Historically comparative educationists wished to develop or reform their own system of education. Technical assistance programmes are undertaken with the same intention in mind. There are at least two levels at which the reform of education can take place, namely (1) at the level of policy and (2) at the level of practice. Comparative educationists, using their knowledge of different national systems can contribute to:

1) an understanding of a problem towards the solution of which alternative policies are proposed;
2) the adoption of one or other of the alternative policies in his or her OWN country;
3) the possibilities of implementing a chosen policy solution in a particular specified national context.

To perform these policy oriented tasks comparative educationists need models and techniques for:
1) the identification and analysis of a problem;
2) a description of the context (political, linguistic, ethnic, economic, religious, social class and educational) in which the problem arises and in which the solution has to be applied;
3) analysing the processes of policy formulation and adoption in the chosen national system; and
4) deciding under specific national conditions which of the alternative policies is least likely to succeed in practice.

To undertake these tasks comparative educationists need:
1) a theory of social change in order to identify and analyse a problem;
2) taxonomies which will facilitate the collection and classification of educational and other societal data;
3) a systems analysis model which will permit the analysis of policy formulation and adoption, and
4) techniques for predicting, under stated national conditions, the outcomes of policy so that a choice can be made between alternatives.

Traditional methods such as these of Schneider, Hilkier and Bereday may partially help in the performance of these tasks. Basically, because of the epistemology which inform them, they are inadequate.