

PART ONE

*The School and the
Social Order*

The Purposes of Public Schooling

Grading parents? In the fall semester of 2000, thirty Chicago public schools sent home parental report cards along with student report cards. Instructions told parents to grade themselves in several categories that included reading to their children, checking homework, and getting students to school on time. Parents were expected to review the self-graded report card with their child's teacher. Eventually, teachers will be required to directly grade parents. Juan Rangel, the head of the United Neighborhood Organizations of Chicago, the major organization promoting parental grading, asserted, "We believe that parents are ready to be held accountable, because it's in the best interests of their children. We need to stop making excuses as to why parents can't be involved with their children." *Education Week* reporter Robert C. Johnston interviewed two parents, Teresa Burciaga and Uriel Sanchez after they received their grade from their son's fourth grade teacher. "We got two D's," Mr. Sanchez told Johnston. "It's important to know. We need to do a better job checking homework."

At first glance, grading parents seems like a well-intentioned effort to involve parents in their children's education; however, parental grading raises issues regarding the goals of public schools. Parental reporting is designed to change parental behavior to meet the needs of public schools. The next logical step would be for the school to determine if the home environment is conducive to learning. Should public school officials and teachers become directly involved in the family life of their students? Are there to be boundaries to the actions of public schools? What happens if parents object to the intrusion of the school into family life?

Can public schools save marriages? That's the hope of Florida's lawmakers. On January 1, 1999, Florida became the first state to require public high schools to teach marriage and relationship skills. According to *The New York Times* reporter Tamar Lewin, "Given the nation's high divorce rates, some educators and social policy analysts say, schools have an obligation to help students think . . . about the role that marriage has played in history and the deeper issues of love, intimacy and commitment."

Saving marriages joins a staggering list of public school goals that include saving lives on highways through driver education, preventing alcohol and drug abuse, stopping the spread of AIDS, reducing crime, eliminating poverty, eradicating racism, building cultural tolerance, educating good citizens, decreasing unemployment, increasing national economic growth, saving the environment, and preparing students for the global economy. The list is impressive. But is it realistic?

Consider saving marriages. What does this mean? Some believe courses on marriages should focus on premarital counseling. Others favor character education. The more cynical suggest teaching divorce law. Diane Sollee, founder of the Coalition for Marriage, Family and Couples Education, a group that advocates schools teaching marriage skills, states, "This isn't rocket science; it's more like driver's ed. It's about teaching kids the basic communication skills they need for a healthy marriage." Several educators believe students should learn practical topics, such as balancing a checkbook and first aid.

Besides the problem of defining content, there are objections to schools teaching about marriage. Some people believe that the topic is more suited to the home than to the school. What about differing religious views about marriage? Others object to marriage courses littering the public school curriculum. If students have to take a marriage course, then some other course has to be dropped. There are only so many hours in the school day. Do we need more math or more marriage courses?

What about parental rights? What happens if parents object to the requirement of a marriage course? Does the public have a greater interest in preserving marriages than in the interests of individual parents? Certainly, health issues often override parental rights. Should we educate all students about prevention of the spread of AIDS? Is education a frontline defense against major epidemics? Should government officials overrule parental objections to instruction in the use of condoms if government officials determine that this instruction is the best prevention against the AIDS epidemic?

Consider other conflicts between parental values and public school goals. Is there a public benefit in teaching toleration of other cultures, religions, and lifestyles? Many conservatives object to multicultural education that stresses tolerance of other cultures. In *The De-Valuing of America: The Fight for Our Culture and Our Children*, William Bennett, former secretary of education, objects to teaching cultural tolerance. Are not U.S. cultural traditions the best? Haven't U.S. cultural traditions produced the best society on earth? Why teach toleration of inferior cultures? Answering yes to the first two questions, Bennett concludes that U.S. schools should focus on transmitting the European roots of American culture. In addition, many Evangelical Christians object to teaching toleration of other religions because they believe Christianity is the only true religion.

The religious issues highlight the potential conflict between public, family, and personal goals for education. In the next three sections I discuss the controversies surrounding the major political, social, and economic purposes of education. These categories sometimes overlap, but they do provide a means for analyzing some inherent problems in achieving educational goals. In addition, my

discussion of educational goals provides a brief history of U.S. education and an understanding of the multiple roles of public schools in contemporary society.

In evaluating the various public goals for education, you might want to consider the broader question of public benefits versus parental or personal educational goals.

- Do you think there are public benefits that should override the objections of parents and other citizens regarding the teaching of particular subjects, attitudes, or values?
- Should elected representatives determine the subject matter, attitudes, and values taught in public schools?
- Do you think public schools should teach subject matter, attitudes, or values that parents or other citizens find objectionable?

THE POLITICAL PURPOSES OF SCHOOLING

The major political goal of public schooling is to educate future citizens and political leaders. Educating citizens encompasses a range of concerns, including having all citizens share the same political values and teaching obedience to the law. This will mean different things under different governments. For instance, in Nazi Germany during the 1930s, schools were enlisted in a general campaign to educate citizens to believe in the racial superiority of the German people, to support fascism, and to be willing to die at the command of Hitler. Racial biology and fascist political doctrines were taught in the classroom; patriotic parades and singing took place in the schoolyard. The lesson learned from the experience of Nazi schools is that one must carefully evaluate the citizenship-training function of public schools. Citizenship training is not necessarily good, nor can it exist apart from a general political philosophy.

When reading the following discussion of the political goals of U.S. education, you should keep these questions in mind:

- What government agency, private organization, or individuals should define the characteristics of good citizenship for public schools?
- Should there be a consensus of political values in the United States and should public schools develop that consensus?
- What government agency, private organization, or individuals should determine the political values to be taught in public schools?
- Does the teaching of patriotism in schools throughout the world increase the potential of international conflict?
- Should the public schools of every country build emotional or patriotic attachments to symbols of the state by using songs, literature, and history?
- Should the purpose of teaching history in public schools be to create feelings of patriotism?

In the United States, early proposals for public education were concerned with the operation of a republican government. After the American Revolution,

many worried about the selection of political leaders. No longer would hereditary nobility and monarchy be a source of leadership. Therefore, what would be the source of leaders for a republican government? In the late eighteenth century, revolutionary leader Benjamin Rush proposed that all government officials be required to graduate from a national university. Rush argued no one would want quacks to practice medicine and, therefore, quacks should be banned from politics. President George Washington proposed a national university to Congress for training political leaders and creating a national culture. He wanted attendance by students from all areas of the country.

Washington's proposal resulted in cries of elitism. Requiring a college education, some protested, would result in politicians being primarily recruited from the rich and national university graduates considering themselves superior to the general public. In this case, a hereditary aristocracy would be replaced by an aristocracy of the educated. If none but the rich had access to higher education, then the rich could use higher education as a means of perpetuating and supporting their social status.

Meritocracy is one answer to the charge that schools can only promote elitism. A meritocracy is a social system that gives an equal chance to all to develop their abilities and to advance in the social hierarchy. In a meritocracy the school is viewed as the key institution for training and sorting citizens, and all people are given an equal chance to receive an education; in other words, there is equality of educational opportunity. This idea permeates existing educational institutions. Plato's *Republic* is an early proposal for education to select leaders and followers. In Plato's utopian proposal each generation is trained in music and gymnastics, and after this education the most talented are selected for further education as guardians. The most talented guardians are educated to be philosopher-kings. This selective educational system, according to Plato, will create a utopian society ruled by the wisdom of philosopher-kings.

In the United States, Thomas Jefferson proposed a meritocracy based on schooling. In the 1779 Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge, Jefferson proposed three years of free education for all nonslave children. The most talented of these children were to be selected and educated at public expense at regional grammar schools. From this select group, the most talented were to be chosen for further education. Thomas Jefferson wrote in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, "By this means twenty of the best geniuses will be raked from the rubbish annually, and be instructed, at the public expense. . . ."

The details of Jefferson's plan are not as important as the idea, which has become ingrained in American social thought, that schooling is the best means of identifying democratic leadership. This idea assumes that the educational system is fair in its judgments. Fairness of selection assumes that judgment is based solely on talent demonstrated in school and not on other social factors such as race, religion, dress, and social class. Meritocracy fails if schools favor individuals from certain racial, religious, and economic groups.

What happens when meritocracy fails and the schools continue to implement the idea? In this situation, schools will favor privileged economic and racial groups which will perpetuate the power of these groups. If students are

taught to believe that schools select fairly, then they might accept the social hierarchy perpetuated by the educational system. Acceptance might obscure inequalities in society. For instance, if the educational system favored those with wealth, then all members of society might come to accept differences in wealth as differences in talent as determined by educational institutions.

Besides the issue of selecting leaders is the question of how schools train good citizens. Opinions are divided. For instance, Thomas Jefferson and Horace Mann, who is often called the father of American public schools, differed on the best method of citizenship education. Jefferson proposed a very limited education for the general citizenry. The three years of free education were to consist of instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic, with reading instruction using Greek, Roman, English, and American history. Jefferson did not believe that people needed to be educated to be good citizens. He believed in the guiding power of natural reason to lead the citizen to correct political decisions. Citizens were to receive their political education from reading newspapers published under laws protecting freedom of the press. Citizens would choose between competing political ideas found in newspapers. The only requirement was that the citizen know how to read.

Interestingly, while Jefferson wanted political opinions to be formed in a free marketplace of ideas, he advocated censorship of political texts at the University of Virginia. These contradictory positions reflect an inherent problem in the use of schools to teach political ideas. There is always the temptation to limit political instruction to what one believes are correct political ideas.

In contrast to Jefferson, Horace Mann wanted schools to instill a common political creed in all students. Mann felt that without a commonly held political creed society was doomed to political strife and chaos. Mann developed these ideas and his reputation as America's greatest educational leader while serving as secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education from 1837 to 1848. Originally a lawyer, Mann became an educational leader because he believed schooling was the key to reforming society.

Horace Mann feared that growing crime rates, social class conflict, and the extension of suffrage would lead to violence and mob rule. Commonly held political values, Mann believed, would curtail political violence and revolution. He envisioned public schools teaching common political values for the purpose of maintaining political order. For Mann, the important idea was that all children in society attend the same type of school. This was what was meant by "common." It was a school common to all children. Within the common school, children of all religions and social classes were to share in a common education. Basic social disagreements were to vanish as rich and poor children, and children whose parents were supporters of different political parties, mingled in the schoolroom.

Within the walls of the common schoolhouse were to be taught the basic principles of a republican form of government. Mann assumed there was general agreement about the nature of these general political values, and they could be taught without objection from outside political groups. In fact, he argued against teaching politically controversial topics because of their potential

for destroying the public school. The combination of common schooling and the teaching of a common political philosophy would create, Mann hoped, a common set of political beliefs that would ensure the survival of the U.S. government. Political liberty would be possible, according to Mann's philosophy, because it would be restrained and controlled by the ideas implanted in students by the public school.

Is there a common set of political values in the United States? Since the nineteenth century, debates over the content of instruction have rocked the schoolhouse. Throughout the twentieth century, conservative political groups, such as the Christian Coalition, American Legion, and the Daughters of the American Revolution, pressured local public schools to not teach left-wing ideas. On the other hand, liberal organizations, and particularly labor unions and the People for the American Way, have pressured schools to teach their particular political doctrines.

Also, there is strong dissent to public schools teaching any political doctrines. Some argue that the teaching of political doctrines is a method of maintaining the political power of those in control of government. In the late eighteenth century, English political theorist William Godwin warned against national systems of education because they could become a means by which those controlling government could control the minds of future citizens. Writing in 1793, Godwin stated, "Their views as institutors of a system of education will not fail to be analogous to their views in their political capacity: the data upon which their instructions are founded."

Another problem is that American public schooling has never been common to all children, which makes it difficult to create a moral and political consensus. All races, religions, and social classes do not mingle within a single common school. Racial segregation continues to exist even after massive efforts at desegregation in the 1960s and 1970s. A variety of religious groups, the largest being Catholic, maintain separate parochial schools. Children in wealthy suburbs attend private schools or public schools that are quite different from those in poorer school districts. Mann's dream of the common public school has never come into existence in the United States. Consequently, Horace Mann's goal of mixing students from differing social backgrounds to reduce social and political tensions was never achieved.

Mann's political and social objectives focused on the concept of socialization. Simply defined, socialization refers to what students learn from interacting with other students, following school rules, and participating in school social events. Socialization can be contrasted with academic learning, which refers to classroom instruction, textbooks, and other forms of formal learning. Some might argue that socialization is the most important learning that takes place in school, because students learn to get along with others.

For many educational leaders, socialization is a powerful means of political control. Learning to obey the rules of the school is socialization for obedience to the rules of government. Advocating the use of schools as political control, Johann Fichte, a Prussian leader in the early nineteenth century, asserted that schools should prepare students for conformity to government laws by teaching

obedience to school rules and developing a sense of loyalty to the school. He argued that students will transfer their obedience to school rules to submission to government laws. According to Fichte, loyalty and service to the school and fellow students prepares citizens for service to the country. The school, according to Fichte, is a miniature community where children learn to adjust their individuality to the requirements of the community. The real work of the school, Fichte said, is shaping this social adjustment. A well-ordered government requires citizens to go beyond mere obedience to written constitutions and laws. Fichte believed children must see the government as something greater than the individual and must learn to sacrifice for the good of the social whole.

To achieve his goals, Fichte recommended teaching patriotic songs, national history, and literature to increase a sense of dedication and patriotism to the government. This combination of socialization and patriotic teachings, he argued, would produce a citizen more willing and able to participate in the army and, consequently, would reduce the cost of national defense.

In the United States, patriotic exercises and the fostering of school spirit were emphasized after the arrival of large numbers of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe in the 1890s. It was during this period that schools initiated Americanization programs. Americanization involved teaching the immigrant the laws, language, and customs of the United States. Naturally, this included teaching patriotic songs and stories. With the coming of World War I, the Pledge of Allegiance, the singing of patriotic songs, participation in student government, and other patriotic exercises became a part of the American school. In addition, the development of extracurricular activities led to an emphasis on school spirit. The formation of football and basketball teams, with their accompanying trappings of cheerleaders and pep rallies, were to build school spirit and, consequently, prepare students for service to society.

Teaching patriotism creates problems for a society with a variety of religious, ethnic, and political groups. Some religious groups object to pledging allegiance to the flag because it involves worship of a graven image. In *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette* (1943), the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that expulsion from school of children of Jehovah's Witnesses for not saluting the flag was a violation of their constitutional right to freedom of religion. Some teachers view patriotic exercises as contrary to the principles of a free society. In a later chapter that deals with the rights of teachers (Chapter 11), there is a lengthy discussion of the court cases dealing with academic freedom and loyalty oaths and the conflict between patriotic requirements and students' rights.

Also, community service as part of citizenship education raises a number of issues. For instance, in the fall of 1998, Chicago became the nation's largest school system to require students to perform community service to receive a high school diploma. Beginning with the sophomore class, students are required to spend forty hours at community service work and are required to submit proof of that work in the form of an essay, video, or oral report. "We want students to learn the importance of community," said Bruce Marchiafava, speaking for the nation's third-largest school system, behind New York and Los Angeles. "They need to know that community is about giving, not just getting."

The immediate problem for Chicago officials was defining and identifying community service. This problem was compounded by the headache of finding enough community service activities for all the students. "If you let students work for an anti-handgun group," Marchiafava said, "do you also let them work for the NRA [the National Rifle Association which opposes strong gun control laws]?" Are political activities community service? What about volunteer work at for-profit schools and hospitals? Also, who decides what is community service? What happens if the person making this decision identifies work with religious organizations as community service? Would this be a violation of the Constitution's prohibition of government aiding religion? What about objections by some people to religious groups such as the Native American Church, which uses peyote, a hallucinogenic drug, in their ceremonies? Will students be able to volunteer to work for organizations advocating the legalization of marijuana?

None of the issues surrounding the political goals of education are easily resolved. Can they even be achieved? For instance, consider the following questions:

- Have the public schools created a consensus of political values?
- Whose values are reflected in the public school's concept of good citizenship?

THE SOCIAL PURPOSES OF SCHOOLING

Public schools attempt to exercise social control and solve a variety of social problems. In the 1890s, American sociologist Edward Ross referred to education as an inexpensive form of police. He divided social control into external and internal forms. Traditionally, he argued, internal forms of control centered on the family, the church, and the community. The family and church inculcated moral values and social responsibility in the child, which ensured social stability and cohesion. In modern society, Ross declared, the family and church were being replaced by the school as the most important institution for instilling internal values. Ross saw reliance on education for control becoming characteristic of American society. Often, the school was replacing the church and the family. "The ebb of religion is only half a fact," Ross wrote. "The other half is the high tide of education. While the priest is leaving the civil service, the schoolmaster is coming in. As the state shakes itself loose from the church, it reaches out for the school."

Frequently, people say that the family and religion are collapsing, and the school must pick up the pieces. Whether these two institutions are in fact collapsing is debatable, but the argument continues to justify the social role of education. The assumption by schools of a responsibility for teaching moral values sparked major political debates throughout the 1990s. The Republican Party's *Contract With America* contends that moral instruction should remain with parents, not with school officials. Across the political spectrum parents are removing their children from schools and educating them at home. This phe-

nomenon is called the home schooling movement. Some parents in my college classes began home schooling out of a desire to limit the exposure of their children to the values of other students and from a fear of criminal behavior in schools. Evangelical Christians turned to home schooling to protect their children from the secular values of public schools. Some progressive parents chose home schooling because of what they perceive to be the dogmatic and conservative content and teaching methods of public schools.

The home schooling movement challenges the often-stated assumption that the family is collapsing and that the government needs to pick up the pieces. Recent discussions of home schooling and parental rights raise the following important questions regarding the social purposes of education:

- What are legitimate areas of social concern for public schools? Should public schools attempt to solve social problems, such as the AIDS epidemic or other epidemics, the destructive use of drugs and alcohol, teenage pregnancy, poverty, and child abuse?
- What government agency, organization, or group of individuals should decide the moral values to be taught in public schools?
- Should instruction related to social and moral issues be mandatory for all students?
- Should teachers be required to only teach the moral and social values given in the school district's curriculum?

Historically, public schools were involved in moral and social instruction in a variety of ways. The very act of requiring school attendance was considered a means of reducing juvenile delinquency. Keeping youth off the streets was a justification for starting summer schools in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Then, the moral and social influence of the school was supposed to keep youth from future acts of crime and from the use of tobacco and alcohol. In later years, the schools assumed the burden of eliminating traffic accidents through driver training; improving family life through courses in modern living and home economics; and eliminating drug abuse, venereal disease, and most other social problems through health education.

Improving society through public schooling became an article of American faith. Horace Mann believed it key to reforming society. He argued that past societies failed to stop crime by government and laws. The answer, Mann said, was in the proper training of young children so that they would not want to do criminal acts. Mann even suggested that America might see the day when the training at the schoolhouse would make it unnecessary to enforce the law.

For some twentieth-century Americans, the school is the symbol and hope for the good society. This hope is best illustrated by a story told to kindergartners in the early part of the century about two children who bring a beautiful flower from their school class to their dirty and dark tenement apartment. The mother takes the flower and puts it in a glass of water near a dirty window. She decides the flower needs more light to expose its beauty. The mother proceeds to wash the window, which allows more light into the apartment and illuminates the dirty floors, walls, and furniture. The added light sends the mother

scurrying around to clean up the now-exposed dirt. In the meantime the father, who is unemployed because of a drinking problem, returns to the apartment and is amazed to find his grim dwelling transformed into a clean and tidy house. The transformation of the apartment results in the father wanting to spend more time at home, and less time at the local bar. The father's drinking problem is solved, he is able to find work, and the family lives happily ever after. This story characterizes the hope that the moral influence of the school will penetrate the homes and neighborhoods of America.

Schools are often asked to solve social problems because this solution does not challenge economic and political interests. For instance, alcoholism might be the product of boredom with monotonous work, deteriorating urban conditions, family traditions, or a variety of other factors. To turn to the school to solve the problem of alcoholism through health classes is to say the problem is one of individual training and that is not related to other causes. It is easier to give a health course than to change job conditions, improve urban environments, or manipulate family traditions. The school is less threatening than such direct changes. Changing job conditions involves confronting the whole organization of industry and the conflicting interests of unions and business.

The school is often the safest and least controversial way of planning for social improvement. A politician in the state legislature or in the local community can call for social reform through the school and thereby give the appearance of doing good without antagonizing any community interests.

Social reform through the school is a conservative approach to society's ills. This is reflected in the school's effort to end poverty. Since the nineteenth century schooling has been considered a means of reducing social tensions caused by economic inequalities. For instance, poverty did not disappear with massive War on Poverty programs launched by the federal government in the 1960s. During this period, emphasis was placed on education as a solution to poverty. The economic model of the War on Poverty in Figure 1-1 exemplifies current and past ideas about schooling and poverty.

In Figure 1-1, a model of the relationship between schooling and poverty, poor-quality education is one element in a series of social factors that tend to reinforce other social conditions. As you move around the inner part of the diagram, an inadequate education is linked to low-income jobs, low-quality housing, poor diet, poor medical care, health problems, and high rates of absenteeism from school and work. This model suggests eliminating poverty by improving any of the interrelated points. For instance, the improvement of health conditions will mean fewer days lost from school and employment, which will mean more income. Higher wages will mean improved housing, medical care, diet, and education. These improved conditions will mean better jobs for those of the next generation. Antipoverty programs include Head Start, compensatory education, vocation and career education, public housing, housing subsidies, food stamps, and medical care.

Today, Head Start programs are premised on the idea that some children from low-income families begin school at a disadvantage in comparison to children from middle- and high-income families. Head Start programs provide

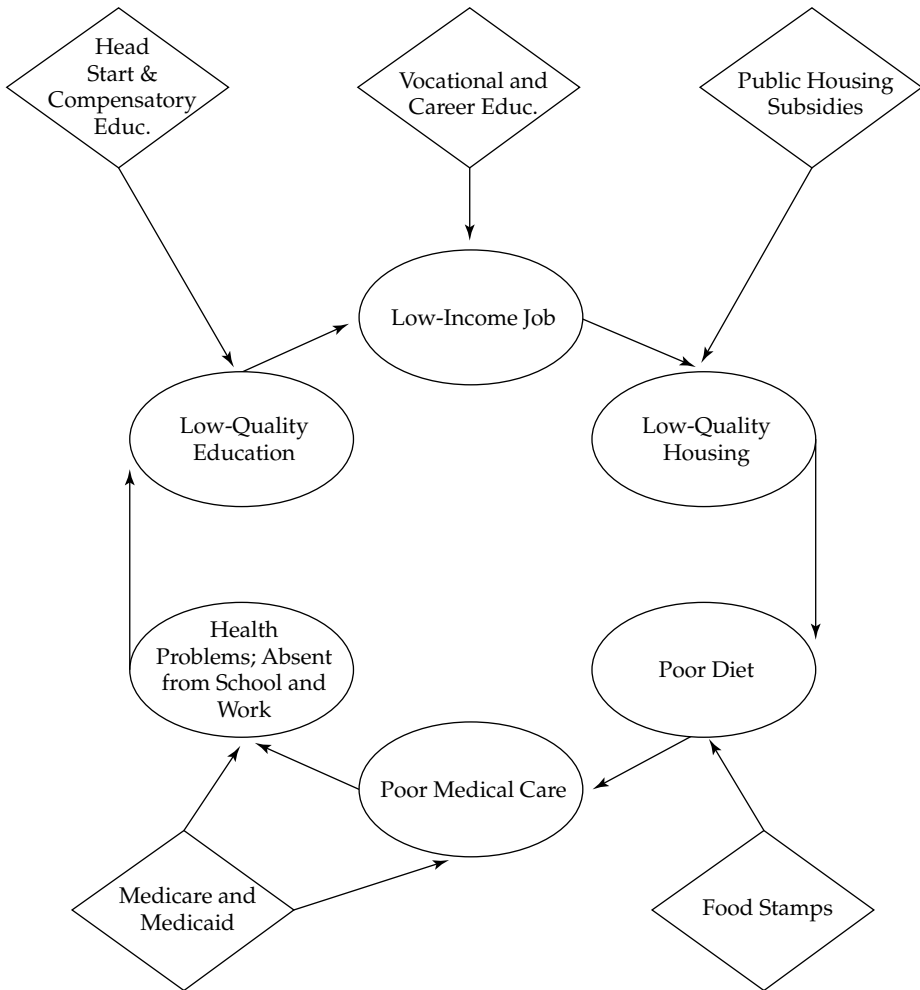


FIGURE 1-1 War on Poverty Model

early childhood education to give poor children a head start on schooling that allows them to compete on equal terms with other children. Job-training programs are designed to end teenage and adult unemployment. Compensatory education in fields such as reading are designed to ensure the success of low-income students.

A possible flaw in this model of school and poverty is *educational inflation*. Increasing the number of high school and college graduates might result in decreasing the economic value of education. It is a simple story of supply and demand.

With educational inflation, the educational requirements of jobs increase while the actual skills required for the job do not change. This results in the

declining economic value of high school and college diplomas. Educational inflation first appeared in the early 1970s when the labor market was flooded with college graduates, and scholars with doctorates were driving taxicabs and cooking in restaurants. In this situation, the occupational structure did not expand to meet the increased educational training of the labor force. The response of educational institutions was to reorganize for more specific career training and call for more limited educational aspirations. The important lesson was that the nature of the labor market was more important in determining employment than was the amount of education available to the population. Educational inflation can hinder the ability of increased schooling to end poverty. There must be an increase in the number of jobs actually requiring higher levels of education for increased schooling to effectively raise levels of income. Education alone cannot solve the problems of poverty.

Besides political disputes over education's role in ending poverty, there is much controversy over other social goals. An important issue centers on moral values. Horace Mann argued that all religious groups could agree upon certain moral values and that these shared values would become the backbone of the moral teachings of the school. A variety of religious groups disagreed with this idea. The Catholic Church is the largest single religious group to dissent and establish its own system of schools. The argument of Catholic Church leaders was that all education by its very goal of shaping behavior was religious and that it was impossible for a public institution to claim that it could satisfy the needs of all religious groups. Even if the public school eliminated all religious and moral teaching, this alternative could not be accepted because education would then become irreligious.

In the 1990s, the most heated value conflicts centered on AIDS education. These debates pitted those who believe in a strong moral code to control sexual behavior against those who believe in the right of free sexual activity between consenting adults. Those who believe in a strong moral code tend to support AIDS education programs that advocate sexual abstinence outside marriage and take a strong line against homosexual activities. Those at the other end of the value spectrum emphasize educational programs that teach safe sexual procedures and advocate the dispensing of condoms in public schools.

In fact, issues surrounding sex education are often the most volatile. In the 1980s, intense discussions occurred concerning the establishment in New York City of the Harvey Milk High School for homosexual teenagers. Some members of the community objected because it seemed to condone homosexuality, while others supported the idea because they believed homosexual teenagers needed help in establishing an identity. Similar controversies occur concerning homosexual teachers. Some people argue that homosexual teachers are not more likely to impose themselves on children than heterosexual teachers. Others fear that homosexual teachers will serve as a model for students inclined toward homosexual behavior. Those supporting gay rights believe homosexuals have as much right to teach as heterosexuals and should be role models for homosexual teenagers.

Controversy over sexual values plagues attempts to deal with out-of-wedlock pregnancies among teenagers. For instance, consider the differing and controversial approaches to the problem of teen pregnancies exemplified by Baltimore's program of offering long-term contraceptives to its students and the federally sponsored teen chastity programs. Under the Baltimore plan announced in 1992, school-based health clinics offered to implant the long-term contraceptive Norplant in female students. The immediate reaction of religious groups was that birth-control devices promote promiscuity and the emphasis in school programs should be on abstinence. On the other hand, advocates of the program said that it was unrealistic to think that schools can limit teenage sexuality by teaching abstinence.

In contrast, federally funded Teen Choice advocated chastity as the solution to problems of teenage pregnancy. The objections to this program came from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), which claimed that the material sponsored by the federal government was full of religious statements and therefore was a violation of the First Amendment requirement of separation of church and state. The ACLU submitted as evidence a federally sponsored pamphlet advising teenagers to "pray together and invite God on every date." Teen Choice and other federally funded programs recommended a curriculum called *Sex Respect*, which says "God is supreme . . . God does exist." While the ACLU criticized this program because of its religious content, defenders argued that there was only limited reference to religion in the programs and that religious values were an important means of promoting chastity.

Overall, the concern about teenage pregnancy and the spread of AIDS has increased debate about sex-education courses. The focus of this debate is the moral content of the subject matter, contraceptives, and abortion. Some community members believe that the primary goal of a sex-education course should be to influence youth not to engage in sexual activities. Usually these members of the community do not want the schools to teach about contraceptives and abortion, because they believe that having information about them increases sexual activity. This group believes that the primary way of reducing unwanted teenage pregnancies is to convince youth to avoid intimate sexual contact.

On the other hand, some members of the community believe that a sex-education course should be designed to prepare youth for sexual activity by teaching about contraception and sexually transmitted diseases. This group usually believes that youth will continue to engage in sexual activity and that the best means of avoiding unwanted pregnancies is to give teenagers adequate information about contraception.

I have described the major range of opinions about sex education found in communities, but there are also other positions that can be taken. For instance, some community members might believe that sex-education courses should include discussions about improving and enhancing sexual relationships. This represents the extreme opposite position from that which supports sex education for preventing sexual contact. There are also those who want sex-education classes to provide arguments against contraception and abortion.

The dream of American education as the panacea for America's social ills continues to be plagued with questions of whose social and moral values and goals should be in the schoolhouse, and whether the panacea of education is just a way of avoiding more direct and controversial approaches to social problems. These questions remain unanswered, but American educators still tend to share Horace Mann's hope that the school will be the heart and salvation of American society.

THE ECONOMIC PURPOSES OF SCHOOLING

Can public schools increase national wealth, reduce inequalities in wealth and income, and advance technological development? Economists argue that schools can increase economic growth in two distinct ways:

1. Schools can socialize future workers for the workplace. The school is the first formal public organization encountered by the child and provides the preparation and training needed to deal with other complex social organizations. The school's attendance requirements, tardiness rules, instruction in completing tasks and following directions, and obedience to authority are preparation for the workplace.
2. The school can increase national wealth by sorting and training students for the labor force. *Sorting* means the identification of individual abilities and interests and the determination of the best type of education and future employment for the student.

Arguments for the school's role in socializing for the workplace can be found throughout U.S. history. In the nineteenth century, schools emphasized marching, drills, and orderliness as preparation for the modern factory. Lining up for class as well as marching in and out of the cloakroom and to the blackboard were justified as training for factory assembly lines.

In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the dominant model for linking schools to the labor market is the "sorting machine." The image of the sorting machine is that of pouring students—called *human capital* or *human resources*—into schools where they are separated by abilities and interests. Emerging from the other end of the machine, school graduates enter jobs that match their educational programs. In this model, education, student abilities, aptitudes, and interests are determined by the school counselor or other school official using a variety of standardized tests. Using these test results, the school official places the student into an ability group in an elementary school classroom and later in high school into a course of study. Ideally, a student's education will lead directly to college or a vocation. In this model, there should be a good match between students' education, abilities, and interests and their occupations. With schools as sorting machines, proponents argue, the economy will prosper and workers will be happy because of the close tie between the schools and the labor market.

THE ECONOMIC PURPOSES OF SCHOOLING IN A GLOBAL ECONOMY

In the twenty-first century, the sorting machine emphasizes worker competition in a global labor market and overcoming inequalities in wealth and income. The goal is to *expand educational opportunities so that U.S. workers are better prepared for high-paying jobs in the global labor market*. American workers are competing in a global economy. As U.S. companies seek cheaper labor in foreign countries, American workers are forced to take reductions in benefits and wages in order to compete with foreign workers. The only hope, it is argued, is to train workers for jobs that pay higher wages in the global labor market.

Preparation for the global economy shifts the focus from service to a national economy to a global economy by preparing workers for international corporations and for competition in a world labor market. This is important to understand because the promise is *not reducing inequalities in salaries between jobs but educating all workers into higher-paying jobs*.

The architect of educational policies for the global economy, former Labor Secretary Robert Reich, writes in *The Work of Nations*, "Herein lies the new logic of economic capitalism: The skills of a nation's workforce and the quality of its infrastructure are what makes it unique, and uniquely attractive, in the world economy." Reich draws a direct relationship between the type of education provided by schools and the placement of the worker in the labor market. He believes that many workers will be trapped in low-paying jobs unless their employment skills are improved. Reich argues, "There should not be a barrier between education and work. We're talking about a new economy in which life-long learning is a necessity for every single member of the American workforce."

Reich's education and economic goals are based on *human capital* concepts. In schools, human capital are students, and the development of human capital simply means preparing students to be efficient workers, who, it is hoped, can find employment in their area of training. Figure 1-2 illustrates human capital theory.

As shown in the figure, money is invested in schools for the education of future workers. Better-educated workers result in increased productivity and economic growth. Economic growth pays for the investment in education. In the framework of human capital, an important consideration is the return on investment.

- Does investment in education produce worthwhile economic returns?
- Should governments invest in schools if there are few economic rewards?

It is very difficult to measure the actual economic benefits of schooling because of a wide variety of other factors impacting the economy, such as international trade, technological development, unions, consumer tastes, interest rates, and other government policies. Consequently, policymakers often look at *internal* and *external* efficiency to measure the general economic performance of schools.

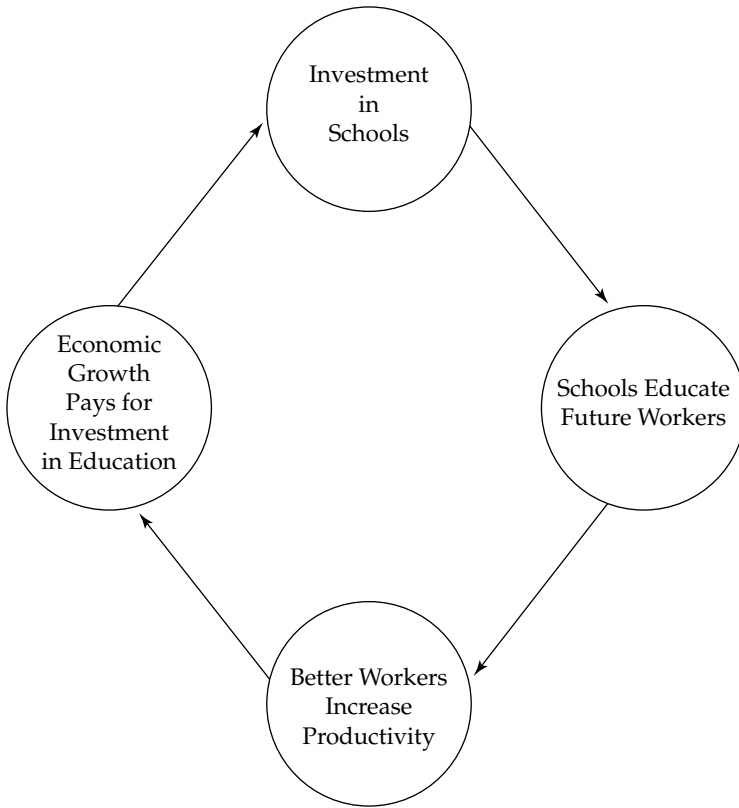


FIGURE 1-2 Human Capital

- Internal efficiency refers to the cost of educating school graduates. The goal is to educate students at the lowest possible cost to achieve the best workers.
- External efficiency is the ability of school graduates to find jobs commensurate with their training. A school system is considered inefficient if graduates obtain jobs requiring less education than they received or if they remain unemployed for long periods of time.

External efficiency, policymakers argue, requires preparing students for jobs in a global labor market. In the United States, policymakers call for world-class standards to raise the educational level of U.S. workers to those of other industrialized countries. This, it is hoped, will make U.S. workers more competitive in world labor markets. World-class standards refer to the educational standards of European countries and Japan. *World-class standards* do not usually refer to the educational standards of Africa and South America. In the attempt to achieve world-class standards, the United States is opening the door to the possibility of creating a global curriculum that would be similar in all industrialized nations. It could be the curriculum desired by international corporations.

A *learning society* and *lifelong learning* are considered essential parts of global educational systems. Both concepts assume a world of constant technological change, which will require workers to continually update their skills. This assumption means that schools will be required to teach students how to learn so that they can continue learning throughout their lives. These two concepts are defined as follows:

- In a learning society, educational credentials determine income and status. Also, all members in a learning society are engaged in learning to adapt to constant changes in technology and work requirements.
- Lifelong learning refers to workers engaging in continual training to meet the changing technological requirements of the workplace.

In the context of education for the global economy, the larger questions include the following:

- Should the primary goal of education be human capital development?
- Should the worth of educational institutions be measured by internal and external efficiency?
- Will the learning society and lifelong learning to prepare for technological change increase human happiness?

HUMAN CAPITAL AND THE ROLE OF BUSINESS IN AMERICAN EDUCATION

Education for the global economy links schooling to the interests of the business community and international corporations. In fact, by the twenty-first century most Americans seemed to accept business as a natural partner in the control of schools. In the 1990s, few people questioned President George Bush and the National Governors' Association statement: "Parents, businesses, and community organizations will work together to ensure that schools are a safe haven for all children." Why would business be considered a logical partner in this objective? Why was there no mention of unions or churches? In fact, why was there no mention of participation by all the citizens who pay taxes to support schools?

The extensive and often unquestioned involvement of business in American schools has increased at a rapid rate and has made economic goals the number one priority of public schools. A February 1, 1990, article in the business section of *The New York Times* opened, "When it comes to reforming the nation's schools, these days the leading radicals are likely to be wearing pin-striped suits and come from oak-paneled boardrooms rather than the ivy-covered walls of academia." After detailing business involvement in shaping the curriculum, managerial methods, and organization of the nation's schools, the article states, "The impetus behind the corporate embrace of education reform is concern about the quality of the American labor pool."

Business involvement in schools raises a number of issues. It is not necessarily true that what is good for American business is good for American

schools and students. The primary concern of business is the maximization of profits. This can mean several things with regard to public schools. First, a major business expense is taxes. Businesses have a stake in reducing taxes, including taxes that support public schools.

Questions can also be raised regarding financial donations made directly by businesses to public schools. Often, adopt-a-school programs involve some kind of business contribution to an adopted school. Obviously, a direct donation to a public school gives the contributor some influence over school programs. On the other hand, if the same money came to the school through taxes there would be greater public determination of school programs. If businesses have the money to give to schools, they have enough money to be taxed to support schools. Giving money directly to schools increases business influence over education at the expense of control exercised by citizens through the government.

Business profits also depend on the quality and expense of workers. As discussed in the previous section, although businesses want educated workers, they also want workers who are compliant and loyal to the company. Should public schools emphasize the development of habits that will meet the requirements of business?

Also, business has a stake in keeping down wages. Wages often depend on the supply of labor. In business, the ideal situation for hiring is a large pool of applicants that will allow business to pay the lowest wages and select the best worker. Obviously, this situation does not help the worker. For example, in the 1950s, business put pressure on the schools to educate more scientists and engineers and by the late 1960s there was a surplus of scientists and engineers, which caused low wages and unemployment. This situation worked to the advantage of the employer but not the employee.

ISSUES ABOUT HUMAN CAPITALISM

The new global demands on education raise the following questions about treating students as human capital:

- Should schools emphasize a broad liberal education or preparation for a career?
- In a labor market based on educational attainment, will inequality of educational opportunity cause economic stratification?
- Will educational inflation defeat efforts to reduce inequalities in wealth and income?
- Should economic opportunities be based on high-stakes tests?

The first question was widely debated in the twentieth century. It can be argued that a broad liberal education enhances the joys of learning and thinking and provides the intellectual tools and knowledge for making decisions about the quality of one's life. In contrast, preparation for a career provides only a narrow education, which limits the ability to think about the broad issues related to

the quality of life and happiness. Does education for a career produce corporate drones?

The second question relates to the wide variation in the quality of schools in the United States. The qualities of teachers, the availability of textbooks and educational materials, class size, the quality of scientific laboratories and computer equipment, and counseling and preparation for college admissions vary among poor rural school districts, wealthy suburban school districts, private schools, and poor urban school districts. If the ability to compete in the labor market depends on the quality of education, then some school graduates will be more advantaged than others. Does this mean that a greater dependence on education for jobs will ensure that the children of the rich remain rich while the children of the poor remain poor?

The issue of educational inflation could defeat any plan designed to use increased educational opportunities as a means of reducing inequalities in wealth and income. What happens if everyone has a college degree?

CONCLUSION

The school will continue to be used in efforts to solve social, political, and economic problems. It is easier for politicians to blame schools for social and economic problems than to try to directly correct these problems. By relying on the school, issues are shifted from an economic and social level to a personal level. Reform the individual rather than society is the message of those who trust the school to end crime, poverty, broken families, drug and alcohol abuse and myriad other social troubles.

Now the focus is on the role of the school in global economy. This focus emphasizes the school's role in economic development. Fortunately or unfortunately, students are viewed as human resources whose primary value is their potential contribution to economic growth and productivity. But is economic expansion a worthy goal if the quality of life is not improved? Doesn't education in and of itself improve the quality of an individual's life by opening new possibilities to thinking and learning?

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