Rethinking schools and school leadership for the twenty-first century: changes and challenges

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Abstract
School leaders face many changes and challenges as they navigate their schools through complex and turbulent educational environments. Highly effective school leaders cope with complexity by building mental models or frameworks to understand the world that they face and operate in. This paper sets out a framework of six changes and six challenges for school leaders to consider as they move through the first decade of the new millennium. The paper is intended to be a means of providing a strategic discussion framework for leadership development within schools.

Keywords
Schools, Leadership, Organizational change, Strategy

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Education Act guaranteed free education for every child in England and Wales. It also divided schools into primaries and secondaries and aimed to raise the school leaving age to 15 and, as soon as "practicable", to 16. However some of these changes took years to bring in. For example the government raised the school leaving age to 15 in 1947 - but it was not until 1972 that the leaving age rose to 16. Twenty-first century education reports and agencies almost all agree on the four C's of 21st century learning: critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creative problem solving [13]. To those four, Fullan and Langworthy [10] and the New Pedagogies for Deep Learning Global Partnership added character education, and citizenship; while others specifically included culture, and computer and digital technologies [21]. For much of the 1990s and the early 2000s, 21st century skills were virtually synonymous with computer and information communication technology (ICT) skills [22]. Looking carefully at recent documents that espouse transforming education for the skills of 21st century learning provides a clearer sense of the demands placed on education.