Strategic Management as Key to Improve the Quality of Education

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Abstract—Strategic management and Leadership are both issues of central importance in raising achievement in schools and colleges and thus are at the heart of the educational debate today. This book is concerned with such major issues as: the nature of strategic management in education; the importance of vision, and mission; styles of leadership; models of educational management; and the purposes of strategic management, which here are equated with the effectiveness and improvement of the institution. It will be invaluable for students of educational management, such as those following master's degrees. It is also directly relevant to teachers and lecturers and schools of all phases and in further education colleges. During the last decade education systems have been undergoing a long process of restructuring from a model of educational management that was deeply rooted in the past to a strategic management model that is focused on the future. The present study aims to make a contribution in this direction. Firstly, we review the current scenario of change, and explore sustainable improvement in education as priority objective in educational management, making it clear that the most significant changes are those that are focused on improvement and on the educational establishment itself. Secondly, after finding that at both national and international level there is a growing consensus in the research about the existence of certain key elements that are necessary in order to achieve this improvement these being strategic educational management and effective educational leadership we describe the distinctive characteristics and the main components of this type of management in education. The paper ends with several implications for improving educational practice. In particular, some basic competences for the professionalization of educational management are outlined.

INTRODUCTION

The need for dialogue between the educational institution and society is now starting to be recognized, taking into account the particular context for innovation within each institution and acknowledging that they need to act democratically, with participation and collaboration from society. There is thus a move away from innovation being tied to sweeping institutional reform, and a move towards a relationship between innovation, the professional development of teaching staff, and the learning processes of students. Throughout history it has been repeatedly demonstrated that those changes and innovations that are driven by government bodies with responsibility for education rarely succeed. Perhaps one of the key reasons for this is that the needs and interests of each individual learning institution be it school, college or university have not been taken into account, nor those of teaching staff. More recently, in view of this lack of success, there has been something of a change in the way in which innovation is approached.

In other words, the focus is shifting towards the particular characteristics and needs of the educational y be deemed to be a success. In this respect there is growing consensus, both in Spain and also internationally, regarding one particular key factor in achieving sustainable improvement in education (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006), namely the strategic management of learning, together with effective educational leadership (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006). The present work seeks to analyze these issues.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Strategic Management Characterizing features and key components Research into change in the context of educational improvement has clarified the nature and reach of an effective management model for achieving the desired improvements in an educational setting. In this approach, fresh management thinking and practices form the basis of that improvement. These issues remain at the centre of a far-reaching debate, with opinions appearing to veer towards a strategic management model with pedagogical & Moreno, 2006). Nowadays it is widely accepted that the fundamental task underlying the redesign of educational institutions is to resolve the dissociation that exists between the strictly pedagogical and the more generically organizational. According to Pozner (2000), this involves acknowledging that

successful educational transformation stems from integrated strategic management. Only deep-seated change in educational working practices will bring the education system up to the optimum level for progress towards the strategic objectives that currently prove so challenging, these being: quality; equality; fitness-for-purpose of the curriculum; and greater professionalism in teaching. distinguishes several of its components as an aide to understanding, together with a series of factors and fundamental competencies that underpin it. With this in mind, it is helpful to examine the basic characteristics and components of this strategic management model. With regard to its characterizing features, the specialist literature reflects the following:

➢ Advice and guidance. Support for teaching staff, to enable them to address issues and identify specific solutions to challenges that arise in the teaching process, is vital.

➢ An organizational culture bound together by a clear vision for the future. The aim here is to look to the future and the challenges it may bring by clarifying objectives, generating consensus, and identifying goals, with a view to achieving not only coherence but also a spirit of entrepreneurship and creativity. It is essential that the entire educational community re-engages with its thirst for learning, given the current climate of change in the sector.

➢ Teamwork. Collaboration becomes the expression of a culture that is geared to providing a shared vision of where the institution wants to get to and of the educational principles that are being pursued. It also provides teaching staff with tools that contribute to their teaching practice and help keep motivation high. Collaborative working in the educational context is based on processes that facilitate shared understanding, and promote joint planning, action and reflection regarding what needs doing and how it needs to be done.

➢ Openness to learning and innovation. organisation that is open to learning from all of its stakeholders and that has the capacity to experiment and innovate in the pursuit of its objectives. This involves breaking down underlying barriers such as fear and inertia and fostering clarity of goals whilst highlighting the need for change and improvement.

➢ The core nature of pedagogy. The educational institution itself is the organizational cornerstone of the education system, and, as such, it is within the institution that pedagogical issues need to be addressed.

➢ Skills for dealing with complexity external teams and networks in order to generate shared projects is key.

As regards the components of strategic educational management, there appear to be three key ingredients: systemic strategic thinking, organizational learning and pedagogical leadership. As many different studies have affirmed in recent decades, the creation of effective educational establishments requires pedagogical leaders who maintain a focus on teaching and training processes and who act as change agents to drive continuous improvement in their respective organizations (Bol & & & Hopkins, 1991). The role and reach of effective educational leadership is recognized as being indispensable and a decisive factor in educational improvement. Evidence-based research on this question clearly identifies the positive role played by this type of leadership in harnessing the efforts of all those involved in educational improvement at every level.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATION

The importance of effective management in educational organisations has been increasingly recognised. Schools and colleges are likely to be much more effective in providing a good education for their pupils and students if they are well managed. The research on school effectiveness and school improvement in many countries shows that the quality of leadership and management is one of the most important variables in distinguishing between successful and unsuccessful schools (Sammons et al., 1994). This finding means that management cannot be a 'taken for granted' aspect of educational institutions. Good management makes a difference to the quality of schools.

Educational management refers to the administration of the education system in which a group combines human and material resources to supervise, plan, strategies, and implement structures to execute an education system. Education is the equipping of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, habits, and attitudes with learning experiences. The education system is an ecosystem of professionals in educational institutions, such as government ministries, unions, statutory boards, agencies, and schools. The education system consists of political heads, principals, teaching staff, non-teaching staff, administrative personnel and other educational professionals working together to enrich and enhance. At all levels of the educational ecosystem, management is required; management involves the planning, organising, implementation, review, evaluation, and integration of an institution.

WHAT ARE SOME EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES?

Education and Educational Leadership is the key to a bright future. This saying have long been used by parents, but the ones who carry the responsibility of giving everyone the Education and Educational Leadership that they need to actually have a bright future falls to teachers. It is important that teachers have effective Educational Management Strategies to keep their classes in disruption free while still keeping the respect and fondness of the students. Here are some tips to have an effective educational management plan.

What do you commonly avoid when discussing a lesson? You commonly want to avoid interruptions in class as this disrupts your flow of thoughts. When that happens, you will not be able to follow up your momentum with helpful exercises, activities, or other important things that you have to say as you have a tendency to forget about it. So it is only important that you deal with class disruptions with as little interruption as possible. As Education and Educational Leadership is will not b understood with many disruptions. You can do this by asking one of the students causing the disruption a question or two and get them back on track. This will also enforce on your students the thought that there is a discussion going on and that they have to listen because the teacher will ask questions some time in class. You can also stop the disruptions with a good laugh, to wake up your students' brain cells and get back to the discussion. This will give a lighter and better ambience in the room which will help in learning.

You should also keep the respect that your students have for you. Every first meeting, students will automatically have a high form of respect for his teacher. You should preserve this respect throughout the whole year. Students will quickly assess what he will be able to get away with, so it is important that you have a clear discipline plan in class and enforce it from first meeting onwards to the last.

Educational Administrators should be selective in your rules as no one will be able to follow 100 rules as precisely as possible. Make sure that you tell them that you expect discipline while classes are ongoing and when they will be allowed to mingle with other students. Have clear punishments for specific misbehaviours.

You should always be consistent in your discipline methods and should avoid not noticing any misbehaviour today and getting exaggeratingly mad about a single one tomorrow, as this will cause your students to lose respect for you. You should also be fair always in your decisions as your students are intelligent creatures and have the capacity to judge what is wrong or not. If you

can, you should always explain why something that they have done is wrong. This will let them understand your way of thinking and follow your rules properly as they will know the reason behind it.

Whatever happens, you should avoid confrontations in public or in front of other students. Always keep confrontations private because you don't want your students to "lose face" in front of his peers. This is also respecting how he is and also allows you to explain to him properly what he has done, get his view about it without thinking that other may hear, and lets you know the truth. If your students share a secret, or confess to you something they don't want to tell others, then keep it a secret. Remember that you will only get the same amount of respect that you give your students, as according to certain saying, "Respect is not something that you receive, but something that you earn".

Lastly, it will be greatly helpful if you start your day fresh and positive. Don't assume negative things as this will cause you to act differently towards your students and that will not be healthy for your class. Keep expectations with each student high and keep clam when someone misbehaves while still enforcing firm discipline, and you'll get through the year with flying colors.

OBJECTIVES

Institutional Level

The board of education and principals are responsible for managing an educational institution's daily operations. The school board formulates policies and has decision-making powers. Their responsibilities include regulating the school budget, formulating its strategic vision and mission, and reviewing and enhancing school policies. The board also monitors school performance, reporting to stakeholders (such as parents and the director-general) and collaborating with parents, government and non-governmental organisations. The board of education can make legal decisions on behalf of the school, entering contracts and providing land.

The principal has a professional and administrative role in the school. With the school board, they chart the school's strategic goals reflecting its mission, vision, and philosophy. The principal supervises teaching and non-teaching staff, coordinating and managing day-to-day operations. They are tasked with procuring resources for the school to achieve its strategic goals and ensuring that staff are trained and equipped with specialised skills, such as first aid. Principals are also required to engage with parents and community partners and provide performance indicators to the ministry (or department) of education.

Principals "build school culture", sustaining enhancement programmes and campaigns in the school. Strategic goals for a school include excellence and engagement in learning, building character and leadership and developing staff competencies, collaborative partnerships, holistic education, quality student outcomes and lifelong, future-ready learners.

Educator Level

Teachers plan and implement lessons based on pedagogical practices in an educational framework, managing and updating student portfolios to recognise and assess diverse domains of development: social, emotional, intellectual, physical, moral and aesthetic. Pedagogical practices are supported by the curriculum philosophy, the goals and objectives of the subject matter, and individual student learning and developmental needs. Although educational management at the educator level is similar to that of the education ministry, its planning, development and monitoring focuses on individual students. Teachers adopt classroom- management strategies and incorporate instructional approaches which promote independence, discipline, and a positive learning mindset. A teacher's classroom-management style influences many aspects of the learning environment. The four general styles of classroom management are authoritarian, authoritative, permissive and disengaged. Teachers use a variety of positive guidance and disciplinary strategies to refocus a student's attention or manage conflicts.

Ministerial-departmental Level

Ministries and departments of education are responsible for the "design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of educational legislation, policies, and programmes". They provide structured support in strategic leadership, human resources, budgeting and administrative management to ensure that the educational system functions effectively and efficiently.

SCOPE

Preschool

Curriculum development at the preschool level is based on several schools of thought. The Kindergarten was established by Friedrich Fröbel in Germany in 1837. Froebel described three forms of knowledge which he viewed as essential to all learning: knowledge of life, which includes an appreciation of gardening, animals and domestic tasks; knowledge of mathematics, such as geometry; and knowledge of beauty, which includes colour and shape, harmony and movement. The goals of Froebel's kindergarten are to awaken a child's physical senses through learning experiences and provide a common ground for individuals to advance.

John Dewey formulated the theory of progressive education. His progressive-education philosophy embraces the idea that children should be taught how to think. Dewey was opposed to assessments, since they cannot measure whether or not a child is educated. The school community should offer learning opportunities which are interesting and meaningful and prepare individuals to live in a democratic society. Children learn through doing, cooperation, problem-solving and collaboration, with the teacher acting as a guide. Projects in Dewey's curriculum encourage exploration, self-discovery and sensorial experiences which provide a holistic approach, focuses on the children's interests, and are developmentally appropriate.

Margaret and Rachel McMillan were social reformers in England who spent their lives trying to address poverty and founded the Open-Air Nursery School and Training Centre in London. Their goals were to provide loving care, health support, nourishment and physical welfare to children. Assistance was provided to parents to aid them in caring for, and interacting with, their children. Pedagogical models on how to engage and interact with young children were provided. The pedagogical principles of the Nursery School may be found in educational frameworks requiring teachers to nurture and teach a curriculum which covers an exploration of the world, aesthetics, music and movement, and literacy.

The Reggio Emilia approach developed in the small north-Italian city of Reggio Emilia. Influenced by constructivist theories and the progressive-education movement, it is committed to uphold the rights of individuals. Key concepts in a Reggio Emilia school include a child's right to education, the importance of interpersonal relationships amongst children, teachers and parents, and children's interactions in work and play. Its curriculum emerges from the children's interest, and is developed through projects and inquiry. Each individual plays an important role in the school, and parental involvement is a key aspect of the child's learning and development.

Montessori education was developed by Maria Montessori, who believed that children go through sensitive periods known as "windows of opportunity". Everything in a Montessori classroom enhances and develops a child's growth. Materials address children's interests and the natural environment. The learning environment is focused on the child. The curriculum trains children to be responsive, and promotes a desire for skills mastery.

Waldorf education, created by the Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner, focuses on the whole child: body, mind, and spirit. The curriculum is designed to provoke thought processes, develop sensitivity, and enhance creative and artistic fluency. The Waldorf curriculum consists of storytelling, aesthetics (arts), practical work, imaginative play, and discovery of nature. Modern schools adopting Waldorf education are independent and self-governing.

Primary Education

Curriculum development at the primary level focuses on the foundations of subjects, covering subject disciplines, knowledge skills and character development. Subject disciplines are the cores and foundations of language, science, humanities, the arts, technology, and social studies. Knowledge skills are personal skills and attributes such as communication, critical thinking, teamwork and judgement, which are developed through learning experiences based on the school's pedagogical practices. Character development, according to Elliot Eisner, is the implicit curriculum: the school's hidden agenda. Character traits and attributes include resilience, self-discipline, empathy and compassion, focusing on the social and emotional development of each student. The curriculum development is a springboard towards personal and social capability, ethical and intercultural understanding, and sound moral judgement.

Secondary Education

Curriculum development varies at the secondary level, based on the course (or stream) in which a student is enrolled. Curriculum focuses on core subjects such as language, mathematics, science and the humanities. Learning experiences, strategic goals, national frameworks and school philosophy are also considered in curriculum development; schools consider values and progressive skills in the development of a holistic curriculum. Elective and vocational programmes are offered, which include social studies, art and music, design, and technology and computer studies. Specialized schools integrate programmes with corporate partners in information and communication technology, entrepreneurship, art, design, media and Da Vinci Learning. Enhanced programmes in sports, arts, and language are also offered.

TERTIARY EDUCATION

Curriculum at the tertiary education level involves specific course design and development. Griffith University describes planning as based on previously-collected evidence; the process also involves assessment, technologically-informed learning and discipline-based capabilities. The process aims to prepare students for the workforce while enhancing their understanding of a subject. Griffith University considers four key elements in curriculum development: learning analytics, external peer review, peer-based professional learning and professional learning workshops.

Co-curricular Activities

Co-curricular activities help students maintain a holistic education, expressing their interests and talents. The activities help foster a sense of social integration, and add a sense of commitment and belonging to one's community and country. Co-curricular activities include science-oriented talent-development programmes, clubs and societies, sports, uniformed groups, and visual- and performing-arts groups. Co-curricular activities may also include advocacy, botany, personal-care, innovation, research-methodology and current-affairs groups.

Health and physical development - This department's primary role is to develop safe and effective programmes to educate students on healthy living and physical education, and involves mastery of a sport and acquiring basic movement skills. The department develops a curriculum based on sequential outcomes and the physical abilities of students. An instructional model may be used as a plan which includes a theoretical foundation, learning outcomes, sequenced activities and task structures. The department may promote parental involvement through partnerships with families and communities, and may rely on support from dieticians, physiotherapists, community health services and sports associations.

Curriculum Planning and Development

Curriculum planning and development involves "the design and development of integrated plans for learning, and the evaluation of plans, their implementation and the outcomes of the learning experience". It designs and reviews curriculum, promotes teaching and assessment strategies aligned with curriculum, formulates special curriculum programmes, creates clear, observable objectives, and generates useful assessment rubrics.

Curriculum development can be described as a three-stage process encompassing planned, delivered and experienced curriculum. It may be shaped by pedagogical approaches contributed by theorists and researchers, such as John Dewey, Lev Vygotsky, Jean Piaget, Jerome Bruner, and Albert Bandura.

Student development - This department's primary role is to create curriculum and programmes which promote character, arts, citizenship, moral education, and global awareness. Its mission is to promote individual student

excellence, encourage collaboration and discovery and challenge students to take responsibility, equipping students with future-ready qualities and competencies. Schools focus on values, collaboration, culture, and integration in approaching student-development programmes. Overseas learning opportunities can be integrated to enable students to become aware of diverse cultures and backgrounds, with the goals of global connectivity and collaboration.

Human resources - The primary goals of the human-resources department are attracting, developing, and retaining staff in the education ministry. It formulates operational policies and systems which directly affect staff performance and attitudes. Departmental objectives include a review of organisational structures and procedures, staff skills development and enhancement, and leadership succession and transition. These aim to foster greater staff involvement and expansion, eventually reaching the education system's overall goals.

Information technology - Information technology harnesses technology to facilitate efficient administration, management and education. This requires frequent staff training to ensure that educators at all levels are fully equipped with the needed skill set, and managers must identify and conceptualise relevant information for instruction. IT systems must be reliable, accessible and assimilated by educators, and are vulnerable to hacking and malware. A period of close examination during integration may be necessary to ensure that educators are using new applications correctly.

Special education - Special education aims to facilitate a healthy learning environment for children with special needs or disabilities, giving all children an insightful and fruitful learning experience. Special education may be provided in mainstream schools or specialised schools. The appropriate choice of learning institution depends on the child's needs and the services available. Children may display learning difficulties or require additional materials for learning. Relevant courses are designed for children on the autism spectrum or with intellectual disabilities, visual impairment, hearing loss or cerebral palsy. Additional assistance may be provided by social-service, non-governmental and voluntary welfare organisations and corporate partners. The department tries to ensure that students with disabilities can participate in the school curriculum on the same basis as their peers. It encompasses all education, including specialised schools and support classes; this is key to ensuring student diversity. Special support services include accommodations, consultations, and personalised learning. Allied educators provide a high level of interaction with each child. A multidisciplinary team of psychologists, special educators, and therapists fosters appropriate, meaningful learning.

SUSTAINABLE IMPROVEMENT

Sustainable improvement as a key aim of educational management The processes associated with teaching and classroom learning should be at the heart of any call for change or innovation, as ultimately it is what the teaching staff deliver in the classroom that makes the difference in the learning outcomes of students. As outlined by Riley, Heneveld and Harris (2002), research has shown that attempts two factors are central to both generating and also to sustaining improvements. The combined efforts of all those working in the educational institution should be focused on supporting these two aspects. It makes little sense to place the emphasis on organizational or curricular change processes if these are not going to make a positive impact on classroom teaching practices. According to Elmore (2002), the central aim of these processes has to be the achievement of significant improvement in learning for all students. In light of the above, and assuming that educational quality is the key determinant of educational outcomes, we outline in the diagram below some of the key ingredients that, according to Brophy (2007), contribute to making lasting improvements in other words, that improve the effectiveness of classroom teaching

The door to classroom innovation - Classroom atmosphere conducive to learning - Learning opportunities - Adaptation of the curriculum to the unique profile of the educational institution - Learning guidance offered - Coherent content - Reflexive discourse - Hands-on activities for practical application - Support materials to help engage learners - Employ diverse teaching strategies - Collaborative learning - Assessment based on achieving objectives - Expectations of success.

In addition to the above factors, research into educational improvement which considers the educational establishment itself as the locus for change (Escudero, 1991) affirms that educational improvement rests on the capacity of the institution and its teaching staff to manage, make decisions and generate innovations that respond to the challenges of their educational practices. Hence the strategic management model is so important.

IMPLICATIONS FOR IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

There is no longer any debate regarding the fate of any attempt to make improvements in education: its success or failure will be decided within the institution itself and the teaching therein, and this, in turn, depends on the

quality of pedagogical leadership and the performance of those in leadership roles. The Head of the institution and its senior management team are regarded as having an increasingly important role to play in the management of that institution

and its results. Responding to the current need for effective management demands of these professionals that they commit to broadening their competences in order to devise new interventions and innovations in the pursuit of greater educational quality. The core competences in the professionalization of education management are: The ability to relate well to others and to foster effective co-working in the educational setting, based on building cooperative, productive relationships that support the improvement of educational services. Competencies geared towards achieving high-quality results, such as continuing development for teaching staff. This ensures that the capacity of the institution in matters of curricular management and pedagogy is adequately developed. Institutional and strategic competencies that enable leadership capacity to be developed. This, in turn, generates a strategic vision of the educational institution, and ensures that new projects are effectively launched and managed. These competences can be considered as fundamental to the training of senior managers in educational institutions (Concha, 2007). They may also be regarded as institutional indicators of improvement in education, & Alfaro, 2009).

CONCLUSION

Educational institutions need management systems in place that are capable of controlling the outcomes of their strategies effectively and efficiently. Just as in the business realm, the education sector must apply structured methods for providing strategic support. he current educational management model in many countries needs to undergo a series of changes, to reflect more closely the competencies and characteristics outlined above. A new management model is required, based on: significant decision-making capacity; leadership that is not solely focused on one single leader but rather is shared across the organisation; teamwork; and strategic planning all driving forward the innovation agenda in education. If this

transformation could be brought about, it would enable in the medium term improvements to be made in the quality of education, and would bring different institutions into line with each other in terms of quality and relevance of the education system overall.

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