SECTION 6
ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Studying Section 6 should take you about 18 hours.

Section 6 focuses primarily on key questions 2 and 3.

After studying this section you should:

• have gained an understanding of educational effectiveness and know how it is conceptualized and defined;
• know how the effectiveness of educational organizations can be measured and the approaches that managers can use;
• understand the relationship between organizational effectiveness and organizational improvement within an educational context;
• be aware of the research findings concerning organizational effectiveness and improvement in education, and what they imply for management practice in education;
• be able to draw on various theoretical perspectives to assist you in managing your organization more effectively.

All the readings for this section are in Reader 3, Part 2.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Section 3 highlighted the importance of understanding the nature and context of educational organizations for effective management practice. This section extends this analysis by addressing the specific question ‘What do effective educational organizations look like?’ Here we are primarily concerned with exploring how individuals and educational organizations become more effective. This will necessarily involve some consideration of the measurement of organizational effectiveness, the features of organizational effectiveness and the implications for management practice. Although much of the empirical work in this area has concentrated on schools, the research findings are applicable to other educational organizations. At a general level, it is argued that the key characteristics of effective educational organizations are transferable and provide important insights for effective management and leadership in education.

Educational effectiveness is an area of research that has come to have considerable significance in recent years. In particular, there have been numerous studies of effective schools in many countries around the world (e.g. Nutall et al., 1989; Levine and Lezotte, 1990; Mortimore, 1991; Reynolds, 1992; Scheerens, 1992). But what is meant by an ‘effective’ school or college? How do we recognize such effective organizations? What does effectiveness mean to you?

At its simplest, defining and determining the effectiveness of an organization would appear to be a relatively straightforward affair. To enquire into the effectiveness of an organization requires asking how well that organization is doing relative to some set of standards. Yet, as Scott (Reader 3, Chapter 10) demonstrates, there are many possible bases for generating criteria of effectiveness and many different value positions from which criteria can be generated. So, what educators perceive as important organizational outcomes may not coincide with the perceptions of parents, governors, the local community, government or the media. It is also feasible that any, or all, of these groups may not agree with each other on a definition of organizational effectiveness. Hence, the measurement of educational effectiveness is a highly complex and potentially controversial exercise.
One problem is that defining educational effectiveness in the real world is not only a technical, or scientific, issue but also an ethical one. Once a word like 'effectiveness' becomes common currency, it can gain many shades of meaning and be so widely used that it loses precision. Another problem relates to the issue of 'effectiveness for whom?' Even if we agree on a definition of effectiveness, questions of educational value still remain. In educational discussions the term 'effective' is often associated with the quality of education. Some authors (e.g. Corcoran, 1985) give a broader meaning to the word by speaking of the general 'goodness' of a educational organization. Other synonyms for effectiveness include efficiency, productivity and the survival of an organization.

In the main, however, the term 'effective' presupposes that some sort of judgement, or measurement, has been made. In the school effectiveness literature, for example, the central aim is to judge whether differences in resources, processes and organizational arrangements affect pupil outcomes and, if so, in what way. In broader terms, the research is concerned with the extent to which educational organizations differ from one another in effectiveness and the reasons for such differences. For most researchers the concept of effectiveness is always linked to the measurement of individual outcomes, which are aggregated for all the students in the organization. As noted earlier, in school effectiveness studies test or examination results are usually used. These have been viewed by some researchers as the most important outcomes of schooling. Other researchers have argued that there are more important outcomes, but these are not so easily measured. As Scott (Reader 3, Chapter 10) highlights, the provision of multiple criteria is important to avoid a narrow interpretation of effectiveness and to reflect the diverse conceptions of organizations (i.e. the rational, natural and open systems perspectives).

In practice various criteria of organizational effectiveness can be considered. Indeed, organizations have quite diverse goals once one moves away from a narrow academic focus. It has been shown, for example, that important stakeholders, such as parents, tend to have a much broader range of expectations from educational organizations than simply academic achievement. Consequently, many recent studies of effectiveness have added students' behaviour, attendance, delinquency, attitudes and self-concept to information on student attainment in order to arrive at multiple measures of organizational effectiveness (e.g. Mortimore et al., 1988; Smith and Tomlinson, 1989).

6.2 MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

One of the distinctive features of educational effectiveness research is a preoccupation with making judgements and measuring performance. The whole issue of trying to come to some objective judgement of organizational performance is, as we have seen, difficult. Increasingly, professionals in education are making statements about 'effective schools and colleges' but which criteria are they using in making such judgements? As Scott has shown, the generation of criteria is an important dimension of measuring organizational effectiveness.

Activity 1
Consider the following questions within the context of your own organization:
• How should criteria for judging the effectiveness of an educational organization be generated?
• Should the criteria be multiple, or not?
• What should the criteria reflect?
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- Who should be involved in generating such criteria?
- Who should apply the criteria?
- Who should make judgements about an organization's effectiveness?

Please make brief notes on each of these questions and return to them once you have completed Section 6. Think about what changes you might wish to make in the light of having read the whole section.

It would appear that there are two very different interpretations of the measurement of educational effectiveness, which result in very different approaches. The first pivots around a set of output indicators that are in the public consciousness and that are, therefore, almost bound to surface in any consultation about effectiveness indicators. These are viewed as the 'products' or 'outputs' of the education system. As noted earlier, these include raw examination results, or test scores, which take no account of the previous attainments of students.

The second and broader type of measurement includes data such as truancy rates, staying-on rates in post-16 education (where relevant) and destination data. This approach allows for a much more eclectic view of organizational effectiveness.

In short, however, all these measures are output indicators in the sense that to some extent they are the result of what happens inside an organization. Clearly, organizations might consider other types of indicator, such as those that are not directly concerned with outputs but instead focus upon processes, for example dimensions of teaching and learning. As the reading by Scott demonstrated, in order to make sensible use of process indicators it is necessary to have in place a robust model of organizational effectiveness. In other words, you must have a model that says if an organization does X, Y and Z well, then it will be an effective organization.

Constructing process indicators presents quite a challenge. As noted earlier, it is far easier for organizations to use the number of qualifications achieved by students than to construct precise process indicators. Yet many researchers argue that value-added measures that consider process factors are more valid indicators of organizational effectiveness than raw measures. Indeed, the definition of effectiveness provided by Mortimore (1991) is premised on value-added measurement. This alternative interpretation of an effective organization is defined as 'one in which students progress further than might be expected from consideration of that organization's intake' (Mortimore, 1991, p. 9). In other words, an effective educational organization 'adds extra value to student outcomes in comparison with other institutions serving similar intakes' (Sammons et al., 1994, p. 3).

It is suggested that this form of measurement allows relative judgements of organizational effectiveness to be made. Clearly, much depends, however, on how value-added measurement is used within the organization and for what purpose. These issues will be returned to later in this section.

Consequently, as we have seen, the concept of organizational effectiveness is closely related to a 'means-end' relationship. When applied to educational phenomena, effectiveness refers to the degree to which educational means or processes result in the attainment of educational goals, or outcomes. In the language of a simple input-process-output systems model of education, effectiveness could be referred to as the translation of inputs by means of processes into desired outputs.
Reading 1

You should now read Chapter 11 by Creemers in Reader 3, which describes the theoretical base underpinning educational effectiveness and its measurement. It demonstrates that the term 'effective' presupposes that some sort of judgement or measurement has been made but suggests the complexity of undertaking such measurement.

Activity 2

1 In your own organization, think about the ways in which effectiveness is defined and measured. Who influences this definition and how narrow, or broad, is the means of measurement currently employed?

2 You might like to make a list of the goals of your organization. Would you consider them to be different from the goals set by other organizations in your sector? If so, in what way?

6.3 THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

There is a tradition of academic research, policy making and professional decision making that focuses directly on the question of educational effectiveness. In this body of research work several important questions have been identified:

- Do educational organizations make a difference to student performance?
- Can we measure the difference that individual organizations make?
- What do effective educational organizations look like?

The issue of organizational effectiveness and its relationship to student performance is best illustrated in the context of early research into school effectiveness. The emergence of the school effectiveness movement resulted largely from social science findings suggesting that home background had a far greater influence on a child's development than did the school attended (Coleman et al., 1966; Jencks et al., 1972). This largely fitted with the dominant view on the part of researchers in Britain during the 1960s and 1970s, which emphasized social class, differences in home environment and parental attitude as explanations for differential student achievement.

To combat this view, a wide range of research efforts focused on separating the impact of family background from that of the school, and ascertaining whether some schools were more effective than others and, if so, what factors contributed to the positive effects. An early example of school effectiveness research in Britain was that conducted by Rutter et al. (1979), which showed that some schools were more effective in promoting academic attainment than others. These findings were subsequently supported by a string of other studies (most notably those by Mortimore et al., 1988, and Smith and Tomlinson, 1989).

These 'school effect' studies were replicated in other countries, particularly the USA and Australia. More recent work employing more refined statistical techniques has also claimed to discover significant differences among schools in their effects on pupil achievements (see, for instance, Smith and Tomlinson, 1989; Williams, 1992). The implication of this research for schools was that they had a role to play in their pupils' development. They could no longer hide behind statements such as 'What else can you expect from children like these?'

It is important to note that these 'school effect' studies did not demonstrate that the school effect was in any way greater than the home effect, or the effect of previous attainment. It is clearly not possible to say which is the greater effect because this depends on the variation in both. Yet we know that family
background influence is huge and remains so. What these studies showed was that the school seemed to have an additional effect on top of the home effect. In other words, that schools made a difference not the difference to students’ educational achievement.

Reading 2
You should now read Chapter 12 by Reynolds et al. in Reader 3, which maps the effectiveness and improvement research traditions within the UK. The reading demonstrates the breadth and extent of this form of research within the UK. It also makes a link between effectiveness and improvement. This is an important relationship, which will be revisited later in this section.

6.4 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The body of research on effectiveness has drawn attention to differences between educational establishments. As we have seen, it has also provided a range of characteristics associated with organizational effectiveness. Indeed, from the research we know at present far more about the factors associated with academic effectiveness than about those factors that are associated with social outcomes. For example, Rutter et al. (1979) identified over twenty factors associated with academic effectiveness but only seven associated with social effectiveness as measured by an establishment's possession of a low delinquency rate.

The important internal factors determining high levels of effectiveness were argued by Rutter et al. to be:

1. a balance of intellectually able and less able students in the school;
2. a system of punishments and rewards, which emphasizes the latter and offers plenty of praise and appreciation;
3. an organizational environment with good working conditions, responsiveness to student needs and good care and decoration of buildings;
4. ample opportunities for students to take responsibility and to participate in the running of their school;
5. good use of homework to set clear academic goals and to foster an atmosphere of confidence in their students’ capacities;
6. teachers providing good models of behaviour by means of time keeping and willingness to deal with pupils’ problems;
7. good classroom management - preparing lessons in advance, unobtrusive discipline, a focus on rewarding behaviour and swift action to deal with disruption;
8. a combination of firm leadership and decision-making processes in which all teachers felt their views were represented.

Another major British effectiveness study, which followed in the tradition of the Rutter et al. (1979) research, was undertaken by Peter Mortimore and his colleagues in the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA). This study (Mortimore et al., 1988) represents the most detailed study of the primary school milieu ever undertaken.

There are several reasons why the study by Mortimore et al. is so important. For example:

- it is the largest piece of school effectiveness research undertaken in either the UK or the USA;
it examined a much broader range of pupils’ educational outcomes than did previous studies, avoiding a narrow focus on basic skills alone;
• the results support and confirm many earlier findings about school effectiveness.

In addition, the results of this study extended knowledge of what contributes to effectiveness in several important ways:

• in contrast to most previous studies, it examined both factors to do with the school as a whole and those to do with teachers’ classroom practices and showed how these related to student outcomes;
• the study demonstrated the methodology of school effectiveness research clearly, utilizing data about individual pupils, their teachers, classes and schools at the appropriate level.

(Note: These particular methodological issues will be discussed and examined in Reading 3.)

The 'junior school effectiveness study' (as it came to be known), like other effectiveness studies, identified a number of key factors important in accounting for the differential effectiveness of schools. Twelve factors of effectiveness were identified by Mortimore et al. (1988):

1. purposeful leadership of the staff by the headteacher;
2. the involvement of the deputy headteacher;
3. the involvement of teachers;
4. consistency among teachers;
5. structured sessions;
6. intellectually challenging teaching;
7. work-centred environment;
8. limited focus within sessions;
9. maximum communication between teachers and students;
10. record keeping;
11. parental involvement;
12. positive climate.

As Reading 2 indicated, a range of more recent research work has similarly sought to identify the features of organizational effectiveness and improvement. Summaries of the research findings have been widely distributed to schools (e.g. Harris and Russ, 1994). Such summaries reveal that there is a general consensus concerning the mechanisms associated with organizational effectiveness.

Activity 3

In view of such empirical evidence concerning organizational effectiveness, consider the following questions:

• How many of the ‘effectiveness’ features identified in the Mortimore et al. (1988) research does your organization possess? Which features are more in evidence than others? Which features are not in evidence?
• In the light of these findings, what practical steps might be taken within your organization to make it more effective?
6.5 EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPROVEMENT WITHIN EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Having explored the features of effective educational organizations, we must next ask the question: to what extent can this information be used to improve educational organizations? Is there a link, for example, between educational effectiveness and educational improvement? Indeed, one of the implicit assumptions of the effectiveness research has been that the lessons from studies of effectiveness can be applied to bring about organizational improvement. But how far is this a reasonable expectation?

Despite a wealth of research evidence concerning the features of effective educational organizations and the factors affecting organizational effectiveness, the practical interpretation and use of this knowledge has been limited. In the main, practitioners have not actively sought to translate the research findings into organizationally based action. Reynolds (1995b) has argued that 'the effectiveness snake oil' cannot be applied to ineffective organizations. He suggests that the effectiveness research studies have very little to offer educational organizations in general unless they are underpinned by an understanding of organizational processes - that is, how particular processes lead to good, or poor, outcomes.

One reason for a lack of synergy between research on educational effectiveness and that on improvement research is that both fields have evolved and developed separately. In the main, the effectiveness research studies have tended to focus upon the end result of being an educationally effective organization and have not outlined how to get to the destination of 'effectiveness'. In addition, the entire effectiveness research enterprise has tended to 'backmap' the characteristics of effective schools on to ineffective ones. As Reynolds (1995b) notes, the effectiveness research has tended to assume that what the ineffective school has is the absence of the things that made the effective school effective. To date, it has not acknowledged that the ineffective organization may have factors that are unknown in the effective organization. In short, the research on effectiveness has tended to view ineffectiveness as simply the reverse of being effective.

The assumption that organizations can copy effective practices in order to improve themselves is implicit in much of the effectiveness research. However, educational organizations are complex systems in so far as one can never assume that a particular action will lead to a specific outcome. The reality is, therefore, that we can never achieve perfect predictability. As a consequence, there will never be a single recipe for achieving effectiveness within an educational organization. The complexity of educational organizations suggests that there should be a choice of theoretical and conceptual interpretations. This issue will be revisited later in this section.

A further point to note here is that educational effectiveness needs to be concerned with 'cross-level' issues within the organization. As noted earlier, it is important to conceptualize educational effectiveness as operating at different levels within the organization. These levels include departmental/faculty and classroom levels.

Reading 3

You should now read Chapter 13 by Brown et al. in Reader 3. This reading illustrates the restricted nature of 'one-level' analyses of organizational effectiveness. Furthermore, it draws attention to the importance of interactions across and between the levels of the educational process (classroom, school/college, local educational structure, national educational structure).

Activity 4

1. From your own experience, think about the extent to which the effectiveness of your own organization is measured at a variety of levels within it.
2 What information about performance is currently collected at each of the different levels? How is such information used? By whom? For what purpose?

3 If information is not collected at different levels within your organization, what argument could you put forward that to do so would be useful?

Please retain your notes and return to them once you have completed this section. At this subsequent point, ask yourself whether your answers to these questions would remain the same.

6.6 TOWARDS ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT

It would appear that for educational organizations to improve, an interaction between information about educational effectiveness and management practice is crucially important. If the main goal of management is organizational improvement, then effectiveness and improvement research must interrelate. For example, school effectiveness research can provide an increasingly sensitive description of good practice for school improvement. This is particularly useful as school effectiveness research becomes more and more sensitive to the context of the school with its multilayered levels of organization, department and classroom.

Reading 4

You should now read Chapter 14 by Harris et al. in Reader 3. This reading illustrates the way in which effectiveness research can illuminate good practice and can affect improvement. As you read, consider the departmental/faculty management processes described and ask yourself the following questions:

- Are these features of effective departments/faculties those you would have predicted?
- How could you use these findings within your organization?
- What issues does this research raise concerning effective departmental/faculty management practices?

As we have seen, when considering how individuals and educational organizations improve and become more effective the issue of measuring performance is of central importance. In order to make judgements about relative performance, data are necessary (see Reading 4). There has been much wide-ranging discussion about the relative merits of raw outcome measures, such as examination or test results, as opposed to measures that look at the progress made by students over time, such as measures that result in 'added value'.

The 'added value' here simply means the boost given by the organization to student achievement over and above what students bring in terms of prior attainment and background factors. Thus, statistical predictions of educational outcomes, such as examination results, can be made on the basis of students' backgrounds and earlier attainment. As noted by Mortimore (1991), this means a 'consideration of intake'. Where students' achievements exceed these predictions, added value has been demonstrated.

Strategies currently used to establish what are sometimes termed value-added approaches are based on techniques used, more or less routinely, in studies of educational effectiveness (e.g. Reynolds and Cuttance, 1992; Scheerens, 1992). Virtually all the value-added approaches contemplated in the UK have been used by researchers.
Reading 5

You should now read Chapter 16 by the Further Education Development Agency and Chapter 17 by McPherson in Reader 3. Both chapters clearly outline the value-added approach in principle and practice. Thinking back to Scott (Reader 3, Chapter 10), consider what kind of effectiveness measure added value is and within which of Scott's three models of organization it best fits.

Activity 5

1. In your organization how is improvement currently judged and measured? Is it measured simply through outcomes, such as test or examination results, or are other measures in place?
2. What do you consider to be the management issues surrounding the collection and use of:
   - examination/test results
   - value-added measures
   as indicators of organizational improvement?

As the readings by McPherson and the Further Education Development Agency demonstrate, the basic tenet of the value-added approach is that like should be compared with like. Value-added measurement is used as a means of taking into account the various external and internal factors that affect performance. As noted earlier, it is one of the broadest ways of measuring organizational effectiveness.

A number of important issues concerning value-added measurement need further consideration. For the educational manager, one of the most important issues concerns the rationale for the introduction of a value-added approach within an organization. The reason for introducing value-added measures needs to be carefully thought out and even more carefully managed. For example, is the purpose of introducing value-added measurement to identify departments/faculties or students that are markedly underperforming and may even be at risk? Is it to help to justify existing levels of organizational performance? Or is it to help you understand more about your own management performance and how to improve it?

The descriptions of value-added measures in the chapters in Reading 5 illustrate the extent to which these require sustained internal and external support. While individual organizations can make some limited progress on their own, external help and guidance is clearly needed. It has been shown that the most important role for such external agents is to communicate to interested parties, such as teachers, parents and governors, why value-added measurement is important and what advantages might come out of it.

Educational managers need to understand and address a number of controversial issues concerning value-added measurement. The chapter by Saunders in Reading 6 illustrates that there are still many ethical issues associated with measurement of this kind. Saunders argues that knowing whether an organization is or is not adding value is just a starting point. The challenge for the individual organization is to use this information for sustained improvement.

Reading 6

You should now read Chapter 18 by Saunders in Reader 3.
Activity 6
1. Make a list of the advantages and disadvantages of value-added measurement as you see them.
2. What are, or might be, the main barriers to the introduction of value-added measurement in your organization?
3. How might they be overcome?

6.7 EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The prime concern of an educational manager is to improve the organization within which he or she works and to raise standards of performance within it. By implication, therefore, issues of quality are of central importance. Quality is a key issue within the educational effectiveness and improvement debate. As Section 9 of this Study Guide illustrates, ‘quality’ in education is difficult to define with any precision. It is clearly something worth looking for, to be approved of and promoted. No one is against ‘quality’, everyone wants to be assured that they will obtain it. But what is it and how does one define its characteristics?

Reading 7
Now read Chapter 15 by Taylor and Hill in Reader 3, which introduces the concept of Total Quality Management (TQM). As you read, make notes on the implications for management practice implied by the model.

The increasing emphasis on the links between organizational effectiveness and leadership has led to a growing recognition that an organization that looks to a headteacher or principal as a single source of inspiration is severely constrained. As we have seen in Section 4, organizational structures often reinforce a somewhat limited view of leadership, confusing what is essentially a hierarchy of roles with the real distribution of knowledge and skills. Research into effective organizations suggests that challenging this traditional order and promoting a more dynamic and decentralized approach to leadership is likely to bring about improvement within an organization.

A number of aspects of leadership, therefore, appear to provide a basis for transforming an organization. These include acceptance of the view that leadership is a function to which all staff contribute rather than a set of responsibilities vested in one individual. Total Quality Management (TQM) is increasingly being used to describe such leadership approaches within educational organizations.

Inherent within the TQM model is an emphasis on transactional leadership. This open systems model is based on an exchange of services for various kinds of reward, which leaders control at least in part. It involves leaders focusing on the purposes of the organization, developing plans, ensuring task completion, facilitating information flow and working well with the various school groups, particularly teachers. It is the kind of leadership that ensures high performance and constant improvement.

Unlike the traditional view of leadership, leadership within TQM is not generally viewed as a matter of status; it requires a very different set of assumptions about management and the work of managers. Reading 7 emphasizes that quality performance does not occur by accident; it occurs because it is designed into the way the organization works; it permeates all aspects of the organization. In essence, TQM requires a systematic management of customer-supplier relationships. These customer-supplier relationships within the organization and
between the organization and provider stakeholders are the basis for all activities. If these processes and chains are managed well, with a constant focus on high performance and improvement, then quality achievements should follow.

What is important in TQM, however, is the attention given to the managing of processes. In much of the effective schooling literature it could be argued that far too much attention has been paid to securing certain outcomes, no matter what the process looks like. TQM has much affinity with natural and open systems models. Within TQM leadership is not associated just with positions of authority or seniority but is a quality that can be possessed by all people at all levels of the organization who can enact leadership behaviours.

6.8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this section I have focused on organizational effectiveness, highlighting in particular the implications arising from research in this area for management and leadership. Effectiveness can apply to the actions and qualities of individuals (an effective headteacher/principal, departmental/faculty head or teacher) or to organizational performance. Throughout this section one of the key variables associated with school and college effectiveness has been shown to be the quality of leadership and management. In addressing key question 2 ‘What are effective leadership and management in education?’ we have identified some distinctive features, including: establishing vision and direction for an organization, communicating this to others, influencing them to change in desired ways, empowering others and fostering an appropriate organizational culture.

In considering key question 3 ‘How do individuals and organizations improve and become more effective?’ we need to take into account the change process. It is common to refer to the ‘management of change’ as a distinct body of research, knowledge and practice, even though its subject matter is a distinct sphere of leadership. Consequently, organizational improvement becomes synonymous with the management of change within that organization. Both the management of change and organizational improvement are discussed in the next section.