SECTION 9
MANAGING FOR QUALITY: MEETING LEARNERS' NEEDS

Studying Section 9 should take you about 18 hours.

Section 9 is concerned with key questions 2 and 3: effective leadership and organizational improvement and effectiveness. It focuses on quality management, meeting learners' needs and curriculum management.

After studying this section you should:

• have a better understanding of quality management ideas, and be able to reflect on how your organization manages for quality and how your own practice relates to this;
• appreciate the importance of focusing on students’ needs in the management of learning and in the organizational structures that support learning and teaching;
• have furthered your understanding of the interrelationships between organizational culture, the requirements of the external environment and the way learning is managed within the organization;
• be able to reflect on and suggest ways of improving curriculum planning, implementation and evaluation in your organization, taking account of the above issues.

All the readings for this section are in Reader 4, Part 1.

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Section 9 explores three main themes: quality management ideas, meeting learners' needs and curriculum management. From a quality management perspective, the effective organization is one in which the organization's values, structures and processes, and leadership actions are all focused on meeting customers' needs - in the case of educational organizations, primarily learners' needs. We then look at curriculum management, the functional task area most directly concerned with meeting learners' needs. E838 deals with four main management task areas: curriculum (this section); finance and staff (Sections 10 and 11); and strategy (Section 8), which integrates the other three areas. If you work in a context where a quality management approach is used you will already be familiar with the ideas presented in subsections 9.1 and 9.2 and will therefore be able to work through the material quite quickly.

This section focuses on various stages of the management cycle (see Figure 4) in looking at managing the quality of students' learning and managing the curriculum. While it is useful to distinguish these four stages in analysing management tasks, in practice they are interrelated and overlapping.

We start at the evaluation stage, looking at the application of quality ideas in education. Evaluation and quality are closely related. Evaluation is concerned with judging how well we are doing and how we could do better. Quality management is concerned with defining and measuring what we are seeking to do and attempting to improve it. We then go on to look at managing the curriculum, which provides the framework for effective learning and teaching to take place, starting with an overview of the process of curriculum change, which embraces all four stages of the management cycle. Later parts of this section then look in more detail at curriculum planning and implementation and the
importance of organizational context factors in managing the curriculum. Finally, in examining curriculum evaluation we return again to the stage of the management cycle where we began.

9.2 APPROACHES TO QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Why is quality important?

Quality, like motherhood and apple pie, is frequently taken for granted as 'a good thing'. Teachers have always been concerned about the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom and the performance of the school or college as a whole. Similarly, educational organizations have in the past sought to assess and measure the quality of their provision, both informally and formally, by means of self-evaluation activities. They have also received external assessments of the quality of their work from local education authority (LEA) inspectors and advisers and national inspection bodies such as Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI).

So why is 'quality' now such a pressing concern for all sectors of education, both in the UK and elsewhere? Much of the pressure to focus on quality issues has come from external sources.

Among the main factors were:

- issues of value for money at a time of constraints on education budgets;
- concerns about standards of educational achievement;
- increasing accountability demands on schools and colleges to answer for their educational and financial performance;
- questions about producing an appropriately skilled workforce that would enable the UK to compete in world markets;
- a breakdown in trust between the education profession and government/politicians (Elton, 1992);
- government concern to shift the balance of power away from education 'producers' (i.e. schools and colleges, LEAs) and towards 'consumers' (i.e. students, parents, employers).

These concerns in the UK gave rise to the large-scale legislative changes of the late 1980s and early 1990s, which were based on the assumption that greater consumer choice and greater autonomy for schools and colleges, together with market-based methods of resource allocation, would act as a spur to quality and push up standards (see Maclure, 1990). Thus in the case of schools, since budgets directly reflect their popularity with parents, each school has a strong incentive to improve its performance in order to compete effectively for pupils with other schools.

Greater organizational autonomy for schools was accompanied by increased central government control over the curriculum, and mechanisms for making schools more accountable for their quality of teaching and learning, by means of published performance data and a regular cycle of inspections which assess
teaching and learning quality against explicit criteria. Similarly for colleges, greater freedom to respond to market needs was accompanied by mechanisms making them accountable for both quality and financial performance.

The policy context has thus set out a number of clear imperatives for schools and colleges:

1. the need to be responsive to consumer demands;
2. the need to have explicit and systematic means for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning quality;
3. the need to be able to demonstrate these means for external accountability purposes.

What is quality?

The concept is very elusive and hard to define. We can distinguish between quality in absolute and relative terms. As an absolute it is similar to the Platonic ideals of goodness, truth and justice, and hence is not susceptible to measurement. As a relative concept, quality is concerned with fitness for purpose, meeting specifications consistently, and meeting customer requirements. We also need to distinguish between quality and standards. A quality service or product is one that consistently meets a particular standard. A standard is a predefined and measurable specification.

At a very simple level, quality 'focuses on activities, processes or outcomes with a view to identifying and/or improving value or results' (Pycock, n.d., p. 5). The British Standards Institute (BSI) definition notes the importance of meeting needs; quality is 'the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs' (British Standards Institute, 1990, p. 4). This suggests a focus on customer requirements, but the needs of the individual customer may be in tension with the broader purposes of the organization, which include meeting the needs of the majority as well as the individual, cost-effectiveness and being answerable to funding bodies. As Frazer (1993) points out; 'Quality in ... education is not the same as satisfying a customer with, for example, the latest model of motor car. Quality in ... education embraces but is not synonymous with effectiveness, efficiency and accountability.'

While recognizing the tension between individual and organizational needs, since the major purpose of an educational organization is to ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place, quality should be concerned with the needs of the learners. 'Any approach to quality improvement ... should be designed or chosen with learners in mind, because all efforts should be directed at improving their chances of success' (Further Education Unit, 1991, p. 13).

As the user of the education service, the learner is the primary customer. The quality management literature also portrays organizations as networks of internal customer-supplier relations. All teachers and other employees are customers and suppliers of each other, and have the responsibility of satisfying each other's requirements. Thus a year 3 teacher is the customer of the year 2 teacher whose pupils she receives, and supplier of the year 4 teacher to whom her pupils progress. As a customer, she will expect the pupils she receives to have been appropriately prepared for the work to be undertaken in year 3, and as a supplier she has a similar responsibility to the year 4 teacher.

Quality management

We now turn to look at approaches to quality improvement.
Reading 1

You should first glance quickly through Chapter 4 by the Further Education Unit (FEU) in Reader 4, to gain a broad idea of the purposes and methods of quality management. Do not spend more than a few minutes on the reading, as you will be asked to read it in more depth after we have looked at what such approaches involve. Your reaction to the reading will depend on whether your organization uses quality management ideas. If so, you will probably be familiar with the points raised in the rest of subsection 9.2 and will be able to work through them quite quickly.

Table 4 identifies a number of key aspects of quality management, together with the activities associated with each. West-Burnham (1992) suggests that these can be seen as stages in a progression from the most simple, and wasteful, post-production inspection to a sophisticated quality management system where all organization members have a shared responsibility for quality. As an organization proceeds through these stages, various important changes in culture take place: there is a greater emphasis on clients; the personal responsibility of the staff increases; there is growing emphasis on process as well as product; and there is increasing commitment to continuous improvement (West-Burnham, 1992, p. 16).

Table 4  Stages of quality management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production inspection</td>
<td>The simplest stage, focusing on finding mistakes after they have been made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-production inspection</td>
<td>Slightly more advanced, involving feedback from clients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality management system</td>
<td>The most advanced stage, where all members of the organization are responsible for quality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus in schools and colleges we can see quality control as a system based on feedback - gaining information so that mistakes can be corrected. It involves gaining feedback from staff, students and possibly also customers outside the organization, for example, parents and employers. Quality control requires regular monitoring and review of course programmes, focusing on outcomes. Internal quality control mechanisms include annual departmental reviews and assessment of pupils' work. External quality control mechanisms include public examinations, such as the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), and formal inspection. Whereas quality control is reactive and focuses on looking back to see what mistakes and problems have occurred, quality assurance is proactive, concerned with 'feed-forward' rather than feedback - that is, designing processes that will prevent problems and mistakes happening. After-the-event
course evaluation and redesign are of no help to students who have already undertaken the course. Quality assurance thus entails looking at the aims, content, resourcing and projected outcomes of courses to ensure that course delivery effectively matches learners' needs. **Quality management** systems are organization-wide arrangements to ensure that quality processes happen and are understood and applied by all staff, incorporating both quality control and assurance, and are linked to the organization's mission and strategy. Activities here include market analysis, strategic planning, curriculum development, resourcing, monitoring and review of student learning experiences (drawn from Doherty, 1994).

Lack of space prevents discussion of the details of quality management approaches here. Various approaches are used, for example total quality management, and the Scottish Quality Management System - particularly in colleges of further education but also, increasingly, in schools. Table 5 identifies the major elements of one widely used approach.

**Table 5** Characteristics of total quality management

(Adapted from West-Burnham, 1995)

**Issues in quality approaches**

As the above discussion has hinted, there are a number of issues and problems in quality management in education. First, concepts of quality depend on the implicit or explicit values we hold about the nature and goals of education.
Different conceptions of education lead to different notions of quality, which in turn lead to different ways of measuring it. Since education generally and individual organizations have multiple and often competing goals (see Hoyle, 1986), quality is an essentially pluralist and contested concept. Thus even in considering the quality of the educational experience of an individual pupil there are problems: are we concerned with its contribution to her academic, moral or social development, her preparation for working life, leisure, responsibilities as citizen, mother, etc., and how do we weight each of these purposes? Similar issues arise with respect to balancing the needs of different groups of students, given limited resources and teacher time - how far should extra support be given to particular groups?

Second, and linked to the above point, is the question: who are the customers, and how can we reconcile their often conflicting interpretations of quality? The learner is clearly the primary customer as user of the education service. However, particularly in the case of younger pupils, learners may lack the knowledge and experience to define their own needs, and their perceptions of these needs may be in tension with those of their teachers and parents. Also, there are a range of other customers and stakeholders who have a legitimate claim to have their quality demands met, for example parents, employers, funding bodies (as paying customers), local authorities and central education departments, and, indeed, the public at large as taxpayers. Each of these groups may stress different aspects of quality and ways of measuring it. Similarly, teachers may disagree among themselves and with these other groups about what constitutes educational quality. In these terms, it has been argued that "quality" can be seen as a metaphor for rival views over the aims of ... education ... a power struggle where the use of terms represents a jockeying for position' (Barnett, 1994), with each group seeking to impose its own interpretation.

Third, learning and teaching processes are characterized by 'unclear technology' (Cohen and March, 1983), as compared with the manufacturing processes involved in, say, the production of cornflakes or kettles. The processes whereby students learn are not clearly understood - different learning and teaching approaches suit different students. Also, students' educational development is influenced by a complex range of factors outside the classroom. Measuring the quality of educational processes and outcomes is therefore inherently difficult, particularly the more affective and intangible effects of schooling. There is always a danger of focusing on easily measurable but crude and limited performance indicators (PIs), such as test and examination performance, on quantitative rather than qualitative data, as discussed in Section 6 of the Study Guide.

Another problem is that the notion of quality and the terminology used were developed in a business context. Coates (1993), in describing the difficulties of introducing quality approaches and methods in higher education, argues that the major problem 'has been in convincing people that "quality" matters. So much baggage is attached to any educational change that has its origin in industry and commerce. The language of "quality" puts up a kind of cultural barrier which is difficult to overcome' (p. 37). Ball (1994) goes further in arguing that the use of language and analogies drawn from a business and competitive market context — such as 'customer', 'quality assurance' - has a seriously damaging influence on education. The language of the marketplace, he argues, is mechanistic and dehumanizing, promoting a culture of self-interest that is inimical to the collectivist and community value systems of educational organizations. The customer model also implies that the customer can make an informed choice and go elsewhere if dissatisfied - both of which are problematic in education.

A final issue is that, as much of the literature emphasizes, quality is not a static concept. Since one of the major objectives of quality approaches is promoting continuous change and development, our notion of quality and ways of measuring it should be responsive to change over time (see Cleland, 1994).
Accountability and improvement

Four main imperatives for educational organizations to adopt quality management approaches have been suggested:

1. **Competitive** - so that they can effectively market themselves to attract students/pupils;
2. **Survival** - to meet the requirements of external bodies such as the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) and funding agencies;
3. **Moral** - educational organizations have a duty to students to develop an effective learning environment;
4. **Professional** - it is to the benefit of staff to have a systematic means of reviewing and developing the quality of their work.

(From Sallis and Hingley, 1991)

The first two imperatives relate to market and external accountability demands. The others relate to internal improvement and development of the school or college. This suggests two broad purposes for quality management approaches:
(a) for accountability purposes - **proving** quality, (b) for review and development purposes - **improving** quality. Many evaluation activities include elements of both purposes, but the two are likely to be in tension, particularly if we take a strict 'rendering account' approach to accountability. Thus, for example, if I am explaining my lesson planning and teaching methods to an external inspector, I am likely to justify my effectiveness - how well I do these things. If I am reviewing my work with colleagues with a view to improving it, I am likely to look at areas of weakness and omission as well as strengths, asking for advice on how I could do better.

We can distinguish four models of accountability (from Kogan, 1988).

1. **Public or state control** - teachers and schools are answerable for their performance and financial spending to various central and local government bodies, to inspection agencies and ultimately to the public as taxpayers.
2. **Professional control** - based on teachers' responsibility to their peers, where groups of teachers, schools and colleges evaluate their performance in terms of adherence to professional norms and values of good practice and a commitment to improving practice.
3. **Consumer partnership** - this is based on a relationship of collaborative equality between schools and parents. Informed parental consent legitimates the professional activities of the school, with both being equal partners in the education of the child.
4. **Consumer control: market** - this provides for accountability through market mechanisms, and the work of educational organizations is conditioned by the degree of success that they achieve in attracting clients. The exercise of choice by consumers - parents and students - in selecting particular schools or colleges, is the mechanism through which accountability is exerted.

Clearly models 1 and 4 are dominant in the current context, with model 2, based on the idea of a self-regulating profession, having been severely curtailed by legislation in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Model 3 is perhaps a little idealistic but emphasizes the important point that parents, and indeed other stakeholders, should be seen as more than merely consumers in the marketplace.

Professional accountability is important in managing for quality. Since teachers, in collaboration with students and other stakeholders (e.g. governors, parents), are
Section 9 Managing for quality: meeting learners' needs

best able to judge learners' needs, it is essential that educational organizations develop their own demonstrable quality assurance methods, directed towards improvement purposes. Otherwise, as events have shown, external bodies will impose measures directed towards public accountability purposes. Schools 'need to set their own quality agendas before others set them ... to move away from the limitations of external measures so as to gain control of the quality process' (Freeman, 1994, p. 23).

We shall look at four articles which deal with various aspects of quality management. You should refer to Table 5 and the issues in quality management and accountability and improvement outlined above, noting the way in which each article contributes to the debate on these points.

**Reading 2**

Now read Chapter 2 by Cuttance in Reader 4. Cuttance describes a system-wide quality assurance scheme in New South Wales, Australia, which is used to monitor various aspects of schools' performance. The chapter explores themes 1, 3 and 4 in Table 5 and some of the links between them. As this is a challenging article you should read it twice. As you read for the first time, make notes on the main themes. As you read it a second time, consider:

- how far the quality assurance system described serves public and professional accountability, and improvement needs at state and organizational levels;
- the helpfulness of the performance indicators used.

Compare the scheme described by Cuttance with a local authority or organizational quality assurance system with which you are familiar, or with an inspection system such as the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), the Further Education Funding Council or HMI.

**Quality and equality**

The next reading looks at the interrelationship between themes 1 and 4 in Table 5: how do we develop a strategy and values that combine quality with equality concerns for all learners? Riley's discussion highlights the relative nature of quality, in exploring the issues outlined above. In seeking to meet the diverse needs of different groups of students it is difficult or impossible to provide equal quality of provision for all groups.

**Reading 3**

You should now turn to Chapter 3 by Riley in Reader 4. As you read, consider the implications of Riley's points for your own organization.

You may feel that the tension between quality and equality is difficult to reconcile, and that system-level action is necessary to counter inequalities, for example redistribution of resources to alleviate the problems of inner urban schools. However, the chapter draws attention to the need to monitor and evaluate the experience and performance of subgroups of students. For example, what are the perspectives of student groups such as disaffected, underachieving, 'high flyers', minority groups, boys, girls - how far do they and teachers feel that the school or college is meeting their needs? How does the test and examination performance of different subgroups compare, what are the reasons for differences and what can be done about them?
Continuous improvement

Reading 4
You should now reread Chapter 4 in Reader 4. This looks at all four of the themes in Table 5 - values, people, quality assurance and customers - and the links between them. The quality of the college's service to learners is seen as the central issue. The various services are summarized in the chapter. It is argued that each of these should be the subject of systematic review and development involving all stages of the management cycle outlined earlier.

Activity 1
Make an assessment of:
• which elements of continuous quality management are used in your organization;
• what issues would need to be tackled in introducing such an approach where it does not currently exist.

Your response will of course depend on whether your educational organization already uses or is working towards a quality management approach. If you work in a small primary school you may feel that such an approach is unduly formal and bureaucratic and that you meet the needs of students and parents most appropriately by more informal and personal means. Nonetheless, the approach provides a useful basis for reviewing and developing existing practice in a systematic way and for 'walking through' the processes from the pupil's perspective - for instance, are reception class children and their parents adequately prepared for the child's first days at school? Could the transition be made smoother? Policy and procedures may not be well understood by all staff, and arrangements that work perfectly in an informal way may collapse when a key member of staff leaves.

Among the issues you may have noted are problems in bringing about the cultural changes necessary to support continuous quality improvement, and micro-political issues, especially in larger, more complex organizations (see the discussion of culture and the management of change in Section 7 and Hales's chapter in Reader 3). Other problems that colleges have found in introducing and developing quality approaches are: lack of time, poor communication, inadequate infrastructure, lack of clarity about initiative and responsibility, inadequate governing body support, lack of expertise and ownership; perceptions of 'innovation for the sake of change', and unduly bureaucratic procedures (from Staff College/Further Education Unit, 1994). If you work with younger pupils you may feel that asking for their views on the quality of the service is potentially threatening, and/or inappropriate since they usually have nothing to compare it with. On the other hand, provided that data are handled sensitively and anonymity is preserved, student feedback can provide a very valuable input to decision making.

Success criteria
The next reading focuses on theme 3 in Table 5, quality assurance, examining the design and use of performance indicators and success criteria. The authors explain performance indicators. Success criteria provide a means of evaluating progress towards specified future targets. Success criteria thus 'refer to future rather than past performance; relate to a planned target designed to improve performance; are chosen by the persons who set the target; influence the way the target is designed' (Department of Education and Science, 1991).
Reading 5
You should now read Chapter 5 by Aspinwall et al. in Reader 4.

Activity 2
Consider the following questions. What are the success criteria used in your own organization? Do they meet the management requirements suggested by Aspinwall et al.?

It has been argued that evaluation to improve the quality of learning requires the commitment of 'interdependent professionals' - that is, teachers working collaboratively to develop systematic means of assessing or developing their own work (see Nixon, 1992). See also the discussion of professional accountability above. Aspinwall's guidance on success criteria provides a useful means towards this. However, the process is quite complex and time consuming, particularly for more qualitative factors, such as pupil satisfaction and pupil/teacher relationships. There may be a danger of neglecting these and focusing on more easily measured quantitative factors.

9.3 THE FRAMEWORK FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

So far we have looked at managing for quality in meeting learners' needs with respect to the organization as a whole. We now turn to examine more specifically the role of curriculum management in providing an effective framework for teaching and learning to take place. 'How the curriculum is ... planned, implemented and evaluated, crucially influences the quality of the education that is provided' (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1989). The articles that we shall be looking at do not use the language of quality management, but are concerned with similar themes and issues, in particular that curriculum development is a systematic process which seeks to ensure that organizational values, policies and practices are directed towards meeting learners' needs effectively and improving their performance. We shall focus on the main stages of the curriculum management cycle outlined earlier, particularly planning, implementing and evaluating. The major task of curriculum managers is to co-ordinate these processes in a way that ensures that the three major elements of the curriculum are in harmony - that is, the intended curriculum (what is planned), the offered curriculum (what is presented by teachers in the classroom) and the received curriculum (what is actually experienced by pupils).

We start by taking an overview of curriculum change, which involves all four processes in the management cycle. Quality management approaches that we looked at earlier usually focus on gradual, incremental development, and can be criticized for neglecting larger-scale structural change (see Chapter 2 by Cuttance in Reader 4). Teachers frequently need to make internally planned curriculum changes, and in the current context managing multiple externally initiated curricular changes is an ongoing task for schools and colleges. Managing curriculum change is a complex and long-term process, especially where substantial numbers of external requirements are involved. As noted in Section 7, there is often a large 'implementation gap' between the intentions of policy makers at national level and the offered and received curriculum in a particular classroom.

Reading 6
You should now read Chapter 6 by Hopkins et al. in Reader 4. The reading summarizes a number of the themes that we looked at in the discussion of the management of change in Section 7 of the Study Guide.
Activity 3

Identify a recent curriculum change in your organization and make notes on which of the three perspectives best fits the management of the innovation process.

It is likely that there are elements of all three broad perspectives and of adoption and adaptation, particularly if the change originated outside the organization. Multiple perspectives are necessary in the management of complex change. Thus, for example, in the case of a government circular requiring some new practice, there may be identifiable stages, in Bennis et al.'s terms (cited in the reading), from power-coercive (the requirement in the circular), to rational-empirical (where a member of staff explains the change to others), to normative re-educative (where the innovation is incorporated into the practices of the organization), though if it is a change that has not been initially welcomed, it will take a long time for it to be accepted as part of the norms and beliefs of the organization. This point indicates the tensions between different values underpinning curricular decisions, especially where various levels within the system are involved.

Curriculum planning and implementation

We now turn to look more closely at the planning and implementation stages of curriculum change.

Reading 7

You should now read Chapter 7 by West in Reader 4. The author outlines an approach to planning and implementing external curriculum requirements within the primary school, though the principles are also applicable to other educational organizations. As you read, make notes on: (a) how far West addresses the quality issues in Table 5, and (b) whether his proposals accord with the suggestions for successful planned change outlined by Hopkins et al. in Chapter 6 of Reader 4.

West explores the links between the planned and the offered and received curriculum, arguing that curriculum policy making should indicate clear means of getting from 'ought' to 'is' by identifying the outcomes of planning as 'what ... we want to witness in the classroom'. Policy making should focus on action and practical outcomes (see the similar point made by Aspinwall et al. about success criteria). With respect to the factors in Table 5, West is particularly concerned with the links between 1 and 4, emphasizing the need to relate overall values and strategy to learners' experiences and the curriculum in action, by means of systematic planning (see 1d in the table), and also with 3, building in monitoring procedures as a means of assuring quality.

In terms of the models discussed by Hopkins et al., West acknowledges aspects of adaptation, negotiation and the development of staff ownership of change. However, he takes a broadly rational and technological (see House, cited in Hopkins et al.) approach to the management of change, and does not take into account political and cultural perspectives. The account is broadly prescriptive - that is, it analyses what ought to happen. Hoyle (1986) describes the 'organizational pathos' that arises from attempting to use rational models of change and development in organizations such as schools, which are characterized by 'lesser-than-rationality', unpredictability and ambiguity (see also Meyerson and Martin, Reader 3, Chapter 4).

Developing a collaborative approach to planning and implementing a generic curriculum policy as suggested by West might be problematic where this approach is at odds with the prevailing school culture. Political perspectives are also important in understanding curriculum innovation. Since any change entails
gains and losses to groups within the organization, innovation can be seen as a complex process of bargaining and negotiation, in which groups seek to maintain and extend their own interests.

**Organization for learning**

Another major factor in creating an effective framework for teaching and learning is the organizational context. In looking at students’ learning needs, factors such as how the school or college is structured, classroom organization, pupil grouping arrangements, and the timetable, are often taken for granted as relatively fixed. As Fidler points out (Reader 3, Chapter 6), organization structures are arrangements to facilitate the work of the school or college. The education of young people is the principal concern, but structures also have to incorporate administrative functions. Over time, administrative concerns may come to predominate, and organizational arrangements that no longer fulfil the educational purposes for which they were established continue unquestioned because they provide for the efficient performance of routine tasks.

Organizational arrangements convey powerful symbolic messages, to both students and staff, about the purposes and values of the school or college. Strategies for pupil grouping, for example, can have a powerful influence on the way pupils perceive themselves and their attitudes to learning. It is important, therefore, from time to time, to look afresh at organizational arrangements to see how far they continue to support and reflect the curriculum philosophy and values of the school or college.

**Reading 8**

You should now read Chapter 8 by Dean in Reader 4, which addresses the issues raised in item 4b in Table 5, structuring the organization to meet learners’ needs. As you do so, make notes on how far your own organization has considered each of the factors discussed, in terms of its contribution to learning needs. You might adopt the strategy of ‘walking through’ the organizational arrangements as if you were a student (see Chapter 4 by the FEU in Reader 4), or asking your own students about their perspective on these factors.

The chapter also explores the practical implications of the quality versus equality issues that we looked at in Reading 3. As Dean points out, a policy commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils is not enough; there needs to be regular monitoring of how effectively it is being actually put into practice.

The organizational context is also an important consideration in the management of pastoral care. Pastoral provision raises the issue of balancing the needs of the individual student with those of the group as a whole. We discussed this issue earlier in relation to equality concerns. Students with particular difficulties or problems, such as those who are disaffected by or alienated from school, may require a great deal of help and support. How far is it appropriate and equitable to provide additional resources to meet their needs? If current organizational arrangements are taken as fixed, this may prove an ongoing dilemma. However, reviewing the allocation of staff time, responsibilities and classes may provide scope for readjusting resources more effectively to address this issue.

**Reading 9**

You should now read Chapter 9 by Holland and Hamerton in Reader 4. The reading is concerned with the relationship between themes 1 and 4 in Table 5.

**Activity 4**

How does your own educational organization manage pastoral provision? Is there a clear policy that is operated consistently across the organization? How far is it appropriate and useful to distinguish between support and discipline structures? What are the strengths and limitations of Holland and Hamerton’s suggestions about the reallocation of staff time and class sizes in terms of meeting individual and group needs?
Curriculum Evaluation

Having looked at the organizational context, and planning and implementation of the curriculum, we come round again to the evaluation stage of the management cycle, where we started this section of the Study Guide. Curriculum evaluation is concerned with determining the value, worth or quality of educational provision as a basis for suggesting how we might improve it. It thus involves making judgements, which depend on the values and beliefs we hold about what education is for. As discussed earlier, these may be contested, and the various perspectives we looked at in the context of curriculum change in general are applicable equally to evaluation. Each perspective would suggest a different approach to the nature, aims and control of the evaluation process. The earlier distinction between external accountability/justification and internal improvement purposes is also important in looking at evaluation. A curriculum evaluation activity is likely to include concerns about both justification (internal as well as external) and improvement. Thus, when members of a department evaluate a new course - to help them improve it, and to provide a rationale for its continued existence - they will probably ask staff and students for their views on content and method; they will not merely look at the examination results.

Curriculum evaluation is an in-depth and systematic process and hence needs to be undertaken periodically. Also important is routine day-to-day monitoring, which looks at whether we are doing what we say we are doing - that is, are curriculum policies and plans being translated into the offered and received curriculum in the classroom? In Reading 7 West conceives of monitoring as a collaborative and shared endeavour that contributes to professional development, not something that is done to teachers. Strategies for monitoring might include team teaching, peer observation, focused self-evaluation with colleagues, pupil shadowing, sampling pupils' work and discussing their learning with pupils.

Finally we turn to an article that explores the task of curriculum evaluation from a perspective based on a professional accountability and development approach. It also makes the important point that implementation and evaluation are closely interrelated rather than separate activities.

Reading 10

You should now read Chapter 10 by Coles in Reader 4, which is concerned in particular with the 'people' factor (theme 3 in Table 5) and its links with the other three areas.

Activity 5

After you have completed Reading 10, reflect on the applicability of the ideas to your own context and make brief notes on:

• how far you and your organization approach curriculum evaluation in the way proposed by Coles;
• bearing in mind the various perspectives on curriculum development and change discussed by Hopkins et al. (Reading 6), to what extent could your organization apply the proposed approach? What factors would promote such a development and what factors would hinder it?
• how far, in your view, can external inspection contribute to internal improvement as Coles suggests?

Your answer to the first two points will depend on the prevalent leadership style in your organization or subunit (see Section 4 of this Study Guide) and the extent to which a climate of mutual trust and collaboration is already established. The issues and problems in moving towards such a climate are not discussed by Coles and, indeed, if you adopt a political perspective, attempts to develop collaboration are likely to be characterized by a 'contrived collegiality' approach.
As regards the last question, external inspection, on the face of it, is more concerned with quality control for public accountability purposes than improvement, despite OFSTED's professed aim: improvement through inspection. Certainly it does not provide the ongoing and sustained support that research studies have found to be necessary for successful change and development (see, for example, Fullan, 1991). Nonetheless, as Coles points out, the process of professional reflection involved in preparing for inspection and implementing action plans afterwards, and the information prepared for the inspection visits, can provide an important input to the internal evaluation process.

9.4 CONCLUSION

In subsection 9.3 we looked at the complex nature of curriculum change, noting the need to draw on various perspectives of management in dealing with the processes involved. We also examined the major stages of the curriculum development cycle - planning, implementation and evaluation - and some of the problems and issues in managing these. The need for a systematic approach was emphasized, linking overall school values and policies with what goes on in the classroom, and the need to reconsider taken-for-granted organizational structures and arrangements to assess how far they contribute to meeting student needs. We also noted that the readings are concerned with issues similar to those in the quality management literature that we looked at earlier.

Those of you who are sceptical about quality management ideas may well ask why we should bother with them, if we're doing it all anyway. Quality management approaches as applied to education should probably carry a health warning, as they raise a number of problems:

- it is difficult to define and prioritize the disparate needs and demands of different customers;
- the customer model implies an exchange relationship, rather than a partnership, and assumes that the customer can make an informed choice and go elsewhere if dissatisfied;
- the 'technology' of learning and teaching are unclear, so quality strategies such as 'prevention' are difficult to apply;
- the use of approaches and language originally designed for a business context may be alienating to some teachers;
- there is a danger of bureaucratization - of developing cumbersome systems and procedures, and of focusing on activities for which there are defined organizational PIs, but neglecting others: 'what gets measured gets done' and what doesn't doesn't;
- many quality management proponents are somewhat evangelistic, failing to recognize the limitations;
- such approaches are broadly prescriptive and de-emphasize conflict and ambiguity aspects of organizational life, and the problems in developing a shared culture, which is necessary to support an organization-wide quality management approach;
- there are tensions between quality for improvement and accountability purposes.

Nonetheless, as the last point indicates, external accountability demands require that educational organizations have systematic and demonstrable procedures for maintaining and improving quality. Most colleges are required to have quality assurance systems as a funding requirement and many have been operating quality management systems for many years. As Freeman (1994) suggests, schools may be wise to set their own quality agendas, based on a professional accountability model, rather than having external, and possibly more narrow, agendas imposed on them.
Quite apart from external pressures, quality management ideas may also be useful for internal purposes for a number of reasons:

- perhaps most importantly, they provide a fresh perspective for looking at organizational activities and their interrelationships in new ways;
- they emphasize the primacy of learner needs and the importance of ensuring that organizational values, structures and processes are directed towards these needs; they thus provide a much needed 'bottom up' perspective in contrast to the more usual 'top down' management view;
- they propose an integrative and holistic approach to management, linking aspects that are often treated separately: overall organizational values and strategy with staff development and learners’ needs;
- they provide a systematic rather than piecemeal and incremental procedure for monitoring and evaluation, including asking for learners’ views;
- they require a proactive stance, attempting to design learning experiences to prevent problems occurring, rather than reacting to problems that have already occurred;
- they focus on ongoing development as a continuing process, involving all staff within the organization.

The importance of effectively managing resources to support the quality of educational provision and organizational values is examined in Section 10.