that field. Jonathan Neufeld has intrigued me with his quirky conceptions of time, and John Smyth has given me a timely exposure to his alternative conceptions of teachers' work. Michael Fullan first brought to my attention the importance and complexity of educational change, and worked with me as an inspiring and unselfish collaborator in understanding and interpreting it. My friend (also artist and art teacher) Frank Lotta is responsible for introducing me to the intellectual wonders of postmodernism, Ted Gordon added to that understanding, and with another friend and close colleague, Ivor Goodson, I have enjoyed the most stimulating ongoing conversations about its significance and its meaning. Gunnar Handal, Sveinung Vaage, Karen Jensen and the students of the Faculty of Education graduate seminar at the University of Oslo supportively helped me work through my ideas on postmodernity and teachers' work when they were in their embryonic stages. Linda Grant, David Lennox and the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation encouraged me to connect my work and ideas with ordinary teachers in Ontario and across Canada – they never give up on respecting and recognizing teachers' professional rights and opportunities to connect intelligently and interactively with research that impacts on their work and their world, nor do they allow researchers like myself to neglect their responsibilities to contribute openly and effectively to that interaction.

Leo Santos has miraculously unscrambled my hieroglyphics in preparing the typescript and his cheerful and energetic support, which is helpful beyond measure, is highly valued. Lastly, my wife and teenage children, Stuart and Lucy, have, as always, managed to tolerate the eccentricity and endure the distractedness that usually accompanies my efforts at book-writing, especially in the later stages. To them, I promise to fix the doorbell, get the ironing completed on time again, and atone for my guilt in any other ways deemed appropriate now all this is over. As well as their tolerance, of course, I also appreciate the warmth, good humor and cheerful skepticism about some of my more "creative" ideas that characterize our household and that make my work and life more pleasurable and rewarding. Home is where the heart is -- and also humility!

Chapters 5-9 in this book build on material that has already been published elsewhere in one form or another, and I am grateful to the permission given by various journals and publishers to reprint it here. These include:

Taylor & Francis publications and *Qualitative Studies in Education* for material in Chapter 5 (first published as Hargreaves, A. (1990), "Teachers' work and the politics of time and space", *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 3(4), 303-20).

Taylor & Francis publications and the *Journal of Education Policy* for material in Chapter 11 (published as "Restructuring restructuring," *Journal of Education Policy*, forthcoming).

Teachers College Press and *Teachers College Record* for material in Chapter 6 (first published as Hargreaves, A. (1992), "Time and teachers' work: An analysis of the intensification thesis", *Teachers College Record*, 94(1), 87-108).

Teachers College Press for material in Chapter 10 (published as "Balkanized secondary schools and the malaise of modernity", in Siskin, L. and Little, J. W. (eds), *Perspectives on Departments*, forthcoming).

Pergamon Press and *Teaching and Teacher Education* for material in Chapter 7 (first published as Hargreaves, A. and Tucker, E. (1991), "Teaching and guilt: Exploring the emotions of teaching", *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 7(5/6), 491-505).

Pergamon Press and the *International Journal of Educational Research* for material in Chapter 8 (first published as Hargreaves, A. (Fall 1992), "Individualism and individuality: Reinterpreting the teacher culture", *International Journal of Educational Research*).

Corwin Press and Sage Publications for material in Chapter 9 (first published as Hargreaves, A. (1991), "Contrived collegiality: The micropolitics of teacher collaboration", in Blase, J. (ed.), *The Politics of Life in Schools*. New York: Sage).

PART ONE

CHANGE

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Chapter 1

Devices and Desires
The Process of Change

INTRODUCTION

This book is about changing teachers. It looks at how teachers and teaching have changed in recent years and assesses the changes teachers will face in the future. It examines how politicians and administrators want to change teachers along with the reforms they propose and the measures they take to do that. Last of all, the book is about how and why teachers actually *do* change, about what it is that impels or inspires them to change (or indeed, not to change) in the first place.

The process by which teaching is changing and teachers are changed, I shall show, is systemically ironic. Good intentions are persistently and infuriatingly turned on their heads. Even the most well intentioned change devices which try to respect teachers' discretionary judgments, promote their professional growth and support their efforts to build professional community are often self-defeating because they are squeezed into mechanistic models or suffocated through stifling supervision. Extra time awarded away from classroom duties can be taken back through closer monitoring and regulation of how it should be used. Professional development can be turned into bureaucratic control, mentor *opportunities* into mentor *systems*, collaborative cultures into contrived collegiality. In these ways, many administrative devices of change do not just undermine teachers' own desires in teaching. They threaten the very desire to teach itself. They take the heart out of teaching.

The reasons for these ironies of change are to be found in the wider social context in which schools operate and of which they are a part. The fundamental problem here, I will argue, is to be found in a confrontation between two powerful forces. On the one hand is an increasingly postindustrial, postmodern world, characterized by accelerating change, intense compression of time and space, cultural diversity, technological complexity, national insecurity and scientific uncertainty. Against this stands a modernistic, monolithic school system that continues to pursue deeply anachronistic purposes within opaque and inflexible structures. Sometimes school systems actively try to resist the social pressures and changes of postmodernity. More often they try to respond with seriousness and sincerity, but they do so with an administrative apparatus that is cumbersome and unwieldy. Educationally, this central struggle presents itself in a number of ways.

First, as the pressures of postmodernity are felt, the teacher's role expands to take on new problems and mandates – though little of the old role is cast aside to make room for these changes. Second, innovations multiply as change accelerates, creating senses of overload among teachers and principals or headteachers responsible for implementing them. More and more changes are imposed and the timelines for their implementation are truncated. Third, with the collapse of moral certainties, old missions and purposes begin to crumble, but there are few obvious substitutes to take their place. Fourth, the methods and strategies teachers use, along with the knowledge base which justifies them, are constantly criticized – even among educators themselves – as scientific certainties lose their credibility. If the knowledge base of teaching has no scientific foundation, educators ask, "on what can our justifications for practice be based?" What teachers do seems to be patently and dangerously without foundation.

It is not simply that modernistic school systems are the problem, and postmodern organizations the solution. Postmodern societies themselves, we shall see, are loaded with contradictory possibilities, many of which have yet to be worked out. But it is in the struggles between and within modernity and postmodernity that the challenge of change for teachers and their leaders is to be found. It is through these conflicts that the realization of educational restructuring as an opportunity for positive change or a mechanism of retraction and restraint will be realized. It is here that the battle for teacher professionalism, as the exercise of wise, discretionary judgment in situations that teachers understand best, will be won or lost.[1]

The book is an argument about teaching and change, and it draws on a wide range of experience, evidence, and argument to achieve that purpose. Much of the book, particularly Chapters 5–9, draws specifically and extensively on a study I conducted with Rouleen Wignall, in the late 1980s, of elementary teachers, their perceptions of their work and their relationships with colleagues.[2] The argument of the book is, in this sense, not only illuminated by the words of teachers themselves, but also springs directly from those words and the sense I have tried to make of them. I do, of course, draw on and actively try to develop theories about teaching and teachers' work, but always in active dialogue with the data. In much of the writing on teaching and teachers' work, teachers' voices have either been curiously absent, or been used as mere echoes for preferred and presumed theories of educational researchers. Teachers' voices, though, have their own validity and assertiveness which can and should lead to questioning, modification and abandonment of those theories wherever it is warranted. In this book, we will see that teachers' words do not merely provide vivid examples of theories at work. They also pose problems and surprises for those theories.

There are four key themes running through the text. As the title suggests, *change* is the overriding one. But there are also three vital domains through which change exerts its impact on the nature and organization of teaching. These are *work*, *time* and *culture*. To orientate the reader to these key themes, I want to signpost each of them in this introduction before developing them in greater depth within the main text.

The Substance of Change

People are always wanting teachers to change. Rarely has this been more true than in recent years. These times of global competitiveness, like all moments of economic crisis, are producing immense moral panics about how we are preparing the generations of the future in our respective nations. At moments like these, education generally and schools in particular become what A. H. Halsey once called "the wastebasket of society"; policy receptacles into which society's unsolved and insoluble problems are unceremoniously deposited.[3] Few people want to do much about the economy, but everyone – politicians, the media and the public alike – wants to do something about education.

With so many traditional Western economic strongholds looking increasingly precarious in the context of an expanding global marketplace, school systems and their teachers are being charged with onerous tasks of economic regeneration. They are being pushed to place more emphasis on mathematics, science and technology, to improve performance in basic skills, and to restore traditional academic standards on a par with or superior to those of competing economies.

In addition to economic regeneration, teachers in many lands are also being expected to help rebuild national cultures and identities. Global economic integration, as expressed in growing economic union within Europe and the Free Trade Agreement in North America, is sowing fears of national disintegration among countries like Britain and Canada – fears that they will lose their cultural and political identities and distinctiveness. In response to economic globalization and multicultural migration, schools in many parts of the world are therefore being expected to carry much of the burden of national reconstruction. In an effort to resurrect traditional values and senses of moral certainty, school curricula, for instance, are being packed with new content which stresses historical, geographical and cultural unity and identity – content which teachers must master and cover.

Last and by no means least, schools and their teachers are being expected to meet these heightened demands in contexts of severe fiscal restraint. Hard-pressed states facing economic retrenchment and the welfare burdens of an aging population are divesting themselves of much of their financial commitment to schooling and expecting schools and their teachers, through market competition and frugal self-management, to stand more on their own feet.

Ideological compliance and financial self-reliance have therefore become the twin realities of change for many of today's schools and their teachers. Across many parts of the planet, the effects of these realities are clearly visible in a multiplicity of reforms and innovations with which teachers are now having to deal. These are what make up the *substance* of change, the actual changes which teachers must address. Two examples – England and Wales, and the United States – illustrate the range and character of these reforms.

In England and Wales, rampant and remorseless change imposed from above has become a pressing and immediate feature of teachers' working lives. The introduction of a subject-by-subject, stage-by-stage National Curriculum; the establishment of detailed, age-related attainment targets; the inauguration of a nationwide system of standardized testing; the creation of a new public examination system; and, most recently, a threatened reversion to traditional teaching methods in primary schools – these are just some of the numerous, simultaneously imposed changes with which teachers are having to cope.[4]

These important and pressing changes are what David Hargreaves and David Hopkins call *branch changes*: significant, yet specific changes of practice, which teachers can adopt, adapt, resist or circumvent, as they arise.[5] Beneath them are even deeper transformations at the very roots of teachers' work which address and affect how teaching itself is defined and socially organized. Such *root changes* include the introduction of compulsory performance appraisal to regulate teachers' methods and standards; the shift to local management of schools as a way of making teachers and their leaders (as a matter of sheer survival) more dependent on and responsive to the market force of parental choice between schools; and draconian measures to make teacher education more utilitarian and less reflective and questioning, by allocating huge proportions of trainee teachers' time to practical training in schools, at the expense of purportedly irrelevant or harmful theory in university education faculties. Alongside all these root changes, there is also the sheer cumulative impact of multiple, complex, non-negotiable innovations on teachers' time, energy, motivation, opportunities to reflect, and their very capacity to cope.

The British case of multiple, mandated change is perhaps an extreme one. It is extreme in its frantic pace, in the immense scope of its influence, and in the wide sweep of its legislative power. More than anything, however, it is extreme in the disrespect and disregard that reformers have shown for teachers themselves. In the political rush to bring about reform, teachers' voices have been largely neglected, their opinions overridden, and their concerns dismissed. Change has been developed and imposed in a context where teachers have been given little credit or recognition for changing themselves, and for possessing their own wisdom to distinguish between what reasonably *can* be changed and what cannot.

England and Wales may be an exaggerated case of rapid and fundamental educational change, but it is not an isolated one. In the United States, while educational policy at the federal level has little legislative force and is mostly expressed through public documents and debates, the pervasive doubts that such documents have fuelled about the ability of anachronistic school systems to develop the sophisticated skills and competences needed to meet the economic challenges of the twenty-first century have provoked numerous attempts to undertake a complete restructuring of the organization of teaching and learning in schools.

The change represented in many US restructuring efforts has shown rather more respect for teachers' abilities and been more inclusive of their efforts than the change represented by top-down UK reform. Even so, patterns of change by compliance that characterized earlier waves of US educational reform have by no means been eliminated, and their persistence often undermines other change efforts and indeed can be passed off as restructuring itself. For instance, many US teacher leadership programs select, reward and evaluate their teachers, not according to multiple criteria of excellence and professional growth, but according to teachers' adherence to approved models of teaching, often ones that place a premium on basic skills.[6] Similarly, evaluations of the implementation of manipulative, problem-solving approaches to mathematics teaching in California show that teachers commonly fail to implement them because of the persistence of parallel programs that emphasize direct instruction in basic skills – programs which are also tied to student testing and teacher appraisal.[7] Restructuring efforts notwithstanding, the *substance* of change for US teachers is therefore not only complex, but also often contradictory. Old waves and new waves of reforms create confusing cross-currents of change that can be difficult to negotiate and that can even drag teachers under.

The changes that are prevalent in Britain and the United States are also to be found in different ways in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, in other countries of the OECD, and in many more nations besides. Accelerating educational change is a global phenomenon! Why are teachers encountering so much change? Where does it come from? What does it mean?

Satisfactory answers to questions about the substance and context of educational change cannot be found in enigmatic clichés which assert that change is all around us, or that the only certain thing about the future is the inevitability of change. Aphorisms such as these are best left to pop psychology books on personal change, human potential or corporate improvement.

Nor can satisfactory answers be found by sticking to the specifics of each particular change in each particular country. In principle, school-based management, for instance, can be a good thing or a bad thing. Where extensive decision-making powers are indeed handed over to individual schools, it can lead to diversity, innovation and teacher empowerment. But when school-based management is implemented in a system where public funding is scarce and bureaucratic control over curriculum and assessment has been retained or reinforced, this can lead to self-seeking competitiveness around narrowly defined goals of basic skills or academic success. Here, school-based management can lead not to devolution of decision-making but displacement of blame.[8] The benefits and drawbacks of school-based management for teachers cannot therefore be evaluated properly in the abstract, but only in relation to parallel evaluations of school financing, and of curriculum and assessment control.

Contemporary patterns of educational reform are systemic and interconnected. As Sarason advises, the different components of educational reform should be addressed as a whole, in their interrelationships, as a complex system.[9] In education, as in other walks of life, things go together. It is the interrelationship of changes that lends them a particular coherence; that gives them one particular thrust rather than another. Meaningful and realistic analysis of educational change therefore requires us to do more than balance out the advantages and disadvantages of particular reforms like school-based management. It requires us to relate part to whole – the individual reform to the purpose and context of its development. And it requires us to look at the interrelationships between the different parts in the context of that whole. There are *big pictures* of educational change, and it is important to look at them.

THE CONTEXT OF CHANGE

Chapters 2–4 will analyze the broad *substance* of educational change as it is affecting teachers, and the *context* from which it springs. Essentially, I shall argue, what is at work in the construction of current patterns of educational change is a powerful and dynamic struggle between two immense social forces: those of modernity and postmodernity.

Modernity is a social condition that is both driven and sustained by Enlightenment beliefs in rational scientific progress, in the triumph of technology over nature, and in the capacity to control and improve the human condition by applying this wealth of scientific and technological understanding and expertise to social reform.[10] *Economically*, modernity begins with the separation of family and work through the rational concentration of production in the factory system, and culminates in systems of mass production, monopoly capitalism or state socialism as ways of increasing productivity and profitability. In modernistic economies, expansion is essential to survival. *Politically*, modernity typically concentrates control at the center with regard to decision-making, social welfare and education, and, ultimately, economic intervention and regulation as well. *Organizationally*, this is reflected in large, complex and often cumbersome bureaucracies arranged into hierarchies, and segmented into specializations of expertise. In the bureaucracies of modernity, functions are differentiated rationally and careers ordered in logical progressions of rank and seniority. The *personal* dimensions of modernity have been widely commented upon. In modernity, there is system and order, and often some sense of collective identity and belonging too. But the price of rationality is also a loss of spirit or magic; what Max Weber described literally as *disenchantment* in comparison with premodern existence.[11] The scale of organizational life and its rational impersonality can also lead to estrangement, alienation and lack of meaning in individual lives.

Secondary schools are the prime symbols and symptoms of modernity.

Their immense scale, their patterns of specialization, their bureaucratic complexity, their persistent failure to engage the emotions and motivations of many of their students and considerable numbers of their staff – these are just some of the ways in which the principles of modernity are expressed in the practice of secondary education. In many respects, state secondary education has become a major component of the malaise of modernity.

Most writers locate the origins of the *postmodern* condition somewhere around the 1960s.[12] Postmodernity is a social condition in which economic, political, organizational and even personal life come to be organized around very different principles than those of modernity. *Philosophically* and *ideologically*, advances in telecommunications along with broader and faster dissemination of information are placing old ideological certainties in disrepute as people realize there are other ways to live. Even scientific certainty is losing its credibility, as supposedly *hard* findings on such things as decaffeinated coffee, global warming, breast cancer screening or even effective teaching are superseded and contradicted by new ones at an ever increasing pace. *Economically*, postmodern societies witness the decline of the factory system. Postmodern economies are built around the production of smaller goods rather than larger ones, services more than manufacturing, software more than hardware, information and images more than products and things. The changing nature of what is produced along with the technological capacity to monitor shifts in market requirements almost instantaneously, reduce the need for stock and inventory. Units of enterprise shrink drastically in scale as a result. Flexible accumulation is now the driving economic principle as profitability becomes dependent on anticipation of and rapid responsiveness to local and changing market demands.

Politically and *organizationally* the need for flexibility and responsiveness is reflected in decentralized decision-making, along with flatter decision-making structures, reduced specialization and blurring of roles and boundaries. If the organizational metaphor of modernity is the compartmentalized egg-crate, then that of postmodernity is the moving mosaic. Roles and functions now shift constantly in dynamic networks of collaborative responsiveness to successive and unpredictable problems and opportunities. *Personally*, this restructured postmodern world can create increased personal empowerment, but its lack of permanence and stability can also create crises in interpersonal relationships, as these relationships have no anchors outside themselves, of tradition or obligation, to guarantee their security and continuance.

The postmodern world is fast, compressed, complex and uncertain. Already, it is presenting immense problems and challenges for our modernistic school systems and the teachers who work within them. The compression of time and space is creating accelerated change, innovation overload and intensification in teachers' work. Ideological uncertainty is challenging the Judaeo-Christian tradition on which many school systems have been based, and raising crises of identity and purpose in relation to what their new missions might be. Scientific uncertainty is undermining the claims of a sure knowledge base for teaching and making each successive innovation look increasingly dogmatic, arbitrary and superficial. And the search for more collaborative modes of decision-making is posing problems for the norms of teacher isolation on which teachers' work has been based, as well as problems for many school leaders who fear for their power as they worry about how far collaboration might go.

Much of the future of teaching will depend on how these distinctive challenges of postmodernity are realized and resolved within our modernistic schools and school systems.

THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

How will teachers actually respond to these changes? How *do* teachers change – at this moment or any other? What makes teachers change in the face of change, and what makes them dig in their heels and resist? Questions such as these concern what is commonly referred to as the *change process*: the practices and procedures, the rules and relationships, the sociological and psychological mechanisms which shape the destiny of any change, whatever its content, and which lead it to prosper or falter. If we are to understand the specific impact upon teachers of educational change in the postmodern world, we must also understand the place of teachers in the change process more generally. While concerns about the change process run through the book as a whole, I want to give it particular emphasis in this opening chapter.

Compared to the rather meager body of research on the context and substance of educational change, there is now a rich store of literature, research and practical understanding on the change *process*. In the field of school improvement, many maxims have been gleaned from this research and applied as a result of it. These include the observations that change is a process not an event;[13] that practice changes before beliefs;[14] that it is better to think big, but start small;[15] that evolutionary planning works better than linear planning;[16] that policy cannot mandate what matters;[17] that implementation strategies which integrate *bottom-up* strategies with *top down* ones are more effective than *top-down* or *bottom-up* ones alone;[18] and that conflict is a necessary part of change.[19] Of course, close inspection of these principles reveals that some are less self-evident and more contestable than they first appear. It took legislative force at the level of the European courts to mandate the abolition of corporal punishment in British schools, for instance. It is hard to say that this mandate did not matter! Similarly, Wideman has found that practice changes before beliefs only under the particular conditions of imposed change.[20] Elsewhere, practice and beliefs tend to change interactively and together. However, while there is certainly a tendency to overstate these principles and to oversell them as manipulable *rules* of change, most of them rest on the fundamentally sound understanding that teachers, more than any others, are the key to educational change.

Changes can be proclaimed in official policy, or written authoritatively on paper. Change can look impressive when represented in the boxes and arrows of administrators' overheads, or enumerated as stages in evolutionary profiles of school growth. But changes of this kind are, as my Northern English grandmother used to say, just *all top show*! They are superficial. They do not strike at the heart of how children learn and how teachers teach. They achieve little more than trivial changes in practice. Neither do changes of buildings (like open-plan ones), textbooks, materials, technology (like computers), nor even student groupings (as in mixed-ability groups) unless profound attention is paid to processes of teacher development that accompany these innovations. The involvement of teachers in educational change is vital to its success, especially if the change is complex and is to affect many settings over long periods of time. And if this involvement is to be meaningful and productive, it means more than teachers acquiring new knowledge of curriculum content or new techniques of teaching. Teachers are not just technical learners. They are social learners too.[21]

Recognizing that teachers are social learners draws our attention not just to their *capacity* to change but also to their *desires* for change (and indeed for stability). This book looks at the desires teachers themselves have to change their practice, or to conserve the practice they already value (and we shall see that these things are by no means mutually exclusive). If we can understand teachers' own desires for change *and* for conservation, along with the conditions that strengthen or weaken such desires, we will get valuable insights from the grassroots of the profession, from those who work in the frontlines of our classrooms, about *how* change can be made most effectively, as well as *what* we should change and *what* we should preserve. Getting up close to teachers in this way does not mean endorsing and celebrating everything that teachers think, say and do. But it does mean taking teachers' perceptions and perspectives very seriously.

Political and administrative *devices* for bringing about educational change usually ignore, misunderstand or override teachers' own *desires* for change. Such devices commonly rely on principles of compulsion, constraint and contrivance to get teachers to change. They presume that educational standards are low and young people are failing or dropping out because the practice of many teachers is deficient or misdirected. The reason why teachers are like this, it is argued, is that they are either unskilled, unknowledgeable, unprincipled or a combination of all three. The remedy for these defects and deficiencies, politicians and administrators believe, needs to be a drastic one, calling for decisive devices of intervention and control to make teachers more skilled, more knowledgeable and more accountable.[22] Underpinning many of these devices for changing teachers is the presumption that teachers have somehow fallen short, and that intervention by others is needed to get them up to scratch.

Many devices of change, predicated on these assumptions, have become familiar fare in strategies for educational reform. They include mandated and purportedly teacher-proof curriculum guidelines, imposition of standardized testing to control what teachers teach, saturation in new teaching methods of supposedly proven effectiveness, career bribery through programs of teacher leadership linked to pay and incentives, and market competitiveness between schools to secure change through teachers' instinct for survival as they struggle to protect their schools and preserve their jobs. These policy devices for changing teachers are poorly synchronized with teachers' own desires for change. Such desires spring from dispositions, motivations and commitments of a very different nature than those which opportunistic politicians, impatient administrators and anxious parents often imagine and presume.

At the heart of change for most teachers is the issue of whether it is *practical*. Judging changes by their practicality seems, on the surface, to amount to measuring abstract theories against the tough test of harsh reality. There is more to it than this, though. In the ethic of practicality among teachers is a powerful sense of what works and what doesn't; of which changes will go and which will not – not in the abstract, or even as a general rule, but for *this* teacher in *this* context.[23] In this simple yet deeply influential sense of practicality among teachers is the distillation of complex and potent combinations of purpose, person, politics and workplace constraints. It is through these ingredients and the sense of practicality which they sustain, that teachers' own desires for change are either constructed or constrained. To ask whether a new method is practical is therefore to ask much more than whether it works. It is also to ask whether it fits the context, whether it suits the person, whether it is in tune with their purposes, and whether it helps or harms their interests.[24] It is in these things that teachers' desires concerning change are located; and it is these desires that change strategies must address.

In recent years, there have been serious and widespread attempts to establish closer congruence between the devices and desires of change. There have been efforts to involve teachers more in the change process, to create more *ownership* of change among the teaching force, to give teachers more opportunities for leadership and professional learning, and to establish professional cultures of collaboration and continuous improvement. Much of this book analyzes the fate of this new wave of strategies which seek to secure change through professional development. While these moves are to be applauded in many respects, I will show that they also contain some important and disturbing ironies. Paramount among these is that the more reformers systematically try to bring the *devices* of change in line with teachers' own *desires* to change, the more they may stifle the basic *desire* to teach itself.

Desire is imbued with "creative unpredictability"[25] and "flows of energy".[26] The basis of creativity, change, commitment and engagement is to be found in desire, but from the organization's standpoint, so too is danger. In *desire* is to be found the creativity and spontaneity that connects teachers emotionally and sensually (in the literal sense of feeling) to their children, their colleagues and their work. Desire is at the heart of good teaching. According to the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, desire is "that emotion which is directed