IN this last article that I write for Educational Leadership as the Executive Secretary of ASCD, there is a strong temptation to look backward, to remember, to reflect, to reconstruct. Instead, I choose to look ahead and to suggest what I think needs yet to be done, rather than to comment on what may have been accomplished.

Where we have been is reasonably well documented, even though the journey has often been recorded without adequate reasons being given for the direction or the detours taken. Some argue that education has attempted too often to move ahead without regard for its larger context. Indicators of activity have included philosophic romanticism, political imperative, and national hysteria. In the days ahead we need to do more than indicate the pressures that cause education and curriculum to assume certain shapes and directions. The design for education must delineate explicit goals for direction, development, and evaluation, and then build them into the implicit goals to ensure that they eventuate.

Without presuming to know all the critical areas of change, the immediate future will likely find us addressing ourselves to a number of concerns, of which the following are representative:

Planning. Research, gaming, and “think tank” operations are rapidly replacing historical review as the key to future developments. Rapid changes require longer projections if we are to be on course. Expressway and systems decisions are more consequential, so planning becomes more complicated and must be better anticipated. A casual evolution no longer exists in biology or education. Planning by not-for-profit or consultation firms is modifying the genesis of ideas and their early structuring. Traditional sources of educational planning are being bypassed as too slow, too parsimonious, inadequate to the need, or irrelevant. International communication systems will minimize place; concern will be for the validity or the quality of the idea or information.

Decision Making. Technology breeds complexity; it also enables us to manage complexity. Decisions will be made in larger packages, in different geographic
units, will require more and larger units of data. Self-fulfilling prophesies become possible by those who control the expanded means and conditions. Decisions regarding priorities will be more explicit, as will the levels of the preceding and consequent decisions, since clearer relationship to goals will be required. Input data must be sought from larger and sometimes new configurations or consortia including citizens, parents, and learners. More persons with a wider range of roles will insist upon appropriate access to the process. A faster tempo of living and deciding will require faster responses and more adequate responsiveness. The professional association and organizations of teachers will be important elements, as will government, industry, and social agencies. New measures to compete in power moves will be required.

**Support Systems.** New means, conditions, specialties, and imperatives will require more sophisticated support systems. Data processing and surveillance capabilities will eliminate many slippages in the system that now provide living and breathing room. The support system must incorporate the new and specialized components; it must specifically provide for elements of creativity or freedom if they are to exist. Working with professional teams, with complex educational and retrieval systems, with preplanned and developed alternatives virtually eliminates the insulated or isolated professional. As decisions are larger and more consequential, the response and support system must be more adequate and more sensitive. More significant measures for diverse inputs and more open communication systems must be developed.

**Resources.** Greater emphasis continues to be placed upon the means, the technology, the materials and conditions necessary for achieving desired goals. The nature of the resources has a more direct and important influence upon experiencing and growth. As resources become more causal, more persons become concerned with their adequacy and kind. Environmental elements become more integral to personal or professional assessments of progress. Greater dependency upon resources alters the existence and role of those involved in their use. Curriculum must be rethought and redefined because of the impact of the extended alternatives, means, and resources which challenge established norms and procedures. As resources become more complicated and essential, access to them becomes more a problem and more a goal in itself. Non-school agencies and sources will assume more importance as recognized learning opportunities and needs. The simultaneous impact of information from multiple sources will increase the necessity for personal and intellectual structures to manage the complex and often contradictory elements.

**Human Relations.** As roles and resources change, so must relationships. The cumulative impact of media and technological elements emphasizes the critical importance of the creative and human elements. Self-esteem and individual enhancement require new emphasis on the communication and acceptance of self and of individuality. The language, the means, and the symbols used to communicate, will further change the nature of relationships. Transitional roles,
mobility of place and occupation, and conflicts in pluralistic cultural and values bases maximize the significance of personal communication. To fulfill a professional role and still be a person, to appreciate individual styles in operation, and in learning, must assume greater priority in education and performance. Non-vocational activities provide opportunities and indicate need for each to humanize himself. Urban development and increased population mean that any human element will have significant numbers of persons to make it visible and important.

Organization. Organizational and institutional structures are threatened by rapid changes and by intensive thrusts hitting single aspects of the maintenance spectrum, thus making them vulnerable. Renewal and reorganization need leadership and funds as do status quo and continuity. Larger decisions will produce new and larger units of organization; leadership functions must become fluid, not static. Team and ad hoc functioning will replace many hierarchial structures; flexibility must exist to incorporate wider and newer elements of force or prestige, to incorporate more adequately the components essential to implementation and acceptance. Local resources and talent will be shown to be inadequate to any significant need. Consolidations incorporate diversity, larger units, and tend toward depersonalizing distances and decisions unless the human relations potentials are maximized. New centralizing, standardizing, and formalizing structures will be forged by pressures from negotiations. Differentiated roles will replace the modular concept of teacher or professional. Complexity which will overburden the present structure, will in turn be replaced by new configurations of power and organization; and generalists will be needed with more dynamic and fewer fragmented competencies.

The completeness or exactness of the foregoing is not the important thing. The intention is to frame some beginnings and to encourage dialogue about them. These and other arenas of action must be identified and subsequent implications developed, knowledgably and courageously. The time for castigation or preaching has long been replaced by the need to formulate both grand and detailed specifications for review.

The "now generation" is insisting upon an assessment and alignment of our social documents and our deeds. Young learners are being introduced to their future via TV cartoons and adventures. Seismic or political shocks are heard world-wide before analysis or perspective is possible. Educators must decide either to be central in the shaping of each development or be content to exist as a second priority relegated to the backwash of ideas and events.

—Leslee J. Bishop, Executive Secretary, ASCD.