



Current theories and thinking on school change

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There is broad agreement in the literature on the need for teachers to participate in the development of change initiatives, to have a 'sense of ownership' of the change and innovation at the local level, and the need to explicitly create the conditions in which these can occur. There is broad consensus also on the factors that make up such conditions. These include questions of the leadership, structural support and resources for teachers implementing change, and opportunities for genuine and critical participation in the adoption and implementation stages.

Rather than outline theories or models of change for general application, the literature tends to identify principles and pre-conditions for change to occur. On this basis, the review has been organised into five provisional sections:

- 1 The complexity and uncertainty of school change
- 2 The need for local ownership of and collaboration in the change process
- 3 The role of the school culture and a supportive environment for achieving change
- 4 The role of the local and national political, social and economic context
- 5 The role of leadership within the school.

1 The complexity and uncertainty of school change

While the concept of school change as a complex and uncertain process is implicit in much of the literature, the works included in this section specifically focus on these aspects of change. The historical development of school change initiatives is considered, with a broad consensus that most attempts at school change have failed, partially due to the failure to fully understand and address the complexity of the process.

Hargreaves, Andy, Lieberman, Ann, Fullan, Michael and Hopkins, David, (eds) 1998, *International Handbook of Educational Change*, vol. 1, Kluwer Academic Publications, Dordrecht, Boston and London.

The introduction to this comprehensive, two-volume set on educational change outlines the historical development of research work from the 1970s into the broad area of school change. They acknowledge the consensus in the literature that most curriculum innovations in this initial period failed to progress beyond the stage of being formally adopted by schools and school systems, and that they almost never get to the point of being 'fully and faithfully' implemented.

The historical legacy outlined here makes the prospects for achieving school change problematic at best. The once accepted idea of rationally planning change, and implementing it in a linear way, is said to have been discredited. Furthermore, they note that research has demonstrated that the promise of 'exceptional' schools and programs has faded over time as such efforts and initiatives proved to be unsustainable.

In summary, these leading figures in the field describe 25 years of 'educational change processes and initiatives' as a 'mixed legacy'. Despite the large amounts of literature on, for example, the stages of educational change, or the responses of individuals to change initiatives, they argue that more research is needed that addresses contemporary problems and challenges. The current context of constant policy changes, multiple and often contradictory demands, and increased expectations on schools and teachers, mean that 'we are only just beginning to understand the challenges of scaling reform up from small samples of improving schools, to entire school systems' (p. 6).

Miles, Matthew B, 1998, 'Finding keys to school change: A 40-year odyssey', in Andy Hargreaves, Ann Lieberman, Michael Fullan, and David Hopkins (eds), *International Handbook of Educational Change*, Kluwer Academic Publications, Dordrecht, Boston and London.

This chapter reviews ten key strategies to achieve change in schools, and the ideas behind them, based on the literature documenting reform efforts. In doing this Miles highlights the lack of clarity and agreement about how to effectively implement and achieve school change. From the literature Miles identifies ten 'major school change strategies' and their underlying rationale as:

- 1 Training teachers with skills for group work;
- 2 Processes of innovation, diffusion and adoption;
- 3 Organisational (ie school) self-renewal;
- 4 Knowledge transfer to schools and teachers;
- 5 Creation of new (alternative) schools;
- 6 Support for schools and teachers' implementation of initiatives;
- 7 Leading and managing local reform;
- 8 Training teachers as 'change agents';
- 9 Managing systemic reform on a large scale; and
- 10 Restructuring schools.

Miles acknowledges that some of these remain relevant for contemporary change, citing for example, the value of rational choice of innovations when designing and restructuring schools, or process analysis for large-scale reforms. As with any list or

prescribed formula for change, however, the lack of consensus both about what constitutes effective change and how it is achieved, is highlighted in this chapter. In this way the review chapter connects with a major theme of the field more generally; that there is no single approach or procedure that can be identified for effective change across all contexts and specific situations.

Fullan, Michael and Stiegelbauer, Suzanne 1991, 'The causes and processes of initiation' in Michael Fullan and Suzanne Stiegelbauer (eds), *The New Meaning of Educational Change*, Teachers College Press, New York.

From a book that identifies and examines the stages and processes of educational change in detail, this chapter goes over the 'initiation phase' of change. Drawing on a substantive body of theoretical and research work on educational change, the authors identify factors that influence the initiation process leading up to and including the decision to implement change (subsequent chapters deal with the implementation and incorporation of change). In line with the emphasis in the work of Michael Fullan et al., the discussion of initiation is set in the general context of the complex nature of change as a fluid, non-linear and context specific process. The discussion points to the influence of the unique context of every school on any attempt to initiate change, the nature and scope of the proposed change, and the level of involvement of teachers in the development and initiation of the change. Such factors strengthen the characterisation of initiation and change as an ongoing and complex 'process', rather than an 'event'.

From this perspective, Fullan and Stiegelbauer identify eight factors that impact on the initiation phase:

- 1 The existence and quality of innovations;
- 2 Teachers access to innovations, linked to structural arrangements, available resources and other issues;
- 3 Advocacy from central administration authorities for reform initiatives;
- 4 Advocacy from teachers, linked to teachers' capacity for working together, constraints on this, and their willingness to adopt change initiatives under the right conditions;
- 5 The role of external change agents;
- 6 Levels of community pressure/support/opposition/apathy, tied to demographic features of the location and the content of the change;
- 7 Funding for the change, tied to its mandated or voluntary nature and its source; and
- 8 Problem-solving and orientations of the school to external policies and funding.

On the one hand, the authors acknowledge that there is no consensus on what constitutes successful initiation, given the multiple sources of change initiatives and the combination of factors impacting on them. On the other hand, they cite some general characteristics of successful and unsuccessful initiation. Features of unsuccessful initiation are identified in terms of the size and nature of the intended change, being too big or vague, too narrow and prescriptive, lacking follow through support, externally imposed without teacher support, or school-based without adequate resources and other supports. In contrast, features of successful initiation are identified as involving strong advocacy, active initiation, and a clear model for proceeding. Initiation is said to require 'relevance, readiness, and resources' as minimal prerequisites for success.

Fullan, Michael 1999, 'Complexity and the change process', in Michael Fullan (ed), *Change Forces: The Sequel*, Falmer Press, London.

One of the most significant writers about educational change, Michael Fullan, updates eight key insights into change processes in this chapter, building on his accumulated knowledge and research in the area. Two main themes are put forward as underlying these insights. Firstly, that schools, as organisations, need to be understood as 'living systems'; and secondly, that in order to identify and develop ideas and strategies, tacit knowledge among teachers in schools needs to be made explicit. The eight lessons set out by Fullan interact with each other in different ways and combinations across different settings.

The key lessons highlight the complex and uncertain nature of any intended educational change, and provide some general principles to both understand change and guide the selection of strategies to achieve change. As is common in this line of research, uncertainty, complexity, and the lack of a single procedure for effective change, are highlighted. That said, Fullan's insights do point to some of the conditions required for effective strategies and procedures to be developed for reform initiatives across particular contexts. The identified insights are:

- 1 Moral purpose is complex and problematic:** Fullan acknowledges his own argument that 'you can't mandate what matters', but argues that in some circumstances top-down mandates may be beneficial both to add pressure for reform, and legitimise the actions of local change agents and school-based energies and initiatives.
- 2 Theories of education and theories of change need each other:** Since no single theory of change can be applied generally, Fullan argues that effective change needs accumulated knowledge about what works in what conditions, contexts and situations, for different types of initiatives.

- 3 **Conflict and diversity are our friends:** Acknowledging the negative character of false consensus, the concept of 'collaborative diversity', that includes and accepts conflict and resistance, is put forward as a preferable model for effective change.
- 4 **Understand the meaning of operating on the edge of chaos:** Taking this further, Fullan points to the need to accept uncertainty, and create open structures that avoid excessive and excessively formal rules and communication forums at the local level. Instead he calls for 'a few key priorities and structures' that trust people and the process, and allow for uncertainty.
- 5 **Emotional intelligence is anxiety provoking and anxiety containing:** As with uncertainty, the point here is to accept anxiety and deal with the challenges it presents.
- 6 **Collaborative cultures are anxiety provoking and anxiety containing:** Extending this further, the call is for a collaborative culture that lets participants experience anxiety, rather than be protected from it, and channel this into positive problem-solving action.
- 7 **Attack incoherence:** In contemporary contexts of teachers dealing with a constant stream of (often unconnected) innovations and reforms, Fullan cites a heightened need to avoid overload, fragmentation and incoherence. Explicit attempts to make meaning of programs and reforms, in part through adequate professional development programs, is required.
- 8 **There is no single solution:** While this point underlies the preceding insights, Fullan stresses that given the levels of complexity involved there is never a single, correct way to proceed with school change. He argues that the process, in practice, will eventually produce local theories of effective change.

2 Local ownership of and collaboration in the change process

Ideas of successful change in school requiring the active participation of the teachers and executive, and a sense of collective ownership of the initiative and its implementation, are well developed in the literature. There is an identifiable consensus on this point. Some authors included in this review argue that in certain situations, and for different stages of change processes, some limits need to be placed on the level of consultation and participation. In general terms, however, the value of broad-based ownership and collaboration for achieving change is endorsed.

Wallace, John and Wildy, Helen 1994, 'The National Schools Project: School site experiences at restructuring', *Unicorn*, vol. 20, (1), pp. 63–72.

Wallace and Wildy review a case study in the National Schools Project (NSP). This was a centrally initiated national reform process, in partnership with employers, unions and universities, and was intended to develop links between changes in work organisation and improved student outcomes. Schools were able to participate voluntarily within the national project, and in that context, develop and implement their own reform initiative, subject to certain conditions and, in some cases, central approval processes. The focus of the local initiatives was on forms and structures of teachers' work in schools.

Wallace and Wildy describe how the school in the case study emphasised collaborative decision-making processes within the school and broader school community, and the related sense of local ownership of the initiative, in contrast to 'centrally inspired projects'. These aspects of the study are put forward as major strengths, promoting improved communication among staff and between them and the community, and allowing the staff to control the pace of change. Constraining features are identified as a general lack of time, under existing structural arrangements for schools and teachers' work, for teachers to sustain the sort of efforts required to implement the initiative, including the need for scheduled time for planning and professional development.

Having identified the benefits of collaboration and local ownership, and some structural constraints that apply even when these conditions are met, Wallace and Wildy go on to note the lack of agreement about what counts as progress for the specific project aims and objectives, and hence the difficulty in assessing the success of the reform.

They conclude that improvements for students, in this case, were more likely to be a result of the school's participation in the project process in general, rather than the specific changes implemented, due to the side effects of improved communication, co-operation, collaboration and commitment to the project. In this sense, they add further value to the processes of collaboration and local ownership for effective school change.

Cherednichenko, Brenda, Hooley, Neil, James, Wes, Kruger, Tony, Lawson, Denise, Moore, Rod, Partridge, Jane and Tyson, Craig, 1999, 'A developing case study: A collaborative longitudinal experience of school change research', *Australian Educational Researcher*, vol. 26 (3), pp. 57–71.

The authors examine a study of projects under the National Schools Network, which evolved out of the National Schools Project (NSP). This paper reviews the action research and change processes in seven schools across six states in terms of their

outcomes for students. The authors' evaluation of the projects in these schools is based on visits by research teams, over four years, observing and documenting practices. In evaluating the projects in these schools, they conclude that those projects, which helped create 'collaborative work practices', were the most effective in achieving both changes to the school culture and the successful implementation of reforms. Support from the school and school community is reported as being 'essential' for the development, implementation and broader dissemination of any school-based reforms.

The paper details specific initiatives for democratic decision making implemented in one of the schools, noting the influence of other systemic factors and policies on the collaborative decision making structures and processes. Here they describe and endorse the process of teachers 'case writing' about their own practice, both as a source of data and a strategy for achieving change. Based on the data they highlight the need for structural conditions to support greater collaboration and ownership in school practice generally, and for the development and implementation of specific initiatives in particular. The central point that emerges from the paper is not just to affirm the benefits of a 'collaborative environment' that facilitates 'teacher-led change and reform', but also to identify from the data the need to actively create the conditions required to support this type of environment.

Angus, Max and Loudon, William 1998, 'Systemic reform in a federal system: The National Schools Project', in Andy Hargreaves, Ann Lieberman, Michael Fullan, and David Hopkins (eds), *International Handbook of Educational Change*, Kluwer Academic Publications, Dordrecht, Boston and London.

This chapter is another report on the National School Project (NSP). It highlights the critical importance of schools and their staff 'owning' any reform initiative as a condition for its successful implementation. The authors qualify this endorsement of local ownership, however, by stressing the difficulties of achieving real change even if such conditions are met. This is attributed to the entrenched teaching practices that persist alongside the rhetoric of school reform.

More specifically, this chapter reviews the complex political processes and alliances involved in the NSP, balancing a range of competing interests: Commonwealth versus State; local versus national; union versus employer; public versus private; big versus small state; and Labor versus Liberal. They argue that the compromises and other costs required to maintain this national project ultimately led to its demise, pointing to competing interests pursuing reform on their own terms.

With respect to achieving school reform, they acknowledge the role of the culture of schools, and the entrenched and taken for granted practices of teaching, as potentially working against innovation. However, they stress that constraints on the capacity of teachers and principals to have genuine ownership of reform initiatives, due to competing stakeholder interests and unequal power relations on reform committees, were critical in this case. In this sense they highlight the stifling effect of centralised control over the project, including an effective veto power over individual schools initiatives, despite the voluntary nature of participation and the capacity for schools and their communities to initiate and develop their own reform projects.

The authors conclude that effective change requires a shared understanding and commitment at the local level, as well as guaranteed systemic support for teachers to implement the reform.

Gibbs, Colin 1999, *Believing, thinking and feeling: Putting the teacher back into effectiveness*, website (28 August 2001):

<http://www.aare.edu.au/99pap/gib99163.htm>

In this paper Gibbs focuses on the role of individual teachers in successful school change, and the need to create conditions in which self-efficacious teachers can actively implement innovations and change. This is done through a critique of the 'businessization' of schooling in New Zealand, in the context constant and rapid change imposed by the centre having a negative impact on the self-efficacy of teachers. The importance of teacher support for, and active participation in, any change initiative is outlined in the contemporary context of heightened pressures, community and employer expectations, curriculum overcrowding, and levels of dissatisfaction being experienced by teachers.

Gibbs draws on 'social cognitive research', and the literature on teacher effectiveness and the impact of change on teacher efficacy. He uses this to make the argument that the difficulties faced by teachers under such conditions promote negative responses to reforms, particular when such initiatives are seen by teachers to make these conditions worse or work against their primary interests. This, in turn, is said to result in teachers being less open to risks and innovation, thus limiting their capacity to implement new ideas.

While the focus of this paper is on the broad 'businessization' agenda in the New Zealand system, the principles developed relate to externally imposed change that lacks the input and support of teachers, and the conditions in schools which work against teachers actively participating in change. Gibbs affirms the need for teachers to believe in and be committed to any change, and be sufficiently empowered to act

proactively and creatively in the process, as the necessary requirements for successful reform and change.

Bishop, Pam and Mulford, Bill 1999, 'When will they ever learn?: Another failure of centrally-imposed change', *School Leadership & Management*, vol. 19 (2) pp. 179–87.

In this paper Bishop and Mulford report on a case study to argue against centrally-imposed reforms, in terms of their negative impact on teachers and principals, and their failure to achieve outcomes tied to the lack of local ownership and participation. Data about 'mutual trust' is used from the interviews with the teachers and a principal in one of the schools to build and support the argument. While the authors report specifically on the centrally imposed reforms of the Kennett government in Victoria under the 'Schools of the Future' policy, they make general conclusions with respect to the source and nature of educational reform. In other words, the authors acknowledge that large-scale, system-wide reforms may need to be directed or initiated by central authorities. However, they argue that in order to succeed, these reforms must deal with the needs and interests of teachers in schools and actively build trust and collaborative action at the local level.

In particular, the interview data is shown to support the argument that imposed change from the centre, implemented through school principals, undermines the trust teachers have in their principals. Further, where teachers see the reform as working against their interests, they are likely to both resist the change, and experience a sense of alienation as the principal expresses the official view. Thus the authors conclude that the way in which the reform is implemented is critical to its success, with non-negotiable, centrally imposed initiatives almost certain to fail. In contrast, giving teachers the opportunity to develop their understanding about initiatives, and to critically assess and discuss them in a collaborative environment, is affirmed as a necessary condition for successful change.

Waugh, Russell F 2000, 'Towards a model of teacher receptivity to planned system-wide educational change in a centrally controlled system', *Journal of Educational Administration*, vol. 38 (4), pp. 350–67.

In this paper Waugh draws on four major system-wide educational changes implemented in Western Australia over the last 30 years, and the research literature about these and other large-scale reforms, to argue for a 'theoretical model of system-wide educational change' that directly addresses the question of 'teacher-receptivity' to change. The central argument is that successful system-wide change needs conditions at the local level that promote teachers' openness to, and active participation in, the reform. From an administrative perspective, he identifies four

factors that relate directly to such conditions: the characteristics of the change; the way it is managed at the school level; its value for teachers; and the value for students as perceived by teachers.

Waugh justifies the focus of his work by noting the lack of research into teachers' receptivity to system-wide change in centralised educational systems, despite the large body of literature on educational change. On this basis, he develops a general model based around the four identified factors. In outlining the model, however, Waugh's arguments seem to suggest that the objective is to create a perception of ownership among teachers, rather than create the conditions for genuine ownership and collaboration. In this sense, the work on promoting teacher-receptivity to change is clearly only one aspect of the process, thus qualifying the potential use of the proposed model.

Hogan, C. and Down, B. 1996, *Teacher research: Stories of teacher development and educational change*, website (17 September 2001): <http://www.aare.edu.au/96pap/downb96.020>

Hogan and Down draw on the journal entries and interviews with the participants in a site-based teacher education course where they undertook action research to discover support structures and conditions that recognise, encourage and value teacher-initiated research for change. The focus of the paper is on initial teacher education, and school-based components of this preparation, making the standard critique of content-based approaches that uncritically deliver information to students. Its implications, however, extend to the ways in which schools and systems recognise and incorporate teacher knowledge into their reform agendas. Taking this further, the authors argue for the conscious creation of contexts in which the teachers' knowledge is recognised and respected, and they can generate their own research for change.

The argument is also for greater collaboration, and the recognition of the role of teachers in any change, based on the primary data and secondary literature on teachers and research and reform. They argue for improved collaboration through what are now standard calls for 'new partnerships' between teachers and academics, and better professional development in which teachers actively research, and make meaning of, identified key issues. The question of adequate support and resources for teachers in their work that is required to create and sustain the conditions necessary for genuine collaboration and participation is implied in the paper. The issue of resources cannot be separated from the main conclusion of the paper: the need to create structured and unstructured, formal and informal, opportunities for teachers to communicate effectively and openly; to take chances; to research; and to work together.

Frost, David 2000, 'Teacher-led school improvement: agency and strategy Part 1', *Management in Education*, vol. 14 (4), pp. 21–4.

This article considers teacher stress and morale in relation to change in schools. Frost argues that a teacher's 'sense of agency is frustrated by the climate of performativity' in schools. As a consequence they suffer an overwhelming sense of failure, with a limited sense of having any agency or opportunities to exercise that agency. Based on this argument, Frost adds to the consensus call for local ownership of change initiatives, in terms of models of school improvement that support individual teachers' reflection on, and participation in, the planning and implementation of change.

School Drug Education Project, 1998, *SDEP in Action*, Case studies from the School Drug Education Project 1997.

This document details the implementation of a school drug education project across different sites. In so doing the report outlines two models, and associated strategies, to engage schools and their communities in a significant curriculum change (in this case, drug education). The two models covered are the 'Whole School' approach, and the 'Train the Trainer' model used in government and non-government, primary, district high and secondary schools, and district education offices. The appendix to the report collates identified key strategies used by all participating schools in the project, under the headings of 'Curriculum', 'School' and 'Parent/Community'. The importance of genuine collaboration and ownership of the reforms, particularly through the whole school approach, is emphasised.

Dimitrijevic, Sue 2000, 'The School Drug Education Project: A cross-sectoral education strategy in an Australian setting', Australian Drug Summit, 13–15 June, NSW Parliament, Sydney.

This paper provides a detailed description of the strategic plan for the implementation of the School Drug Education Project (SDEP). The implementation was undertaken through five strands:

- The development and provision of curriculum materials;
- Professional development for schools and teachers;
- School drug policy and guidelines development/assistance;
- Parent and community participation; and
- Evaluation and monitoring.

Each of the five strands is dealt with in the course of the paper, and a general overview of the timing and style of support offered to schools and communities is

provided. Feedback on the resources and the professional development elements of the broader project is favourable, highlighting the value placed on meaningful collaboration, with adequate resources and support for teachers to implement change.

3 School culture and supportive environment for achieving change

Intersecting with some of the works previously reviewed, this section highlights the impact of the culture of the school and the school system on its structure and practice, and on any attempted reform initiative or change. This follows the major line of research from the early 1970s that identified the social culture of schools as a previously ignored factor that complicated any intended change process in multiple ways. A major theme is the importance of explicitly working to create an environment in systems and schools that actively supports teachers in the change process.

Lieberman, Ann 1998, 'The growth of educational change as a field of study: Understanding its roots and branches', in Andy Hargreaves, Ann Lieberman, Michael Fullan and David Hopkins (eds), *International Handbook of Educational Change*, Kluwer Academic Publications, Dordrecht, Boston and London.

Lieberman provides a brief historical review of post-World War II work on educational change as a field of study in the United States. She outlines the process by which major reform efforts in science education (in the Cold War context), for example, led to research on what assisted and impeded the implementation of such reforms. She notes Sarason's lasting legacy, entrenching in the field the idea that implementing change in schools necessarily involved changing the culture of the school, hence the need to take these more complex features into account when planning and implementing change. In this sense, the importance of the particular context is highlighted, in terms of its influence on what and how teachers and principals think and do.

Ludlow, Sandra 1994, *Reflections of a solo teacher researcher on the process of implementing change*, website (28 August 2001):
<http://www.aare.edu.au/94pap/ludsl94.219>

Ludlow reports on a case study of a teacher's experience in a single-teacher school attempting to engage in research, and in response to this, develop and implement change in their teaching practice. Journal entries, audio recordings and discussions

with the teacher were the primary sources of data for the study. Based on the teacher's experience, Ludlow identifies support for individual teachers, at multiple levels, as a critical factor in any effective process of initiating and implementing reform initiatives. The types of support identified include contact with regular, collaborative groups to discuss implementation; the necessary physical and other resources required for implementation; and the provision of adequate time for group and individual planning and monitoring of the change process. The context of a single teacher attempting to engage in action research, in relative isolation, and apply the findings of the research in practice, is clearly not representative of most teachers' situation or experience. The interesting point to emerge from the paper however, that does have wider implications, is that in these unusual conditions the same types of pre-conditions are identified for effective change in teaching practice – better support for locally owned and developed initiatives.

Hattam, Robert and McInerney, Peter 2000, 'Proper teacher training holds the answers to "whole school reform"', *Education Review*, vol. 4 (2), pp. 14.

In this brief paper Hattam and McInerney, both acknowledged researchers in the education field, add to the calls for the establishment of democratic and collaborative structures and practices in schools. They make a standard critique of recent trends in school education that shift responsibility for teachers' ongoing professional development and learning away from national and state systems and onto individual schools. Taking this further, they focus on teachers' learning, and the aspects of the school context that impact on their learning and implementation of any school-side reform initiatives. Based on this, Hattam and McInerney highlight the importance of the specific (political, socio-economic and demographic) context, the school culture, school leadership and planning, as key factors influencing teachers' learning for school reform. Conclusions in the paper emphasise the need to address the school culture, and levels of support for teachers, for effective and holistic change to occur. This includes conscious work to establish democratic and collaborative structures and forms of leadership, and recognition of the centrality of teachers and their learning in any process of cultural change.

4 The role of the local and national political, economic, social and cultural context

The features identified in this section focus on the need to take into account the specific contexts and conditions when dealing with any change of reform. The identified consensus, based on the works' theoretical discussion and research into attempted reforms, is that every initiative and its interaction with the particular

context, is unique. Hence, as well as the general principles of ownership and collaboration, an additional proposal emerges – that the specific features of the particular combination of reform and context must be taken into account in determining a strategy for achieving change.

Fullan, Michael 1998, 'The meaning of educational change: A quarter of a century of learning' in Andy Hargreaves, Ann Lieberman, Michael Fullan and David Hopkins (eds), *International Handbook of Educational Change*, Kluwer Academic Publications, Dordrecht, Boston and London.

In this chapter Fullan reviews the historical stages in educational change thinking, covering the 'implementation phase', the 'meaning of change phase', and the 'capacity for change phase'. In the first stage, he identifies the attention given to the role of teachers as change agents, and notes that, despite large numbers of innovations in the early 1970s, little was changing in practice. The second identified stage built on this by developing meaningful change from the points of view of teachers, students and the community. Tracing this through to contemporary times, the 'capacity for change phase' is described in terms of the complex connections between individuals, schools, systems and multiple internal and external factors influencing change. Fullan prioritises the role of individual teachers as proactive agents of change, often working for change 'despite the system'.

Fullan concludes that there is no 'silver bullet' solution to engineer change in all situations, given the well-accepted view that what works in one place may completely fail in another. He provides some historical background to the development of this contemporary understanding of school reform. Given the importance of the contextual features, Fullan raises the need to link teachers with the reform, the school and the community, in order to enhance their capacity to work as agents of change.

Fullan, Michael and Stiegelbauer, Suzanne 1991, 'Causes/processes of implementation and continuation', in Michael Fullan and Suzanne Stiegelbauer (eds), *The New Meaning of Educational Change*, Teachers College Press, New York.

Fullan and Stiegelbauer deal with the implementation stage of school change, setting out a range of general, local and external characteristics of effective change and themes that impact on the implementation process. The complexity of these interacting factors and themes highlights both the lack of clarity or certainty with respect to change processes, and the non-linear and potentially non-rational nature of change linked to the particular social context. Common themes of complexity in

planning and co-ordinating the 'multilevel social process' of school change are stressed in the chapter.

The value of this chapter, as in other works by Fullan, is the way it systematically lays out the multiple and interacting factors that influence this complex social process. In this chapter, the authors review the need for clarity, practicality and local ownership. These factors, in turn, are dependent on and shaped by both the characteristics of the local context, and the agendas of the government and employing authorities. They also highlight the importance of 'vision building', empowering teachers to work for change, and providing them with adequate assistance and professional development to achieve this. The conclusion reinforces the theme of ownership, stressing the need for local initiation of and participation in change, pressure and support for change; changing beliefs and behaviours; and a sense of local ownership. This chapter sets out some general conditions or principles for change as part of a broader attempt to generate a theory for effective change.

Hattam, Robert 1998, *Towards a cultural geography of school reform and teachers' learning'*, website (27 August 2001):

<http://www.aare.edu.au/98pap/hat98194.htm>

Hattam uses the metaphors of 'cultural geography' and 'maps' to emphasise the complexity of social life, and the inter-relationship between schools and the socio-cultural context in which they are located. Based on a critical theory of school reform and a commitment to an egalitarian society, he calls for a 'critical cultural geography' that directly connects everyday life and practice in the classroom, and any initiatives for school reform, with the broader social context.

From this perspective Hattam examines some case studies from the 'Teachers Learning Project' to develop five propositions as the basis for a 'cultural geography' theory of teachers' learning and reform. Drawing on secondary literature to contextualise school and school reforms, and unspecified data sources from the case studies, he sets out the five propositions for teachers' learning:

- 1** Teachers are the most important actors in any school change, given their constant negotiation of the increasingly complex and problematic lives of their students;
- 2** Teachers' learning is a socio-cultural practice, such that serious school change must explicitly work on the school culture;
- 3** Locally developed, dynamic programs to support teachers' learning should be developed;

- 4 'Whole-school reform' needs to be coherent, driven by a shared vision, adequately resourced, and link planning with teaching practices, professional development and curriculum development; and
- 5 Critically reflective practice for teachers should be valued and encouraged, with the acknowledgement that it is difficult to sustain over time.

Through these propositions Hattam highlights some of the multiple ways that the local context and conditions influence school reform, and the need to make these explicit in order to actively create the conditions necessary to support any restructuring, reculturing and changes to pedagogy.

Kaye, Michael 1994, 'Implementing change in Australian tertiary education systems: Reflections on some practical strategies', *Unicorn*, vol. 20 (1), pp. 52–61.

This paper analyses attempted reforms in tertiary education, their common strategies and processes for change, and questions some of the taken for granted assumptions about the reform process. In particular, Kaye challenges the consensus view on local ownership and participation, questioning whether, as a matter of principle, all staff should be included as potential change agents, and whether this necessarily leads to higher quality outcomes. Drawing on official reform proposals and reports on their implementation, Kaye identifies different types of responses to change: those already doing what the change requires; those needing retraining; and those unwilling or incapable of changing. He argues that management strategies are required that take these into account. Taking the argument further, Kaye argues that calls for 'worker participation' and commitment to change are often more rhetoric than substance, creating an image of workplace democracy. In its place he calls for better judgement about when the support and participation of all members is required or relevant.

The paper acknowledges the importance of the prevailing conditions or context with respect to any change, including the adequacy of resources and the attitudes and abilities of staff. Six factors are identified that influence the success of any change. These are:

- 1 The level of resources;
- 2 The age of those required to change;
- 3 The source of the change;
- 4 The role of external consultants;
- 5 The extent to which employers understand the change and are able to provide meaningful support for people to implement it; and
- 6 The time frame expectations of change agents.

Kaye concludes by citing the complex and problematic nature of any strategy for change, given the interaction of the multiple variables in the particular context. While viewing reform solely in terms of management strategies is clearly not adequate, the issues and combination of six factors raised by Kaye are relevant to the planning and implementation of reform initiatives across educational sectors.

Lee, David 2001, 'School change from the "bottom-up" – How real is the prospect?', *Literacy Learning: the Middle Years*, vol. 9 (1), pp. 141–9.

Lee discusses possibilities for school-initiated change in literacy learning, based on a critique of recent state and federal policy initiatives, particularly those in Victoria, for their failure to connect teachers with the social, cultural and political contexts in which they work. He adds another voice to the call for these contextual features to be taken into account in curriculum and pedagogical reform. This is illustrated through the example of literacy reforms in the context of the early Kennett years in Victoria, in a climate of school closures, staff cuts, increased workloads, hostility towards teacher unions and general insecurity.

Lee's central argument is that certain initiatives failed to work their way into the broader school culture because they were generated from outside the schools, were imposed on schools and teachers, and as a result failed to meet the needs and questions of teachers. He draws on secondary accounts of particular reform initiatives to emphasise the importance of the source of the reform and the nature of its implementation. Lee argues that the external source of the reforms meant that they did not address internal structural or organisational issues, and were perceived by staff as an additional demand on their already overcrowded workloads. In this sense, taking the local context and culture into account means actively working for teacher support and ownership of a project or initiative as an essential condition for its successful implementation.

Lipman, Pauline 1998, 'Conclusion: Restructuring in social context' in Pauline Lipman (ed), *Race, Class, and Power in School Restructuring*, State University of New York Press, New York.

Writing in the United States context, Lipman focuses on the impact of reform initiatives on existing social inequalities based on race, class and power relationships in schools. Her source of data includes her own research in several schools, involving observations and interviews with the staff. This is connected with the theoretical literature on schools' role in the (re-)production of inequalities.

Lipman challenges three taken for granted assumptions about school-based reform, in terms of their impact on existing dimensions of inequality. First, in response to the

claim that decentralisation brings more participation and local innovation, she notes the potential for teachers to uncritically reproduce existing inequalities, particularly in some local social and political contexts. Second, she questions the claim that collaboration will necessarily promote critical enquiry and dialogue, arguing that it can simply entrench differences and negative understandings like deficit models. Third, the value of organising students into small groups is questioned, based on the tendency for them to be organised according to 'ability', promoting deficit assumptions, different expectations for different students, leading to different outcomes.

In response to these challenges Lipman identifies three major themes to be addressed in order to improve outcomes for students who are the most disadvantaged by current arrangements. These are:

- 1 The need to challenge the hierarchy of knowledge in schools, and social relationships in society generally;
- 2 The need to confront the taken for granted assumptions inherent in school culture, and broader social and political culture; and
- 3 The need to change existing power relations to consciously include traditionally marginalised groups in any reform process.

Lipman synthesises the established equity critique of schools and society, highlighting the potential of school reforms to reinforce rather than address areas of inequality. The value of the chapter is in the identified potential of generally accepted practices in school reform to entrench inequities, and hence the need to critically assess such strategies and their outcomes on a regular basis against such criteria.

Dinham, Steve and Scott, Catherine 1998, 'Reconceptualising teacher's work', paper presented at the Australian College of Education National Conference, 27–30 September, Canberra.

Dinham and Scott provide an overview of the current reality facing most teachers, that is, of increased expectations, responsibilities and pressures from multiple sources. These include additional academic demands that add to already overcrowded curriculums, alongside additional social expectations and administrative responsibilities. This reality is set in the context of the declining social status of teachers, and politicised calls for greater accountability for schools and teachers.

Based on quantitative data from a study into the occupational satisfaction, motivation and mental health of teachers in three countries, they characterise teachers' current predicament and identify factors contributing to this situation. Thus they conclude that school-based factors, like leadership, the culture and decision-making processes and local levels of resources, are the most critical for effective change. At the same time

they argue that the broader context in which teachers and schools are currently situated impacts on the capacity of teachers and schools generally to implement more change.

From the data they characterise teachers as simultaneously experiencing 'role overload', 'role malintegration' and 'role ambiguity', all of which adds to their increased resistance to additional demands and reform initiatives. The critical point made in the paper is the heightened need, under current conditions, for teacher involvement, collaboration and ownership of change initiatives, with sufficient resources and other supports in place, to address these identified problems.

Harris, Alma and Hopkins, David 1999, 'Review article: Teaching and learning and the challenge of educational reform', *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, vol. 10 (2), pp. 257–67.

In this paper Harris and Hopkins review five texts on effective teaching and school reform. They argue for the centrality of teachers and their practice in the classroom in any reforms intended to improve student learning. They call for reforms that begin with a clear idea of what works in classrooms, and provide supporting networks of professional development. Five challenges for educational reformers are identified in order to achieve these outcomes:

- 1 The need for more clarity in the field of effective teaching;
- 2 The need for better understanding of how teaching (including curriculum and organisation) impacts on learning;
- 3 The need to link organisational and instructional change;
- 4 The need for strategies to help teachers teach and students learn, rather than just the setting of targets for student achievement; and
- 5 The need for better understanding of how 'effective teaching' can improve students' learning, rather than more research knowledge about 'effective teaching'.

As with much of the literature in the field, little detail is put forward about how such challenges can be met. Statements of the problem are made, with implicit and direct claims about how things should be, but they are largely at the level of rhetoric. The substance of how to better link reforms to teaching and learning, or connect organisational with instructional change, for example, is not provided.

Sharkey, Paul 1996, *On befriending texts for change*, website (14 September 2001): <http://www.aare.edu.au/96pap/sharp96.159>

This philosophical paper attempts to use the concept of hermeneutics to explain how policy texts are received and engaged with by teachers in schools. Underlying the abstract language, the paper makes some interesting and relevant points. One is the need for teachers to be open, with useful assistance, to engage with new ideas contained in policy texts that may not accord with their existing world and educational views. Similarly, Sharkey talks about the need for teachers to understand policy texts in their social and political context, and in their application. He argues that effective change is achieved by teachers applying the change in their practice first, rather than the more traditional procedure of beginning with teachers' knowledge and understanding of the change at an abstract or theoretical level.

Sharkey also emphasises the role of uncertainty in the change process as it relates to texts, and teachers' understanding of them and themselves. He argues that teachers must take personal risks in terms of challenging their own beliefs and understandings, as they open themselves to change with uncertain outcomes. The underlying idea is the importance of meaningful conversation, in which participants are genuinely open to new and challenging ideas, for effective change to occur. Hence the argument is that change processes need to create the spaces and conditions for this type of conversation with texts and reform initiatives, leading to both changes in teachers' beliefs and their development of skills to enact the change. This paper emphasises the substantial amount of work required to consciously create conditions that are conducive to change.

Hargreaves, Andy 1997, 'Cultures of teaching and educational change' in Michael Fullan (ed), *The Challenge of School Change: A Collection of Articles*, Hawker Brownlow Education, Cheltenham.

In this chapter Hargreaves critically reflects on the line of work advocating the 'reculturing' of schools to achieve change, for which he has been a central figure. The critique is aimed at developing and extending work on school culture in ways that both facilitate effective change and benefit teachers and students. Hargreaves argues that the academic 'celebration' of chaos and uncertainty in schooling, based on claimed exciting possibilities for teachers and change agents in such conditions, has tended to exclude the underlying political and structural causes of the chaotic conditions. He argues that in some cases, the causes of the chaos and uncertainty, like contradictory politicised reform agendas, need to be consciously and actively attacked.

Hargreaves goes on to review the tendency in the literature on teacher cultures to promote individualised, personal responses to external political and structural problems. He describes this in terms of an 'interior turn' in the literature that advocates personal solutions, like reflective practice or stress management, to

imposed problems that, in fact, ought to be challenged. More critically, he argues that the study of teacher cultures has been colonised by the interests of 'educational management' seeking to implement managerial change. In this way the discussion of school and teacher cultures tends to be from the perspective of school managers, positioning principals as directing the creation of cultures that includes mandating a 'contrived collegiality' among teachers in which imposed change can be achieved.

Hargreaves reaffirms his commitment to better understanding the cultural dimensions of schools, teaching and educational change. He qualifies this, however, by warning that the politics of the 'interior turn' in cultural strategies for change excludes attention being given to external strategies of reform and restructuring that risk dismantling public education and the professional independence of teachers. He concludes by advocating support for teachers as active agents in developing their own cultures; learning from alternative studies of teacher cultures; and the development of change theories that address how teachers and principals can 'turn outwards' to confront the assault of public education.

Reid, Alan 1999, 'The National Educational Agenda and its curriculum effects', in Bruce Johnson and Alan Reid (eds), *Contesting the Curriculum*, Social Science Press, Katoomba.

From a book that aims to provide an 'overview of a range of curriculum issues that are engaging educators currently', this collection of essays encourages teachers to claim their authority as curriculum-shaping agents. As such, it provides insights into the teachers' perspectives of the curriculum demands and models of implementation to which they have been exposed in Australia over the last 30 years. This chapter explores national education policy since the early 1980s, the forms of national initiatives and their impact in this period. It provides an insight into scepticism about the national calls for change and promises of improvement that have been the experience of teachers and administrators over an extended period.

Reid identifies fears that arise from the impact of such policy making and calls for change, in the national context, as:

- a reduction in the diversity of the education system;
- the stratification or narrowing of the curriculum;
- the damage of competition between schools;
- the increased distance between school-based educators and policy makers;
- and
- the potential for the system to reproduce social inequality.

Questions about effective leadership, as a key factor in successful change, constitute a long-standing theme in the literature. Aside from the paper by Shue-Tak Yu (2000), the focus in this section builds on the consensus on local ownership, advocating local leadership of change initiatives. Arguments against hierarchical and top-down models are articulated, in favour of collective and teacher-based leadership models.

Foster, Margot, Le Cornu, Rosie and Peters, Judy 2000, *Leadership for Learning*, website (27 August 2001):

<http://www.aare.edu.au/00pap/fos00305.htm>

This 18-month study of a South Australian (DETE funded) project, 'Learning to Learn', focused on leadership in schools to move beyond school reform to more fundamental school redesign. In particular, the paper reviews teachers' (identified as school leaders) participation in 'Learning Circles' within the DETE project to facilitate the implementation of the reform. Data comes from field notes from the Learning Circle meetings, and from Learning Circles and Learning Site Reviews and Practicum Evaluations.

Given this focus, the paper not surprisingly endorses the theme of school leadership being essential for effective change, while acknowledging ongoing debate over the issue of leadership generally, and the need for further research. The arguments around leadership centre on the concept of establishing 'teachers as leaders', with the support of principals, as a strategy to change the culture of the school and actively engage teachers in the change process. In this sense they critique the 'corporate managerialism' model of leadership in schools, advocating instead the use of 'learning circles' to support teacher leadership teams.

On the process of planning, they call for an 'emergent approach' in which individual schools develop, over time, their own vision for redesign, rather than follow an externally developed plan. The sense of local ownership is evident here, with teachers clarifying their values, beliefs and goals at the local level prior to implementing any change. Further, they acknowledge the need for a 'critical mass' of support in the school and community for the redesign initiative, and the need to respond to the reality of 'innovation overload' by integrating change demands across the school in ways that avoid simply adding more work for teachers. The paper is also strong on supporting staff, calling for an acceptance of their different levels of engagement in the change, opportunities for dissent to be aired, and the provision of adequate resources and time to support teachers learning and collaborative planning.

The paper outlines some conditions to support effective change, including a three day, fully resourced, 'professional development practicum' for teacher leaders

involved in the project in different schools to critically reflect on their experience. Based on data from teachers participating in the project, and reports on its progress, the paper complements work on local ownership through its call for local leadership and initiation of reform. Finding ways in which leadership can be supported and developed, at the local level, is seen to underlie successful reform.

Shue-Tak Yu, Richard 2000, 'Leadership and effective school reform', *The Practising Administrator*, vol. 22 (1), pp. 28–31.

In contrast to the paper on the South Australian redesign, Shue-Tak Yu reports on a principal-led school reform in Singapore, in which data is cited to show an improvement in students' performance in examinations over a four-year period. The extent to which such a measure can be attributed to a single factor, in this case the general attitude and leadership style and practice of the principal, is of course highly problematic and not addressed in the paper. With these limitations in mind, Shue-Tak Yu does provide a case for the importance of leadership by the principal in any reform initiative. In the context of Singapore, he cites a range of contextual and cultural factors that also assisted the change process, including the general valuing of and support for school education in society, and the strong national academic curriculum unencumbered by additional demands and social issues. Acknowledging the extensive literature on restructuring strategies, he claims that the level of commitment from individuals to the change, in a supportive environment, is the essential factor.

The 'solution' offered in this paper, however, really amounts to just another strategy, without addressing how such levels of commitment from staff can be achieved in the complex and diverse political and social settings of different schools. References to the need for 'good teachers' and 'good families' further highlight the lack of detail and critical thinking, and the overly simplistic solutions.

Brooker, Ross, Elliot, Bob and Macpherson, Ian 1998, 'Changing schools: Creating a discourse for teacher leadership' in Lisa Catherine Ehrich and John Knight Flaxton (eds), *Leadership in Crisis? Restructuring principled practice: Essays on contemporary educational leadership*, Qld, post pressed.

Brooker et al. make a strong case against leadership structures based on bureaucratic hierarchies, in favour of more 'organic' or 'communal' structures in schools that recognise and promote the capacity of teacher leadership within and beyond the classroom. Using qualitative data from a survey of teachers, and field notes from school visits, they develop the argument that traditional hierarchical

structures of leadership are inadequate for contemporary times, since leadership in schools involves an 'interplay of people and contexts ... the majority of who are teachers'. The potential of teachers to lead the process of transformational change in schools can be realised, they argue, through a model that recognises and supports teachers' knowledge, skills and attitudes in and of their local context.

In this sense the paper adds to the calls for conditions and structures in schools that directly support and encourage teachers to take leadership roles for change in collaboration with their colleagues and the school community. These conditions include organisational structures that empower teachers, and provide resources and real decision-making power, and a non-threatening climate that allows for open debate and risk taking.

The paper provides a good case for the centrality of the teacher in any change at the school level. Accepting this principle, the call for a model that prioritises creating conditions that 'support and sustain the individual teacher as a leader of learning' is compelling.

Silins, Halia and Mulford, Bill 2000, *Towards an optimistic future: Schools as learning organisations – Effects on teacher leadership and student outcomes*, website (14 September 2001):

<http://www.aare.edu.au/00pap/sil00273.htm>

Silins and Mulford report on an ARC-funded study into organisational learning and leadership practices that impact on this, with the objective of 'reconceptualising schools as learning organisations to promote successful school change'. They set out to identify and detail characteristics of schools as learning organisations, and aspects of school leadership and related conditions that can support schools' development as active learning organisations. As with most of the literature, the authors highlight the connections between the conditions of the teachers' working life in schools and their commitment to their work, to trying new ideas, to developing new skills and to change. Desirable conditions include the concept of teachers having decision-making power, such that they perceive themselves as genuine change agents in the school.

Their study draws on quantitative data from surveys of teachers and students, and analyses of the nature of organisational learning and leadership to support it, to develop a path model with twelve variables. The model examines both their impact on teacher leadership and organisational learning, and in turn the impact of these on students' participation and engagement in school. The conclusions that emerge from the study raise issues of local ownership, and a participatory and supportive school culture that allows for critical reflection and discussion, as necessary conditions for teacher learning, leadership and school change. The question of how to involve

teachers and teacher leaders in school change without simply placing additional burdens on their already heavy workload is also raised.

While focusing on school learning and teacher leadership, the paper adds to the case for both interpersonal and cultural conditions that support and value teachers and their work, and material conditions that provide time, resources and spaces for teachers to effectively lead and engage in school reform and change.

Gold, Barry Allen 1999, 'Punctuated legitimacy: A theory of educational change', *Teachers College Record*, vol. 101 (2), pp. 192–219.

This detailed paper traces the longitudinal study of reform initiatives in a primary school over a 23-year period. Through this study Gold develops the 'punctuated legitimacy' model of educational change. The model was developed partly in response to the failure of innovations, in terms of their full implementation, within a few years of their adoption. Gold argues that this short-term failure is an integral part of the longer-term process of deeper change, with schools experiencing a cycle of attempted major changes that challenge the deep structures of schooling, and then periods of smaller incremental change during which pressure again builds for more fundamental change.

Innovation failures are said to be a trigger for further changes, by, for example, leading to changes in leadership. Similarly, the loss of legitimacy associated with an existing practice or outcome is said to trigger attempts to reconstruct legitimacy through further and more substantive change. Gold argues that it is the perceived legitimacy of an innovation that primarily influences whether or not a school abandons it, rather than whether or not it achieves its set objectives.

For the purposes of this review, the paper offers some insights into the common factors that trigger more substantive reform efforts in the long term. Additionally, it highlights the importance of the perceived legitimacy of any reform initiative for its adoption by teachers, in the context of other conditions being met.