Blackboards and Bootstraps
Revisioning Education and Schooling

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Blackboards and Bootstraps: Revisioning education and schooling contributes to an international conversation about public education that, in recent decades, has been attenuated if not silenced by advocates of neoliberalism, marketisation and neocorporatism. Written for a wide audience, this book is not a manifesto for the twenty-first century. It is more of an invitation than a blueprint. In drawing a distinction between education and schooling, it identifies, recovers and explores many ideas about education and schooling that are no less important to the practice of the present than they were to the pedagogues of the past.

The introduction questions the role of schooling in the future trajectory of spaceship earth. The remainder of the book considers these questions by revisiting a range of ideas that underpin current practice. It launches itself by returning to the sixteenth century, a time when the organisation and conduct of modern schooling took shape around a new set of terms – syllabus, class, curriculum and didactics – that, in their Latin forms not only became prominent in the international educational lexicon but also survived into the twentieth century. By the First World War, there was an international awareness that schooling is not the same as education. Schooling originally for the land-owning, mercantile and commercial elites of the sixteenth century had only partially engaged with the visions of democratic schooling voiced in the eighteenth century Enlightenment and the subsequent extension of suffrage and national and sexual liberation movements.

Impressed by the universalistic achievements of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, the authors raise the prospect of a new educational humanism in the globalised world of the twenty-first century.
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During the sixteenth century the organisation and conduct of modern schooling took shape around a new set of terms. Latin forms of the words syllabus, class, curriculum and didactics gradually became prominent in the international educational lexicon. Despite being repeatedly drawn in different directions by religious and national tensions, schooling maintained the same terms and supporting framework until the 20th century. In essence, schooling was conceived as an institution based on a map, a journey and a destination. It was designed to guide learners along different pathways across the map of inherited knowledge, with each designated pathway linked to the realisation of human values that included personal discipline, heavenly salvation and/or collective progress.

Modern schooling, therefore, originated in the European Renaissance. It took shape as a post-medieval phenomenon, a response to the move from feudalism to capitalism and to the spread of ideas about secularization, rationalization and industrialization. As a result, schooling has served as an enduring witness to both the sophistications and hesitations of modernity.

But, as this book also maintains, inherited forms of schooling were subjected to fresh challenges in the twentieth century. These arose from the recognition that education is not the same as schooling (as indicated by calls for de-schooling and free-schooling), that schoolteaching has an uneasy relationship with personal agency (as indicated in the claim that every school-based learner offers themselves up as just another brick in the wall); and, not least, from the recognition that the centralisation and globalisation of schooling undermines the identities (cultural, regional etc.) of different communities.

Such challenges not only questioned the status of schooling, they also fostered a sense that modern schooling has exhausted its original purposes. An agenda that took shape 500 years previously was beginning to wear out. It had outlived, that is, the aspirations of the emergent, urban mercantile and commercial classes of the sixteenth century; and it had remained disengaged from the visions of education voiced in the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. The separatist and elitist educational aspirations of the Renaissance had been met and repeatedly sustained yet, at the same time, they became difficult to reconcile with new ideas about public education that, from the eighteenth century, accompanied the extension of suffrage and the successes of national and sexual liberation movements.

This book arises from a collaboration, a dialogue conducted over 20 years which has been recreated in this form to nurture and widen conversations about education and schooling. Despite the range our own conversation, we resist the claim that we have moulded a magic bullet or uncovered a set of hidden tablets. This work neither outlines a ballistic trajectory nor offers a policy manifesto. It has been
FOREWORD

prepared, instead, as an accessible and concise contribution to an international conversation that, in recent decades, has been attenuated, if not silenced, by advocates of neoliberalism, marketisation and neocorporatism.

We have had difficulty in arriving at a title for our work. For its working title this manuscript was known as Closing the Gap between Education and Schooling but, as draft followed draft, this title ceased to be a distillation of our two main ideas: first, that the distinction between education and schooling is problematic and, secondly, that clarification of differences between education and schooling can be sought in the diversity of the historical record.

How, then, can these two ideas be linked in a title acceptable to its authors and attractive to readers and publishers? There is a sense that this book is based upon dipping into the historical record, reconstituting its contents and recovering something to think about for the future. It is also about re-examining, recasting and refreshing an enduring sense of educational history with a view to revising or, perhaps more accurately, re-visioning current perspectives on education and schooling.

Writing at the beginning of the twenty-first century has also raised other problems. We recognise, for instance, that our dialogue is incomplete. Our hope is that it fosters reflection, reaction, even rejection. Equally, our observations are not merely composed through the narrowness and obscurity of a specialist language and lexicon. We believe that, as human beings, we are all citizen-educationists now; and that, accordingly, we all share a democratic mandate to engage ourselves with words, ideas and connections that help us to imagine the global futures of education and schooling.

As twenty-first century authors, too, we also recognise that these futures will be shaped by new forms of online communication and conversation. In particular, two processes have recently changed the relationship between authors and readers: the international digitisation of library and museum holdings, and the growing call for the transparency afforded by open access sources. We try to respect these changes in the chapters that follow. The original dates are usually given for the publication of our sources while, in some cases, a second year is given to indicate a more recent republication of the same source. At the same time, digitisation has meant that much of our source material is available online, including texts published through international initiatives (e.g. Project Gutenberg). Equally, much material published by international organisation such as the United Nations is also available online and may not, therefore, be included in our bibliography. Nevertheless, all dictionary and biographical entries have been sourced from the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (1964 printing) and Chambers Biographical Dictionary (1974).

Insofar as this book has been in preparation over several years, we have struggled to keep up with changing events and the changing map of knowledge. We recognise, therefore, that we have been unable to incorporate many insights generated by our predecessors and peers. Nevertheless, we thank those whose work has prompted our own thinking and, with due humility, dedicate this book to those
whose contribution we may have internalised but have visibly failed to acknowledge or incorporate.

For their verbal support (which can never receive due recognition in a bibliography), we would also like to thank the following who, individually and collectively, have repeatedly encouraged us to revisit, re-examine and reconceptualise earlier efforts to understand schooling past and present: Ana Albertin, Norberto Bottani, Waltraud Boxall, Wilfred Carr, Phil Freeman, José Gimeno, Keith Hoskin, Joaquin Irastorza, Alison Jones, Stephen Kemmis, Ingrid Nilsson, Yngve Nordkvelle, Daniel Kallos, Lisbeth Lundahl, Tom Popkewitz, Fazal Rivzi, Doris Santos, M. Luisa Sanz, Alejandro Sanvisens, Jurjo Torres, Mirian Jorge Warde, Gaby Weiner, Jack Whitehead and Lyn Yates.

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CHAPTER 1

SPACESHIP EARTH AS A GLOBAL COMMUNITY

For those who want to learn, the obstacles can often be the authority of those who teach. (M. de Montaigne, 1580/1993, p. 43)

Concern over the earth’s limited resources is sometimes linked with the dynamic idea of spaceship earth. At least as far back as the biblical legend of Noah’s Ark, voyagers have chosen various means of protecting themselves. Noah’s boat-building and rescue operation was designed to avoid the flooding that, according to the Bible, accompanied the Earth’s creation. Since then, other voyagers have continued to worry about the state of the earth. The image of spaceship earth revisits Noah’s questions: where are we going? What preparations do we need to make? And how do we get there? If spaceship earth is to serve as a cosmic ark, these questions still demand creative answers.

This book has a similar outlook. It recognises the challenges faced by schooling as it struggles to survive in the fluid, if not turbulent, economic and political circumstances of the beginning of the twenty-first century. Such a challenge is not parochial; it has become global. It has deepened the difficulties that arose as nineteenth – and twentieth-century politicians wrestled with accommodating the expansion of schooling. But how can these problems be overcome? Is it possible, for instance, to look back and learn lessons from the past? Or is it the case that extrapolation from the accepted patterns of the past has been negated by new circumstances equivalent to the unprecedented rising tides of global warming? Should the reform initiatives of the past be seen, therefore, merely as bygones that, in their turn, have become detritus littering the historical record? Indeed, should this debris be disregarded, left merely to the curiosity of archaeologists and antiquarians?

Or is it possible to look elsewhere? Is there another starting point for discussing education and schooling? Is it possible to look beyond the transient initiatives of the past, those widely-publicised or remembered reforms that subsequently broke up and disappeared after drifting into the doldrums of popular indifference. Such reforms are easily forgotten until, perhaps, they are resurrected and reassembled by later generations. To avoid this repetitious fate, we choose to start not so much with the past as with the fundamental processes represented by the enduring questions: what is education and what is schooling?

Past discussion of education and schooling has been suffused with ideas about what it is to be human. At different times, discussion has revolved around virtue,
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salvation, diversity and progress. What are the distinguishing features of a good human being? How can they be saved from original sin? How do they differ from each other? And how can schooling be steered to assure human progress? In turn, such amorphous ideas have underwritten frameworks of educational practice. Although latent and usually transient, these frameworks can also be excavated, like the traces of former life forms derived from DNA extracted by archaeologists from bone fragments. Educational structures can be discerned in a similar way. They are manifest in traces of educational practice, the scraps and scratchings of human existence left behind as alphabetic and numeric forms of representation, vellum manuscripts, printed texts, school designs, curricula, classrooms, blackboards, desks and examination questions.

But the structures revealed by these traces are never as stable, secure or eternal as their protagonists often presume. Different frameworks, like different forms of upbringing, existed alongside each other; and they cut into, interfered and interrupted each other – as in the tensions that exist between analogue and digital cultures (vinyl recordings versus compact discs), or between musicians who play by ear and those who defer to standardised, five-line notation. One indication of this problem surrounds the use of the label traditional. While educational practices may be celebrated as surviving the test of time, describing them as traditional suggests that they are also slipping outside the boundaries of current practice. Yet even traditional practices must have been new at one time, replacements for even earlier activities.

The open plan school replaced the traditional classroom school which, in its turn, replaced the traditional one-room school – and so on back to the peripatetic (i.e. wandering) teacher whose ultimate archetype, also known as the wanderer, was Aristotle. In Aristotle’s case, however, his wandering occurred while he taught in the Lyceum in Athens, a public meeting place where aspiring learners gathered to learn not only from Aristotle but also from other resources available on that site (e.g. library, gymnasium).

Scrutiny of education and schooling is unnecessarily constrained if it is reduced to a narrative about how the new replaces the traditional, and about their relative merits. History is not a sequence of episodes – or initiatives – that neatly succeed one another in the pursuit of progress. It can also be regarded as the analysis of change. What emerges from succeeding snapshots, taken through time, is more like a kaleidoscope or collage than a synthesis. Ideas and practices are consciously or unconsciously borrowed and reconfigured from earlier social forms. And it is this kaleidoscope and its contributing elements that must be accounted for in the story of schooling.

EDUCATION AND SCHOOLING

Education has existed since the beginnings of the human species, if not earlier. Long before their lives are touched by schooling, animals – including humans –
have learned by observation and trial and error. That is, they have learned to modify their behaviour, for example, by embracing routines, regimes or disciplines demonstrated by other members of their species. As Stringer notes in *The Origin of Our Species* (2012):

The best strategy for the average person in a variable environment might be to look around and rely on imitation, rather than individual learning. Through imitation and peer-group feedback, populations could adapt well beyond the abilities of an isolated genius whose ideas might never get beyond his or her cave, or might be lost through a sudden death. (p. 242)

In these terms, education embraces the shared, yet diverse, processes whereby animals, including humans, identify, accumulate, refine, conserve and circulate — or recycle — their experience. Experience is recycled through forms of communication — or languages — shared among species members. Whatever form these languages take, audible bird calls, visible body movements (e.g. among bees) or the high-frequency emissions of bats, communication fosters the sharing of information. Human beings, however, seem to have more elaborate forms of *communication*, something that is not only shared but also stimulates inside-the-head thinking. As a result, *reflection, cognition* and *knowing* have become fundamental elements of human learning. In the process, prior experience is transformed into something else (e.g. tales about growing crops, making pots and preserving foodstuffs). Experience is passed on to others who subject it to further cycles of creative transformation. Experience, therefore, can exist in a variety of forms. It can take a verbal form (e.g. ‘this is how you make a cake’); it can take a neurological form (e.g. memories of cake making), or it can take a material form (e.g. ‘here is one of grandmother’s cakes’). Taken together, these transformed versions of experience also provide definitions of learning and teaching. The accumulation and codification of experience is the basis of *learning*; whereas the recoding and transmission of experience is the basis of *teaching*.

Education, therefore, is a process that not only embraces teaching and learning but also accumulation, codification and transmission. Throughout human history, these three activities have also become associated with material objects. For instance, experience may be accumulated, codified and transmitted as notches on a stick (i.e. a form of census). It may be codified as a work song (e.g. shanties sung by sailors). It may be reduced to a mnemonic for remembering the colours of the rainbow, a memorial for remembering the dead, a series of binary digits (bits), or a metaphor (life is a bowl of cherries, or can of worms). In an extreme case, attempts are made to accumulate and codify the sum total of human experience in a multi-volume encyclopaedia (literally, all-round, systematic accumulations of knowledge).

Moreover, there are always two sides to any process of codification. Initially, it entails the reduction of experience to a form that is different from the original experience, as when events are captured on film. In turn, this codification — as a
deviation from the original – always interferes with the recovery of the original experience, as when subsequent observers of a film disagree about the authenticity, content and significance of the original experience. Communication, therefore, is always a risky and error-prone endeavour. The search for faithful, high fidelity transmission is utopian, a search for an ideal that is always just beyond reach. It is a truism of communications theory that any ‘signal’ is always liable to interference from ‘noise’ associated with its medium of transmission. Accordingly, the quality of telephone communication is affected by interference related to the copper wire, fibre-optic cable or communication satellite, those media that bridge the distance between transmitter and receiver. Knowledge may be codified, for instance, into a series of bound volumes yet such experience is also bounded by the limitations of this paper-based medium of transmission. Encyclopaedia, for instance, are always constrained by the fact that they are repositories of yesterday’s knowledge and thus consistently out of date.

Even the fifteenth-century scholars who compiled the earliest texts known as encyclopaedia were troubled by the constant extension of knowledge. Recently, however, efforts have been made to overcome this problem through the creation of encyclopaedia that are constantly being compiled and updated. Based on websites known as wikis, a prefix derived from an Hawaiian word meaning ‘fast’ or ‘quick’, the earliest versions of Wikipedia appeared in mid-1990s. Wikis, therefore, are designed to enhance the accumulation, codification and transmission of experience. They encourage users to add, modify, or delete content. Yet, insofar as a wikipedia is still a codification, it is no less controversial than a printed encyclopaedia. While presenting itself as being perpetually up to date and responsive to the changing map of knowledge, it is still routinely open to challenge and amendment in the light of claimed inaccuracies and misinterpretations.

In this respect, *Wikipedia* is no different from any other encyclopaedia. Its entries are subject to the same human frailties (i.e. codification vulnerabilities) as any other codification of experience. Nevertheless, like all other codified encyclopaedia, wikipedia exists and offers a platform for cognition and communication. It serves, that is, as a resource for another fundamental educational process: self-instruction. Human beings can accumulate experience through observation – watching others – and through consulting the records (or codifications) left by earlier practitioners. Such learning, however, is intrinsically inefficient. It is sometimes described as *bootstrapping*, a self-sustaining process where humans ascend the tree of knowledge without external support (i.e. by using the image of a strap wrapped around the tree). Bootstrapping, however, is an ambiguous term because, in the example already given, external support is provided by the strap. Nevertheless, like the analogous imagery of the skyhook, bootstrapping highlights the general problem that any learner faces. What can serve as a strap or hook; and where can such devices be found?

The problem of external support in self-instruction can also be expressed in terms of two riddles: (1) If learners already know what they are looking for, why
are they looking? And (2) if they don’t know what they are looking for, how will they know when they have found it? These hindrances seem impenetrable. They invite despair, encouraging learners to excuse themselves with the equally paradoxical claim ‘it’s never too late to give up’. Yet these riddles, described in Plato’s writings as *Meno’s paradox*, can be resolved with the parallel assumption that learning can be steered through intrinsic motivation, something that serves as a strap or hook. From this perspective, learning is as much about curiosity and the will to learn as it is about achieving goals. The journey (seeking) is as important as the destination (finding). Active seeking allows, if not includes, reflection on past experience. And this reflection assists in the re-evaluation of old knowledge. Thinking or reflecting becomes the strap, skyhook or codification that enables learners to reach new heights of understanding about past experience.

Moreover, the ultimate goals of learning need not be identified in advance. Instead, they can be allowed to unfold during the journey. The journey provides its own destinations, in the same sense that the longest journey always starts with a single step. As it unfolds, step by step, the purposes of the journey are progressively brought into focus. Learners are motivated because they believe that they will learn something valuable through reworking and recoding their earlier experience. Gradually, for instance, they become able to regard their original problem in a new light, reconsidering it as a fresh opportunity, a potential solution. What is learnt along the way rarely matches the original expectations. Besides being pointers on a crude navigational compass, the successive understandings of learning expose new problems, new horizons and new challenges. From this perspective, the course of learning is unpredictable. It is an expression or outcome of innate (or species-specific) human motivation and, what amounts to the same thing, human creativity. Learning, therefore, is an inevitable consequence of human frailty, of being a human. Coding problems that intervene when humans focus on a chosen and immediate task may make learning difficult but, when overcome, also become launching pads for further learning.

When seen from this perspective, educational processes are unregulated, except by the constraints that, in different ways, shape every human life. Learning from experience is a hit and miss affair. It is always eccentric, irregular and aberrant. Disruption or deviance arises from the humanity of those who participate in the accumulation, codification and transmission of experience. Participants, for instance, are easily drawn to explore alternative courses of action such that the eventual outcomes may bear little relationship to the formulation of their original goal. The discovery of the non-stick properties of teflon, for instance, was a by-product of research into the creation of cheap, non-poisonous and non-explosive refrigerants that were safe to use in domestic refrigerators. While such manifestations of humanity – or human frailty – might be deemed intrinsic weaknesses in the make-up of *Homo sapiens*, such prevarication or deviation is profoundly educational. Uncertainty of outcome allows education to be transcendental. Codification may disrupt the transmission of experience, but it also
has the unintended consequence of enabling humans to transcend, climb over or go beyond their previous ways of living. Education, therefore, serves as the skyhook of human liberation.

By contrast, schooling has a different purpose – the elimination of human frailty. It relies on the adoption of bounded educational routines that are assumed not only to have predictable outcomes but also to be repeatable or transferable from setting to setting. For these reasons, such routines take on a life of their own. They become associated with specialist personnel (e.g. schoolteachers), specialist activities (e.g. catechesis) and specialist settings (e.g. language laboratories).

Yet this apparent contrast between education and schooling is an oversimplification. It is based on stereotypes – polar opposites that exist more in the minds of the authors than in reality. As already hinted, it is incorrect to pose regulated schooling against unregulated education. And much of the rest of this book scrutinises this dualism. As we see it, education is not the same as schooling. But it is not easy to distinguish one from the other. For instance, the lexicons of education and schooling overlap – at least in the English language. Politicians speak of the ‘education system’ when, in fact, they are referring to systems of schooling. And this conflation of education and schooling fails to account for other educational institutions like the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) whose mission is to ‘inform, educate and entertain’. And what about universities? Should ‘higher education’ be more accurately described as ‘higher schooling’? And what response is relevant when someone from the USA asks ‘what school (i.e. university) did you attend’?

As schooling emerged in the historical record (see later chapters), it took on many words that previously animated educational discussions. Pedagogue is a case in point. It can denote a personal tutor or upbringer, thereby falling within the lexicon of educational practice; or it can also be a synonym for schoolteacher – in which case it falls within the lexicon of schooling. Insofar as the former senses – tutor and upbringer – denote someone who leads out, they are much closer to education than schooling. Likewise, the word school is much older than the sense used in recent centuries. Scholē in classical Greek referred to leisure, a time for human recreation (or re-creation), something that was seen as essential to the pursuit of eudaemonia, human flourishing or, as it is usually characterised, the good life. But nowadays such activities would, in English, be outside- or after-school activities, more usually described as ‘adult education’. In a sense linked to Meno’s paradox, leisure activities promoting human flourishing relied on intrinsic motivation. They were driven, therefore, by ‘purposiveness without purpose’ (Skidelsky & Skidelsky, 2012, p.166). And insofar as a life of leisure associated with the Athenian Lyceum included discussion, study and reflection, it is no surprise that it is sometimes remembered as the archetypical school.

As indicated in the next chapter, more recent uses of school can relate to places (e.g. a driving school), groups of people (a school of thought) and a set of proceedings (e.g. schooling learners, including horses). In these respects it is
similar to the words *church* which can also refer to place (e.g. ‘Church of
St Peter’s, Rome’), persons (e.g. ‘Church of Rome’) or to proceedings (e.g. to
‘church’, meaning to take someone or something to church in order to give thanks).

While it is true, from a chronological perspective, that schooling came later than
education, it is an over-simplification to define schooling merely as a formalised
version of education. Such a convergence relies on the erroneous assumption that
education and schooling are merely different versions of the same activity which
merely lie at different points on the same continuum. In practice, their relationship
is more complex. It is better to see them as distinct yet overlapping phenomena.
Both, that is, are concerned with reworking human experience but whereas
education is about the recycling of experience, schooling’s primary concern is with
the distribution of experience. Its organisers assume they have the power to shape
learners in particular ways and, as important, in ways that separate them from other
learners. But such an argument misses a crucial point: education and schooling are
processes that can be mediated in multiple ways. Some humans may experience
education as a version of schooling (e.g. whenever their parents act like
schoolteachers), while others can readily turn their schooling into a source of
personal empowerment and liberation, thus enjoying the motivational fruits of
education rather than schooling.

Another way to distinguish schooling from education is to reflect on the
difference between teachers and schoolteachers. In both cases, teaching involves
the recoding as well as the transmission of experience. Human beings act as
teachers whenever they try to explain and/or demonstrate the current value of past
experience. In education, this mediating agent need not be a schoolteacher. It can
be a parent, friend or even an interested bystander (e.g. an older member of the
same community). In schooling, however, mediators are usually implicated in
particular regimes of power and authority. Schoolteachers, that is, have a
prescribed social role. They act as agents for other authorities (e.g. church and
state). Thus, the written history of schooling is as much a narrative about the
exercise of power and authority, as it is an account of an agency of empowerment
and liberation. Such is the kaleidoscope of schooling and education. Schooling for
some may be education for others.

Schooling began to take its modern form in Europe between 1500 and 1650. The
defining feature of its origins is not only that it was associated with specific
regimes of power and authority but also with a specific lexicon (syllabus, class,
curriculum and didactics) which gave substance to the enactment of these regimes.
The general aim of schooling during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was
secular. It had worldly purposes that were not identical to the concerns of religious
authorities. Its main aim was to increase and extend the production of (male)
schoolteachers, lawyers, bankers and merchants who, in their adult lives, would
define, administer and re-shape politics and government. Schooling, therefore,
began to play a particular role in the distribution of human experience, one that it
has held ever since. Rooted in urban settings and their associated guild and
community structures, schooling became central to the changing political and moral fabric of the modern era. It became the focus of ideas and policies relating to the allocation and, by the same token, the withholding of human resources. Schooling, therefore, took shape as an institution that, consciously or unconsciously, managed the distribution of difference and inequality.

Modern schooling, therefore, is not the same as education. The role of schoolteachers as mediating agents or go-betweens is more prominent. They are expected to steer the course, journey or pilgrimage that learners are expected to follow. Their task is to take learners from one place to another. Indeed, during the Middle Ages, the Christian life was regarded as a metaphorical pilgrimage. Sermons repeatedly reminded the faithful that their earthly life was merely a temporary displacement from their ultimate destination – the eternal home of heaven. Yet, as Brotton points out in his history of map-making, by the dawn of humanism (viz. the late fourteenth century) the stairway to heaven had begun to broach new pathways. Some children entered through the golden gate whereas others we denied admission or forced to take the back stairs.

Brotton adds that this diversity also had a secular form – in the ‘whole host of new worlds discovered by more prosaic earth-bound travellers’ (2012, pp. 107–108). Travellers who recognised the possibility of multiple pathways included Christopher Columbus who found a new route to the Americas in the 1490s, Vasco de Gama who rounded the Cape of Good Hope in 1498 thereby creating a new route to India, and Ferdinand Magellan whose expedition completed the first circumnavigation of the globe in 1522 (although Magellan died in the process). By the middle of the sixteenth century, then, the birth of modern schooling was confounded by a growing awareness that there might be more than one course of life (curriculum vitae in Latin), a complication that was to deepen in the concurrent reformation of the Christian Church and the contrasting pathways offered by Martin Luther (1483–1546), John Calvin (1509–1564) and the founder of the Jesuits, Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556). The influence of new forms of church and public discipline associated with Lutheranism, Calvinism and the Jesuits seems to have been profound in the early history of schooling. Then (as now) the organisation of schooling included struggles and diversions over pathways and courses.

FOLLOWING A COURSE

This problem of courses, however, was much older than the Reformation. The recurrent cartographic question: ‘what course should be followed?’ had already been raised in Meno’s paradox. The net result is that schoolteachers are expected to follow a prescribed course, even if they are unsure how the chosen course might be organised, steered or completed. They are like mariners who chose to steer by distant stars, well aware that their journey is vulnerable to the vagaries of cloud cover, winds and tides. In its most general formulation, the goal of teaching is to
take the learner ‘somewhere else’, sometimes with the help of a prepared chart (curriculum) and compass bearing (or mission statement). The ultimate educational goal, therefore, is to foster learning rather than the acquisition of knowledge. This goal can also be illustrated within the value framework of the Modern Olympics. Competitors are set goals and schooled into a discipline by their coaches; yet many know they will never reach the winners’ podium. Their goal is more personal – taking part and improving on their personal best. One of the creative team behind the opening ceremony of the London Olympics of 2012 wrote in a similar vein:

Progress is not motivated by money. Progress comes from those who are happy to embark on a course of action without quite knowing where it will lead, without doing a feasibility study, without fear of failure or too much hope of reward. (Boyce, 2012, p. xi)

This general orientation, therefore, is based on the Olympic compass and its cardinal points: swifter, higher, stronger. Indeed, Olympic athletes are scarcely different from Renaissance explorers who left their home ports with the idea of searching for terra incognita (Latin: unknown land), which their cartographer colleagues had previously labelled: ‘here be dragons’!

In the early Middle Ages, Institution-based teachers were an embodiment of their educational goals. ‘I teach what I am’ was their unique selling point. Learners became disciples (followers) of such influential teachers as they imitated, learned and internalised the conduct and activities (or discipline) of their teachers. This instructional framework still survives in fields (e.g. music and ballet) where practices and their practitioners are still identified in terms of their progenitors (e.g. the influence of Sergei Diaghilev (1872–1929) on twentieth century ballet).

By the Renaissance, however, schoolteachers could sell their services as surrogates for other scholars such as the Dutchman, Erasmus (1466–1536), the German, Melanchthon (1497–1560), or the Spaniard, Vives (1492–1540). ‘I teach according to Vives [etc.]’ was how they marketed their services. This was possible because, by then, the writing of notable teachers had begun to circulate in printed form. Schoolteachers and schoolteaching flourished through the emergence of texts, serving as scripts, that could be produced more accurately and circulated more easily than the hand-copied, error-prone manuscripts used by their earlier counterparts. The idea that schoolteachers might merely serve as stand-ins for higher authorities (e.g. Erasmus, Luther) appealed to local communities anxious to set up schools to further their own economic and social aspirations. A local printer/bookseller could easily reprint and/or edit texts to be used by a town-appointed teacher.

Schoolteaching, therefore, grew as a viable occupation but, in the process, schoolteachers became ensnared in a paradoxical role. Through their association with printed texts, they appeared to step back and distance themselves from the transmission process yet, at the same time, they continued to mediate the power and authority embedded in the textbooks that steered their teaching. Compiling
textbooks was never a random process. Their form and content arose from interventions by editors, printers, publishers and booksellers who could be members of the same corporation or family business (see, for instance, Johns’ *The Nature of the Book*, 1998; and Grafton’s discussion of Renaissance ‘correctors’, 2011).

Such textbooks provide an example of how experience can be mediated by material artefacts as well as human beings. Every educational artefact is a potential source of interference. Yet despite its material form, such mediation also remains profoundly human, if only because artefacts have, themselves, been shaped by human hands and minds. Thus, even if schooling is envisaged as a closed system with clear goals and anticipated outcomes, its operation – at the hands of humans – cannot be assumed to follow the blueprint or expectations of its designers. Despite being subject to the discipline of an ordered framework, learners will seek to realise their own aspirations, educational or otherwise. Deeds rarely match the terms of their stipulation. Schooling may be designed to institutionalise difference but, as suggested above, it may also foster outbreaks of creativity.

**TEACHER AUTHORITY**

The intervention of schoolteachers in the accumulation and transmission of experience became problematic in the Renaissance. Many of them had taken up different positions in Reformation debates. One of the lasting distinctions (and tensions) that arose at this time was between *curriculum* and *didactics*. In its simplest form, curriculum refers to the *what* of schoolteaching while didactics relates to the *how* of schoolteaching. But, together, curriculum and didactics embrace a double codification. Mediation and codification of experience to create a curriculum runs in tandem with the mediation and codification subsequently performed by schoolteachers. This double codification may operate in harmony – as when schoolteachers accept the values embedded in their curriculum – or it may result in tension, as when schoolteachers wish to revise the mediations and codifications that shaped their received curriculum. Schoolteachers, therefore, have an authority which can be deployed in many ways and for many purposes.

Tensions arose because both curriculum and didactics were acknowledged as instruments of control. If curricula (courses of life) are subject to centralist control, control over didactics was equally within reach of the authority of schoolteachers. Historically, the authority of schoolteachers was underpinned by legislation (e.g. decrees from popes, monarchs, parliaments and town governments). In turn, this delegated authority underpinned schoolteachers’ practice, life-styles, social status and standards of living. But schoolteachers’ authority, however, is not only established by legislation. It can also be derived from the endorsements of students, parents and colleagues. The worth of this consumer-derived knowledge was influential in the Middle Ages as scholars were encouraged by word of mouth to
travel across Europe to centres of teaching and learning such as the universities of Bologna, Paris and Oxford.

More recently, other currencies of valuation have emerged. These include licences provided by church authorities, valuations provided by training institutions (e.g. certificates of merit), and judgements offered in school inspectors’ reports. Together, such valuations by participants, practitioners and government agencies generate a multidimensional account of each teacher’s background experience, recent performance and current charisma. Such accounts may be coherent and reducible to a single scale of values; or they may display irreconcilable tensions as when, for instance, parents’ views of a caring school conflicts with inspectors’ notions of a performing school.

Another indication of the authority of schoolteachers is the way they are regarded not as workers but as professionals. Like many terms in the educational lexicon, this label has its own history. A professional is someone who has something to profess, such that making a profession is analogous to making a confession. Originally, it entailed a public display of beliefs which, in turn, gave professors forms of authority of the kind associated with members of a religious order. In return, the profession of schoolteaching could be considered a vocation, a calling from God. Indeed, as indicated in the next chapter, schoolteaching emerged within the training activities of medieval Christian cathedrals. Sometimes given the title *scholasticus*, assistant or junior priests were endowed with the grace (i.e. divine assistance) of God in their daily work. Their professional status embodied a sense that their activities, including their didactic practices, were sacred and, therefore, inviolable.

**A PERFECT REFORM?**

Although the secularisation of schooling had begun centuries previously, Christian religion – with the Bible serving as a universalist textbook – dominated schooling until the first half of the nineteenth century, if not beyond. Topics or subjects (e.g. geography, history) were taught by reference to Biblical sources. In more recent times, however, the secularisation of schoolteaching has continued. Religious ceremonies and rituals are given less attention; the study of religion is not restricted to Christianity; Biblical learning is concentrated in ‘religious studies’ courses; and, in a link between secularisation and bureaucratisation, these courses are examined and graded in the same way as any other worldly subject.

The intervention of worldly forces has a long history in schooling. Recognition that methodised teaching would reduce the time needed for learning existed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In its simplest form, the methodisation of knowledge meant bringing order or sequence into the communication of knowledge. What sequence of questions is most appropriate to learning of such knowledge and how might such knowledge to be laid out on the pages of a textbook? Such humanist attention to methodisation not only fostered the
production of catechisms for all areas of schooling, it also had an impact on the layout of texts. Indeed, Illich suggests that insofar as creation of manuscript books was the ‘result of scribes writing by hand’, the advent of ‘mechanical reproduction’ (i.e. moveable-type printing) around 1460 meant that the ‘text as object’ was turned into a ‘stamp’ (Illich, 1993, pp. 116 and 115).

Moving to the nineteenth century, an equally influential concern for methodisation arose from a Quaker engineer, Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856–1915) who worked his way from being a machine-shop labourer to becoming chief engineer of the Midvale steel works in Pennsylvania, USA. Taylor’s experiences led him to the belief that the productivity of steel mill workers did not match their high labour costs. And his solution to this discrepancy, developed after he began working with other companies in the area, was a reorganisation of production that included the standardisation of production methods and the transfer of control from the workers to management. Through such so-called ‘time and motion’ study, Taylor realised that the work of skilled operatives could be broken down into specific tasks that could be reallocated to carefully trained and controlled workers, a reorganisation that resulted in reduced labour costs. Taylor reported his findings in *The Principles of Scientific Management* (1911/1947). Besides contributing to the reorganisation of industrial production, Taylor’s ideas gradually diffused to other institutions (e.g. schools and hospitals), with the net result that schoolteachers, nurses and doctors could begin to be seen in the same light as steel workers.

As this suggests, schoolteachers are made not born; and their training and work still echoes Taylorist assumptions about the reorganisation of production. Although they may work alone in schoolrooms, the form and content of their work is designed or codified by central agencies who also oversee the conversion of centralised curriculum blueprints into textbooks, reading schemes and examination syllabuses. Initially manufactured through classroom apprenticeships, schoolteachers are still retooled and realigned whenever the production lines of schooling are reorganised to take account of new policies that became a business plan for the effective organisation of schooling.

But where do such ambitious control technologies leave the vocation and professionalism of schoolteachers? Management practices stem from Taylor’s observations at Midvale and with his aspiration to eliminate the interference (or mediation) of workers, practices known at the time as goldbricking and, more recently, as cyberslacking. In effect, school curricula and didactics have been gradually reorganised in the twentieth century so they can fit the rhythms of mass production. The ultimate, taylorist ambition is the production of a teacher-proof curriculum. If curricula are packaged in this way, the interference or mediation of schoolteachers is eliminated – and didactics is reduced to delivery. For Taylor’s vision to be realised, schooling must be reorganised as an error-free production line where there is no need to take account of human cognition and not need to prepare or train personnel who are aware of its operation. Concern for method or didactics
would be abandoned, reducing schoolteaching to little more than machine-minding.

It is for this management reason, perhaps, that the idea of basing schooling on the provision of learning environments has come to prominence in recent decades (see, for instance, Biesta, 2005). Online virtual learning environments are identified as stand-alone learning solutions that replace the need for curriculum and didactics. Indeed, it is probably no accident that these settings are characterised as learning rather than teaching solutions. If the need for schoolteachers can be abandoned, there is no need to retain words like teaching and schoolteaching. Learning environments eliminate the interference of human frailty (i.e. schoolteachers) in the accumulation and transmission of experience. Yet, human dignity – also a human frailty – can still subvert the accomplishment of a perfect school reform. All teachers and learners have minds of their own and, as human beings, are capable of identifying their own goals, setting their own compasses and finding new connections between the accumulated experience of the past and fresh horizons for the future.

Recent work by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), however, provides a cautionary comment on the efficacy of learning environments. In an international survey of schoolteachers, the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) project sought ‘in a timely and cost-effective manner, robust international indicators and policy-relevant analysis on teachers and teaching in order to help countries to review and develop policies that create the conditions for effective schooling’ (OECD, 2009, p. 19). Its conclusions were that there are two ‘key factors in developing effective learning environments’: ‘classroom disciplinary climate’ (viz. ‘safe, productive, orderly classrooms that are supportive to learning’) and teachers’ ‘self-efficacy’ (viz. ‘the success of teachers in addressing educational challenges’). A contemporaneous summary notes that ‘there are numerous other factors determining the classroom learning environment’. Nevertheless, it highlights the importance of self-efficacy since it was linked to ‘productivity and influencing people’s action in the workplace’ (Education International Research Unit, 2009, p.2). Despite its acknowledged limitations, the OECD report starts with the assumption that human beings are part of any learning environment – a stance that may be at variance with the promotional claims of companies selling learning management systems. Equally, the TALIS project also accepted that the environment for learning does not stop at the classroom door.

Creating the perfect school reform is as difficult as finding a container for a universal solvent. This problem is also reminiscent of the imaginary island nation with a perfect social, legal and political system created in the satirical novel Utopia (1516), written by Thomas More (1478–1535). More’s political system was as contradictory as a teacher-free curriculum. Utopia’s irony – the clash between More’s description of a political system and his awareness of its impossibility – can also be seen as a comment on his own life. He was both a humanist, a life-long
friend of Erasmus, and a servant of the English king Henry VIII. This personal tension came to a head when he objected to Henry’s self-appointment as head of the Church of England (i.e. as a replacement for the Pope). More refused, therefore, to take an oath accepting the supremacy of the English Crown, a treasonable stance that led to his trial, imprisonment and death by decapitation. Well aware of the controlling intentions of the political state – he had been Lord Chancellor (the senior law official) between 1529 and 1532, More’s human frailty was reflected in his reputed gallows farewell: ‘the King’s good servant, but God’s First’.

SCHOOLING AND PUBLIC LIFE

But is schooling merely a pathway of personal advancement, an institution where humans identify their own goals and set their own compasses? Or does it have wider, social purposes? In its origins, modern schooling had a public purpose, in the sense that it was intended to serve the general (i.e. collective) interests of a specific community. In their Renaissance origins, British schools, like Eton (founded 1440) and Harrow (1572), became known, correctly, as public schools because they prepared (male) learners for public life. Serving the interests of the overlapping land-owning, commercial and merchant classes, they prepared young people for the exercise of power in local, civic, regional and national government. They nurtured governing elites at a time when few men and fewer women had the freedom or authority to exert influence and leadership in the public sphere. For centuries, schools and schooling have fulfilled this function. Their relationship with the public sphere is that they have generated public servants. Among other things, they have played a major role in advancing young people to institutions of higher learning (schools and universities) where they receive training appropriate for careers as national and colonial administrators, bankers, judges and archbishops. It is for this reason, too, that Aristotle regarded not only that ‘education in goodness is best undertaken by the state’ (book 10 of his Ethics; 1986, p. 337) but also that the regulation of such upbringing was part of the philosophy of human affairs that came to be known as politics. Such regulation was to ‘ensure that the citizens of a state accommodate their lives to that canon [achieving goodness] as closely as their own inner capacities and the external pressures of the law can determine’ (Introduction, p.13).

By the twenty-first century, however, the restricted public sphere of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had disappeared. The extension of suffrage had led to the creation of new forms of representation and new forms of institutional, local, national and international politics. There was a growing political awareness that adults were no longer the subjects of a superior authority (e.g. a monarch or god). They had become citizens and were expected to play an active part in the organisation and regulation of a democratic society (i.e. public life). How then, did
schooling respond to this new relationship between public schooling and civil society?

Early efforts to answer this question focused on the creation of different types of schools and their classification according to their social function. These included girls’ schools; ‘dissenting’ schools for families that did not subscribe to orthodox religious values; ‘ragged’ schools for orphaned or abandoned children; ‘hedge’ schools in rural areas, often taught during the winter months after crops had been harvested; and ‘Sunday’, ‘evening’ or ‘factory’ schools for young workers who were otherwise employed in factory work during the working week. These schools took on many different names, they were relatively unregulated but the aspirations of their organisers (churches, parents, men and women seeking an income) were widely accepted. They also existed alongside attempts to create local or ‘parish’ schools. But the instability, inefficiency and diversity of this mosaic of schooling evoked calls for the regularisation of all schools according to a common code of practice. But was this to be accomplished by an established church or by institutions of the state?

An illustration of this issue in the early nineteenth century is provided by the problem of the registration of births, marriages and deaths in England and Wales. These records had been the responsibility of church administrations. But, by the beginning of the nineteenth century the state required more accurate records – for voting, taxation and military (i.e. conscription) purposes. In the meantime, church records had become unreliable because of the rise of dissenting sects, clandestine (or so-called common-law) marriages and the existence of an unknown number of children who bypassed registration (e.g. because they had died or their parents had become alienated from the registration process). While wealthy citizens were concerned about inheritance and ownership, poorer members of society cared little about registering their life events and, more likely, were worried about possible costs or the rumour that registration meant increased taxation. In 1837, a state-run registration service was established in England and Wales to record births deaths and marriages. Similar state initiatives occurred, for instance, in France (1792), Ireland (1864), the Netherlands (1811) and Hungary (1895).

These changes were symbolic of bureaucratic state legislation, transfer of a mosaic of schooling to more central forms of office-based government. Subsequent centralist interventions included moves to create systems of common or comprehensive schooling. Attempts were made, for instance, to create common schools in New England (USA) during the middle of the nineteenth century. As ideas about compulsory schooling gaining credibility in Europe, the idea behind common schooling in North America was that it would become a site where ‘common political and social ideology was taught’ (Spring, 1990, p. 74). The official perspective was that a common school ‘attended in common by all children’, would reduce friction between social groups, serve as an agency of government policy, and allow regulation by local politicians. The latent yet overarching role of such common schooling was to teach protestant values which
would sustain the work ethic among a growing army of New England industrial workers. Such proposals, however, also courted controversy. Fierce political battles took place in New York and Philadelphia when Roman Catholic immigrants and Native Americans objected to the use of the King James version of the Bible.

The later idea of comprehensive schooling also emerged in the USA but, in this case, during the first third of the twentieth century. It was envisaged as a management solution to the sectional and sectarian weaknesses of the common school idea. It sought social harmony through merging different pathways of schooling. Such schools were described as comprehensive because they combined – or comprehended – these different pathways, often on a single site or campus. Their most important historical feature was that they did not offer a common course or single pathway for all learners. Instead, they comprised a sophisticated machinery of social balancing, one whose purpose was to combine social harmony with the accommodation of difference, a process discussed further in a later chapter.

Notions of common, comprehensive or selective schooling, therefore, sought to reconcile social harmony, social difference and social selection. This aspiration remained influential throughout the twentieth century. But by the twenty-first century, these notions were open to revision. What, for instance is the optimal relationship between harmony and democracy? What should schooling comprehend? And how should it become both a public and a democratic institution?

These questions indicate that times have changed since state intervention began. The school provision of the twenty-first century cannot be the same as the provision made in the sixteenth or the nineteenth centuries. The organisational questions addressed in the past were, themselves, a response to changing social, economic and political circumstances. By the twenty-first century, public provision was no longer restricted to the needs and aspirations of social elites. It began to engage with other social forces, notably neo-liberal ideas about marketisation.

MARKETISATION

By the twenty-first century, the costs of schooling had soared because more people sought to take advantage of the services of schooling and stayed at school for a longer time. Communities that had created schools were reluctant to finance greater use of public monies. One solution to this financial problem, globally discussed, has been an argument about moving schooling out of the public sphere and recreating it as privatised institution whose services are sold on a market place – hence the label *marketisation*. As in the purchase of private piano lessons, driving lessons or dancing lessons, learners are *customers* who pay for the benefits they acquire from such instruction. Marketisation extends these customer relations to embrace all aspects of schooling, not merely those aspects, like music lessons, on the margins of earlier provision.
The payments that customers are expected to contribute may be direct – the payment of school fees; or they may be serviced through loans, scholarships and tax-relief. Marketisation assumes that anyone with the desire to learn will invest in their own future, not rely on state support derived from taxes gathered from older members of their community. Marketisation, therefore, redefines education and schooling as a private good. The acquisition of such a good (e.g. knowledge, skills and experience) increases the personal capital of learners, becoming a resource that they can reinvest to accumulate further capital.

A crucial assumption of marketisation is that this accumulation of capital not only benefits individuals but also contributes to society’s general well-being. Private acquisition becomes a public good. Marketisation assumes that the advancement of the human species can be left to the aggregate actions of individuals rather than to the intervention of agencies (e.g. the welfare state) which represent the collective will of the population. For this managerial reason, marketisation assumes that such intervening agencies are not merely costly but also redundant. Letting the market decide becomes the dominant policy strategy.

Such thinking offers schooling a new infrastructure and, with it, a new lexicon centred around the personal economic value of schooling. Schooling becomes the delivery of a service that is not only fit for purpose but also can be assessed against benchmarks of desired performance. This new lexicon is dominated by the econometric evaluation practices devised by Taylor’s descendants – accountants, economists and management consultants. Their managerial task is to help governments and supra-national agencies achieve more for less. Moreover, their own practices are claimed to be equally cost-effective because the bulk of their data is collected by schoolteachers, learners and examination agencies. Armed with this value-for-money data, contract managers, project managers, performance managers and data managers monitor the work of schools and, at best, transform them into self-regulating machines based on internal auditing.

Marketisation connects with a keystone liberal idea made famous in John Stuart Mill’s *On Liberty* (1859/1901, available online). One of its key proposition, according to Mill, is that the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilised community is to ‘prevent harm to others’ (chapter 1). Mill’s claim was that individuals are in the best position to know what is good for them. It is not the state’s responsibility to protect themselves against the error of their own ways. They know more about their own circumstances than anyone else. And, as a consequence, they are better qualified to assess their own risks.

While this view supports current neo-liberal arguments against paternalist state intervention, it is not universally accepted. Focusing schooling upon the accumulation of private goods may, in aggregate, increase the economic fortunes of communities and nations. But is there any guarantee that human beings will, individually, also enter the market place to purchase additional goods (e.g. insurance) that buffer themselves against unexpected changes in their lives (e.g.
unemployment, disability, chronic illness)? The assumption that marketisation automatically take care of its human agents (buyers and sellers) is questionable. Does it promote human awareness and the readiness of human beings to reflect, individually, upon their life chances and, therefore, protect themselves against such risks? Can marketised schooling, therefore, protect others from its own limitations? If the global financial crisis of 2008 – a ‘catastrophic failure of prediction’ that involved ‘everyone from the mortgage brokers to the White House’ (Silver, 2012, p. 20) – represented a failure of financiers and politicians to be aware of their own power to do harm to others, what reassurance does neo-liberalism offered to other citizens? Does schooling based on marketisation consciously promote human qualities of freedom, awareness and creativity that simultaneously expose its limitations and promote the transcendence of marketisation? Can educators inoculate learners against the viral teachings they might be offered?

Behavioural economists have argued that while consumers of services may understand their present circumstances, they may not be as competent to calculate risks associated with longer-term life decisions (e.g. whether to give up smoking). They argue for a new forms of paternalism, state action that nudges citizens, where a nudge is defined as ‘to touch or push slightly…to attract attention’. Such nudging can operate through advertisements on television or on public transport. Organ donation provides a contemporary example. To become a donor, citizens may be asked to tick a relevant box, giving their consent to becoming a donor. Or if they are not given a box to tick, they are being nudged, indirectly, to assent to being a donor. The nudge is constructed as a default option; unwilling respondents must actively opt out. Whether nudging is a viable political strategy, its existence suggests that the freedom of buyers and sellers in the market place can also be managed through the design of the nudges they experience and the choices they are required to make.

Mill’s original liberal ideas about state power and avoiding harm have become controversial, especially since neo-liberal governments chose to intervene in the banking and mortgage crises of 2008. How, then, should future state power be exerted? Paternalism that also requires opting out may be meaningful within the individualism espoused by neo-liberalism. But what should apply across society? Can parents opt out of mass immunisation programmes for their children, if there is the likelihood that such avoidance risks exposing other children to harm (e.g. by preserving risk across a community)? Such political and moral questions require case by case calculation of personal and social risks. It also suggests that marketisation cannot be reduced to the liberal behaviour of individuals, however creative and prudential their decision-making. Unintended side effects may distort the market to such an extent that it ceases to be a free market and must be regulated in other ways. As Sandel notes, there are some things that ‘money can’t buy’ (2012).
An earlier section of this chapter – the resolution of Meno’s paradox – suggested that learning includes a process of seeking. For the long-term nurturance of spaceship earth, learning about searching for solutions must become an essential feature of schooling. One blueprint is offered in the ideas of a Brazilian-born educationist, Paulo Freire (1921–1997). His *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1993, available online and first published in Portuguese in 1968) is notable because – to Anglo-American audiences – it highlighted the difference between education and schooling. Freire looked at education and schooling in terms of two constituencies: (1) elites who control the distribution of difference and inequality and (2) the ‘oppressed’ who are the objects of the power retained by elites. He argued that modernist schooling should be replaced with forms of educational practice that allow the oppressed to express and develop their humanity.

Freire’s ideas gained widespread attention, following the translation of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* into English and Spanish in 1969. His central thesis was that if human learning is extended to embrace an understanding of human existence (through wider studies of society), human beings can remake themselves through a process that Freire termed *conscientization* or consciousness-raising. In turn, Freire believed that *conscientization* can be achieved through dialogue, something which was not ‘merely technique’ but, rather, ‘an epistemological relationship…a way of knowing’. Dialogue, he felt, is a means of developing a better understanding of the object of knowledge. It serves, Freire suggested, as an ‘indispensable component of the process of both learning and knowing’ (1993, p. 17).

Freire’s call for educational freedom relied on the assumption that the future of education and schooling requires the reorganization of curricula and didactics, reorganization that might be achieved, in short, through the dialogical consideration – or questioning – of knowledge in its social context. At the same time, this formulation raises two recurrent questions that have troubled, if not animated, Freire’s followers. What is dialogue? And how should social context be understood? The purpose of schooling may be to liberate learners from their unconscious acceptance of difference and inequality; and it may be easy to advocate contrasting conceptions – feminist, socialist, Marxist, liberal or anarchist – of dialogue and context. But does this allow learners the freedom to exercise their own ‘epistemological curiosity’ (Freire’s term) and, in the process, to raise their own consciousness? Or is it the case that they are expected to take on and internalize the goals of those who liberated them? If so, does *conscientization* always foreshadow liberation?

Despite this recurrent problem with notions of consciousness-raising and conscientization, Freire’s ideas had been globalised by the 1980s, often extended to the realm of adult education; that is, outside the framework of compulsory schooling. Nevertheless, it is equally true that spaceship earth has changed since
the publication of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. The diffusion of globalization and the resultant spread of homogenized practices have subjected education and schooling to new forms of overarching control. Freire’s caution that emancipatory learning should be built on the re-examination of politics and history has been overtaken, perhaps, by the idea that alternative senses of freedom can be achieved through the marketisation of schooling. Yet, a residual question remains: freedom or quasi-freedom?

GLOBAL OR GLOCAL?

For many years – at last since the eighteenth-century Enlightenment – notions of political freedom have been linked to assumptions about national identity, spirit and ethos. In the early nineteenth century, cross-national awareness grew among educational policy makers, a trend which marked the beginnings of inquiries that launched the field of comparative education. In the wake of the Napoleonic wars (1803–1815), victors and losers sought to reform their versions of schooling to become, in effect, elements of a national defence system based on books not bombs. Believing that schooling is essential to national renewal, government authorities gathered information in a search for optimal solutions to their political problem. Data on schoolteachers, school size and school attendance was subjected to statistical analysis (a science also in its infancy at that time). The net result of these efforts was the reform of school systems serving, among others, the peoples of Germany, France and the United Kingdom. Different national curricula, system of teacher training and models for the distribution of difference and inequality emerged from these reforms.

It was an era in the history of schooling where national priorities took priority over confessional concerns, a development illustrated in the history of the Jesuits. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) had achieved extensive economic and commercial power, largely to sustain its social, educational and missionary work. In various parts of the world, however, its economic activities clashed with the interests of civil and state authorities; and tension also arose between the centralist organisation of the Jesuits and the centralist organisation of the Papacy. A consequence of such tensions were that, in France, the Jesuits were dissolved by a royal edict of 1764 and, overall, were suppressed by Pope Clement XIV in 1773. Similar political and economic tension arose elsewhere leading, for instance, to similar episodes of suppression and expulsion within the Spanish and Portuguese empires. While civic authorities profited from the revenues, trade and institutions that Jesuit communities left behind, many adherents migrated and set up communities in non-catholic parts of Europe (e.g. Prussia and Russia). Following the Napoleonic wars, more stable and powerful monarchs came to power and, by 1814, the re-establishment of the Jesuits had been endorsed by Pope Pius VII.
For more than 100 years, national/imperial priorities remained in place through both world wars. By the end of the twentieth century, however, globalisation intervened. Cross-national awareness came into conflict with post-national awareness. In 1958, the Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) was founded to represent national interests. It began as an independent association of national institutions and agencies interested in measuring student performance. Its purpose was to establish whether particular educational policies had positive or negative effects on learning. To this extent, it continued lines of inquiry initiated more than 150 years earlier in the wake of the Napoleonic wars.

The IEA’s emphasis changed when its work was taken up by the OECD and relaunched as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA, founded 1997). PISA inquiries have taken place every three years and assess the performance of fifteen-year-olds in reading, mathematics and science. Four hundred and seventy thousand 15-years-old students representing 65 nations and territories participated in PISA 2009; and an additional 50,000 students representing another nine nations were tested in 2010. Beyond analysing the results of these national investigations, PISA has probably attracted more publicity for its global rankings – league tables based on data whose significance, PISA researchers recognise, is easily blurred (i.e. open to misinterpretation) if statistical uncertainty is disregarded.

The relevance of PISA’s results to national and international debate is, therefore, difficult to ascertain (see the discussion of statistical uncertainty and the mis-reporting of forecasts in Silver’s The Signal and the Noise, 2012). While national agencies typically scrutinize results relating to their own populations, international attention focuses on league tables. This dual scrutiny – national and international – has aroused tension between educationists who, on the one hand, wish to revise national curricula and, on the other hand, politicians who wish to improve their nation’s league-table ranking in subsequent PISA investigations. Cross national analysis, however, is often superficial, with politicians rummaging across national boundaries for practices (or keynote indicators) that might foster higher ratings.

But manipulation of isolated practices (e.g. class size) rarely has the desired effect. Such practices do not stand alone but, instead, are embedded within and inexorably linked to other infrastructural aspects of national schooling. The potential impact of such tinkering is usually over-rated. In the absence of systemic reviews of schooling – the original aspiration of comparative educationists – piecemeal reforms serve as little more than rhetorical or public relations strategies. They are a form of tokenism. They are the Potemkin villages of schooling, reminders of the fake settlements erected by the Russian minister Grigory Potemkin in order to fool Empress Catherine II during her visit to Crimea in 1787. Such facades appeal to passing tourists who, willingly or unwillingly, fail to appreciate their lack of material or political foundation.
While national, regional or local identities are still important to the contextualization of human learning, the politics and history of globalisation are also part of this context and, therefore, implicated in the conscientization of all learners. The spread of globalised policies (e.g. online learning environments and MOOCS (massive open online courses) created by multi-national publishers and centralist universities) are attempts to merge global and local perspectives. Globalised policies mask the local historic, cultural, political, and economic connections that, in the past, perpetually interrupted and shaped the smooth recycling of inherited aspects of education and schooling.

Despite their intentions, global policies do not trump local practices. Balance can be sought through transforming them into glocal policies. This may lead, for instance, to a preference for inter- or cross-cultural rather than multi-cultural schooling. Intercultural education accepts the global and the local. It recognises that there can be no internationalism without nationalism and that all forms of nationalism can be traced back to international migration and intermarriage. Intercultural educational, therefore, is inclusive rather than exclusive. It accepts that human beings on spaceship earth differ from one another; but it makes no prior assumption that these differences provide a basis for curriculum differentiation, exclusion, segregation or apartheid. It celebrates the fact that the interaction of human differences is a source of human potential not human degeneration. Glocalisation, therefore, can be a harbinger of freedom and creativity.

A basic assumption of this book is that modern schooling came into being in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and that, thereafter, it was constantly reconstructed in different contexts. Diversity of values and practices generated a pedagogic diaspora which became formalised with the emergence of national educational systems. International comparisons, however, do only partial justice to this diversity. Education and schooling are, and always have been, fluid institutions. They can be rethought, reformed, even reinvented with the aid of trial-and-error processes that are as old as conscious human activity. In the latter part of the twentieth century particular attention was given to rethinking the infrastructure of schooling so that, suitably amended, it could become an institution that embraces all humanity.

The twentieth century also witnessed economic growth based on an international division of labour, the deregulation of trans-national corporate activity, and the instantaneous transformation and flow of capital. At the same time, economic growth has contributed to smarter communication, cheaper transport and increased movement of people and commerce. Schooling has changed in the process. Forms of elementary or common schooling in the nineteenth century gave way to patterns of multilateral and comprehensive schooling in the twentieth century. But are they sufficient for a globalised future?
Starting from the premise that human beings can become self-conscious and re-build themselves and the surrounding world, the new circumstances of the twenty-first century have fostered cognitivist, constructionist and self-efficacy thinking about curriculum and didactics. This perspective accepts that human beings have minds of their own which, suitably nourished, can contribute to shaping the future. Such an outlook encourages schoolteachers and learners to think in new ways. It fosters multiple senses of being and belonging. It sustains active experimentation. And it values new conceptualisations and formalisations of knowledge (e.g. epistemological curiosity).

Nevertheless, twentieth-century approaches to learning, schoolteaching, curriculum and didactics have struggled with practices bequeathed to them by their predecessors. Since at least the sixteenth century, repeated attempts have been made to create new courses or journeys across the map of knowledge. These journeys have been steered according to distant goals (e.g. the extension of human erudition, preparation for heavenly salvation). By the nineteenth century, however, these journeys had become more detailed, taking account of theories of human and social development popularised in the European Enlightenment. The idea, for instance, that growth can also include change allowed notions such as development and evolution to flourish (e.g. following the work of Charles Darwin). Attention to human development led to a parallel revitalisation of pedagogy as a dynamic science of upbringing. These ideas about human development received further stimulation in the twentieth century, through the research and writings of neuroscientists and others who drew attention to the capacity of human beings to rework their experience and understandings and, in the process, arrive at new understandings of the world. Conscientization or consciousness-raising became a key human aspiration of the twentieth century. Equipped with new understandings, human beings not only see their world in a new light but also see the possibility of rebuilding education and schooling according to these new understandings.

The introduction of these insights into the conduct of mass schooling has, in turn, extended the horizons and ceilings associated with education and schooling. Notions of creative learning have been extended through debates about the politics of schooling and their relationship to the distribution of difference and inequality. It is increasingly accepted that schooling should not merely be concerned with the acquisition of the knowledge assembled by encyclopaedists. Rather, it should also give attention to moral questions, originally raised by humanists like William Shakespeare (1564–1616) and Renée Descartes (1596–1650). What does it mean be human: ‘to be or not to be. That is the question’, asked Shakespeare, with Descartes adding ‘I think therefore I am’.

Shakespeare and Descartes worked in the Post-Reformation era when many private, non-church schools were founded that pioneered teaching build around the understanding and interpretation of humanist texts (a process discussed more fully in the next chapter). Although often known as grammar schools, the texts used in such schools were selected and edited both for their grammatical and moral lessons
CHAPTER 1

(i.e. to foster erudition). Scholars passed this humanist moral framework on to their own students, many of whom would serve as schoolteachers. Yet it is also true that these early pioneers had only limited success in weaving humanist educational ideals into the fabric of institutionalised schooling. Whether by design or default, their failure represented a victory of schooling over education, a victory from which modernism has yet to recover.

SYNOPSIS

This tension is the focus of this volume. Beyond the foreword and this introduction, there are four substantive chapters and an afterword. Chapter two starts with the question posed in its title: what counts as public schooling? It comments on forms of schooling that emerged in the Middle Ages and how these were modified to take account of humanist sentiments newly expressed – and ultimately blunted – in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The rise of schooling had an impact on educational practice that has received insufficient attention from historians working with Anglo-American sources. With the notable exception of the pioneering work reported in Grafton & Jardine’s From Humanism to the Humanities (1986), a failure to distinguish education from schooling has been combined with a reluctance to examine the relationship between them.

The history of public schooling since the seventeenth century has also embraced the gradual separation of schooling from religious or confessional interests, leading to the gradually spread of ‘natural’ (secular or republican) forms of upbringing. These, in turn, fuelled the intellectual ferment known as the eighteenth-century Enlightenment in Europe and North America. By the nineteenth century, schooling had become a matter of widespread public concern, touching all sections of society. It had become a public issue.

Teaching according to the laws of nature (i.e. natural education) led to new ways of thinking about education and schooling. These revisited the humanist perspective that human beings should take over their own destiny; and they included the view that education had a more distant horizon – the shaping of human evolution or, as was typically expressed at the time, human progress. In turn, developmental perspectives began to dominate educational thought, policy and practice, a stance prefigured in the work of the Frenchman Nicolas de Condorcet (1743–1794) and the Prussian, Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835). Later in the nineteenth century, such a positive view of social progress was further harnessed to the view that didactics could be regarded like any other social or natural science and that, accordingly, universal laws of didactics (or methods of teaching) could be deduced from observation and experiment.

To an important degree, therefore, educational thought in the twentieth century was shaped by scientific movements (e.g. logical positivism, behaviourism, experimental design) and, as important, by the conduct and outcomes of the First and Second World Wars. The nationalism of the nineteenth century was challenged
by internationalism while ideas about segregated schools were challenged by advocates who favoured versions of common or comprehensive schooling. New patterns of regulation (or management) also emerged to shape education, schooling and associated institutions (e.g. adult education). Throughout the twentieth century, then, forms of schooling pioneered in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were put under strain as they sought to accommodate the spread of mass schooling. And one mechanism for the release of this strain was the parallel growth, diversification and spread of alternative forms of schooling, often considered to be outside the realm of public provision. In fact, these external initiatives – creating a rainbow of independent schools – proved important in at least one respect: their ideas began to feed back into the organisation of public educational systems.

Chapter three (Public schooling and the Welfare State) examines this longstanding twentieth-century tension between public and private schooling. The Welfare State comprised a political agenda which echoed the totalising project envisioned in the Great Didactic produced by Jan Amos Comenius (1592–1670). By the twentieth century, however, the reform of schooling had become a comprehensive or multilateral project: parallel lines or streams of schooling were organised into institutions of mass schooling. Yet this project also accumulated anti-democratic features by, for instance, giving precedence to the rights of the political state over those of citizens, parents and learners. Such an imbalance in the welfare state proved sufficiently controversial by the end of the twentieth century that it allowed the spread of neoliberal (i.e. anti-statist) ideas. Freedom through marketisation underwrote the organisation and conduct of schooling. Marketisation was claimed as offering a means of reconciling the common good (expressed as the rights of the state) with the rights of individuals (expressed as their freedom of choice).

Nevertheless, marketisation retained a recurrent infrastructural tension. Is the invisible hand (Adam Smith’s term) of the market place adequate to public education? Or do markets also require regulation by a higher authority? As suggested, it is useful to distinguish marketisation from quasi-marketisation – organisation and regulation that may yield desired outcomes but which, ultimately, relies on regulatory mechanisms controlled by external human authorities.

The fourth chapter (New Education for New Times) takes a further look at events in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It revisits the emergence of forms of ‘natural’ of ‘active’ schooling foreshadowed in the work of Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) and developed through the initiatives, for instance, of Johan Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746–1827) and Friedrich Froebel (1782–1852). Among other things, it examines how the infrastructures envisaged by such pioneers was further clarified and extended by their twentieth-century successors such as Ovide Decroly (1871–1932), Maria Montessori (1870–1952), Celestin Freinet (1896–1966) and John Dewey (1859–1952). It also indicates how the work of these pedagogues began to resonate harmoniously with psychological ideas about discontinuities in growth and human development that can be represented in terms of different stages
or structures. This stance came to be known as structuralism. Human thinking and activity is based on complex unities, mindsets, belief systems or structures about, for instance, growth and diet, sexual reproduction, and cause and effect that form and dissolve while the human brain is still growing. And a parallel field of inquiry, sometimes known as constructivism, focuses how human beings transcend these mental structures and create new knowledge and understandings. Understandings about the past are disrupted and reconnected in new ways. Through reprocessing old knowledge (constructivism), learners take their thinking to a new level (structuralism).

The fifth chapter (Mass Schooling, Globalisation and Human Rights) documents the clash between the creation of instructional regimes and the designs of active schooling. It regards the creation of instructional regimes as a potential source of rigidity that limits rather than extends the reach of schooling. It also confronts the reality of globalisation and the challenges that it poses for all teachers and learners. And, not least, it considers how groups excluded from the humanitarian perspectives of the eighteenth century Enlightenment might be incorporated into education and schooling in the future. From this perspective, both schooling and education are envisaged as open systems, neither of which can be reduced to a limited range of externally-determined pathways, courses or stages. If reconfigured according to the ideals of social inclusion, economic efficiency and life-long learning, education and schooling break free from tensions that reach back at least as far as the Renaissance.

The idea of education for all is recovered to include women anxious to combine motherhood with active citizenship, young people unable to find work, and migrants (not the nationalist formulation, immigrants) who feel marginalised. Such possibilities for changes in education and schooling reflect humanist and democratic sentiments. Yet they must stand against the alternative, neo-liberal, market-related thinking which became prominent around the end of the twentieth century. The world order is delicately balanced. How, then, should spaceship earth be prepared? Where is it heading? Will it survive? And what part will education and schooling play in its future?

Chapter six, an afterword with the title Closing the Gap, reviews the entire volume in the light of this last question. It returns to the separation of education from schooling and raises a series of related educational questions about pedagogy and didactics. If education and schooling are different expressions of human relationships, and if historical change includes a conversation between generations, what kinds of conversation might be embedded in the future everyday transactions of schooling? And if global citizenship is seen as a valid educational horizon, will it include a parallel endorsement of the humanist – and Olympian – idea that education is more about participation, purposes, elevated ceilings and unknown horizons than about curriculum objectives and learning outcomes.

This book, therefore, should be seen as an essay not a manifesto. It reports rather than concludes longstanding discussions that will continue far into the
future. The notion of rebuilding schooling as education, and replacing inequality with inclusion and creativity is a challenge that faces all humanity. This commentary, then, is designed to clear up a confusion endemic in Anglo-American educational communities (e.g. the failure to distinguish education from schooling). Each of the authors has worked and reworked versions produced by the other. Our intellectual focus has, however, been the same. We share an enduring interest in the past, present and future of pedagogics (upbringing); we seek an understanding of the diversity and significance of current thinking about curricula and didactics; and we continue to struggle with an enduring aspiration to become more creative teachers and learners.