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## Development of Administrative Theory

### Focusing Questions

1. What is theory?
2. What are the functions of theories?
3. What major developments in administrative thought have evolved in the field of educational administration?
4. How have emergent nontraditional perspectives influenced the study and practice of educational administration?
5. How can open systems theory be used to diagnose problems in school operation?
6. How can the learning organization be used to achieve school success?

In this chapter, we attempt to answer these questions concerning theoretical and historical developments in administration. We begin our discussion by exploring the nature of theory. Then we discuss six functions of theories: identifying relevant phenomena, classifying phenomena, formulating constructs, summarizing phenomena, predicting phenomena, and revealing needed research. Next, we identify and explain the major developments in administrative thought: classical, human relations, behavioral science, and post-behavioral science approaches. This is followed by a discussion of emergent nontraditional perspectives in the study of educational administration. Next, we examine schools as open systems. We conclude the chapter with a discussion of the learning organization and its impact on the operation of schools.

## What Is Theory?

Educational administrators are professionals who have a code of ethics and are licensed by state boards of education (American Association of School Administrators, 2020). Thus, their behavior is guided by acceptable standards of practice. One of the best criteria of a profession, however, is that it has matured as a science; that is, it has developed a solid theoretical base—a body of organized and tested knowledge. Such is the case with educational administration as a behavioral science. Theory in educational administration has been evolving since the 1950s (Griffiths, 1959; Halpin, 1958). To an increasing degree, educational administration is characterized by using theory to explain and predict phenomena in educational organizations (Griffiths, 1988).

A **theory** can be defined as a set of propositions about the interrelationships among concepts that allows us to explain and predict phenomena (Kerlinger, 1986). In the field of educational administration, theories are also referred to as models. We use these two terms interchangeably.

Karl Weick (1995), perhaps one of the best known theorists in the behavioral sciences, noted that theory tells us *why* something occurs, not simply *what* occurs. Theory is the answer to questions of *why*. Theory is about the connections among phenomena, why events occur. Theory emphasizes the nature of causal relationships. A good theory delves into the underlying processes of phenomena so as to explain the systematic reasons for a particular occurrence or non-occurrence (Sutton & Staw, 1995).

There is no shortage of theories in educational administration. For example, there are theories to describe what motivates people, the most effective

leadership styles, the best way to resolve conflicts, and the effects of goal setting on task performance. In some instances, there are multiple theories that help us to explain and predict phenomena. These multiple theories attest to the fact that educational administration is an academic discipline that is continually growing and evolving as a science; that is, educational administration as an active discipline has earned credibility by being research driven. Scientific rigor replaces speculation and untested assumptions.

You will be introduced to many theories in this book. Many of the theories are based on actual studies of organizations. They offer a lens, or way of thinking about how organizations function. You will find that different theories provided in this book will offer you different ways of thinking about the same issue. As you study these theories, think about how they might apply to organizations with which you are familiar: as an employee, as a customer, or as a graduate student. This is the value of theory; by using different lenses, you will broaden your understanding about how organizations can be structured and managed in more effective ways.

## The Functions of Theories

Many school administrators feel uncomfortable with theories. They prefer that behavioral scientists provide them with practical prescriptions for administering their schools. Upon closer examination, however, almost every action a school administrator takes is based to some degree on a theory. For example, a school administrator may include others in a decision involving an issue that is relevant to them and that they have the expertise to make, instead of making the decision unilaterally. Such action is referred to in the research

literature as participatory decision making. Participatory decision making, also referred to as shared, collaborative, or group decision making, focuses on decision processes that involve others.

In education, participatory decision making is based on the idea that active involvement of teachers, parents, or community members in school decisions will lead to improved school performance (Lunenburg & Irby, 2018). It is believed that those closest to teaching and learning, namely teachers, and those with the most knowledge about the children, namely parents, should be involved in decisions because they have expertise that is crucial to improving school performance. Furthermore, it is believed that when teachers and parents are involved in decision making, they will be more committed to implementing and supporting the decision, and a sense of ownership in the school will result (Lunenburg & Irby, 2006). Without realizing it, the school administrator made the choice to involve others in the decision-making process on the basis of a theory.

Without theories to guide them, school administrators would likely flounder and make decisions based on speculation and untested assumptions. Thus, theories provide a guiding framework for understanding, predicting, and controlling behavior in organizations. Theories also contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field (Lunenburg, 2013c). More specifically, theories serve six important functions—identifying relevant phenomena, classifying phenomena, formulating constructs, summarizing phenomena, predicting phenomena, and revealing needed research.

### Identifying Relevant Phenomena

Theories determine the number and kinds of phenomena that are relevant to a study. A theory tells a behavioral scientist what to observe and to ignore. For example, behavioral scientists may study school administration from the open systems perspective. (Open systems theory is discussed later in this chapter.) A relevant component in the open systems approach is the external environment that impacts the organization. Several subsystems exist within this environment. Among the more important are economic, political, productive, distributive, and resource systems. Behavioral scientists may study the external environment from within all these frameworks. Multiple phenomena are associated with each subsystem. Behavioral scientists will not know precisely what phenomena to observe until they construct theoretical solutions for each problem area under investigation.

### Classifying Phenomena

Scientists rarely work efficiently with masses of phenomena; therefore, they construct theoretical frameworks for classification. The physical sciences have been successful in developing such conceptual schemes. Geologists have developed schemes for classifying rocks, and botanists have devised systems for classifying plants.

An example of a classification scheme in educational administration is the study of transformational leadership by Bernard Bass and Ronald Riggio (2006). Using factor analysis, Bass and Riggio developed eight dimensions of transformational and transactional leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, idealized consideration (transformational), contingent reward, management by exception (active), management by exception (passive), and laissez-faire (transactional).

Another example comes from the work of Henry Mintzberg (2013). After extensive, structured observation of five executives (one a school superintendent), Mintzberg classified managerial activities into ten administrative roles: figurehead, leader, liaison (interpersonal); monitor, disseminator, spokesperson (informational); and entrepreneur, disturbance-handler, resource-allocator, negotiator (decisional). If educational administrators fail to develop theoretical frameworks for classifying phenomena, they will limit the advancement of knowledge in the field.

### Formulating Constructs

Reliable information can be obtained through direct observation and measurement. However, many aspects of behavior cannot be directly observed. Intelligence is not an observable entity; it is inferred from using instruments that sample subject behavior. Affective predispositions such as attitudes, interests, and opinions cannot be observed directly; they are observed indirectly as they manifest themselves in behavior. Consequently, behavioral scientists have developed constructs to explain why certain types of behavior occur. These constructs are often referred to as hypothetical constructs to imply that they are a construction of the social scientist's imagination. Kurt Lewin's (1951) force-field analysis is an example of a theoretical construct.

### Summarizing Phenomena

Theories summarize isolated lists of data into a broader conceptual scheme of wider applicability. These summaries can be stated with varying degrees of comprehensiveness and precision. They may range from simple generalizations to complex theoretical relationships.

A school superintendent making a generalization about granting certificates of achievement to outstanding teachers in the school district is an example of low-level summarizing; this type of summary is not usually referred to as a theory. But the superintendent might construct a more complex generalization, one that describes the relationship between phenomena. For example, after observing the granting of certificates of achievement to deserving teachers, the superintendent may note a relationship: Public recognition is a means of motivating teachers. Summarizing and explaining phenomena permit deeper understanding of data and translate empirical findings into a more comprehensive, theoretical framework.

In the natural sciences, for instance, the theory of oxidation brings many of the chemical reactions common to everyday life into focus. The more comprehensive the theory, which is supported by verified observations, the more mature the science becomes.

### Predicting Phenomena

A theory permits behavioral scientists to predict the existence of unobserved instances conforming to it. For example, Abraham Maslow (1970) made the following generalization: People at work seek to satisfy sequentially five levels of needs arranged in a prepotency hierarchy. A deprived need dominates the person's attention and determines behavior. Once this deficit is satisfied, the next higher-level need is activated, and the individual progresses up the hierarchy. When the level of self-actualization is reached, progression ceases. The more this need is satisfied, the stronger it grows. On the basis of this theory, one can expect to find a similar pattern of behavior in a variety of work settings where no statistics have been generated. That is, theory enables one to predict what should be observable where no data are available.

### Revealing Needed Research

Theories generalize about phenomena and predict phenomena. They also pinpoint crucial areas to be investigated and crucial problems to be solved. One problem in PK–12 schooling today is that the pressure of high-stakes testing has led many teachers to intensive teaching to the test (Lunenburg, 2013a). Thus, tests seem to be driving educational practice.

If one accepts the premise that tests are driving educational practice, perhaps the best way to improve practice and increase student achievement is to construct better tests. Critics argue that many state-mandated tests require students to recall obscure factual

knowledge, which limits the time teachers have available to focus on critical thinking skills (Berliner, 2011; L. McNeil, 2000; Nichols, 2007). However, according to Stuart Yeh (2001, 2006), it is possible to design force-choice items (multiple-choice test items) that test reasoning and critical thinking. Such tests could require students to *use* facts rather than *recall* them. And test questions could elicit content knowledge that is worth learning. More research is needed in test development and validation.

In sum, theories serve six important functions—identifying relevant phenomena, classifying phenomena, formulating constructs, summarizing phenomena, predicting phenomena, and revealing needed research. In short, theories help us to systematically explain and predict phenomena. We now turn our attention to the development of administrative theory. The development of administrative theory can be placed into a loose historical framework. In general, four models emerge: classical organizational theory, the human relations approach, the behavioral science approach, and the post-behavioral science era. We will discuss each in turn.

## Classical Organizational Theory

**Classical organizational theory** emerged during the early years of the twentieth century. It includes two different management perspectives: scientific management and administrative management. Historically, scientific management focused on the management of work and workers. Administrative management addressed issues concerning how an overall organization should be structured.

### Scientific Management

Prior to the turn of the twentieth century, there was almost no systematic study of management. The practice of management was based on experience and common sense. Frederick W. Taylor tried to change that view. An engineer, he pursued the idea that through careful scientific analysis the efficiency of work could be improved. His basic theme was that managers should study work scientifically to identify the “one best way” to perform a task.

F. W. Taylor's **scientific management** consists of four principles (1911):

1. *Scientific Job Analysis.* Through observation, data gathering, and careful measurement,

management determines the “one best way” of performing each job. Such job analysis replaces the old rule-of-thumb method.

2. *Selection of Personnel.* Once the job is analyzed, the next step is to scientifically select and then train, teach, and develop workers. In the past, workers chose their own work and trained themselves.
3. *Management Cooperation.* Managers should cooperate with workers to ensure that all work being done is in accordance with the principles of the science that has been developed.
4. *Functional Supervising.* Managers assume planning, organizing, and decision-making activities, whereas workers perform their jobs. In the past, almost all work and the greater part of the responsibility were thrust on workers.

Taylor’s four principles of scientific management were designed to maximize worker productivity. In his early career as a laborer in the steel industry, he observed firsthand how workers performed well below their capacities. He referred to this activity as *soldiering*. Taylor felt that scientific management—“time study” for setting standards, separation of managerial and employee duties, and incentive systems—would correct the problem. Rather than relying on past practice or rules of thumb, he provided managers with explicit guidelines for improving production management, based on proven research and experimentation.

### Administrative Management

Whereas scientific management focuses on jobs of individual workers, **administrative management** concentrates on the management of an entire organization. The primary contributors to the field of administrative management were Henri Fayol, Luther Gulick, and Max Weber.

Henri Fayol was an engineer and French industrialist. For many years, he served as managing director of a large coal-mining firm in France. He attributed his success as a manager not to any personal qualities he may have possessed but, rather, to a set of management principles that he used. Fayol claimed that all managers perform five basic functions: planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, and controlling.

Besides the five basic management functions, Fayol identified fourteen principles that he felt should guide

the management of organizations and that he found useful during his experience as a manager (Table 1—1).

Fayol’s fourteen principles of management emphasize chain of command, allocation of authority, order, efficiency, equity, and stability. Max Weber also recognized the importance of these factors, but Fayol was the first to recognize management as a continuous process.

Luther Gulick and Lyndall Urwick (1937), other classical theorists, augmented Fayol’s five basic management functions while serving on Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Committee on Government Administration. They coined the acronym POSDCoRB, which identified seven functions of management: planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting:

1. *Planning* involves developing an outline of the things that must be accomplished and the methods for accomplishing them. It attempts to forecast future actions and directions of the organization.
2. *Organizing* establishes the formal structure of authority through which work subdivisions are arranged, defined, and coordinated to implement the plan.
3. *Staffing* involves the whole personnel function of selecting, training, and developing the staff and maintaining favorable working conditions.
4. *Directing*, closely related to leading, includes the continuous task of making decisions, communicating and implementing decisions, and evaluating subordinates properly.
5. *Coordinating* involves all activities and efforts needed to bind together the organization in order to achieve a common goal.
6. *Reporting* verifies progress through records, research, and inspection; ensures that things happen according to plan; takes any corrective action when necessary; and keeps those to whom the chief executive is responsible informed.
7. *Budgeting* concerns all activities that accompany budgeting, including fiscal planning, accounting, and control.

One of the most influential contributors to classical organizational theory was German sociologist Max Weber (1947), who first described the concept of



TABLE 1—1 **Fayol's Fourteen Principles of Management**

Component	Description
Division of work	The object of division of work is improved efficiency through a reduction of waste, increased output, and a simplification of job training.
Authority	Authority is the right to give orders and the power to extract obedience. Responsibility, a corollary of authority, is the obligation to carry out assigned duties.
Discipline	Discipline implies respect for the rules that govern the organization. Clear statements of agreements between the organization and its employees are necessary, and the state of discipline of any group depends on the quality of leadership.
Unity of command	An employee should receive orders from only one superior. Adherence to this principle avoids breakdowns in authority and discipline.
Unity of direction	Similar activities that are directed toward a singular goal should be grouped together under one manager.
Subordination of individual interest	The interests of individuals and groups within an organization should not take precedence over the interests of the organization as a whole.
Remuneration	Compensation should be fair and satisfactory to both employees and the organization.
Centralization	Managers must retain final responsibility, but they should give subordinates enough authority to do the task successfully. The appropriate degree of centralization will vary depending on circumstances. It becomes a question of the proper amount of centralizing to use in each case.
Scalar chain	The scalar chain, or chain of command, is the chain of supervisors ranging from the ultimate authority to the lowest ranks. The exact lines of authority should be clear and followed at all times.
Order	Human and material resources should be coordinated to be in the right place at the right time.
Equity	A desire for equity and equality of treatment are aspirations managers should take into account in dealing with employees.
Stability of personnel	Successful organizations need a stable workforce. Managerial practices should encourage long-term commitment of employees to the organization.
Initiative	Employees should be encouraged to develop and carry out plans for improvement.
Esprit de corps	Managers should foster and maintain teamwork, team spirit, and a sense of unity and togetherness among employees.

Source: Adapted from Henri Fayol, *General and Industrial Administration* (New York: Pitman, 1949), pp. 20–41. (Originally published in French in 1916 with the title *Administration Industrielle et Generale*.)

bureaucracy. Weber's contributions were not recognized until years after his death. Weber's concept of bureaucracy is based on a comprehensive set of rational guidelines. Similar in concept to many of Fayol's fourteen principles, Weber's guidelines were believed to constitute an ideal structure for organizational effectiveness. Weber's ideal bureaucracy and Fayol's fourteen principles of management laid the foundation for contemporary organizational theory.

Classical organizational theories and their derived principles have many critics. An emphasis on efficiency characterized the classical approach to management. To these theorists, an efficiently designed job and organization were of prime importance. Psychological and social factors in the workplace were ignored. The critics claim that when managers ignore the social and psychological needs of workers, organizations do not provide adequate motivation to their employees. The classicists

assumed that financial incentives would ensure worker motivation. In short, the focus of classical organizational theory was on the task, with little attention given to the individual or group in the workplace. This flaw was primarily responsible for the emergence of the second approach to management thought: the human relations approach.

## Human Relations Approach

The **human relations approach** is considered to have started with a series of studies conducted at the Hawthorne Plant of Western Electric near Chicago by Elton Mayo (1933) and Fritz Roethlisberger and William Dickson (1939). These studies, widely known as the Hawthorne studies, have strongly influenced administrative theory.

### The Hawthorne Studies

The **Hawthorne studies** consisted of several experiments. They included the first Relay Assembly Test Room, the second Relay Assembly Group, the Mica-Splitting Group, the Typewriting Group, and the Bank Wiring Observation Room experiments. In addition, an interview program involving 21,126 employees was conducted to learn what workers liked and disliked about their work environment.

Two experiments in particular are noteworthy. In the Relay Assembly Test Room experiments, the research began with the designation of two groups of female workers. Each group performed the same task, and the groups were located in two separate rooms, each of which was equally lighted. One group, designated the control group, was to have no changes made in lighting or other work-environment factors. The other was the experimental group in which lighting and other environmental factors were varied. Changes in the productivity of the two groups was subsequently measured and analyzed. Regardless of the light level or various changes in rest periods and lengths of workdays and workweeks, productivity in both the control and the experimental groups improved; in fact, the worse things got, the higher the productivity rose.

In the Bank Wiring Observation Room experiments, a group of nine men were paid on a piecework incentives pay system. That is, their pay increased as their productivity increased. Researchers expected that worker productivity would rise over time. As in the Relay Assembly Test Room experiments, researchers found an unexpected pattern of results. They discovered

that the group informally established an acceptable level of output for its members. Most workers, the “regulars,” ignored the incentive system and voluntarily conformed to the group’s standard level of acceptable output, called a *group norm*. Those who did not conform, the “deviants,” were disciplined by the group to bring their output in line with the group’s standard output. Workers who produced too much were called “rate-busters” and sometimes were physically threatened to make them conform to the rest of the group. On the other hand, employees who underproduced were labeled “chislers” and were pressured by the group to increase their productivity.

To understand the complex and baffling pattern of results, Mayo and his associates interviewed over 20,000 employees who had participated in the experiments during the six-year study. The interviews and observations during the experiments suggested that a human-social element operated in the workplace. Increases in productivity were more of an outgrowth of group dynamics and effective management than any set of employer demands or physical factors. In the lighting experiment, for example, the results were attributed to the fact that the test group began to be noticed and to feel important. Researchers discovered that the improvement in productivity was due to such human-social factors as morale, a feeling of belonging, and effective management in which such interpersonal skills as motivating, leading, participative decision making, and effective communications were used. Researchers concluded, from the results of the incentive pay-system experiment, that informal work groups emerged with their own norms for the appropriate behavior of group members. In short, the importance of understanding human behavior, especially group behavior, from the perspective of management was firmly established.

### Other Contributors to the Human Relations Approach

Mayo and his associates were not the only contributors to the human relations approach. There were several strong intellectual currents that influenced the human relations movement during this period. Kurt Lewin (1951) emphasized field theory and research known as group dynamics. Noteworthy is his work on *democratic* and *authoritarian* groups. Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1939) generally concluded that democratic groups, in which members actively participate in decisions, are more productive in terms of both human satisfaction and the achievement of group goals than are authoritarian

groups. Furthermore, much of the current work on individual and organizational approaches to change through group dynamics (sensitivity training, team building, Alcoholics Anonymous, and Weight Watchers) and the action-research approach to organizational development is based on Lewin's pioneering work.

Carl Rogers deserves mention here as well. Not only did he develop a procedure for industrial counseling (C. R. Rogers, 1942) while working with Mayo and his associates at Western Electric, but the metapsychological assumptions on which his client-centered therapy (C. R. Rogers, 1951) is based also provide the skeletal framework on which the human relations approach is built. For example, according to Rogers, the best vantage point for understanding behavior is from the internal frame of reference of the individual, who exists in a continually changing world of experience; who perceives the field of experience as reality for them; and who strives to actualize, maintain, and enhance their own human condition.

The writings of Jacob Moreno made a substantial contribution to the human relations movement. Like Lewin, Moreno (1953) was interested in interpersonal relations within groups. He developed a sociometric technique: People develop selective affinities for other people. Groups composed of individuals with similar affinities for one another will likely perform better than groups lacking such affective preferences.

Additional contributors to the human relations school of thought include William Whyte and George Homans. Using a field study methodology similar to the one used by Mayo, Whyte studied the nature and functioning of work group behavior in the restaurant industry. He examined intergroup conflict, status within groups, workflow, and the like. Consistent with Moreno's sociometric theory, W. F. Whyte (1949) found that selective preferences among group members are associated with such factors as similarities in age, sex, and outside interests. His study is significant because the findings are based on observations of real-life situations rather than isolated laboratory conditions. George Homans's (1950) general theory of small groups was a major landmark. Homans conceptualized the totality of group structure and functioning that has received wide attention among organizational theorists and practitioners alike.

The major assumptions of the human relations approach include the following ideas:

1. Organization members are motivated by social and psychological needs and by economic incentives.
2. These needs, including but not limited to recognition, belongingness, and security, are more important in determining worker morale and productivity than are the physical conditions of the work environment.
3. An individual's perceptions, beliefs, motivations, cognition, responses to frustration, values, and similar factors may affect behavior in the work setting.
4. People in all types of organizations tend to develop informal social organizations that work along with the formal organization and can help or hinder leadership.
5. Informal social groups within the workplace create and enforce their own norms and codes of behavior. Team effort, conflict between groups, social conformity, group loyalty, communication patterns, and emergent leadership are important concepts for determining individual and group behavior.
6. Organization members have higher morale and work harder under supportive leadership. Increased morale results in increased productivity.
7. Communication, power, influence, authority, motivation, and manipulation are all important relationships within an organization, especially between superior and subordinate. Effective communication channels should be developed between the various levels in the hierarchy, emphasizing democratic rather than authoritarian leadership.

The human relationists used field study methods extensively, as well as laboratory experiments, to study the work environment. These social scientists made important contributions to our understanding of employee behavior in the workplace.

### Behavioral Science Approach

Behavioral scientists considered both the classicists' rational-economic model and the human relationists' social model to be incomplete representations of employees in the work setting. A number of authors attempted to reconcile or show points of conflict between classical and human relations theory; thus, the **behavioral science approach** was born.



## Effectiveness/Efficiency

Although a contemporary of many human relationists, Chester Barnard was one of the first authors to take the behavioral science approach. For many years, Barnard served as president of the New Jersey Bell Telephone Company. His executive experience and extensive readings in sociology and organizational psychology resulted in one of management's few classic textbooks.

His best known idea is the **cooperative system**, an attempt to integrate, in a single framework, human relations and classical management principles. Barnard (1938) argued that the executive must meet two conditions if cooperation and financial success are to be attained. First, the executive must emphasize the importance of *effectiveness*, which is the degree to which the common purpose of the organization is achieved. Second, the executive must be aware of *efficiency*, which is the satisfaction of "individual motives" of employees. His main point is that an organization can operate and survive only when both the organization's goals and the goals of the individuals working for it are kept in equilibrium. Thus, leaders must have both human and technical skills.

## Fusion Process

Another major contributor to the behavioral science approach was E. Wight Bakke of the Yale University Labor and Management Center. He views the organization as embodying a **fusion process** (Bakke, 1955). The individual, he argues, attempts to use the organization to further their own goals, whereas the organization uses the individual to further its own goals. In the fusion process, the organization to some degree remakes the individual and the individual to some degree remakes the organization. The fusion of the *personalizing process* of the individual and the *socializing process* of the organization is accomplished through the *bonds of organization*, such as the formal organization, the informal organization, the workflow, the task(s) to be completed, and the system of rewards and punishments.

## Individual-Organization Conflict

Holding views similar to Bakke's, Chris Argyris (1993) argues that there is an inherent conflict between the individual and the organization. This conflict results

from the incompatibility between the growth and development of the individual's maturing personality and the repressive nature of the formal organization. Argyris believes that people progress from a state of psychological immaturity and dependence to maturity and independence and that many modern organizations keep their employees in a dependent state, preventing them from achieving their full potential.

Further, Argyris believes that some of the basic principles of management are inconsistent with the mature adult personality. The resulting incongruence between individual personality and the organization causes conflict, frustration, and failure for people at work. People learn to adapt to the failure, frustration, and conflict resulting from the incongruency by ascending the organizational hierarchy, by using defense mechanisms, or by developing apathy toward their work, which ultimately leads to the dysfunction of the organization's goals. This trend to conformity has been espoused in such popular books as W. H. Whyte's *The Organization Man* (1956) and A. Harrington's *Life in the Crystal Palace* (1960).

## Nomothetic/Idiographic

A useful theoretical formulation for studying administrative behavior is the social systems analysis developed for educators by Jacob Getzels and Egon Guba. Getzels and Guba (1957) conceive of the social system as involving two classes of phenomena that are independent and interactive. First are institutions with certain roles and expectations that together constitute the **nomothetic dimension** of activity in the social system. Second are the individuals with certain personalities and need-dispositions inhabiting the system who together constitute the **idiographic dimension** of activity in the social system. Behavior then in any social system can be seen as a function of the interaction between personal needs and institutional goals. Conformity to the institution, its roles, and its expectations results in organizational effectiveness, whereas conformity to individuals, their personalities, and their need-dispositions results in individual efficiency. (Note the similarity between Getzels and Guba's framework and those of Barnard, Bakke, and Argyris.)

## Contingency Theory

**Contingency theories** of leadership have come into vogue in recent years. Fred Fiedler (1967) developed

a contingency theory of leadership effectiveness. The basic premise is that in some situations relationship-motivated leaders perform better, whereas other conditions make it more likely that task-motivated leaders will be most effective. Three variables determine the situations under which one or the other type of leader will be most effective: leader-member relations (the degree to which leaders feel accepted by their followers), task structure (the degree to which the work to be done is clearly outlined), and position power (the extent to which the leader has control over rewards and punishments the followers receive).

### Situational Leadership

Another popular leadership theory is situational leadership, developed by Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard (2007). **Situational leadership theory** is based primarily on the relationship between follower maturity, leader task behavior, and leader relationship behavior. In general terms, the theory suggests that the style of leadership will be effective only if it is appropriate for the maturity level of the followers. Hersey and Blanchard see two types of maturity as particularly important: job maturity (a person's maturity to perform the job) and psychological maturity (the person's level of motivation as reflected in achievement needs and willingness to accept responsibility).

### Transformational Leadership

In his examination of the concept of **transformational leadership**, Bass and Riggio (2006) contrast two types of leadership behavior: transactional and transformational. According to Bass, transactional leaders determine what subordinates need to do to achieve their own and the organization's goals, classify those requirements, help subordinates become confident that they can reach their goals by expending the necessary efforts, and reward them according to their accomplishments. Transformational leaders, in contrast, motivate their subordinates to do more than they originally expected to do. They accomplish this in three ways: by raising followers' levels of consciousness about the importance and value of designated outcomes and ways of reaching them; by getting followers to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the team, organization, or larger polity; and by raising followers' need levels to the higher-order needs, such as self-actualization, or by expanding their portfolio of needs.

### Other Important Contributors

The great diversity of perspectives in the behavioral science school makes it impossible to discuss all of its contributors here. Social scientists such as Abraham Maslow (1970), Douglas McGregor (1960), Frederick Herzberg (1993), Rensis Likert (1979), Robert Blake and Jane Mouton (1994), Victor Vroom and Arthur Jago (1988), William Reddin (1970), and Amitai Etzioni (1975) did much to assist its development. Warren Bennis (1990), in his best-selling book on leadership, identifies bureaucracy and other classical management principles as the "unconscious conspiracy" that prevents leaders from leading.

A key contribution of the contingency perspective may best be summarized in the observation that there is no one best way to administer an organization. There are no motivation strategies, organizational structures, decision-making patterns, communication techniques, change approaches, or leadership styles that will fit all situations. Rather, school administrators must find different ways that fit different situations.

### Post-Behavioral Science Era

The behavioral science approach influenced the preparation and practice of school administrators for some time, but it has lost much of its original appeal recently with challenges to modernist views of organizations and leadership. Building on the strengths and shortcomings of the past, three powerful, interrelated concepts of school improvement, democratic community, and social justice emerge, which form the development of the next era of the profession: the **post-behavioral science era** (Murphy, 2002). This view is reinforced with increased emphasis on emergent nontraditional perspectives (variously labeled neo-Marxist, critical theory, and postmodernism).

### School Improvement

Accountability for school improvement is a central theme of national policies. On December 10, 2015, President Barack Obama signed into law the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the most recent reauthorization of ESEA of 1965, replacing the defunct No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The new law builds on key areas of progress made in previous years, including demanding accountability standards for schools, school districts, and states, and state testing requirements

designed to improve education. ESSA reaffirms the American ideal—that all children, regardless of race, income, background, or address, deserve the chance to make of their lives whatever they wish. Will schools, school districts, and states be able to respond to the demand?

In an ideal system, **school improvement** efforts will need to focus educational policy, administration, and practices directly on teaching and learning. This will require districtwide leadership focused directly on learning. School leaders can accomplish this by clarifying purpose; encouraging collective learning; making data-driven decisions; aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment; and providing support. Taken together, these five dimensions provide a compelling framework for accomplishing sustained districtwide success for all children (Lunenburg, 2003).

### Clarifying Purpose

School administrators can help shift the focus from teaching to learning if they insist that certain critical questions be considered in their schools, and school administrators are in a key position to pose those questions. What do we want our students to know and be able to do? The focus in a learning community is not whether teachers are teaching but rather whether students are learning (Bulach, Lunenburg, & Potter, 2016b). How will you know if the students are learning? And that question points to student progress. How will we respond when students do not learn? What criteria will we use to evaluate student progress? How can we more effectively use the time and resources available to help students learn? How can we engage parents in helping our students learn? Have we established systematic collaboration as the norm in our school?

In their study of improving teaching for rigorous learning, which involved a sample of 1,500 schools, F. M. Newmann, Carmichael, and King (2015) found that successful classrooms focused on “authentic” pedagogy (teaching that requires students to think, to develop an in-depth understanding, and to apply academic learning to important realistic problems) and student learning. They achieved this in two ways: greater organizational capacity and greater external support.

The most successful schools, according to F. M. Newmann et al. were those that functioned as learning communities. That is, they found a way to channel staff and student efforts toward a clear, commonly shared purpose for learning. Moreover, they found that external agencies helped schools to focus on student learning and to enhance organizational capacity

through three strategies: setting standards for learning of high intellectual quality, providing sustained schoolwide professional development, and using deregulation to increase school autonomy. In short, dynamic internal learning communities and their relationships with external networks made the difference. Evidence on the critical combination of internal and external learning is mounting.

In research recently completed at the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) Institute, Robert Marzano (2017) identified classroom practices that generally increase student achievement: identifying similarities and differences; summarizing and note taking; receiving reinforcement for effort and recognition for achievement; doing homework and practicing; using nonlinguistic representations; learning cooperatively; setting objectives and testing hypotheses; and using cues, questions, and advance organizers. Regardless of whether or not teachers teach to standards, these classroom practices work well.

In addition, Fred Lunenburg and Beverly Irby (2011) provide long-standing, proven instructional strategies that can improve teaching and learning including set induction, stimulus variation, closure, reinforcement, recognizing attending behavior, silence and nonverbal cues, cueing, use of examples, planned repetition, questioning skills (fluency of questioning, probing questions, higher-order questions, divergent questions), and the use of multiple frames of reference.

### Encouraging Collective Learning

A key task for school administrators is to create a collective expectation among teachers concerning student performance. That is, school administrators need to raise the collective sense of teachers about student learning (Louis, 2013). Then administrators must work to ensure that teacher expectations are aligned with the school’s instructional goals (Murphy, 2016). Furthermore, principals need to eliminate teacher isolation so that discussions about student learning become a collective mission of the school.

Principals must develop and sustain school structures and cultures that foster individual and group learning (Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith, Dutton, & Kleiner, 2012). That is, school administrators must stimulate an environment in which new information and practices are eagerly incorporated into the system. Teachers are more likely to pursue their group and individual learning when the school provides supportive conditions, such as particularly effective leadership (Leithwood & Louis, 2012). Schools where teachers

collaborate in discussing issues related to student learning are more likely to be able to take advantage of internally and externally generated information. Teachers can become willing recipients of research information if they are embedded in a setting where meaningful and sustained interaction with researchers occurs in an egalitarian context.

“The key to student growth is educator growth” (Louis, 2012). In a collaborative learning environment, teachers become generators of professional knowledge rather than simply consumers of innovations. Innovations are built around the system rather than using pre-packaged school improvement models (G. E. Hall & Hord, 2010). Changing mental models replaces training educators in new behaviors (Senge, 1990, 2006). Continuous instruction-embedded professional development replaces one-shot non-instruction-specific professional development events (Zepeda, 2019). Single-loop, linear learning that monitors whether a system is reaching its goals is replaced by double-loop learning where systems are able to revisit whether goals are still appropriate and then recycle as needed (Argyris, 2007).

One popular collaboration structure is teacher teams. Schools are recognizing that teachers should be working together in teams as opposed to working individually in isolation in their classrooms. High-performing teams will accomplish four different things (Lunenburg & Lunenburg, 2015): (a) They will clarify exactly what students should know and be able to do as a result of each unit of instruction (we know that if teachers are clear on the intended results of instruction, they will be more effective); (b) they will then design curriculum and share instructional strategies to achieve those outcomes; (c) they will develop valid assessment strategies that measure how well students are performing; (d) then they will analyze those results and work together to come up with new ideas for improving those results. Regular assessment and analysis of student learning are key parts of the team's process.

### Making Data-Driven Decisions

How can schools gauge their progress in achieving student learning? Three factors can increase a school's progress in achieving learning for all students (Sclafani, 2001). The primary factor is the availability of performance data connected to each student. Performance data need to be broken down by specific objectives and target levels in the school curriculum. Then the school is able to connect what is taught to what is learned. The curriculum goals should be clear enough to specify what each teacher should teach. And an assessment measure,

aligned with the curriculum, will indicate what students have learned. Also, teachers need access to longitudinal data on each student in their classroom. With such data, teachers are able to develop individual and small-group education plans to ensure mastery of areas of weakness from previous years while also moving students forward in the school curriculum.

The second factor is the public nature of the assessment system. Annually, the school district should publish a matrix of schools and honor those schools that have performed at high levels. This activity provides role models for other schools to emulate. At the school and classroom levels, it provides a blueprint of those areas where teachers should focus their individual education plans (IEPs) and where grade levels or schools should focus the school's professional development plans. The public nature of the data from the accountability system makes clear where schools are. Data should be disaggregated by race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, English language proficiency, and disability. Performance of each subgroup of students on assessment measures makes the school community aware of which students are well served and which students are not well served by the school's curriculum and instruction.

The third factor in gauging progress toward achieving student learning is the specifically targeted assistance provided to schools that are performing at low levels. Before the advent of accountability systems, it was not evident which schools and students needed help. The first step is to target the schools in need of help based on student performance data. Each targeted school is paired with a team of principals, curriculum specialists/instructional coaches, and researchers to observe current practices, discuss student performance data with staff, and assist in the development and implementation of an improvement plan. The targeted schools learn how to align their program of professional development with the weaknesses identified by the data. They learn how to develop an improvement plan to guide their activities and monitor the outcomes of the activities, all of which are designed to raise student performance levels.

Next, once a team of teachers has worked together and identified students who are having difficulty, the school faces the challenge of how the teachers are going to respond to the students who are not learning. The challenge is not simply reteaching in the same way that the teachers taught before, but in providing support for teachers to expand their repertoire of skills and providing support and time for students to get additional assistance they need in order to master those skills.



When students are not learning, principals and other administrators must ensure not only that professional development programs are in place to give additional support to teachers but also that intervention strategies are in place to give additional support to students.

### Aligning Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

School administrators need to ensure that assessment of student learning is aligned with both the school's curriculum and the teachers' instruction (English, 2011). When they are well constructed and implemented, assessments can change the nature of teaching and learning. They can lead to a richer, more challenging curriculum; foster discussion and collaboration among teachers within and across schools; create more productive conversations among teachers and parents; and focus stakeholders' attention on increasing student achievement (Popham, 2012).

For curriculum goals to have an impact on what happens in classrooms, they must be clear. When school districts, administrators, and students are held accountable for results, more specificity is needed in implementing the curriculum (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2016). In a high-stakes accountability environment, teachers require that the curriculum contain enough detail and precision to allow them to know what the students need to learn.

Most states are attempting to align their assessments with their standards. School administrators need to consider three principles in this endeavor (Glandel & Vranek, 2001). First, assessments not based on the curriculum are neither fair nor helpful to parents or students. Schools that have developed their own assessment measures have done a good job of ensuring that the content of the assessment can be found in the curriculum. That is, children will not be assessed on knowledge and skills they have not been taught. This is what Fenwick English and Betty Steffy (2001) refer to as "the doctrine of no surprises."

However, the same is not true when schools use generic, off-the-shelf standardized tests. Such tests cannot measure the breadth and depth of the school's curriculum. Second, when the curriculum is rich and rigorous, the assessments must be as well. Assessments must tap both the breadth and depth of the content and skills in the curriculum. Third, assessments must become more challenging in each successive grade. The solid foundation of knowledge and skills developed in the early grades should evolve into more complex skills in the later grades.

### Providing Support

One of the biggest challenges in advancing state standards and assessments, and the accountability provisions tied to them, is providing teachers with the training, teaching tools, and support they need to help all students reach high standards (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Specifically, teachers need access to curriculum guides, textbooks, or specific training connected to state standards. They need access to lessons or teaching units that match state standards. They need training on using state test results to diagnose learning gaps. Teachers must know how each student performed on every multiple-choice item and other questions on the state test. And training must be in the teachers' subject areas. Only then can teachers be prepared to help students achieve at high levels on state-mandated tests.

In addition to professional development for teachers, all schools need an intervention and support system for students who lag behind in learning the curriculum. Schools need to provide additional help to students who lag behind in core subjects, either in school, after school, on weekends, or during the summer. School administrators need to supply the financial resources to fulfill this mandate. This involves acquiring materials, information, or technology; manipulating schedules or release time to create opportunities for teachers to learn; facilitating professional networks; or creating an environment that supports improvement efforts (Lunenburg, 2007).

Higher state standards usually mean changes in curriculum, instruction, and assessment—that is, changes in teaching and learning. The history of school reform indicates that innovations in teaching and learning seldom penetrate more than a few schools and seldom endure when they do (Elmore, 2004; Lunenburg, 2011m). Innovations frequently fail because the individuals who make them happen—classroom teachers—may not be committed to the effort or may not have the skills to grapple with the basic challenge being posed. Teachers are motivated to change when their personal goals are aligned with change, when they are confident in their ability to change, and when they feel supported in attempting the change (Fullan, Quinn, & McEachen, 2017). To gain commitment of teachers and students to pursue school improvement efforts, school administrators must promote school cultures that reward achievement (Lunenburg, 2002).

In sum, the new framework for school improvement that we have described here provides a powerful and useful model for achieving school success. Sustained

districtwide school improvement is not possible without a strong connection across levels of organization (school, school district, community, and state). Internal school development is necessary from principals, teachers, and parents, but school improvement cannot occur unless each school is supported by a strong external infrastructure; stable political environments; and resources outside the school, including leadership from the superintendent and school board as well as leadership from the state.

### Democratic Community

The concept of **democratic community** is not new. Much of the current work is grounded in John Dewey's ideas promulgated more than 100 years ago. For example, at the turn of the twentieth century, Dewey (1900) argued that schools should embody the kind of community that combined the best aspects of classic liberalism and communitarianism or, in Dewey's words, of "individualism and socialism" (p. 7)—a place that could prepare people to live within and to maintain a healthy, democratic society. However, Dewey's vision was relatively uninfluential throughout much of the twentieth century. A resurgence of interest in Dewey and his concept of a democratic community as it relates to schooling has emerged in education in recent years (Jenlink, 2009; Lunenburg, 2010d).

At mid-twentieth century, James Conant (1953) suggested that the basic tenets of American democracy should be taught in schools, along with language, history, economics, science, mathematics, and the arts. More recently, George Wood (1992) expanded this theme by suggesting that democratic citizenship should be taught in schools. These include traits such as commitment to community and a desire to participate; values such as justice, liberty, and equality; skills of interpretation, debate, and compromise; and habits of study and reflection. Others have concurred. Andrew Hargreaves (1997) suggested that the cultivation of "openness, informality, care, attentiveness, lateral working relationships, reciprocal collaboration, candid and vibrant dialogue, and the willingness to face uncertainty together" is a central purpose of schooling, not merely the production of employable workers. Carl Glickman and Ian Mette (2020) add a leadership perspective. Using a practical framework for school, district, and community leaders, their roadmap replaces dependence on top-down state and federal regulations, focusing instead on locally guided initiatives to address local goals.

Critiques concerning the meaning of democracy in our time have proliferated over the last two decades. And a number of publications have addressed the various meanings of community. For example, community is described in multiple ways in the education literature. Community is referred to as "professional community" among educators (Calderwood, 2000), "learning community" among students (Furman, 2003), "school-community" addressing school-community relations (Osterman, 2001), and "community of difference" in multicultural settings (Gay, 2018; Shields, 2003).

Gail Furman and Robert Starratt (2002) advocated the definition of community of difference as more compatible with contemporary postmodernism. Thinking about a community of difference requires a reconceptualization of the concept of community itself, moving away from homogeneity toward a new center in which diverse groups negotiate a commitment to the common good. According to Shields, Larocque, and Oberg (2002), "[A] *community of difference* begins, not with an assumption of shared norms, beliefs, and values; but with the need for respect, dialogue, and understanding" (p. 132). Educational leaders who want to move toward a community of difference will be informed by research on race and ethnicity.

Similarly, democracy is subject to many interpretations in education. Its most common meaning is usually tied to the idea of the nation-state and the American version of democracy. According to Katharyne Mitchell (2001), democratic community cannot be limited to such a narrow view of democracy in a world characterized by diversity, fragmentation, and globalization. National boundaries are permeated by regional and global alliances. Children should be educated within an increasingly global context.

### Democratic Community and Leadership

Our version of democratic community resembles more the ideas promulgated by Furman and Starratt (2002). They extended the emerging work on democratic community through a deeper analysis of the linkages between democratic community and leadership in schools. And Furman and Starratt's model places democratic community in a context of postmodernism, characterized by inclusiveness, interdependence, and transnationalism. In their view and ours, professional community, learning community, school-community, and community of difference, and the American version of democracy, along with Dewey's progressivism, laid much of the groundwork for the concept of democratic community.

Some common themes are beginning to emerge regarding the concept of democratic community derived from Dewey's progressivism and its more contemporary, postmodern interpretations. Furman and Starratt (2002) discussed the nature and character of democratic community and how it might be enacted in schools. The central tenets of democratic schools include the following:

1. Democratic community is based on the open flow of ideas that enables people to be as fully informed as possible.
2. Democratic community involves the use of critical reflection and analysis to evaluate ideas, problems, and policies.
3. Democratic community places responsibility on individuals to participate in open inquiry, collective choices, and actions in the interest of the common good.
4. Democratic community involves acting for others as well as with others in the interest of the common good.
5. Democratic community is based on the acceptance and celebration of difference, and focuses on the integral linkages between the school, the surrounding community, and the larger global community.
6. Creating democratic community in schools involves systematic attention to structure, process, and curriculum and instruction.

### Family and Community Involvement

Schools alone cannot adequately provide children and youth with the necessary resources and support they need to become successful students, productive workers, and responsible citizens in a democratic society. Family and community involvement in schools is viewed as so critical for the success of students, especially poor and racial-ethnic minority students, that many reform programs include a family and community involvement component in their school improvement strategies (Harry & Ocasio-Stoutenburg, 2020; Sanders, Allen-Jones, & Abel, 2002).

Joyce Epstein's (2018) parent involvement strategies, Henry Levin's (1987) Accelerated Schools, Robert Slavin's (2001) Success for All Schools, and James Comer's (1980) and Comer, Haynes, Joyner, and Ben-Avie's (1996) School Development Program are grounded in

developing inclusive and democratic connections with families and communities. The programs emphasize family and community support processes. They provide the school's faculty with strategies for increasing parent involvement, raising attendance rates, improving classroom management, preventing behavior problems, integrating social and health services, and solving other nonacademic problems. The programs structure the school in ways that fundamentally change the notion of school as merely an academic institution.

Levin's Accelerated Schools, Slavin's Success for All Schools, and Comer's School Development Program have been shown to result in student success in school, including positive attitudes toward school, better attendance and behavior in school, higher rates of homework completion, and better achievement in academic subjects. This research has been supplemented by studies that have shown that well-planned activities, such as Epstein and colleagues' (2018) parent involvement strategies, can increase parent and community involvement even among families traditionally considered hard to reach, including low-income, racial-ethnic minority, and single-parent families.

### National and State Education Policies

Research on the benefits of family and community involvement has had a positive effect on national policies during the past decade. The Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994, for example, identified eight national goals for public schools. Goal 8 states:

Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children.

Linked to Goals 2000 was the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) of 1994, a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Among other things, this reauthorization strengthened the family involvement component of Title I, which seeks to improve the educational opportunities for and outcomes of poor children. The reauthorization of Title I mandated that school-level family involvement policies include parent-school agreements designed to clarify the goals, expectations, and shared responsibilities of schools and parents as partners in students' education. Such agreements were intended to be helpful frameworks for discussions between schools and parents about how to encourage better student performance in school. In addition, Title V: Promoting Informed

Parental Choice and Innovative Programs of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and its successor ESSA of 2015 contain numerous provisions for school, family, and community involvement in students' learning.

States have developed standards to encourage greater family and community involvement in schools. Key educational reform groups, such as the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL), formerly called the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards, the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), have developed standards pertaining to parent and community involvement in schools. Standard 8 of the ten PSEL Standards states:

Effective school leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being. (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015, p. 16)

In 1992, InTASC (Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium of state education agencies, higher education institutions, and national education organizations) developed ten principles that all teachers should master. According to Principle 10, teachers are expected to foster relationships with school colleagues, parents, and community agencies to support students' learning. The NCATE emphasized in its standard for content knowledge that teacher candidates should understand principles and strategies for school, family, and community partnerships to support students' learning.

### Curriculum and Instruction

A resurgence of interest in democratic community in recent years has implications for schools and schooling, particularly as it relates to curriculum and instruction. To be sure, the enactment of democratic community in schools would require changes in curriculum and instruction. These modifications would be compatible with some components found in Theodore Sizer's (1984, 1992, 1997) Coalition of Essential Schools (CES), Mortimer Adler's (1982) Paideia Proposal (PP), Henry Levin's (1987) Accelerated Schools, Robert Slavin's (2001) Success for All Schools, and James Comer's (1980; Comer et al., 1996) School Development Program. More specifically, two powerful strategies that are

grounded in the tenets of democratic community and found in the aforementioned frameworks are critical thinking and constructivism.

*Critical Thinking.* The Center for Critical Thinking (2018) provides an excellent treatise on **critical thinking** applied to instruction. Critical thinking shifts classroom design from a model that largely ignores thinking to one that renders it pervasive and necessary. Critical teaching views content as something alive only in minds, modes of thinking driven by questions, existing in textbooks only to be regenerated in the minds of students.

Once we understand content as inseparable from the thinking that generates, organizes, analyzes, synthesizes, evaluates, and transforms it, we recognize that content cannot, in principle, ever be "completed" because thinking is never completed. To understand content, therefore, is to understand its implications. But to understand its implications, one must understand that those implications in turn have further implications and hence must be thoughtfully explored.

The problem with didactic teaching is that content is inadvertently treated as static, as virtually dead. Content is treated as something to be mimicked, to be parroted. And because students only rarely process content deeply when they play the role of passive listeners in lecture-centered instruction, little is learned in the long term. Furthermore, because students are taught content in a way that renders them unlikely to think it through, they retreat into rote memorization, abandoning any attempt to grasp the logic of what they are committing to memory.

Those who teach critically emphasize that only those who can think through content truly learn it. Content "dies" when one tries to learn it mechanically. Content has to take root in the thinking of students and, when properly learned, transforms the way they think. Hence, when students study a subject in a critical way, they take possession of a new mode of thinking that, so internalized, generates new thoughts, understandings, and beliefs. Their thinking, now driven by a set of new questions, becomes an instrument of insight and a new point of view.

History texts become, in the minds of students thinking critically, a stimulus to historical thinking. Geography texts are internalized as geographical thinking. Mathematical content is transformed into mathematical thinking. As a result of being taught to think critically, students study biology and become biological thinkers. They study sociology and begin to notice the permissions, injunctions, and taboos of the groups in which they participate. They study literature and begin



to notice the way in which all humans tend to define their lives in the stories they tell. They study economics and begin to notice how much of their behavior is intertwined with economic forces and needs.

There are ways, indeed almost an unlimited number, to stimulate critical thinking at every educational level and in every teaching setting. When considering technology for this stimulation, the Internet is important to instructional design. Much has been written about the Internet and education over the past ten years (Internet Society, 2017). Lessons have been learned from experience with different technologies and services in countries with different educational systems. Five broad themes have emerged from experience to date as priorities for school policymakers today: infrastructure and access, vision and policy, inclusion, capacity, and content and devices (see <https://www.internetsociety.org/resources/doc/2017/internet-access-and-education/>).

**Infrastructure and access.** Schools need computers, tablets, and other information and communication technology (ICT) devices that are integrated in a smart fashion in the educational environment to make the best use of Internet-enabled learning. These need to be maintained, upgraded, and cybersecure. They also need reliable electric power. The total costs of ownership—capital and operational—should be factored into budgets, and the importance of financial constraints should not be underestimated. School buildings may need to be redesigned to make effective use of Internet-enabled learning. These, too, are important aspects of enabling access.

**Vision and policy.** Policies for Internet access and use should encompass the entire education system—from preschool and primary education, through secondary and tertiary education, to lifelong learning, reskilling, and retraining. The aim should be to improve the digital literacy and skills of everyone throughout society, adults as well as children.

**Inclusion.** Policies should promote greater equality in access to learning resources for disadvantaged groups within societies, such as those living in rural areas or in poverty, ethnic minorities and speakers of minority languages, and those with disabilities.

**Capacity.** Success in the digital age requires digital skills. As they enter the world of work, individuals should be able to make use of computers and other

digital equipment. Digital literacy—the ability to use online applications, find information online, assess its quality and value, and make use of it in daily life—is crucial to living in the digital world, particularly for the growing number who will work in ICT-intensive industries. School students and adults alike need to learn how to use the internet to undertake transactions and how to protect themselves against cybercrime. Ways to develop these skills should be included in curricula.

**Content and devices.** One of the most dramatic differences the Internet can make lies in opening access to a wider range of content for teaching and learning—content that is explicitly educational in purpose and the much wider range of online content that can supplement curricula. Instead of relying primarily on textbooks, teachers can direct students to many different sources, and students can develop research skills by exploring online content on their own.

Through these Internet priorities, a constructivist instructional model advances higher-level instruction, such as problem solving and increased learner control. The Internet becomes a necessary tool for student-centered discovery and research. Of course, it can also be used for lower-level drills and practice.

At every level and in all subjects, students need to learn how to ask questions precisely, define contexts and purposes, pursue relevant information, analyze key concepts, derive sound inferences, generate good reasons, recognize questionable assumptions, trace important implications, and think empathetically within different points of view. The Internet enables learners and teachers in each area by providing information for good reasoners to figure things out. Critical thinking may be a key organizing concept for curriculum reform and for improving teaching and learning.

**Constructivism.** **Constructivism** may be the most significant recent trend in education relative to the dynamic relationship between how teachers teach and how children learn. One foundational premise of constructivism is that children actively construct their knowledge rather than simply absorb ideas spoken to them by teachers. For example, Jean Piaget (1970) proposed that children make sense in ways very different from adults and that they learn through the process of trying to make things happen, trying to manipulate their environment. Theories such as these, which assert that people are not recorders of information, but builders

of knowledge structures, have been grouped under the heading of *constructivism* (Piaget, 1970). Thus, students are ultimately responsible for their own learning within a learning atmosphere in which teachers value student thinking, initiate lessons that foster cooperative learning, provide opportunities for students to be exposed to interdisciplinary curriculum, structure learning around primary concepts, and facilitate authentic assessment of student understanding.

In constructivist theory, it is assumed that learners have to construct their own knowledge—individually and collectively. Each learner has a repertoire of conceptions and skills with which they must construct knowledge to solve problems presented by the environment. The role of the teacher and other learners is to provide the setting, pose the challenges, and offer the support that will encourage cognitive construction. Because students lack the experience of experts in the field, teachers bear a great responsibility for guiding student activity, modeling behavior, and providing examples that will transform student group discussions into meaningful communication about subject matter.

Constructivism emphasizes the processes by which children create and develop their ideas. Applications lie in creating curricula that not only match but also challenge children's understanding, fostering further growth and development of the mind. Furthermore, when children collaborate in cooperative learning groups, they share the process of constructing their ideas with others. This collective effort provides the opportunity for children to reflect on and elaborate not only their own ideas but also those of their peers. With improvement of and access to the internet, the children's cooperative classroom becomes the world. In this cooperative learning setting, children view their peers as resources rather than as competitors. A feeling of teamwork ensues. These processes, critical thinking and constructivism, have resulted in substantial advances in student learning (Lunenburg, 1998, 2012e).

Constructivism serves as the basis for many of the current reforms in several subject matter disciplines. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics published *Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics*, which calls for mathematics classrooms where problem solving, concept development, and the construction of learner-generated solutions and algorithms are stressed rather than drill and practice on correct procedures and facts to get the “right” answer. The National Committee on Science Education Standards and Assessment similarly issued *National Science*

*Education Standards*, which calls for science education reform based on experimentation and learner-generated inquiry, investigations, hypotheses, and models. The National Council of Teachers of English has called for emergent literacy as an important thrust in language arts reform. Interdisciplinary curricula is the theme of social studies reform being advocated by the National Council of Social Studies.

In sum, Theodore Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools (CES), Mortimer Adler's Paideia Proposal (PP), Henry Levin's Accelerated Schools, Robert Slavin's Success for All Schools, and James Comer's School Development Program, critical thinking, and constructivism are compatible with the principles of democratic community, particularly the open flow of ideas, critical reflection and analysis to evaluate ideas, and dialogue.

## Social Justice

A concern for **social justice** is at the core of democracy. The United States prides itself on being a fair and just democracy, a nation in which every citizen is to be treated equally in social, economic, political, and educational arenas. According to its Constitution, the United States seeks to establish “liberty and justice for all.” In spite of these goals, U.S. society is composed of many inequities: rich and poor, educated and illiterate, powerful and powerless. Now in the third decade of the twenty-first century, educational leaders must continue to question whether they have an obligation to create a nation whose words are supported by the experiences of its citizens.

The Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution addressed the question of equal opportunity, declaring that “no state shall deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” The mandate that people receive equal protection extends to equal educational opportunity. Although this fundamental affirmation of equal opportunity has been part of American discourse since the inception of this nation and is found in the Declaration of Independence and other documents, inequities in the major social, economic, political, and educational institutions continue to exist in American society.

## Inequities in Schooling

Inequities in schooling are among the social injustices with which educational leaders need to be most concerned. Although it has been a stated goal in the United States that all youngsters, regardless of family

background, should benefit from their education, many students do not. Most schools do not teach all students at the same academic level. The U.S. educational system to this day is beset with inequities that exacerbate racial and class-based challenges. Differential levels of success in school distributed along race and social-class lines continues to be the most pernicious and prevailing dilemma of schooling (Lunenburg, 2015). Furthermore, there is considerable empirical evidence that children of color experience negative and inequitable treatment in typical public schools (Skrla, McKenzie, & Scheurich, 2010).

Many children of color find themselves marginalized in toxic schools that offer inferior education (Skrla et al., 2010). These schools affect the opportunities and experiences of students of color in several immediate ways: They tend to have limited resources; textbooks and curricula are outdated; and computers are few and obsolete. Many of the teachers do not have credentials in the subjects they teach. Tracking systems block racial-ethnic minority students' access to the more rigorous and challenging classes, which retain these students in non-college-bound destinations. These schools generally offer few (if any) Advanced Placement courses, which are critical for entry into many of the more competitive colleges.

Furthermore, African American students are over-represented in special education programs, compared with the overall student population. More than one-third of African American students (as compared with less than one-fifth of White students) in special education are labeled with the more stigmatizing labels of "mentally retarded" and "emotionally disturbed." Conversely, four-fifths of the White students (as compared with two-thirds of the African American students) in special education are much more likely to be labeled "learning disabled" or "speech impaired" (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

African American males are more than twice as likely as White males to be suspended or expelled from school or to receive corporal punishment (Losen, 2015). Jonathan Kozol (1991) in his classic text, *Savage Inequalities*, described the inferior education received by racial-ethnic minority students (particularly African Americans and Hispanic Americans)—fewer resources, inequities in funding, inadequate facilities, tracking systems, low expectations, segregated schools, and hostile learning environments.

These related inequities, the persistent and disproportionate academic underachievement of children of color and their injurious treatment in our schools, are

compelling evidence that the U.S. public education system remains systemically racist (Skrla et al., 2010). This is not to suggest that racism is consciously intended or even recognized by educators; it is institutional racism that is systemically embedded in assumptions, policies and procedures, practices, and structures of schooling. Nevertheless, every day more than 17 million African American, Hispanic American, Native American, and Asian American children experience the effects of systemic racism in U.S. public schools (Skrla et al., 2010).

### Systemic Racism in Schools

Racism in the United States includes a broad spectrum: individual, institutional, White racism, racial prejudice, interethnic and intraethnic hostility, and cultural racism, to name a few (Donaldson, 2000). African American, Asian American, European American, Hispanic American, Native American, and mixed racial categories all play a part within these subtle racist systems. However, the targets of racism in our schools and in society are people of color through both institutional and individual racism. Racial prejudice, individual bigotry, and institutional racism have devastating effects on students and society at large.

The disproportionate academic underachievement by children of color has been the driving force behind the current accountability policy in the United States. However, a shift in U.S. demographics would seem to exacerbate the problem of achieving educational equity and its attendant impact on social justice. The student population grows increasingly diverse, the teaching force remains predominantly White, and achievement of children of color continues to lag significantly behind that of their White counterparts.

Demographic trends indicate that growth in the nation's racial-ethnic minority population will have significant implications for public schools. From 2000 to 2010, 85 percent of legal immigrants to the United States came from non-European countries. Most of the immigrants came from Asia (China, the Philippines, and India) and the Americas (Mexico, the Caribbean, and South America) and resided in the major cities of California, New York, Florida, and Texas. From 2001 through 2010, over 10.5 million immigrants came to the United States, representing the largest growth for a single decade (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2012).

Demographic projections indicate that the nation's population will grow to 333 million by the year 2030. At that time, more than 92 million Americans, more than one-third of the nation, will be non-Hispanic



White (Vespa, Armstrong, & Medina, 2018). Moreover, students of color are the fastest-growing segment of the school population and have been the least well served by the schools (Lunenburg, 2013b).

Projected change in the percentage of school-age children (5 through 18 years of age) for four ethnic groups between 2016 and 2030 are the following: Hispanic Americans will increase from 24.9 percent to 26.5 percent; Asian Americans will increase from 5.2 percent to 6.3 percent; African Americans will increase from 15.1 percent to 15.5 percent; and White (non-Hispanic) Americans will decrease from 51.1 percent to 46.9 percent (Vespa et al., 2018). These figures indicate that the United States is rapidly becoming an even more ethnically diverse nation than ever before, and certain states (e.g., California, New York, Florida, and Texas) already have very large immigrant populations.

In general, similar demographic shifts have not occurred in the teaching ranks. Despite the changing racial makeup of public-school students in the United States, 80.1 percent of the teaching force is White, non-Hispanic; 6.7 percent is Black, non-Hispanic; 8.8 percent is Hispanic; 2.3 percent is Asian, non-Hispanic; 0.2 percent is Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic; 0.4 is American Indian/Alaska Native, non-Hispanic; and 1.4 percent is classified as two or more races, non-Hispanic (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). This often results in considerable cultural and social distance between middle-class White teachers and students of color.

Michelle Young and Julie Laible (2000) suggested that White educators and educational leaders do not have a thorough enough understanding of racism in its many manifestations, nor do they comprehend the ways in which they are perpetuating White racism in their schools. Other scholars (Gay, 2018; Han & Laughter, 2019; G. R. Howard & Clark, 2016) further summarize the consequences of this mismatch between White middle-class teachers and students of color. They cite how teacher preparation programs rarely train teacher candidates in strategies for teaching culturally diverse students. The lack of familiarity with their students' cultures, learning styles, and communication patterns translates into teachers holding negative expectations for students, what some theorists refer to as *deficit thinking* (Valencia, 1997). And often, inappropriate curricula, instructional materials, and assessments are used with these students (Banks, 2009; Bennett, 2011).

An Education Trust (2012) document concluded, "Around the country, too many states and school districts are giving short shrift to the teaching and learning

environment serving students with the greatest need." Linda Darling-Hammond (1997) confirmed these data, making explicit reference to teachers in the schools. Being poor, being of color, being an inner-city resident do not cause differences in educational achievement. Rather, the lack of resources put into the education of some students and the inequitable treatment of children of color and low-income children are the major causes of difference and social injustice. And teachers are the most important educational resource available to students.

In its simplest form, social justice is linked to redressing institutionalized inequality and systemic racism. John Rawls (1971) argues that social justice is defined by four principles. The first principle is based on equality of treatment of all members of society (equal rights and liberties). The second is based on all people being regarded as individuals. The third involves giving everyone a fair chance (equal opportunity). The fourth involves giving the greatest social and economic benefits to those least advantaged. The application of these four principles of social justice to education would mean that more resources should be allocated to improve circumstances of those historically least served by the system rather than treating all individuals equally.

The notion of social justice suggests that treating all people equally may be inherently unequal. Rawls argues that all education stakeholders are obligated not only to safeguard individuals' rights but also to actively redress inequality of opportunity in education. This notion posits that educational leaders are obligated to examine the circumstances in which children of color and poverty are educated. Social justice in schooling, then, would mean equal treatment, access, and outcomes for children from oppressed groups. It would mean closing the achievement gap between children from low-income communities and communities of color and their mainstream peers so they are successful in school and school success would be equitable across such differences as race and socioeconomic status. It would mean working toward such a vision of social justice in school by engaging the powerful force of accountability policy, that is, excellence and equity for all children.

### Excellence and Equity

Educational leadership for social justice is founded on the belief that schooling must be democratic and an understanding that schooling is not democratic unless its practices are excellent and equitable. Educational equity is a precondition for excellence. Edmund



Gordon (1999) linked social justice to excellence and equity by arguing the following:

The failure to achieve universally effective education in our society is known to be a correlate of our failure to achieve social justice. By almost any measure, there continue to be serious differences between the level and quality of educational achievement for children coming from rich or from poor families, and from ethnic-majority or from some ethnic-minority group families. Low status ethnic-minority groups continue to be over-represented in the low achievement groups in our schools and are correspondingly underrepresented in high academic achievement groups. (p. xii)

We must achieve equal educational results for all children. Failure to do so will hamper specific groups from attaining the fundamental, primary goods and services distributed by society—rights, liberties, self-respect, power, opportunities, income, and wealth. Education is a social institution, controlling access to important opportunities and resources (Lunenburg, 2010g).

## Emergent Nontraditional Perspectives

**Positivism** was the dominant orthodoxy in educational administration until the late 1970s. Positivism is a view of knowledge as objective, absolutely true, and independent of other conditions such as time, circumstances, societies, cultures, communities, and geography (Comte, 2011). Another tradition of positivism is *empiricism*, which maintains that knowledge of the world can only be acquired through the senses and through experience. This view of science came to be known as *logical empiricism* or *logical positivism* (deVries, 2011). From these philosophies there developed positivism—the view that any investigation in the natural or social sciences must be derived from empiricist postulates in order to be considered academically acceptable. Simply stated, positivism is a worldview that all knowledge of the world comes to us from sense experience and observation.

The positivist approach to research consists of several functions: (a) the observation and description of perceptual data coming to us from the world through our senses, (b) the development of theories inferred from such observations and descriptions of perceptual data, (c) the testing of hypotheses derived from theories, and (d) the verification of hypotheses that are then used to verify the theories derived from the

observation and description of perceptual data (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). The approach evolved from an empiricist model of science that involves observation and description, theory building, and hypothesis testing and verification.

Quantitative methods using large samples with the objective of statistical inferences was the predominant tool used. For example, the positivist perspective implies that we could study whether a supportive leadership style reduces stress in subordinates. If we find evidence of this, then another researcher studying leadership and stress would discover the same relationship. The positivist approach to the generation of knowledge dominated research in educational administration until the late 1970s.

At that time, objections began to surface regarding the dominant (positivist) orthodoxy. Alternative paradigms began to appear and continued to be refined through the 1980s. These emerging nontraditional perspectives came under the general heading of *subjectivist* and *interpretivist* approaches. **Subjectivist** and **interpretivist** views refer to perspectives that look inward to the mind rather than outward to experience and that connect to philosophical idealism and, more recently, to phenomenology and existentialism (Stewart, 2011). For example, supportive leadership is a personal interpretation of reality, not something that can be measured across time and people.

Subjectivists and interpretivists rely mainly on qualitative data, such as observation, nondirective interviews, and document analysis. They listen to the language people use in order to understand the common meaning people have toward various situations, events, or phenomena. For example, subjectivists and interpretivists might argue that one needs to experience and observe supportive leadership to study it. Furthermore, one cannot predict relationships because a specific situation shapes reality (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Subjectivist and interpretivist perspectives are illustrated by the early work of scholars such as T. B. Greenfield in Canada; by the work of neo-Marxist and critical theorists such as Richard Bates and others; and by the early work of postmodernists such as Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Jean-François Lyotard (Butler, 2011; Fendler, 2011). The scholars in this tradition have attempted to expand the traditional knowledge domains that define educational administration.

The subjectivist perspectives led to the increased popularity of qualitative research methods under various labels: qualitative methods, ethnography, participant observation, case studies, fieldwork, and naturalistic

inquiry. These approaches are attempts to understand educational processes within local situations. Societies; cultures; communities; unique circumstances; gender, race, and class; and geography serve as important analytical categories in such inquiry. There seems to be an increasing interest in bringing together positivist and interpretive paradigms that may prove valuable to researchers pursuing advanced degrees in educational administration (Irby, Lunenburg, Lara-Alecio, & Tong, 2015; Lunenburg & Irby, 2008).

In sum, the classical “rational” model evolved around the ideas of scientific and administrative management, including the study of administrative processes and managerial functions. The human relations “social” model was spurred by some early seminal social science research, including experimentation and analysis of the social and psychological aspects of people in the workplace and the study of group behavior. The behavioral science approach was an attempt to reconcile the basic incongruity between the rational-economic model and the social model. The more recent post-behavioral science era includes the interrelated concepts of school improvement, democratic community, and social justice, as well as emergent nontraditional perspectives variously labeled neo-Marxist, critical theory, and postmodernism. (Lunenburg & Irby, 2013). Table 1—2 provides an overview of the four major developments in administrative thought.

As shown in Table 1—2, differences in leadership, organization, production, process, power, administration, reward, and structure are important distinguishing characteristics of the four approaches. We can see how organization and administrative theory have evolved from a concern for efficiency and the basic principles of management to an emphasis on human and psychological factors, to social systems and contingency theory, and finally, to a concern for school improvement, democratic community, social justice, and postmodernism. While we have not included all people who have made contributions in the evolution of administrative thought, we have highlighted major contributors and basic concepts and primary eras in the evolution. Furthermore, no attempt is made to date the eras precisely. In fact, if we view the sequence of developments in organizational and administrative theory, we notice a correlational rather than a compensatory tendency.

Traces of the past coexist with modern approaches to administration. For example, although the classical “rational” model has been modified somewhat since its emergence during the 1900s, views of the school as a rational-technical system remain firmly embedded in

the minds of policymakers and pervade most educational reforms proposed since the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) and the many reports that followed. Indeed, this view of schooling is in place today with current accountability policy to assess student, teacher, and school performance. Implicit in ESSA of 2015 and its immediate predecessor, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), is the concomitant expectation that school administrators and teachers will adjust instructional strategies to yield more effective learning outcomes for all children.

## Schools as Open Systems

All schools are open systems, although the degree of interaction with the external environment may vary (Lunenburg, 2010k). According to **open systems theory**, schools constantly interact with their external environment. In fact, they need to structure themselves to deal with forces in the world around them. In contrast, closed systems theory views schools as sufficiently independent to solve most of their problems through their internal forces, without taking into account forces in the external environment. ESSA and NCLB are good examples of open systems theory and the impact these laws have had on schools. Since these two federal laws were passed, states began to focus their policy on standards, accountability, and the improvement of student achievement. Statewide assessment systems were implemented nationwide. Thus was born an era of high-stakes testing complete with rewards and sanctions for low-performing schools. ESSA and NCLB have impacted local school districts in every state.

A **system** can be defined as an interrelated set of elements functioning as an operating unit (Senge, 1990, 2006). As depicted in Figure 1—1, an open system consists of five basic elements: inputs, transformation process, outputs, feedback, and the environment.

### Inputs

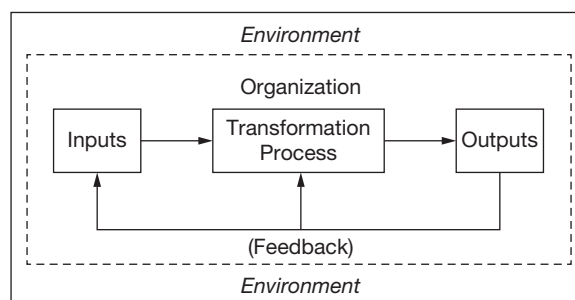
Systems such as schools receive four kinds of inputs from the environment: human, financial, physical, and information resources. Human resources include personnel. Financial resources are the capital used by the school or school district to finance both ongoing and long-term operations. Physical resources include supplies, materials, facilities, and equipment. Information resources are knowledge, curricula, data, and other

TABLE 1—2

## Overview of the Four Major Developments in Administrative Thought

Period	Management Elements	Procedures	Contributors and Basic Concepts
Classical organizational theory	Leadership Organization Production Process Authority Administration Reward Structure	Top to bottom machine Individual anticipated consequences  Rules; coercive Leader separate Economic Formal	Time-and-motion study, functional supervisor, piece rate (Taylor); five basic functions, fourteen principles of management (Fayol); POSDCoRB (Gulick); ideal bureaucracy (Weber)
Human relations approach	Leadership Organization Production Process Authority Administration Reward Structure	All directions Organism Group Unanticipated consequences Group norms Participative Social and psychological Informal	Hawthorne studies (Mayo, Roethlisberger, and Dickson); intellectual undercurrents: group dynamics leadership studies (Lewin, Lippitt, and White); client-centered therapy (Rogers); sociometric technique (Moreno); human relations in the restaurant industry (Whyte); small groups (Homans)
Behavioral science approach	Consideration of all major elements with heavy emphasis on contingency leadership, culture, transformational leadership, and systems theory	Cooperative systems (Barnard); fusion process (Bakke); optimal actualization—organization and individual (Argyris); social systems theory—nomothetic and idiographic (Getzels and Guba); needs hierarchy (Maslow); Theory X and Y (McGregor); hygiene-motivation (Herzberg); Systems 1–4 (Likert); open-closed climates (Halpin and Croft); managerial grid (Blake and Mouton); contingency theory (Fiedler); situational leadership (Hersey and Blanchard); expectancy theory (Vroom); 3-D leadership (Reddin); compliance theory (Etzioni); structure of organizations (Mintzberg); leadership-unconscious conspiracy (Bennis)	
Post-behavioral science approach	Interrelated concepts of school improvement, democratic community, and social justice with heavy emphasis on leadership; and emergent nontraditional perspectives	School improvement, democratic community, and social justice (Murphy); transformational leadership (Bass); learning organization (Senge); reframing organizations (Bolman and Deal); TQM (Deming); synergistic leadership theory (Irby, Brown, Duff, and Trautman); values and ethics (Hodgkinson, Stefkovich, Shapiro, Beck, and Starratt); gender, race/ethnicity, and class (Gilligan, Nieto, Delpit, Shakeshaft, Grogan, Brunner, Tallero, Irby, Brown, Skria, Ortiz, Marshall, Lomotey, Jackson, Pounder, Mertz, Dillard, Rossman); critical theory and postmodernism (Greenfield, Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard, Giroux, Bates, McLaren, Foster, English, Capper, Maxcy, Scheurich, Dantley, West, Young, Larson, Furman, Anderson, Shields, Lather, Freire)	

FIGURE 1—1 Open Systems Model



kinds of information utilized by the school or school district.

### Transformation Process

The school administrator's job involves combining and coordinating these various resources to attain the school's or school district's goals, that is, learning for *all*. Ideally, students are transformed by the school system into educated graduates, who then contribute to the environment. How do school administrators achieve this? Work of some kind is done in the system to produce output. The system *adds value added* to the work in process. This transformation process includes the internal operation of the school or school district and its system of operational management. Some components of the system of operational management include the technical competence of school administrators and other personnel, including their decision-making and communication skills, their plans of operation, and their ability to cope with change. Activities performed by school administrators and other personnel within the organization's structure will affect the school district's outputs.

### Outputs

The school administrator's job is to secure and use inputs from the environment, transform them—while considering external variables—to produce outputs. In school organizations, outputs are the attainment of the *goals* or *objectives* of the school district and are represented by the products, results, outcomes, or accomplishments of the system. Although the kinds of outputs will vary

with a specific school, they usually include one or more of the following: student achievement, teacher performance, growth levels of students and teachers, student dropout rates, employee turnover, student and employee absenteeism, employee–management relations, school–community relations, student attitudes toward school, and employee job satisfaction.

### Feedback

These outputs provide feedback data to the system. Feedback is crucial to the success of the school operation. Negative feedback, for example, can be used to correct deficiencies in the transformation process or the inputs or both, which in turn will have an effect on the school's future outputs.

### Environment

The environment surrounding the school or school district includes the social, political, and economic forces that impinge on the organization. The environment in the open systems model takes on added significance today in a climate of policy accountability. The social, political, and economic contexts in which school administrators work are marked by pressures at the local, state, and federal levels. Thus, school administrators today find it necessary to manage and develop “internal” operations while concurrently monitoring the environment and anticipating and responding to “external” demands.

Since the enactment of ESSA and its immediate predecessor, NCLB, education has been near the top of the national political agenda. The federal law



nationalized the discussion concerning the well-being of public schooling in America. At the time the report was released and subsequently, there was concern with an achievement gap in America (Darling-Hammond, 2010a, 2010b; DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Karhanek, 2010; T. C. Howard, 2020; Murphy, 2010; Paige, 2011; Teranishi, Nguyen, Alcantar, & Curammeng, 2020). These academic achievement gaps and academic comparisons led many people to conclude that the U.S. public school system was underperforming. With recognition of an achievement gap and the rise of international educational comparisons, states began to focus their policy on standards, accountability, and the improvement of student academic achievement.

The social, political, and economic forces that impinge on schools are not all state and national, however. Local school administrators also face a number of challenges that are exclusively local in nature, such as bond referenda, difficult school boards, and teacher unions. These local political issues can at times confound state-mandated policies. Some examples follow. Principals often face mandated programs that do not meet the changing demographics of their student population. Teachers are often bound by union contracts that conflict with the norms of their particular school. Superintendents are expected to respond to federal mandates even though resources are scarce. Zero-tolerance policies may require expelling a student even though it may not be in that student's best interest to miss school for an extended period of time. And education leaders are faced with ongoing pressures to show good results on state-mandated achievement tests while at the same time dealing with a growing number of management duties, such as budgeting, personnel hiring, labor relations, and site committees resulting from school-based management legislation.

## The Learning Organization

In recent years, organization theorists have extended the open systems model by adding a “brain” to the “living organization.” Today school administrators are reading and hearing a great deal about learning organizations. Peter Senge (1990, 2006), a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, popularized the concept of learning organization in his best-selling book *The Fifth Discipline*.

A **learning organization** is a strategic commitment to capture and share learning in the organization for the benefit of individuals, teams, and the organization. It does this through alignment and the collective capacity to sense and interpret a changing environment, to

input new knowledge through continuous learning and change, to embed this knowledge in systems and practices, and to transform this knowledge into outputs.

Senge defines learning organizations as “organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free and where people are continually learning how to learn together” (p. 3). Senge describes a model of five interdependent disciplines necessary for an organization to seriously pursue learning. He identifies systems thinking as the “fifth discipline” because he believes that thinking systemically is the pivotal lever in the learning and change process. Brief definitions of Senge's principles follow.

- *Systems thinking*: A conceptual framework that sees all parts as interrelated and affecting each other
- *Personal mastery*: A process of personal commitment to vision, excellence, and lifelong learning
- *Shared vision*: Sharing an image of the future you want to realize together
- *Team learning*: The process of learning collectively; the idea that two brains are smarter than one
- *Mental models*: Deeply ingrained assumptions that influence personal and organizational views and behaviors

The five disciplines work together to create the learning organization. A metaphor to describe this systems theory-based model would be DNA or a hologram. Each is a complex system of patterns, and the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Senge, author of the best-selling book *The Fifth Discipline*, has written a companion book directly focused on education. In *Schools That Learn*, Senge and colleagues (2012) argue that teachers, administrators, and other school stakeholders must learn how to build their own capacity; that is, they must develop the capacity to learn. From Senge et al.'s perspective, real improvement will occur only if people responsible for implementation design the change itself. He argues that schools can be re-created, made vital, and renewed not by fiat or command, and not by regulation, but by embracing the principles of the learning organization.

Senge et al. make a powerful argument regarding the need for a systems approach and learning orientation.

They provide a historical perspective on educational systems. Specifically, they detail “industrial age” assumptions about learning: that children are deficient and schools should fix them, that learning is strictly an intellectual enterprise, that everyone should learn in the same way, that classroom learning is distinctly different from that occurring outside of school, and that some kids are smart while others are not. They further assert that schools are run by specialists who maintain control, that knowledge is inherently fragmented, that schools teach some kind of objective truth, and that learning is primarily individualistic and competition accelerates learning. Senge et al. suggest that these assumptions

about learning and the nature and purpose of schooling reflect deeply embedded cultural beliefs that must be considered, and in many cases directly confronted, if schools are to develop the learning orientation necessary for improvement.

Through learning, people make meaning of their experience and of information. Learning helps people to create and manage knowledge that builds a system’s intellectual capital. Karen Watkins and Victoria Marsick (1999) have developed a model of the learning organization around seven action imperatives that speak to the kind of initiatives that are implemented in learning organizations. (See Administrative Advice 1–1.)

## ADMINISTRATIVE ADVICE 1–1

### THE SEVEN ACTION IMPERATIVES OF A LEARNING ORGANIZATION

The seven action imperatives can be interpreted in terms of what must change to help schools become learning organizations.

- *Create Continuous Learning Opportunities.* This means that learning is ongoing, strategically used, and grows out of the work itself.
- *Promote Inquiry and Dialogue.* The key to this imperative is a culture in which people ask questions freely, are willing to put difficult issues on the table for discussion, and are open to giving and receiving feedback at all levels.
- *Encourage Collaboration and Team Learning.* The relevant action imperative for this level focuses on the spirit of collaboration and the skills that undergird the effective use of teams. People in schools frequently form groups, but they are not always encouraged to bring what they know to the table.
- *Create Systems to Capture and Share Learning.* Technology-based strategies that are used for this purpose focus on the use of software such as Lotus Notes or Microsoft Access to capture ideas across dispersed teams and divisions, and computerized documentation of changes in a particular area.
- *Empower People Toward a Collective Vision.* The primary criteria for success with this action imperative are the degree of alignment throughout the organization around the vision and the degree to which everyone in the organization actively participates in creating and implementing the changes that follow from the vision.
- *Connect the Organization to Its Environment.* Schools must function at both global and local levels. Schools can use benchmarking to see what other schools are doing to achieve excellence and to solve similar problems and can scan their environment for new trends by using computer databases. Technology enables people in schools to move beyond their walls.
- *Provide Strategic Leadership for Learning.* Leaders who model learning are key to the learning organization. They think strategically about how to use learning to move the organization in new directions.

## PRO/CON DEBATE

### TRAINING SCHOOL LEADERS

Xerox's CEO David Kearns said that schools are admirably suited to the economy and culture of the 1950s and spectacularly unsuited to the high-tech future of the next century. He believes that education is big business and the same theories that guide industrial executives are the ones school leaders need to solve education's problems.

**Question:** Is the management training provided by business and industry for their leaders the best source of information and skill development for principals and superintendents?

#### Arguments PRO

1. Organizational theory is generic. Its essential concepts are applicable in all organizations.
2. Most organizational theory taught in educational administration courses was generated by researchers in the industrial setting. Industrial management thought leads the way. Why not do away with intermediaries?
3. Business and school leaders need to work more closely together. If they share the same training, think about the same ideas, and speak the same language, it will improve the collegial relationship between schools and the communities they serve.
4. Management training is current and tested. Industry has invested heavily in the development of management-training programs. If that resource is being offered to schools, it would be foolish not to take advantage of the offer.

5. Management trainers understand organizational theory well and can teach adult learners in all types of organizations to apply theory to their settings.

#### Arguments CON

1. Business is private enterprise; schools are public service agencies. It would be a dangerous mistake to borrow management theory wholesale.
2. Many aspects of management theory do not apply in educational settings. It takes several years to adapt management theory into educational administrative theory. Educational researchers play an important role in sifting and applying organizational theory.
3. The scions of industry are one consumer group for schools. Educators' relationship to them is important but no more important than the relationship with the leaders of other consumer groups such as parents, colleges, and civic agencies. While educators should be open to feedback from clients, they should not be co-opted by them.
4. Management training is behaviorist and outcome-driven. It does not consider the social and psychological needs of the teacher as much as the profits of the organization.
5. Management trainers understand profit-driven organizations but do not understand the norms and values of educators.

## SUMMARY

1. The practice of educational administration has changed in response to historical conditions and theoretical developments.
2. To an increasing degree, educational administration is characterized by using theory to explain and predict phenomena in educational organizations.
3. The functions of theories include identification of relevant phenomena, classification of phenomena, formulation of constructs, summarization of phenomena, prediction of phenomena, and revelation of needed research.
4. Since the early 1900s, four major perspectives on administration have evolved: classical organization theory, the human relations approach, the behavioral science approach, and the post-behavioral science era.
5. Three contemporary extensions of administrative perspectives are emergent nontraditional perspectives, systems theory, and the learning organization.
6. Emergent nontraditional perspectives have spawned research in ethics and values; gender, race/ethnicity, and class; and critical theory and postmodernism.
7. Systems theory is usually discussed in terms of inputs, a transformation process, outputs, feedback, and environment.
8. The learning organization concept has received much attention since the publication of Peter Senge's book *The Fifth Discipline*. Senge provides five interacting principles that constitute a learning organization: systems thinking, personal mastery, shared vision, team learning, and mental models.

## KEY TERMS

theory 3	nomothetic dimension 10	constructivism 18
classical organizational theory 5	idiographic dimension 10	social justice 19
scientific management 5	contingency theories 10	positivism 22
administrative management 6	situational leadership theory 11	subjectivist/interpretivist 22
human relations approach 8	transformational leadership 11	open systems theory 23
Hawthorne studies 8	post-behavioral science era 11	system 23
behavioral science approach 9	school improvement 12	learning organization 26
cooperative system 10	democratic community 15	
fusion process 10	critical thinking 17	

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is theory?
2. What are the functions of theories?
3. What major developments in administrative thought have evolved in the field of educational administration?
4. How have emergent nontraditional perspectives influenced the study and practice of educational administration?
5. How can open systems theory be used to diagnose problems in school operation?
6. How can the learning organization be used to achieve school success?



## SUGGESTED READINGS

Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). *The flat world and education: How America's commitment to equity will determine our future*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press. *The Flat World and Education* offers an eye-opening wake-up call concerning America's future and vividly illustrates what the United States needs to do to build a system of high-achieving and equitable schools that ensures every child the right to learn.

English, F. W. (Ed.). (2015). *The SAGE guide to educational leadership and management*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. This guidebook reviews how leadership was redefined by management and organizational theory in its quest to become scientific, then looks forward to promising theories, concepts, and practices that show potential for development and application.

Gay, G. (2018). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press. This award-winning text is relevant for today's diverse population, including new research on culturally responsive teaching, and a focus on a broader range of racial and ethnic groups.

Glickman, C., & Mette, I. M. (2020). *The essential renewal of America's schools: A leadership guide for democratizing schools from the inside out*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press. Glickman and Mette provide a powerful set of guidelines that will lead to true school renewal.

Howard, T. C. (2020). *Why race and culture matter in schools: Closing the achievement gap in America's classrooms* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press. This bestseller identifies innovative programs with evidence-based results on eliminating disparities in student outcomes and includes strategies to help school leaders create more equitable learning environments.

Marzano, R. J. (2017). *The new art and science of teaching*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree. Robert Marzano identifies classroom practices that generally increase student achievement: identifying similarities and differences; summarizing and note taking; receiving reinforcement for effort and recognition for achievement; doing homework and practicing; using nonlinguistic representations; learning cooperatively; setting objectives and testing hypotheses; and using cues, questions, and advance organizers. Regardless of whether or not teachers teach to standards, these classroom practices work well.

Teranishi, R. T., Nguyen, B. M. D., & Curammeng, E. R. (2020). *Measuring race: Why disaggregating data matters for addressing educational inequality*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press. This book is a must-read for anyone interested in new ways to critically analyze evidence-based strategies that remove racial and ethnic barriers to achieving greater equity and equality.