

## SST: Adult roles

### Business manager

## Futures Group Matrix

Source: Davies, B. and Ellison, L. (1999), *Strategic Direction and Development of the School*, Routledge, London.

### Setting up of a futures group in a school

A futures group can consist of a group of people who meet at approximately two-monthly intervals to consider the impact of possible futures on the school. This group can take a number of forms. It could be the traditional senior management team taking 'time out' to stand back and interpret what is happening in the wider environment. It could consist of a mixture of that group and governors who will represent a broader cross-section of experience. It may be more appropriate simply to have a cross-section of staff. In some areas, some headteachers meet with other heads on a termly basis for this purpose. Whatever grouping is chosen, it is important that the activity does not become a simple 'talking shop' but that some structure and coherence should be attempted. In particular it is important that key issues are identified and that the analysis progresses through data collection to scenario building.

This can be achieved in either of two ways as shown in Exercises 3.1 and 3.2.

#### **Exercise 3.1: futures brainstorming**

In this approach, the group starts with a 'clean slate' and engages in brainstorming about the future, having an unstructured discussion which can then be formalized, perhaps using the framework shown in Table 3.1.

Whilst carrying out this activity, it is important to look not just at the school sector but at the wider economic and social trends and to be creative by looking at a range of organizations and policies such as the information technology industry, the impact of the emerging economies, political and societal changes and their impact on the nature of work. The possible broader impact on the education sector can then be assessed.

**Table 3.1 Brainstorming the future**

Area for consideration	Evidence of trends/expectations	Possible implications for education

A more structured approach than the one suggested in Exercise 3.1 would be to start with some pre-determined futures list. We suggest that schools take our ten reengineering trends as a start and, after discussion, identify five areas which they wish to monitor. Then, two or three times a year, they can undertake to report any significant developments or any items that urgently need adding to the list of five.

### ***Exercise 3.2: reengineering trends***

Choose five of the ten reengineering trends outlined on pages 29 to 41 which your school should examine over the next 12 to 24 months. The aim should be to build in staff and governors the capability to understand the implications of these trends for the school. Choose those about which you, as a group, have little awareness, have not looked at recently or which might be particularly significant for your school. The focusing should allow the school to use its time effectively.

Consider the possible impact on the school of each of these and then suggest how the school might respond in order to cope with that impact. Record the results using the format in Table 3.2.

***Table 3.2 Reengineering trends***

Reengineering trends	Potential impact on the school	School response
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		



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