

INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOK OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY

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International Handbook of Educational Policy

Part One

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INTRODUCTION

**Nina Bascia, Alister Cumming, Amanda Datnow, Kenneth Leithwood
and David Livingstone**

This Handbook presents contemporary and emergent trends in educational policy research, in over fifty chapters written by nearly ninety leading researchers from a number of countries. It is organized into five broad sections which capture many of the current dominant educational policy foci and at the same time situate current understandings historically, in terms of both how they are conceptualized and in terms of past policy practice. The chapters themselves are empirically grounded, providing illustrations of the conceptual implications contained within them as well as allowing for comparisons across them. The self-reflexivity within chapters with respect to jurisdictional particularities and contrasts allows readers to consider not only a range of approaches to policy analysis but also the ways in which policies and policy ideas play out in different times and places.

The sections move from a focus on prevailing policy tendencies through increasingly critical and “outsider” perspectives on policy. They address, in turn, the contemporary strategic emphasis on *large-scale reform*; substantive emphases at several levels – on *leadership and governance*, improving *teacher quality* and conceptualizing learning in various domains around the notion of *literacies* and concluding, finally, with a contrasting topic, *workplace learning*, which has had less policy attention and thus allows readers to consider both the advantages and disadvantages of learning and teaching under the bright gaze of policy.

Many readers will be drawn to particular sections or topics within sections and encounter this Handbook as a reference tool whose value lies in its treatment of specific issues. While there is much to gain from such an approach, the Handbook in its entirety has more to offer. In this introductory chapter, the five editors identify some of the major themes that crosscut the five sections in order to enhance readers’ ability to recognize and assimilate broader understandings about both policy and policy research. Such broad understandings might be brought to bear not only upon the specific chapters within these volumes but also on policy research beyond the Handbook.

In this chapter, we provide a summary overview of trends in educational policy and policy research over the last half century in order to situate the

present work in context and to raise sensitivity to the ways in which policy making and policy research have influenced each other over time. We also describe how evolving theories of learning, both individual and organizational, have provided conceptual underpinnings for educational policies in several domains. The extent to which policy itself, and policy research, are primarily intent on power over or, conversely, with advocating for “life on the ground” is a third major cross-cutting theme. After addressing these themes, the final sections of this chapter provide an overview of the major concerns and foci contained within each section.

Evolving Directions in Policy and Policy Research

In one broad sense, the Handbook is concerned with the ways in which educational policy can be, or ought to be, understood as a discrete, bounded phenomenon. It traces, continues and extends traditions of research which have evolved over nearly a half century from relatively simple to increasingly complex notions of policy – and at the same time, it engages in an ongoing conversation about the extent to which policy research can or does form any of the basis for the evolution of educational policy making.

At its most basic level, educational policy has been understood as a rational plan, consciously articulated by an authoritative body, usually a government or governmental agency, codified in text such as law or regulation which articulates clear expectations for behaviour and explicitly or implicitly reasserts the formal authority of government in requiring that behaviour. Starting in the expansionist eras of the 1950s and 1960s, educational policy analysts, like those working in other public sectors, were concerned with policy impact, “what went right” or “what went wrong” in terms of the extent to which policy did what it set out to do (cf. McLaughlin, 1987). Beginning in the later 1960s, research evidence, especially in the US, suggested that policy actually had minimal likelihood of resulting in the consequences which it intended. Policy implementation became recognized as an arena distinct from policy making and a necessary focus of policy research. Once policy “left” the arena of policy making and “arrived” in the organizational settings where action was expected to occur, what actually happened and why? Was it a matter of faulty policy design; if designs were improved, would implementation be more certain? Or was lack of intended results a matter of unwilling or incompetent implementers? Primarily economic and psychological approaches to policy research led to considerations of implementers’ motives and abilities to act as policy intended. Identifying salient conditions for successful implementation became a major focus of much policy research (see for instance Elmore, 1977; McDonnell & Elmore, 1987). Both policy researchers and makers began considering seriously the notion of individual and organizational capacity to engage productively with policy; they paid attention to the presence or absence of certain attributes, including skills and resources, that seemed to be correlated with educational success.

It is important to recognize the changing economic and political context in

the post-1960s period as an important influence on shifting policy paradigms, particularly a growing conflict between “top down” and “bottom up” approaches. The continual expansion of the capitalist economic system reached evidently global proportions in this period. In addition to the growing interdependence of national economies and the increasing number of international political forums, new communication and transportation technologies aided unprecedented cultural exchange, especially through mass media and tourism. A major educational consequence was an increased export of policies and programs from more powerful countries to those that were economically dependent on them, as well as increased indigenous resistance to such policy implementation. The emergence of neo-conservative political regimes since the economic stagnation of the 1970s in advanced capitalist societies has also generally been associated with a stronger assertion of centralized and rationalizing educational policies to restrain public spending on education and apply standardized accountability criteria on a globally competitive scale. At the same time, provision of public education had become sufficiently universal to provoke very substantial popular resistance to such measures, both domestically and internationally, among those who see these policy changes as threats to equal accessibility and local control of school systems. Struggles and tensions between centralizers and local control advocates generally, and over funding, curriculum development and testing issues in particular, became widely evident. Subsequent educational policy analyses have increasingly reflected these tensions and recognized the likely involvement of groups with differential powers and interests in virtually every educational issue.

By the 1980s and early 1990s, a line of primarily sociological educational research preoccupied with life “on the ground” in schools and other learning sites encouraged a reconceptualization of policy activity: Organizations, especially schools where educators taught and led and student learned, loomed large: their leadership roles, structures, surrounding communities, histories, norms and daily routines were seen to have the power to resist, mediate and reconstruct policy in powerful ways (see for example Ball, 1987; Clune, 1990; Hargreaves, 1994; Rosenholz, 1989; Siskin, 1994; Taylor et al., 2001). At around the same time, conceptions of implementers emerged as fully formed actors with histories, values and priorities whose encounters with policy were fraught with complexity (see for example Casey, 1993; Goodson, 1992; Thiessen, Bascia, & Goodson, 1996; Werner, 1991). When such implementers with such richly varied agency were seen to work within and interact with such powerful organizations, it was no wonder policies did not behave as predicted. Such concerns led to transformations in both policy research and policy development: with so much going on, it was no longer possible to maintain notions of policy as neutral, rational, intentional and authoritative.

Frustrated by the apparent lack of direct influence and impact suggested by such scenarios and policy preferences, confronted by shrinking fiscal resources for public education and facing growing control by influential organizations such as the World Bank, in the 1990s policy makers began to part company

with these increasingly nuanced lines of educational policy analysis and attempt a return to rational, top-down policy making. The dynamic tension between “top down” and “bottom up” was replaced with an overriding emphasis on “alignment” among key activities (such as curriculum, assessment, teacher training and evaluation, and administration) as governments attempted to institute “systemic” reform of educational systems (see Smith & O’Day, 1991). The first three sections of this Handbook especially are substantively concerned with the current emphasis on standardization that has been taken up through educational policy in a number of countries around the globe.

As a result of what some implementers and policy researchers have perceived as powerful and invasive new directions in educational practice, policy researchers have begun moving away from a conceptualization of policy as a simple process “down” a formal hierarchical educational system and toward notions of policy in terms of systems, webs and networks. Such notions emphasize the effects of policy as a confluence of both formal and informal factors that intersect in particular places, and in terms of ideas and discursive practices with the power to influence both action and the meaning of that action. “Policy” is thus not only what the government says, but what communities surrounding schools, parent groups, the media, and professional associations say about what educational practice is or should be. In contrast to concerns that teaching and learning are peculiarly impervious to efforts to reform them, the school and the classroom, and indeed educational systems themselves, are viewed as institutions highly permeable to outside influence (Bascia & Hargreaves, 2000; see chapters by Joshee & Johnson and by Osborn & McNess in this volume).

Such permeability is captured by many of the chapters in the Handbook. At the same time, the chapters, both individually and in aggregate, suggest that, despite the intentions and, in some cases, the sheer magnitude and might of policy efforts, the processes of administering, teaching and learning are more complex than current policy proclivities would have it. As the chapters by Mundy and by Osborn and McNess, among others, suggest, context continues to matter in the particular shape that policies actually take whether or not policy formulation attempts to take context into account. The politics of policy making, both formal and informal, matter in terms of what concerns get taken up by policy and how (chapters by Bascia, Reynolds, and Wells & Holmes). The dissonance or disconnect between the activities or individuals upon which policy shines its bright light are problematic both for that which is ignored and for that which is scrutinized – it continues to ignore how people really live and learn, as Smaller and others reveal and, as Hager suggests most directly, like the Heizenberg Principle, policy by its very nature can result in the reduction of understanding of the phenomenon it purports to address.

Policy researchers are concerned about the limited direct influence research seems to have had on policy making) (see, for example, chapters by Levin, Luke, Sachs, & Seashore). This concern, of course, parallels concerns about the extent to which policy can directly influence educational practice. At the same time, a longer view of educational policy development over several decades suggests

that there has been some degree of influence as policies themselves became increasingly more attuned in their formulation and usage to some of the complexities identified by researchers – at least until rather recently.

Learning Theory and Educational Policy

One of the intersections between educational policy and policy research is that both have been shaped by changing understandings of how humans learn. The direct effects of such changes manifest themselves most obviously in policies and policy research about curriculum and pedagogy: many of the chapters in the *Literacies and Learning* section of this Handbook, for example, demonstrate these direct effects. More implicitly but nonetheless equally importantly, such changing understandings of human learning have shaped our views of the organizational conditions necessary to support curriculum and instruction, as some chapters in the section on *Leadership and Governance* attest; as well, such implicit understandings have substantially influenced the nature of many of the educational reform processes reflected in the section on *Large Scale Educational Change*, a major preoccupation of policy makers and researchers.

The evolution of our efforts to better understand learning can be described along two trajectories. One trajectory, the earlier and more foundational of the two, has the individual learner as its focus. The second trajectory, often borrowing theories from the first, is concerned with collective or organizational learning. These two trajectories overlap as theories about how individuals learn became increasingly sensitive to cultural influences on such learning and as theories of collective learning began to inquire about the distribution of cognition within social structures.

Individual Learning

The modern history of individual learning theory began with behaviorist views (Skinner, 1950; Thorndike, 1913). Skinner's contingent reinforcement theory, for example, avoided any attempt to explain behavior in terms of internal cognitive processes relying, instead, on environmental stimuli. These views of learning had a strong influence on instructional policy and practice through the first half of the 20th century, extending at least into the 1960s with initiatives aimed at scripting lessons and designing instruction so as to foster very small, error free, increments of learning. The behavioral objectives and criterion referenced testing movements (Glaser, 1963) were founded on this view of learning and had an enormous impact on curriculum design and assessment throughout the '70s, later manifestations to be found in the competency movement and in special education in the form of behavior modification programs which continue through today.

From that point of departure, explanations of human learning first became much more cognitive. Information processing theory, for example, concerned itself almost entirely with interior-to-the-mind structures such as plans, scripts

and schema (Newell, Rosenblum, & Laird, 1990) and included complex efforts to model and reproduce such processes through artificial intelligence (e.g., Haugeland, 1993). These explanations were enriched considerably, and made much more policy relevant, by research aimed at understanding and enhancing more domain-specific processes in such school-related fields as science (White, 2001) and writing (Sperling & Freedman, 2001).

While the cognitive “revolution” began with an almost exclusive focus on the mind, it soon began to reflect lines of theory which understood human learning as not only something that took place in individual minds but also in cultural contexts, as Vygotsky’s (1978) work had demonstrated (Cole et al., 1978); people learned in such contexts and the nature of those contexts was highly determinant of both how much and what was learned. This provided a foundation for many new practices in schools, cooperative learning, for example (Slavin, 1987), along with educational policies aimed at supporting such practices.

Understandings of individual learning have continued to evolve both by “drilling down” into individual cognitive processes (e.g., neural network theory, brain research) and extending efforts to understand the “situated” nature of cognition (Anderson, Reder & Simon, 1996). At this point, the policy and practice implications of the latter seem much more obvious than the former. Situated views of learning, for example, call for more authentic educational environments better connected to real life conditions, support out-of-school experiences for students and their inclusion in the curriculum and encourage problem-based forms of instruction in school. Situated views of learning have also had a powerful effect on professional development policies and practices for educational practitioners and the importance of teacher professional community, as reflected in some of the chapters in the section on *Teacher Quality*; they support more school-based forms of initial teacher preparation, as well as internships and on-the-job training of school administrators. Many of the chapters in the section on *Workplace Learning* are founded on situated understandings of how learning occurs.

Collective or Organizational Learning

Sometimes dated to Argyris’s seminal work in 1978, much of the research on collective learning has appropriated concepts from individual learning theory in its theoretical musings. Organizational learning, defined as individuals learning in organizational contexts, is conceptually similar to situated views of learning, with the important exception of its concern for the organizational consequences of *multiple* individuals learning, sometimes for related reasons.

While one school of organizational theory (e.g., Simon, 1996) views collective learning as the sum of all individual learnings, another argues that the whole is more than the sum of its parts (Hutchins, 1996). The first school is able to pursue most of its agenda extrapolating from individual learning theory of the type already described, extending its interests to the potentially coordinated distribution of individual cognitions (Solomon & Perkins, 1997) throughout the

group or whole organizations. The second school has a much greater challenge; it is to account for learning outside individual minds. This challenge has sometimes been addressed by pointing to collective action as a substitute for individual minds.

The literature on collective learning is rich in ideas many policy makers and practitioners consider novel and provocative. But it is not a literature initially written for these people, so it remained largely out of sight until popularizing efforts got underway in the early '90s. The most visible example of such popularization was Peter Senge's (1990) widely read book, *The Fifth Discipline*, its several more applied spin-offs (e.g., Senge et al., 1994, 2000) and his personal, charismatic, speaking tours. These initiatives brought many ideas from organizational learning theory to the attention of policy makers and practitioners in many fields, but including the field of public education.

Ideas drawn from organizational learning theory supported a growing understanding, in the educational community, that previous reform efforts had failed to live up to expectations primarily because they were piecemeal; they had not taken into account the context in which teachers worked in anything like the comprehensive way that would be needed to provide the conditions which would actually encourage and reward people in schools for changing their practices. As Olson's chapter points out, individual understandings of learning have not acknowledged the institutional nature of schooling and so their influence on policies has been much less than would be expected had they done so. Many chapters in the handbook section on *Large Scale Reform* could trace their origins to thinking aided and abetted by this source of ideas about collective learning and the need for a systemic view of organizational change.

The growing interest in collective learning is certainly reflected in the development of research and policy studies that extend beyond schooling to adult education. Social policy makers' interest in adult learning and "permanent education" began to emerge in the 1960s in most industrialized countries, when secondary and post-secondary school systems had expanded substantially enough to produce large numbers of graduates who were motivated to seek further education courses after graduation. Demand for adult courses increased very rapidly in most countries during this period. Both the coincident growth of the economy and schooling in the post-WWII period and the transition from manufacturing to service-centred economies with increasing emphasis on handling information rather than materials encouraged policy makers to stress the continuing growth of literacy skills and advanced education as means of ensuring continuing economic growth. Human capital theory which stressed individual investments in education provided a convincing rationale for continuing expansion of schooling. Popular belief in this rationale, combined with the general tendency of participation in organized education to create interest in further participation, led to provision of universal secondary schooling, rapid growth of enrolments in post-secondary schooling and widespread participation in adult education courses in most industrialized countries. Research on initial inequalities in educational opportunities during the 1960s documented the import of

learning incentives in early childhood and also encouraged policy makers to begin thinking about education as a more pervasive lifelong experience, from “cradle to grave.” The growing attention to social aspects of learning through the life course included growing interest in the actual learning practices of adults in different contexts, such as the “learning organizations” promoted by Senge (1990). Official policymakers came to see adult learning as the weak link in a lifelong learning framework and governments, employers, labour organizations and equity groups are all increasingly concerned about sustainable provision and funding of vocational and general formal and informal learning opportunities throughout the adult life course (OECD, 2003, p. 81). While there is now general support for the principle of lifelong learning and prevalent interest in collective dimensions of adult learning, there is much dispute among these groups over the most effective policies to enhance adult learning. Much of this dispute is centred on the optimal ways and means of supporting workplace learning.

Insider and Outsider Perspectives in Policy and Policy Research

The chapters in this book bring to the fore a distinction between two theoretically dichotomous perspectives, both of which are inherent in policy initiatives or adopted in research about them. This dichotomy – common in anthropological studies – centers on the question, Whose views are represented: Those of the insiders? Or those of outsiders? Are the premises of a policy based on the values, interests, and practices of local cultures, and derived from them (the emic view, as Pike’s, 1967, theory of tagmemics termed it)? Or are they based on the perspectives of outsiders claiming an authoritative interpretation of these situations (the etic view, proposed by Pike)? Many tensions in policy debates – and many of the tensions described in the Handbook chapters – are essentially juxtapositions of these perspectives.

The tendency of etic views is to advance one perspective which may supersede, dominate, alter, ignore, or even suppress emic views. This may be done for utilitarian interests: to achieve a perceived common good, for example, or to create conditions for advancement, equality, or opportunity. Standardization may be promoted for reason of efficiency, to maximize benefits to the greatest number, or to extend opportunities or apply knowledge broadly. Rationales for a mass perspective on societies may arise from diverse values and political orientations, ranging from socialists to free market advocates, involving scholarly comparativists as well as earnest nationalists.

A tendency in emic views is to ignore, resist, reinterpret, or even transform the etic perspective, either to maintain local interests or valued traditions, to advance priorities that may not be otherwise acknowledged, or (again) to promote local concerns. The rationales for doing so are many, each unique to particular populations, institutions, sub-cultures, or interest groups. They are also prone to change as such groups redefine or reorient themselves. Culturally, the emic view may simply be how people function together, based on local values

and practices. Capitalizing on these tendencies can, at best, be emancipatory or, at worst, self-serving.

These tensions imply that policy circumstances are never stable. Either an etic or emic view may presume to have a resolution to a dilemma, a strategy that works, or a worthy cause to advance. From the etic viewpoint, the perceived merit of these purposes warrant implementing them broadly – within and across jurisdictions or whole education systems. To do so, some form of ideology must exist, be it principles of universal education, best practices, or no child left behind. In turn, an emic view may challenge the relevance, worth, or appropriateness of a policy imposed from elsewhere. What value do we receive? How are our particular interests served? Why should we conform? If such challenges are not mobilized into outright resistance, they may be acted upon in other subtle ways, for example, by tacitly subverting implementation of the policy, by failing to comply with its conditions, or by transforming its principles or characteristics to suit local interests, and in the process possibly even fostering local ownership of the policy.

Research on educational policies, likewise, tends to proceed from either etic or emic perspectives. Again, the question is, Whose interests are promoted by inquiry? Etic perspectives advance the interests of those administering a policy, or other policies like them. Early educational policy research can be understood as having been significantly etic in its approach. Research questions tend to focus on indicators, outcomes, or perceptions of success: Does the policy work? How? What factors facilitated or constrained it? What increments of change are evident, by what measures? What underlying principles operate, such as could be acted upon elsewhere? What further improvements may be needed? Methods of research from an etic perspective tend to involve program evaluations, surveys, or analyses of outcomes or trends. The first two sections of this Handbook, in particular, describe policy domains that are significantly etic in their assumptions about how best to bring about educational change.

Emic perspectives advance the interests of those who interact with a policy or who aspire to establish one. Such perspectives became more prevalent in educational policy research starting in the 1980s and 1990s, and the last three sections of this Handbook in particular take emic approaches into account. Research questions from the emic perspective tend to focus on qualities of lived experience, emancipation of groups or individuals, recognition of unacknowledged values, or improvement of local conditions: What specifically is going on here, from the viewpoint of the actors in the events? What does it feel like to be involved? Who benefits in what ways? What advantages does the policy bring to whom? Has there been a worthwhile transformation? Is the process of the research itself empowering the people associated directly with the policy? Methods of research oriented to emic perspectives tend to involve ethnographies, multiple sources of verbal data (e.g., interviews, diaries, life histories), prolonged engagement in local circumstances, or interpretive studies of unusual or problematic cases.

The countervailing tensions between emic and etic perspectives hinge on the

moral aspects of educational policies. Taken to the extreme, are educational policies enacted for a universal good, or are they inevitable realizations of the totalizing ideologies that govern societies, subsuming differences into the mainstream, dictating even the ways that people regulate themselves (as suggested by Foucault, 1977; Marcuse, 1991)? Or can policies help educators to realize potentials for emancipation, for example, through the development of understanding, cultural capital, or critical actions to counteract these all-encompassing ideologies (as suggested by Bhaksar, 1986; Bourdieu, 1991; Ewert, 1991; Habermas, 1984, or even Dewey, 1988)? Both tendencies probably apply to some extent in all circumstances of education. So distinguishing, interpreting, and acting on them, in consideration of diverse and complementary sources of evidence, is an obligation for all policy initiatives.

These issues are not simply juxtapositions of majority and minority interests, as defined by ethnic affiliation, language, economic power, social class, race, geographic location, and so on – though such factors relate obviously to them. In certain countries in North America or Europe the charge is often made that educational policies have traditionally served majority interests while accommodating, over time, an increased – and increasingly diverse – majority that participates in education. In turn, the interests of cultural or regional minorities, however defined, are secondary or are even suppressed. Recent trends, for example, toward curriculum standards, large-scale achievement testing and international comparisons, and accountability indices have all assumed the benefits of implementing broadly a common set of values, practices, and norms (e.g., for language, literacy, and cultural knowledge). They have assumed as well the availability of a common set of resources, predispositions, technologies, or other enabling factors to realize them.

But is it realistic or even feasible to think of doing so in a truly comprehensive way? Local values and actions always mediate general directives, rendering the idea of complete standardization improbable, even for those who most energetically act on a particular policy (because they tend to do so in unique ways that inevitably are never “standard” in other contexts, as observed in many instances of curriculum innovations). Individual schools act, teachers teach, and students learn in unique ways. So standardizing policies are customized in local circumstances. Nonetheless, common standards, purposes, or concepts may frame the work and discourse of local actors in significant ways, even if absolute fidelity in their activities is not to be expected.

It is also worth acknowledging that, for many countries in Asia, Africa, or Central or South America, an almost contrary situation exists to that of Europe or North America: Small elite groups control the wealth and power in these societies, along with educational policies that may tend to serve their minority interests more than those of the majority populations (Chau, 2002). Other fundamental differences exist in the cultural organization of educational systems internationally. Some educational systems are highly centralized (e.g., in France or Japan), others are decentralized (e.g., in Germany or the U.S.), and others are in flux, moving from the latter toward the former (e.g., in Australia, Canada,

or the United Kingdom). Limitations inherent in educational policies also need to be acknowledged. Any one policy in education is restricted by its own discourse, conceptualization, and capacity. Moreover, any policy is perpetually being reconfigured by new groups of people in positions of responsibility, adapted to previously unrecognized constraints or outcomes, and subject to the emerging knowledge and abilities of people who act on the policy.

But is the obligation of those responsible for education not to improve it, to advance knowledge about education and worthy causes, and to invest in the resources needed to advance them in significant ways? In this sense, policies are intentions, moral responsibilities, and cultural expectations. As such, all policies must necessarily combine etic and emic perspectives and involve the inquiry needed to understand and to know how best to act on them, both particularly and generally.

Section 1: Large-Scale Educational Reform

The section of this Handbook on large-scale educational reform addresses the shifting landscape in educational change. For at least two decades ending in the 1990s, educational change policies tended to be local, focused on one school or educational institution at a time. In the past ten years, however, there has been an increased emphasis on policies designed to effect large-scale change across school systems at the district, state, or national level. The chapters in this section explore various examples of large-scale reform in PreK-12 and higher education and also discuss the ways in which policy trends, such as globalization and marketization, are simultaneously facilitators and evidence of the predominance of large scale reform strategies.

Several common themes run across the chapters. First, there is the tension between centralization and decentralization that inevitably results with large-scale reform policies. Questions arise as to what should be centralized and what should be decentralized. For example, the chapter by Stoll and Stobbart discusses the case of England, which they argue is a “hothouse of centrally driven educational reform, particularly in relation to what is taught and how.” However, as they explain, even as England has centralized curriculum and instruction, they have tried to strike a mix between “informed prescription and informed professionalism.” Anderson’s chapter on district-level reform explore similar themes, drawing on multiple cases of school district reform to describe the strategies districts are attempting in their effort to centralize some aspects of education (e.g., literacy curricula) and decentralize others (e.g., teacher leadership). In their chapter on marketization, Wells and Holmes warn of the possible consequences of centralization of standards and accountability, arguing that high-stakes testing reforms force many schools to become more factory-like in their mechanical approach to teaching. Thus, while one might see more uniformity across a system with large-scale educational reform, the chapters in this volume also point to the cautions and challenges inherent in such an approach.

A second closely related theme in this section is the adaptation of large scale

reform policies by local educators. Datnow's chapter discusses how in the absence of opportunities for strong professional development accompanying reforms, educators make sense of them in ways that fit mostly with their prior practice. In some cases, this had led to innovation, whereas in others it has led to business as usual. In part this is because many educators are left woefully underprepared for the demands of large scale educational reform. Capacity building and professional development have not kept pace with policy demands. As Knapp and Meadows argue, "the majority of teachers do not get 'both the words and the tune' of standards-based reform, which is not surprising given how ambitiously the new learning agenda has been set. ... The extent of new professional learning for teachers, implied by most standards-based reforms, is beyond what most policymakers or teachers ever imagined." This appears to be an inevitable feature of large scale change, as people struggle to figure out how to make broad policies and mandates work within their local circumstances at the district, school, or classroom level.

A third theme of large-scale educational reform concerns the policy borrowing that is occurring across geographic boundaries. Mundy's chapter on globalization argues that patterns of social interaction across national and regional spaces have reached new magnitudes in recent history, and this has had a profound impact on education. Joshee and Johnson's chapter on multiculturalism policies in the U.S. and Canada offers one possible theoretical explanation for how this might occur, as they introduce the notion of "policy webs" wherein policy dialogue and texts contribute to the development of a web that shapes the discourse across boundaries. In her chapter on large scale change in higher education in the U.S., El-Khawas discusses how formal and informal networking brought state agency officials into contact with counterparts in other states, which led to extensive policy borrowing in the 1990s, both in respect to broad policy directions for higher education as well as details for policy implementation. Similarly, Howie and Plomp's chapter reviewing international comparative studies of educational chapters reveals how such studies have led to a borrowing of some curricular policies across national boundaries, as well as benchmarking through national and international comparisons.

A fourth theme that characterizes large-scale educational reform is a focus on evidence-based policymaking. Educational policies in the era of large-scale change often include strong accountability and evaluation components. Increasingly, educators are being asked to defend their decisions based on evidence or data. In the U.S., for example, educators are being asked by the government to rely on "scientifically based research" as the basis for the educational decisions they make (Slavin, 2002). Wells and Holmes' chapter suggests that such an orientation derives from a business-sector model. The high stakes accountability and testing systems that increasingly exist provide a set of evidence-based "indicators" for consumers comparing schools and educational providers. On the positive side, as Wasik and Hindman's chapter on early childhood education points out, the emphasis on evidence-based policymaking has contributed to increased monitoring of and policies regarding the quality of

pre-school education, particularly with respect to low-income and minority children. This has led to improvements. Wasik and Hindman explain: “By embracing and acting upon research findings of recent decades, these policies have fostered a widespread increase in emphasis on language and literacy development, as well as on attention to teaching young children specific skills.” Taking a different angle, Anderson’s chapter also reveals that data-driven decision making at the local district or school level is a prevalent strategy in districts showing success in student achievement gains over time. Overall, while what “counts” as evidence is sometimes rather narrowly construed, the fact that policymakers see research and decision making as closely linked is certainly significant.

The chapters in this section of the Handbook demonstrate both the promise and pitfalls inherent in large scale educational reform. On the one hand, large scale educational reform, by its very nature, allows for the possibility of change of grand dimensions. Larger numbers of children and educators have the potential of being touched in positive ways by broad improvement efforts, at least according to the theory. At the same time, the forces of globalization, marketization, and standardization that drive large scale educational reform also lead to various challenges, particularly where capacity building and assurance of equity are concerned.

Section 2: Leadership and Governance

The chapters in the second section of the Handbook address three sets of issues very much at the forefront of current concerns in K-12 and post secondary education. While many of the chapters touch on several or all of these issues, the dominant focus of three chapters is the complex relationships between research, policy and practice. Six chapters explore the governance and funding of public education and the remaining four are most directly concerned with leadership.

Research, policy and practice relationships are taken up in the three chapters by Louis and by Lasky and her colleagues. Karen Seashore Louis unpacks the relationships between researchers (knowledge producers) and policymakers. Her goal is to better understand how research-based knowledge comes to be used in the formation of policy and eventually incorporated into educational practice. The chapter surveys different conceptions of these relationships and the history of efforts to understand them but focuses, in particular, on the relationship between those people and institutions that do research and those people and institutions that set educational policy. Noting that these relationships have received little research attention in education in recent years, Louis describes efforts to better understand the politics of knowledge use, the behavior of policy users, and the how organizational context influences knowledge use through organizational learning processes. This chapter usefully distinguishes between activities that influence what knowledge actually gets produced (“the politics of

production”) and activities aimed at bringing policymakers attention to new knowledge once it has been produced (“post-production politics”).

Whereas Louis’ chapter focuses primarily on the relationship between research and policy communities, the focus of the chapter by Lasky, Datnow and Stringfield is about the relationships between policy and practice communities. For purposes of this chapter, the education system is conceptualized as an interconnected and interdependent nested policy system, a system which is permeable, malleable and embedded within a larger global context. The purpose of the chapter is to identify those linkages among state, district and school levels which are most likely to promote or inhibit educational reform initiatives. Although the authors report only modest research available for their purpose, the chapter identifies an extensive range of linkages promoting educational reform including federal and state financial support, resource partnerships, education policy generated by government agencies, standards and accountability systems, professional development and learning partnerships, problem-solving partnerships, continuity in reform efforts, political alliances, relational linkages, shared values and vision, district efforts to mediate state policies and school practices. Examples of each of these linkages – as well as a smaller list of unproductive linkages – are provided in the chapter along with a rationale for why one would expect each such linkage to promote educational reform.

Governance and funding issues are taken up in six chapters by Land and Stringfield, Mulford, Corter and Pelletier, Karumanchery and Portelli, and both of Lang’s chapters. Educational governance reforms during the last 20 years in the United States are described by Land and Stringfield. Many such reforms deviate from the traditional governance provided by school districts including, for example, site-based management, charter schools, contracting out of services, vouchers, tax subsidies and state and mayoral takeovers of school districts. School districts themselves have also been the subject of reform efforts including procedures for selecting board members, restricting the responsibilities of school boards to policy not administration, and directing board’s attention to the academic achievement of students. This chapter examines evidence about the strengths and weaknesses of each of these reform alternatives, concluding that we have much yet to learn about their effects, particularly their effects on student achievement.

In his chapter, Mulford explores the relationship between the nature of accountability policies, either “contractual” or “responsive,” advocated by central governments and the models of governance adopted for schools (“old public administration,” “new public management” and “organizational learning”). Mulford claims that the centrally-defined output criteria associated with many accountability policies, and local innovation aimed at finding ways of meeting such criteria, are not necessarily contradictory. What matters is the degree to which the central specification of standards becomes so detailed and interventionist that a culture of control rather than autonomy develops. Three policy-related directions are identified for helping to avoid the unproductive effects of excessively interventionist accountability policies: development of assessment tools

that encompass the range of outcomes schools aspire to for their students (e.g., social and emotional, as well as cognitive); the use of high quality data for making decisions about policy and practice; and the development of new attitudes toward failure, attitudes that acknowledge failure as an essential part of learning.

Although rooted in at least partly different intellectual traditions, Karumanchery and Portelli's chapter takes up many of the same concerns for equity in student outcomes addressed by Riehl in her chapter. This chapter examines how interpretations of democracy in many bureaucratized Western educational contexts negatively effect socially disadvantaged groups of students and continue to serve the status quo interests of those with power and privilege. Two main questions are explored in this chapter: how can we better understand the roles played by interpretation and political positioning relative to the application of democratic values in schooling? And how might concerns about access, success and representation, sometimes considered "marginal matters", be included in the discourse of schooling and the bureaucratic structures governing such schooling?

Dating from at least the early 1960s, a growing body of evidence attests to the contribution of family factors to the success of children at school. Corter and Pelletier review this evidence, documenting the range of policies created to encourage parent and community involvement in school governance and other school functions. The chapter examines how such involvement can be most productive and what the effects are of policies that foster such involvement. In particular, this chapter reviews evidence on children's' school readiness, and parent roles in governance, specifically in school councils; it also examines evidence about parent roles in the U.S. comprehensive school reform programs, as well as comprehensive community reform initiatives. The authors argue that the focus of parent and community involvement has not been as directly focused on improving the success of students as it should; future efforts aimed at engaging parents and community should adopt that focus and map backward to potentially promising interventions.

Approaches to the funding of K-12 schools and their effects on capacity is the theme of one of Lang's two chapters. This chapter outlines alternative approaches that have been and could be used to fund public education with a strong emphasis on the use of funding formulas. Lang begins by reviewing ways in which public investments in education are made and the cost drivers (e.g., numbers of students, classrooms, schools) used in making such investments; he notes that the relationship between volume and cost in most existing formulas are assumed to be linear (based on numbers of students, for example) although in many cases such costs increase or decrease in "steps" (increases or decreases of a whole class of students is necessary before costs change much due to the cost of the teacher's salary). The bulk of this chapter is devoted to exploring issues concerning: how the adequacy of funding for schools might be determined; the historical roots of formula funding and the principles on which it is based; the basic characteristics of a school funding formula; the functions a formula

should perform; and how to judge whether a formula is working. The chapter ends with a number of policy recommendations concerning the nature and use of funding formulas.

In his second chapter, Lang analyses formula based funding of colleges and universities. This chapter addresses the reasons and expectations for using formulas, provides an overview of different types of tertiary funding formulas (e.g., enrolment-based, staff-based) and offers an explanation of how formulas are used to solve persistent financial problems in post-secondary institutions. The chapter outlines, as well, what formulas cannot do, how differences among institutions can be accommodated by formulas and considers what the future holds for funding colleges and universities using formulas.

Leadership and policy relationships are addressed in chapters by Day, Riehl, Leithwood and Jacobson. In his chapter, Christopher Day offers a brief but quite comprehensive description of successive United Kingdom government initiatives, since the last world war, aimed at increasing schools' accountability for improving teaching and learning. In response to concerns about global competitiveness, such initiatives include, for example, local school governance, a more prescriptive national curriculum, regular testing of students, the introduction of sanctions and rewards linked to the results of such testing, and forms of performance management for most school personnel. While changes such as these have dramatically reduced the autonomy of teachers and administrators, Day argues that successful school leadership in this policy context requires considerably more than effective management or implementation of the government's policy agenda; it also requires leadership informed by moral values and capable of resolving persistent dilemmas unrecognized by policy initiatives. Such leadership, argues Day, is less about style and strategy and more about student welfare, building community in schools and the fostering of trust among staff and parents. Day also offers a description and critique of current efforts in the United Kingdom to train school leaders, efforts that are part of the mandate of the new National College for School Leadership.

Carolyn Riehl examines the implications for school leaders of educational policy contexts aimed at achieving more equitable learning outcomes for all students. Such contexts are now pervasive in many parts of the world, having evolved from earlier concerns for equality of "inputs." Riehl draws on a wide range of empirical and normative literature to make the case that to achieve such equity school leaders will need to focus their efforts on three broad categories of tasks: changing the culture of the school; improving teaching and learning processes; strengthening relationships among schools, families and communities; and building the capacities school personnel need to successfully accomplish these other tasks. School leadership aimed at achieving equitable outcomes, Riehl argues, is essentially moral in nature and guided by an ethic of justice.

The chapter by Leithwood takes up the implications for school leadership presented by the overriding concern for accountability in so many of today's large-scale reform initiatives. This chapter uses, as a framework, a fourfold

classification of approaches to accountability drawn from an analysis of current policy instruments in many countries. These market, decentralization, professionalization and management approaches are each based on different assumptions about what is wrong with schools and what would be required to fix them. Leithwood identifies the assumptions about successful leadership underlying each approach and reviews evidence about how successful leaders ensure positive consequences for their schools as a result of implementing each of the four approaches.

Finally, in this section, Jacobson's chapter helps us better understand the current and future supply of school leaders, principals in particular. Evidence reviewed in this chapter makes clear that, in the U.S. at least, there is no shortage of people who have completed the qualifications necessary for assuming positions of assistant principal or principal. Indeed, since at least 1988, there appears to have been a substantial oversupply of such people. Nonetheless, present school leaders are relatively mobile, a large proportion are reaching retirement age and significant proportions are assuming administrator roles relatively late in their careers. These factors, together, increase volatility and the appearance of a shortage, even when one does not exist. Evidence from the U.S. and other countries indicates that salary differentials and working conditions have an important bearing on the volatility of school administration positions. Initial differences between the salaries of teachers and assistant principals offer little incentive to those considering administrative roles, although subsequent roles as principals and superintendents produce very large financial gains over remaining in the classroom. Such working conditions as lack of job security, long hours, and highly accountable policies are cited as serious disincentives to many considering careers in administration. This chapter ends with a series of recommendations for how to help ensure an adequate stream of future, well qualified candidates for school administration positions.

Section 3: Teacher Quality

This section of the Handbook is concerned with a number of types of policy which have been considered and implemented in many countries and are intended to improve the quality of teaching. A prevailing assumption driving educational policy development over the past couple of decades is that social, political and economic progress are dependent upon the quality of schooling students receive. Increasingly, policies are based on the assumption that the quality of teaching is at the heart of the quality of student learning. And, also increasingly, assumptions about "teaching quality" have focused exclusively on a notion of teaching as classroom practice. As Bascia's chapter details, the past decade or more has seen a general trend toward a "triage" approach to educational policy in general and to teaching policy in particular: with reductions in funding allocations for public education, concerns about a significant turnover of teachers (and administrators) as a generation of educators retires, and insistence on tangible and

swift results for policy investments, educational policy in many countries has narrowed from concerns about broad social and structural supports for teaching and learning to mandating specific directives intended to influence classroom practice as directly as possible.

Given the sheer number of teachers required to staff public schools, especially given the large number of teachers retiring in this time period, a major concern of policy makers concerned with teacher quality is increasing the quantity of “the teacher workforce.” Chin and Asera describe the evolution of certification and licensure policies over several decades by one U.S. state, charting efforts to simultaneously increase the channels through which individuals are brought into the teaching force and yet to ensure some adequate level of teacher preservice training. Their chapter suggests that such efforts are blunt instruments and rarely achieve what they intend, partly because of the impossibility of ensuring both quality and quantity at the same time and because of other policy efforts occurring in a complex if not chaotic policy system. Quartz, Barraza-Lyons and Thomas elaborate on some of these points in their chapter on teacher retention. Drawing together evidence from across a number of countries but focusing on urban school districts in the U.S., they demonstrate that the contemporary shortage of teachers is, to a great extent, a problem of teacher attrition: as many individuals who invest in and commit to starting a teaching career, a significant proportion of them leave teaching altogether, or leave teaching in the growing number of high poverty schools where conditions for teaching and learning are most challenging. This chapter considers the efforts some university teacher educators have made to support new teachers before and during the first few years of their urban teaching experiences. While new teacher induction and mentoring initiatives are increasingly popular teacher quality initiatives, Quartz and her colleagues ask whether such strategies are sufficient responses to the magnitude of challenge facing educators, given both the current lack of attention to school- and district-level supports for teaching and other contemporary policy preferences that educators must contend with.

Curricular reform is, obviously, substantially directed at improving teaching and potentially a major influence on teachers’ work. Modifications, additions and wholesale new directions in curriculum policy have been prevalent across the globe for many years, though some jurisdictions have seen more of this activity, and more sustained activity, than others. While certain trends in curriculum reform are readily recognizable across national boundaries, and curricular innovation has long been identified as one of the major vehicles for the expansion of mass schooling internationally by institutional theorists such as Francisco Ramirez and his colleagues (for example, Ramirez & Boli, 1987) a closer examination of how these reforms actually manifest on the ground reveals a more nuanced and complex picture. By contrasting teachers’ responses to curricular reform in three European countries over the past decade, Osborn and McNess’ chapter suggest that policy’s ability to drive educational change is shaped in important ways by what might be considered the historical record of policy efforts, and what Karen Seashore and others have termed the “professional

cultures of teaching” (Louis, 1990) that are particular to different jurisdictions. Paralleling to Stephen Ball’s work in the 1990s (1998), Osborn and McNess are able to illustrate that both the particular shape a policy might take and the salience (or lack of salience) vary in important ways that suggest both the potential for implementor agency, on the one hand, and the impossibility of mass changes in the same direction by macro-level policy edict.

Professional learning is another broad area of interest for teaching quality policy – not only initial, preservice teacher training but the extent to which teachers possess and make use of opportunities to continue developing their teaching skills over the course of their careers. The literature on professional development for teachers is quite substantial and varied; it is concerned with the formal, structured learning opportunities available to teachers, with the factors that support or constrain it, with teachers’ actual cognitive and social learning processes, and the ways in which teachers direct their own learning. Most of the chapters in this section of the Handbook are concerned with professional development matters to a greater or lesser extent, though this section does not attempt to cover the entire teacher development landscape. Chapters that focus most directly and exclusively on teachers’ professional learning are set against the backdrop of contemporary professional development policy proclivities – for structured professional development activities that emphasize the technical aspects of classroom teaching, and for monitoring teachers’ ongoing learning through various accountability schemes. In various ways, the authors of these chapters question the fundamental assumptions as well as the substance of contemporary professional development policies. Sleeper, Bolhuis and Geijsel’s chapter conceptualizes learning as the construction of meaning in social contexts and suggests that efforts should be made to focus on how teachers and administrators collectively participate in such social construction and learn to use innovation to change their practices, solve problems, and enhance teaching, learning and caring. The authors identify conditions which both prevent and foster learning for school improvement. Central to fostering productive learning for school improvement are conditions the authors associate with professional learning communities. Smaller, on the other hand, reports on a study that details the weekly and annual habits of teachers through survey, interview and journal analyses. By demonstrating the motives, breadth and sustained attention to ongoing learning, he challenges assumptions that teachers will not learn unless compelled to do so. Reynolds’ chapter focuses on the politics of the development of teacher learning policy in one Canadian province. Like Chin and Asera’s chapter, Reynolds’ focus on the dynamics of policy development both demonstrate and help explain the sometimes ill-conceived and poorly implemented results of policy crafted in the context of contentious political processes.

Standards for teaching are another common concern of policy makers and analysts across a number of national jurisdictions. Sachs’ chapter raises questions about what drives the interest in establishing standards and who the most appropriate groups might be to assert what they are by describing the political processes of standards development in three different national contexts.

As these descriptions suggest, this section of the Handbook not only attempts to cover the major policy domains currently employed under the rubric of teaching quality; it also provides vivid illustrations of the ways in which policy making in this and other related areas continues to fall short of effective conceptualizations of how to bring about and sustain positive conditions for teaching and learning. Chin and Asera, Lyons and her colleagues, and Bascia's chapters in particular detail policy "patchiness" and disjunctures, even in an era where "systemic reform" and policy "alignment" are highly valued, at least at the rhetorical level. The chapters by Slegers and his colleagues, Smaller, and Osborn and McNess, in somewhat different ways, each suggest that, even while both policy makers and policy researchers have moved toward a more extreme view of policy's ultimate power to affect practice, implementers continue to assert agency, and policy implementation is still a socially constructed process.

Many of the chapters consider, either directly or obliquely, the politics of policy making and remind us of the great extent to which such politics are fundamental to the context in which practice occurs – both substantively, in terms of the nature of the assumptions and knowledge base that forms the foundations for such policies, and symbolically, in terms of the sets of relationships between teachers, who must receive and interact with such policies, and others. These themes are most overtly considered in the chapters by Sachs, Reynolds and Bascia. The primacy of the state to set both policy and the terms of policy making is revealed as ideologically motivated, limited in its rationality, and subject to the influence of other bodies (for example, teacher unions) at both the policy formation and implementation. The "tapestry" notion elaborated in Bascia's chapter reminds us that other groups can, do and might contribute significantly to educational policy.

Section 4: Literacies and Learning

We put literacy forward as an example of a core issue that educational policy necessarily has to understand and address. Literacy is fundamental to human activity and learning, in both formal and informal contexts, at schools and other public institutions, at work, as well as in homes and communities. In education, literacy relates curricula to the development of individual abilities, to society, and to the world, not just as preparation for work but also for citizenship and for intergroup, international, and historical understanding. Other basic fields of knowledge, such as science or mathematics, are also core issues for educational and social policy, and could well have formed, space permitting, the bases for sections of this book.

Consideration of literacy and education brings to the fore a range of important policy issues. First, as Levin demonstrates, communication is vital between those who do research on literacy and those who formulate policy in governments and in schools. But their respective agendas for knowledge development and for social action often tend to pass each other by or even to collide, though they

could be linked more productively and for mutual advantage. Effective coordination between policies in schools and policies for social services is especially needed, Strickland argues, for early childhood literacy and for “at risk” populations. Luke puts his own experiences in Queensland and Singapore forward as an example of an educator given the authority to develop new literacy curricula, working from consideration of a wide range of different types of evidence, from within and outside of schools, while looking forward to future needs for literacy in globalized and technologically evolving societies. The Queensland example is analyzed further in the chapter by Schultz and Fecho, who contrast its broad-based conceptions and locally-based implementation with the doctrinaire, centrally declared mandate of *No Child Left Behind* in the U.S.

The foundations of knowledge for establishing policies for school curricula vary, to be sure. Debates about such matters have seldom been as contentious as in controversies over literacy education. For instance, Pressley outlines the current consensus among educators for the value of literacy curricula that are balanced (in their attention to a full range of reading and writing abilities, akin to those expressed by Strickland) and based on analyses of the practices of exemplary teachers. He juxtaposes this view against criteria advocated in U.S. government policies that only acknowledge findings deemed to have resulted from scientific research (which may, or may not, relate to learning and teaching in schools). Kelly in turn argues, in her review of educational policies for media literacy, that the philosophies, resources, and premises guiding policies in this domain vary, in the extreme – from policies that promote the development of critical, informed citizens to those that represent blatant corporate exploitation of youth. Bereiter and Scardamalia argue, from a different basis, that policy makers should raise their expectations for learning from new technologies, beyond a basic functional literacy and beyond the opportunities provided by many commercial software programs, to help students learn to cooperate to solve problems and generate new ideas so as to meet the emerging demands of the so-called “knowledge society.”

Triebel traces the historical progression of philosophies about literacy over the past half-decade, demonstrating how the policies informing aid programs for developing countries have shifted from ideological, nearly militaristic “campaigns” for literacy in the 1960s to the current, sociologically-based understanding of literacies as specific social practices in diverse communities. The sociolinguistic foundations of literacy policies are further highlighted in the chapter by King and Hornberger, who evaluate initiatives to link school literacy policies with community and family interests, particularly for minority populations. Their analysis shows that these policies tend to be based either on conceptions of a mismatch between home and school (which education is supposed “to correct”) or efforts to bring the knowledge and resources of the community into the school curricula and thus capitalize on expanded, multiple definitions of literacy. Schultz and Fecho similarly urge policy makers to create dialogues between (a) the situations and aspirations of individuals and groups and (b)