INSTRUCTOR’S GUIDE FOR

Leading Educational Change

Global Issues, Challenges, and Lessons on Whole-System Reform

EDITED BY

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Teachers College Press
Teachers College
Columbia University
New York and London
ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR’S GUIDE

This instructor’s guide is a companion to *Leading Educational Change: Global Issues, Challenges, and Lessons on Whole-System Reform* edited by Dr. Helen Janc Malone. The book’s chapters are designed to be stand-alone, and can be read in the order of the reader’s choosing. This guide is arranged to conform to the book, by chapters across five Parts. It poses questions that help illustrate the authors’ arguments. The questions can be used to guide classroom instruction, professional development training, individual learning, or to promote idea generation and debate in small and large groups. This guide can also be helpful in facilitating broader discussions about educational change on a global scale, system-level reforms, and ways to improve practice, or to address lingering concerns pertaining to quality and equitable educational opportunities. It is suitable for education leaders and decisionmakers at all levels of government, district staff, principals, and teachers, as well as students in the undergraduate and graduate programs of education.

A Brief Overview of the Book

The development of the educational change knowledge base has grown substantially over the past decade. International assessments, comparative analyses, and diverse capacity-building strategies have led to significant knowledge creation and mobilization within the field. Today, we are beginning to understand in a more nuanced way the intricacies of educational change. What we have learned is that we must attend to inputs and outputs equally and address contextual factors and underlying conditions that promote student learning and educational success. Reflective of the burgeoning knowledge base, this book is organized into Parts that explore five lines of inquiry:

- **Part I: “Emerging Issues in Educational Change”** examines salient cross-cutting issues that play a role in shaping system-level change.
- **Part II: “Improving Practice”** profiles strategies that build professional capacity and collective inquiry.
- **Part III: “Equity and Educational Justice”** critically analyzes contextual factors that lead to inequitable systems of schooling and considers strategies that promote educational justice.
- **Part IV: “Accountability and Assessment Systems”** attends to the use of internal and external accountability mechanisms as drivers for data-based decisionmaking.
- **Part V: “Whole-System Change”** offers lessons from emerging and established models engaged in comprehensive system-level change.
The five themes are intertwined and represent diverse levers that can be pulled in order to create meaningful and sustainable change. The chapter authors draw attention to the reality that educational change is multifaceted, political, and uncertain, but that positive educational change is possible when it is embedded in a clear vision, strong leadership, resource investment, internal and external accountability, high-quality practice, collaboration, and continuous engagement by all the stakeholders. The purpose of this contemporary anthology is to bring to the forefront the latest thinking across the five lines of inquiry in order to promote important discussions within the education sector.
PART I: EMERGING ISSUES IN EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

Educational change is both a process and a set of practices that inform, reform, and redesign systems of education. What constitutes educational change is contextual and dependent on a range of factors that ultimately influence teaching and learning. However, international benchmarking and standardized assessments, coupled with a growing evidence-base about effective instructional practices, leadership development, and system-level reform are increasingly influencing how the field approaches educational change in the 21st century.

This Part serves to address five cross-cutting themes that play a critical role in educational change: (a) the influence of international assessments on educational policymaking; (b) the uses and misuses of benchmarking as a key lever of educational reform; (c) the tradeoffs associated with the standardization of knowledge; (d) the optimal utilization of technology in the learning process; and (e) the benefits of engaging diverse stakeholders in educational decisionmaking.
This chapter examines the merits of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) comparisons as drivers for educational change.

- What has been the influence of PISA on macro-level educational changes?
- How is PISA applied in Brazil to inform national goals?
- How did Germany use the PISA scores to make systemic reforms?
- What strategies, according to the author, can speed up the pace of change?
- Why is PISA a powerful reform instrument?
- Think about your practice and/or community context. How is PISA being used to inform the work in your school(s)?
Teleporting Change: The Dynamics and Distortions of International Benchmarking

Andy Hargreaves

Culture, history, orientations to learning, and educational practices are all important considerations when trying to learn from another country’s reform efforts. The truth is, however, that educational reform is like ripe fruit: It rarely travels well. In this chapter, the author addresses four strategies that distort or deny international benchmarking.

- What is international benchmarking?
- How is the United States engaged in bench warming?
- What are the author’s cautions against bench pressing?
- What are the dangers of cherry picking?
- What does the author suggest should be the hallmark of thoughtful benchmarking?
- What are the nine broad factors that underpin educational success?
- How can countries like the United States start to develop a better learning mindset?
- How can international benchmarking inform policy? On-the-ground practice?
Directions of Change:
Why the United States and China Are Moving in Opposite Directions

Yong Zhao

China and the United States are moving in the opposite directions, argues the author. China is transforming its education system to mimic the American design, while America is “de-Americanizing” its education in an effort to make its education more Chinese.

• Why are the United States and China moving away from their own educational traditions to follow each other’s lead?
• How have the U.S. reforms moved the country to become more like China?
• Which elements of the U.S. education system is China trying to incorporate into its reform efforts and why?
• What problems is the United States trying to solve through its educational reforms?
• What problems is China trying to solve through its educational reforms?
• Based on Zhao’s chapter, what aspects of the existing U.S. education policy should the school reformers reconsider? Keep? Promote? Why?
Mindful Teaching with Technology: Steps Toward Harmonization

Dennis Shirley

Educators around the world are asking themselves how they can best use new technologies in ways that promote learning that is deep and mindful rather than shallow and distracted.

• What were the stages of technological change since the 1960s?
• What beliefs do endorsers hold about technology and learning?
• How do educators who question or shelter students from technology differ from one another in regard to the role of technology in education?
• Why does the author advocate for harmonizing with technology as the most favorable approach to practice?
• Are you a technology endorser, skeptic, protector, or harmonizer?
• How does your school integrate technology? How does your school’s approach to technology aid or hinder student learning and instructional practices of teachers?
What counts as educational success within the U.S. school reform context is narrow. There are four lines of inquiry that should be moved from the periphery to the center of educational change discourse in order to broaden our notions of student learning and achievement.

- What four lines of inquiry need to be included in educational change discussions?
- What broader purposes of education is the author proposing?
- What is student-centered education? Why is it important?
- What argument is the author making about the role of nonformal learning spaces in education reform?
- Who are front-line stakeholders? Why should they be engaged in the school reform conversation?
- How does your school/district engage families and community members in educational reform decisions? How are such partnerships being developed/sustained?
PART II: IMPROVING PRACTICE

Capacity building through collective inquiry and shared leadership has been promoted through a burgeoning body of research as a promising way to build deep instructional practices and improve teaching. Educators are increasingly opening their classroom doors for observation and engaging in daily practices that promote continuous improvement. From school-based practices to professional development programs, it is becoming evident that what builds capacity are spaces where teachers feel open to share, learn, challenge, innovate, and succeed both individually and collectively. Although the accountability era promotes data-centered habits, practices that inspire teachers are those that go beyond student achievement test scores and focus on pedagogy and instructional practices that enrich teachers and students alike. This Part illustrates evidence-based collaborative practices that promote high-quality teaching in the 21st century.
The author draws attention to the need to move away from status quo approaches to teaching and to focus on collective inquiry and innovations as anchors of good practice.

- How does the author define capacity for learning?
- What role do researchers play in supporting educators’ collaborative inquiry?
- Why are teacher conversations important for the improvement of practice?
- What two conditions are the most conducive to nurturing teachers’ creativity?
- How does your school build capacity for learning?
- How does your school balance creative teacher learning and accountability?
The author argues that prepackaged school reforms do not align well with individual school needs because they fail to account for the local context. Instead, he offers a different approach to school reform and instruction—engagement by school leaders in diagnostic and design work as means to define goals, to identify strategies for improvement, and to address problems.

- What are the challenges of prepackaged reforms?
- What are the core aspects of leading and managing instruction in schools and school systems?
- How does the author define diagnostic work? How does it benefit practice?
- What is distributed leadership? How does it promote effective instructional practices?
- Has your school adapted a pre-packaged reform? How does the model aid your improvement efforts?
- Does your school engage in distributed leadership?
- How do you engage in diagnostic and design work? Offer an example.
In this chapter, the author discusses two approaches to system-wide improvement in instructional practice: the program or practice implementation approach and the professional learning community approach.

- Describe the core elements of the practice implementation approach.
- Describe the contours of the professional learning community approach.
- What is Japanese “lesson study”? How does it improve instructional practices?
- What are the challenges and opportunities associated with the implementation approach?
- What are the challenges and opportunities associated with professional learning communities?
- Have you engaged in either the implementation approach or the professional learning communities? Which one has worked well in your practice and why?
Within the education field, three programs in particular—The National Writing Project (NWP), The New Teacher Center (NTC), and the Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP)—are considered illustrative of the best teacher training practices.

- What ten practices are represented by the NWP’s model of teacher learning?
- How do NTC mentor-mentee relationships promote a deeper understanding of the problems faced by novice teachers?
- What are the centerpieces of the TLLP program?
- What professional development practices promote collegial communities and continuous teacher learning?
- Have you been a part of a professional teacher training program? What worked well? What didn’t?
- How did the training impact your practice short-term? Long-term?
The Small Origins of a Large-Scale School Reform in Mexico

Gabriel Cámara

The author addresses the power tutorial relationships have on building teacher and student capacity and content expertise, and on improving practice. The author traces the development and growth of the tutorial relationships model from poor rural classrooms to a nationwide middle grades strategy in Mexico.

• What prompted the creation of the tutorial relationships model?
• How do tutorial relationships support teachers and students?
• What are the advantages of this model?
• Why is the model generating national attention?
• Have you engaged in tutorial relationships? If yes, how has such a model benefited your practice? Your students? What were some challenges?
• How can tutorial relationships be scaled up in your community/district?
“Education for all” and the promotion of equitable learning opportunities illustrate central goals of many societies across the globe. Fairness and inclusion are commonly cited by decisionmakers as the foremost objectives within the educational enterprise. Yet, inequalities across racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic lines persist—many low-income children and students of color attend under-resourced and/or low-performing schools. The dialogue within the education sector is often dichotomous—bifurcated between education reformers who believe that standardized assessments can assist in the identification and narrowing of the achievement gaps and those who posit that the conversation about equity in education has to move beyond student performance to directly address the underlying institutional structures (from classroom practices to educational finance) that perpetuate the historical and cultural power differentiation across demographic lines. This Part of the book offers a critical analysis of equity and educational justice across the globe, focusing on the contextual factors that have led to the existing systems. The chapter authors propose considerations on how to approach educational justice in a way that creates system-level change and promotes equity in the learning experiences of disenfranchised students.
Equity: The Big Challenge for Education Systems

Mel Ainscow

This chapter draws on research carried out over the past 2 decades in the United Kingdom to identify strategies that address equity in education. The author offers three factors that play a role in students’ learning experiences: within school, between school, and beyond school factors.

- How does the author define ecology of equity?
- How can engaging with evidence create “interruptions” in practice?
- What was the impetus for the Families of Schools program?
- What effect did the Challenge have on schools and on the students?
- What multidimensional strategies does the author propose to address equity?
- How does your school/district work with community members to support student learning?
Equity-Driven Educational Change

Amanda Datnow

The author posits that the main challenge in educational change is that of equity. Her chapter addresses ways to mobilize research knowledge to improve educational outcomes for low-income and minority students and considers implications for policy and practice.

- Why does the author suggest reframing the national discourse about achievement gap in terms of education debt?
- How might we mobilize our best research knowledge and skills to improve the educational experiences of low-income and racial minority students?
- How do we engage in cross-disciplinary equity research?
- What is needed to adequately support equity-driven change efforts?
Engaging Critical Diversity in Educational Reform

Sherry L. Deckman

This chapter explores two salient factors that leaders should address in order to bring about enduring change in educational practice and policy: (a) the present educational structures that conceal power differences; and (b) educator silence in addressing issues of systemic inequality.

- What is monoculturalism? How does the present era frame monoculturalism?
- What is silenced dialogue and how does it play out inside classrooms?
- Describe the tracking example offered by Jeannie Oakes’s research. How does tracking promote social stratification?
- What is colormuteness and how does it manifest itself in schools?
- How can certain multicultural practices perpetuate social inequality?
- What themes in this chapter stand out to you as important considerations for your daily practice in education?
The Pursuit of Excellence and Equity in Divided Countries: A South African Case

Jonathan D. Jansen

This chapter examines four approaches of how schools managed, or fail to manage, tension between equity of access and retaining the standards of education in South Africa.

- Why didn’t the new government force integration in all schools?
- How did the race-privileged schools respond to the pressure for change?
- Describe the similarities and differences among schools A through D.
- What do these approaches teach us about the pursuit of equity and excellence?
- What three factors supported political intervention and renewed interest in education?
- What lessons do you draw from the South African school examples offered by the author?
Ensuring Educational Justice in Latin American Education Systems: Issues and Challenges

Silvina Gvirtz and Esteban Torre

In this chapter the authors describe the Latin American educational systems and their relationship to education justice, address the current conditions and certain aspects of the existing institutions that undermine educational justice, and conclude with the challenges ahead.

• Discuss briefly the challenges Latin American educational systems have faced since the 1970s.
• What two indicators do authors use to assess equity in Latin American educational systems?
• What challenges persist in offering equitable learning opportunities in Latin America?
• What are the aims of the Information and Communication Technologies strategy?
• What strategies do the authors propose to ensure educational justice and high-quality education for all?
PART IV: ACCOUNTABILITY AND ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS

The accountability era that has swept the globe has shifted educational focus from inputs to outputs. National and international assessments are increasingly applied as tools to measure the overall success of education systems and to gauge student learning. For many countries, the emerging accountability systems mark the first time the nations have been able to visibly and comprehensively examine the state of their educational systems and the implications of the existing structures and organization on the overall student achievement. However, the increased use of external assessments have brought to the forefront the need to utilize such data as a starting point on which to build upon improvement strategies rather than to apply standardized measures as sole decision points in education policy and practice.

This Part of the book is focused on a critical examination of assessments and accountability systems. Its chapters pay particular attention to how the emerging accountability systems are informing the public, challenging the status quo, and reshaping education. They also draw attention to the appropriate use of assessments and the need to create professional accountability structures that address quality in education.
The author chronicles the history and creation of the Australian national assessment system. He discusses how the Australian accountability system is informing practice and contends that the new assessment is a useful tool to expose problem areas and to offer data that could inspire school reform.

- What is ACARA and what kinds of assessments does it apply?
- What is the purpose of NAPLAN?
- How does ACARA report test results? How are school comparisons made and why are they designed in such a way?
- How does the author respond to the critics of NAPLAN?
- What was the impetus for designing a national curriculum?
- How are students’ assessments applied in your school/district? How does such data inform your practice?
Rethinking a Century-Old System: Hong Kong

Patrick Griffin

This chapter outlines the contours of the Hong Kong assessment system, explains why the nation has moved away from the century-old British system, and offers an analysis of the new system’s implementation.

- What four changes have led Hong Kong toward a new accountability system?
- Describe the contours of the new education system.
- How does standards-referenced reporting differ from the previous model?
- How has the new assessment changed teaching practices?
- How can the Hong Kong model be applied in your educational context? What would be the tradeoffs?
Quality Assurance System: 
Making Education Accountable in Russia

Elena Lenskaya

The author briefly outlines the Soviet-era educational system, offers a comprehensive introduction to the new national assessment structure, and concludes with the imperative for future accountability improvements.

- Describe the Soviet-era educational system. In what ways was the Soviet-era accountability system inadequate in measuring student learning?
- What replaced the dual-exam system?
- Explain the contours of UNEX. What were the three main challenges with UNEX?
- What has been the educational and social impact of UNEX?
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The Bottom-Up Push for Quality Education in India

Madhav Chavan and Rukmini Banerji

This chapter offers an emerging model from India—an annual nationwide effort that aims to engage people in understanding their children’s learning levels, using assessment for action as well as for accountability.

- What is the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) and why was it developed?
- What do ASER results indicate about the state of student knowledge and learning in India?
- What was the government reaction to ASER and why?
- What is Read India? Describe the learning camps.
- Why do the authors call for a “community initiative” approach in education?
- What major lessons can you draw about the education system in India and the challenges and opportunities ahead?
Accountability as a Collective Professional Responsibility

Lorna Earl

The author argues that large-scale assessments are levers for policymakers but are distant from the daily practices of teaching and learning. She proposes a focus on professional accountability designed to support classroom teachers and school leaders in their daily practice.

- How does the author define professional accountability?
- What are the components of professional accountability?
- Why does the author say that teaching is a moral enterprise?
- What is “collaborative inquiry”? How does it enable change?
- Do you engage in collaborative inquiry?
- How does your school/district/educational community support professional accountability?
PART V: WHOLE-SYSTEM CHANGE

Over the last several decades, countries across the globe have engaged in large-scale whole-system reforms. Although each nation has approached system-level educational change based upon unique sociocultural, historical, political, and economic contexts, there are several strategies that have proved essential in creating meaningful progress, including a clear and inspiring national vision for education, strong leadership, consistent resource investment, professional capital development, internal accountability, focus on collective improvement, stakeholder engagement, and a positive outlook on change. Whole-system change is gradual. As the chapters in this Part illustrate, systemic change is a process that can have a profound impact on schools and students, both collectively and individually. This last Part of the book tracks the challenges and triumphs of whole-system reform efforts, from countries aspiring to improve to more-developed models seeking excellence.
This chapter reflects on the challenges, potential, and evidence about building professional learning communities in Wales as a form of collective capacity to secure school and system-wide change.

- What was a major lever for raising standards in Wales?
- What are the four core reasons as to why educational reforms rarely lead to sustained improvement?
- How does the national Welsh program define Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)?
- What has been the impact of PLCs? What challenges remain?
- What are the four core lessons from the Welsh system-wide reform?
Education in Brazil: New Challenges

Maria Helena Guimarães de Castro

This chapter traces the history of Brazilian educational system development, the progress made, and examines the challenges associated with improving learning in Brazil.

• What policies have had a positive impact on Brazilian education since 1995? In what ways were these policies unsuccessful?
• Describe the efforts taking place in Minas Gerais, São Paulo, Ceará, and Rio de Janeiro.
• What three challenges are presented in the chapter? Discuss how each challenge has impeded system-wide reform.
Fifteen Years of Singapore’s “Thinking Schools Learning Nation” Vision

Pak Tee Ng

This chapter reviews the “Thinking Schools Learning Nation” vision and its implementation over the past 15 years through three explorations: What has changed? What has not changed? What lies ahead?

- What stages of development has the Singapore undergone since 1965 to transform its educational system?
- What was Goh Chok Tong’s vision and philosophy for education? What was the aim of the “Thinking Schools Learning Nation” vision?
- What two major elements have not changed?
- What does the author mean by “centralized decentralization”?
- How does the education system manage the tensions associated with whole-system reform?
Fulfilling the Dream in Finland

Pasi Sahlberg

Finland has been an interesting laboratory for implementing educational innovations for large-scale education reform. This chapter explores the origins and elements of the Finnish system-wide change.

- What was the Finnish dream that launched the educational changes over the past 3 decades in Finland?
- Describe how the country trains, promotes, and supports its teachers.
- What does GERM stand for (the acronym and its elements)? Why does the author have reservations about GERM?
- What three lessons does the author offer about the Finnish educational transformation?
Conclusion: Issues, Challenges, and Lessons on Whole-System Reform

Helen Janc Malone

The concluding chapter of the book offers lessons and considerations for the future.

• What does it mean to lead educational change?
• What lessons does the editor offer to the readers?
• How can these lessons be implemented to shape policy? Practice?
• What challenges remain?