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This book is the fifth in the series of books which began in 1988 with *The Self-Managing School*. It moves the concept of self-management forward within this book. The idea of self-managing has developed into that of self-transforming, whereby schools are transforming their own education system to ensure that the outcomes for all pupils are positive. In the first three chapters there is an overview of what the self-managing school was aiming to achieve historically and why there now needs to be a move away from this to that of transformation. The following chapters within the book go on to explore why schools need to engage in the process of transformation and how this can be achieved by using the case studies of successful transforming schools. At the end of each chapter there is useful summary of the key points within the chapter under the sub-heading: 'Important messages for policymakers and practitioners'.

The authors compare the educational outcomes for children across different countries to show how countries which were once seen to have a successful education system, such as England, are now falling behind other countries. The notion here is that such schools have embraced the concept of self-transformation. The countries which are proving to be the leaders within the twenty-first century for securing the high performance of their pupils and narrowing the gap of achievement are: Canada, Hong Kong, Finland, Shanghai, Singapore and South Korea. Here the authors indicate how in the long term these countries will reap the reward within their economy for adopting the process of self-transformation within their education system.

The authors indicate how school improvement can only be established effectively if there is a move

away from a 'top-down' approach which is dictated by the government of the country, to an approach which gives schools the flexibility to ensure that there is a real engagement with the community in which it works. The school needs to work with the community to ensure that it takes on board the needs of the learners and the community which it serves, working in true partnership. By utilising this approach the school can bring about a transformation in the teaching and learning strategies which it uses to maintain high outcomes for all pupils. By transforming the education system the school can secure its success by designing its own education system, utilising resources from different sources, including other schools. A self-transforming school is at the 'leading edges of innovation' and will develop its own curriculum from the 'global curriculum'. However, schools need to evaluate whether they have the capability and capacity to transform their education system before they commence on the journey of transformation.

This book provides good advice for leaders who want to improve the outcomes for pupils within their individual school. It shows how a 'global education system' cannot be used as an excuse to why a school is underperforming. It states it is the responsibility of leaders within a school to develop the capacity to transform teaching and learning and not just replicate systems which are seen to be effective within other schools. However, for this reason you will not find the solution within the book to guarantee high outcomes for all pupils, but you will see the value in using self-transformation within a school to bring about change. This book is an invaluable text for students engaged in research, as the author summarises the historical context of education systems within different countries and shows how this has impacted upon pupil performance. It raises questions about adopting approaches wholesale and why this is not an effective approach in securing pupil progress within schools.

Suzanne Strawford

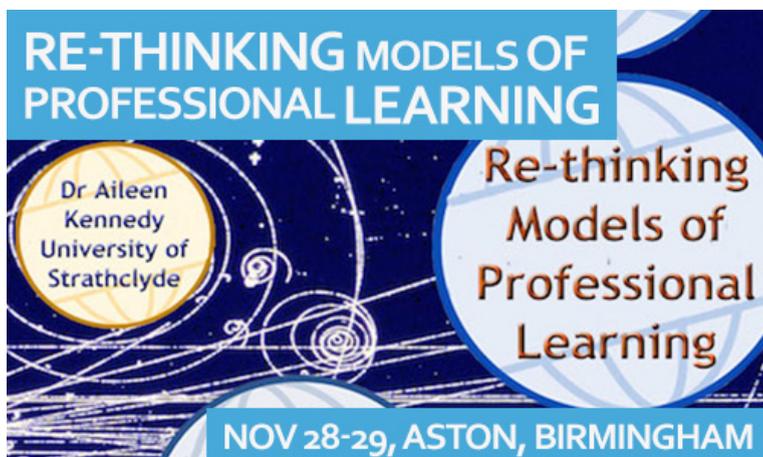
Primary Partnership Manager, Newman University

e-mail s.strawford@newman.ac.uk

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