

Linking The World of the Policy-Maker to That of the Change-Agent in Educational Change

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Abstract

Policy cannot “mandate what matters”. In fact, policy in educational reform can set a general direction and framework, but it is local implementation that produces real outcomes. It is important to change the core of schooling or teachers’ deep beliefs in teaching practices, their values, and basic assumptions. Changing organizational culture can bring deeper forms of change that helps the organization survive and grow. This article, which stresses the importance of organizational culture in school change, is based on five arguments. First, taking a post-modernist standpoint, the paper argues that change is itself a complex process. Second, as change does, different classroom teachers understand a policy differently and require different models of implementation, and centrally-imposed policies are likely to cause teachers’ resistance to change. Therefore, policy-makers have to be aware of changes in organizational culture that lead to changes in teachers’ basic assumptions, behaviors and processes. Both policy-makers and practitioners must not neglect the existence and the world of the other, so that different units in a change paradigm should be linked to each other. The paper concludes that all changes should include human substance transmitted through effective communication and emotional quotient management.

Introduction

Educational reform is not a new concept. However, policy initiatives seem to have little impact on student achievements (Harris & Hopkins, 1999) although the ultimate goal of schooling is to create conditions to maximize students’ learning (Christie & Lingard, 2001; Lingard et al., 2003). There are problems within the change process that both the government and change agents (namely schools, teachers and other external constituents) must be aware of. Policy cannot “mandate what matters” (McLaughlin, 1990, p. 12). In fact, policy can set a general direction and framework, but it is local implementation that produces real outcomes. What makes a difference in education change is, according to Elmore (1996), to change the core of schooling or teachers’ deep beliefs in teaching practices. This kind of change involves changes in values, basic assumptions, and beliefs. Changing organizational culture can bring deeper forms of change that helps the organization survive and grow. It is the shared beliefs and values that set the boundaries as to what goals can and cannot be achieved by the organization. Bowman and Deal (2002, p. 105), who place organizational culture in the symbolic frame of school leadership, suggest that it is organizational culture that provides the energy and zest to the organization, and that a “weak culture calls out for change”.

This article aims to discuss the importance of organizational culture in school change which is based on five arguments. First, taking a post-modernist standpoint, the paper argues that change is itself a complex process. Being change doers at the school sites where change is mandated to happen, classroom teachers understand a policy differently and require different models of implementation, and centrally-imposed policies often make teachers' resistance and hesitance to change at school levels unavoidable. Therefore, in order to have a change carried out, those in leadership roles have to be aware of changes in the culture of the organization that lead to changes in teachers' basic assumptions, behaviors, and processes. Both the policy-maker (the national, provincial, or state governments and departments of education and training) and the practitioner (schools, teachers, or principals) should not neglect the existence and the world of the other, so that different units in a change paradigm should be linked. Finally, the paper concludes that all changes should include human substance when intelligence quotient (IQ) is not solely enough.

The Nature of Change as a Process

There are many factors influencing educational policy change such as natural disasters and scientific advances (Levin, 1976). Fullan (2000) emphasizes that the walls between schools and external environments are almost broken down due to the expansion of technology and market competition. Furthermore, globalization has shaped the world into a time- and space-compressed place (Christie & Sidhu, 2002) and the role of the nation-state becomes more prominent in regulating policies which must be appropriate in the global contexts (Marginson, 1999). The aim of education is, therefore, to train students for academic and social outcomes (Lingard et al., 2003) and the ability to handle global diversity.

In addition, in this postmodern world where change even turns to be changeable itself (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Law & Glover, 2000; Limerick, Cunnington, & Crowther, 1998), change is a non-linear process, and it cannot always be easily managed or created (Kirkbride, Durcan, & Obeng, 1994). The past and present cannot always prepare us for the future. We certainly know the initial point of change which we impose to carry out, but how it happens may be unknown because one change event is interconnected to another. Change cannot occur as a single event or an end point but rather as a link in the whole systematic chain. Also, perceptions towards change are not the same in the minds of the change producer and the change doer. Some may think change is like replacing an out-of-date and ineffective factor by an innovation to fix the situation. Others may perceive that change is meant for improvement, making existing conditions better. There are still a number of people, especially conservative teachers, who insist that change is non-sense. No matter how a change is implemented, the result is always the same. The root of the problem is, as a result, how to convince change agents that potential policies are meant for the public good.

Change is also complex, contradictory, and multidimensional. According to Fullan (1993) (see also Cuban, 1988; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991), there are two main kinds of change in education. First-order changes refer to those that improve the

efficiency and effectiveness of existing conditions without disturbing the basic organizational characteristics, and second-order changes seek to alter fundamental ways in which organizations are put together, creating changes at the whole systematic level. According to Cuban (1988), it is, consequently, hard to implement second-order changes without support from external constituents. Second-order change requires more efforts in linking units in the system to implement a change, and collaboration and commitment from these lower units are essential. Support from “outside” agencies to the “inside” schools is increasingly important because forces outside schools are now facing teachers every day (Cuban, 1988; Fullan, 2000). Effective schools should use internal strength to seek relationships and to build corporate partnerships with outside agents. Many school reform efforts have failed due to the reason that first-order changes have been largely carried out while second-order changes involving the whole system have been untouched. To put it briefly, the “ingredients change, but the soup remains the same” (Cuban, 1988, p. 75).

Moreover, components in a change may be too static to encourage systematic change to happen (Elmore, 1996). In fact, change often happens at school levels in the form of everyday problem-solving techniques. The purpose of such changes is to fix a mistake to help the institution survive within that unit rather than to improve the whole system. More importantly, it is necessary to change the core of educational practice which includes teachers’ understanding of students’ learning, their roles in learning, and how this kind of knowledge is reflected in teaching. The “core” also includes structural arrangements of schools entailing both physical structures and relationships in class. This kind of change is concerned with changes in values and beliefs, which then becomes a question because changing structures is easier to achieve than changing culture although the former may not bring deeper forms of change. Also, change in other elements other than the cores may result in surface change. Teaching practices, which have great impact on students’ achievements, are not changed dramatically although from the outside it seems that schools are constantly changing. The worst consequence of this phenomenon, as a Vietnamese idiom says, is the “running after achievements disease” when schools try to prove that they are the best schools with a huge number of students gaining extremely high marks. Classrooms teachers tend to design less difficult tests and appear more generous with grading, and hence the quality of schooling must be questioned instead of trying to find out whether students’ academic ability is truly trained.

One of the dominant features in school reform¹ is decentralization and empowerment which are necessary for schools to turn down the traditional hierarchical management as much as they can in order to extend their relations beyond their boundaries to seek support from external stakeholders. It is then the local level that goes bottom-up. Fullan (2000, p. 583) posits that the “outside” agencies’ responsibility is to provide schools with adequate infrastructure and focus on policies for decentralization, local capacity building, accountability, and stimulation of innovations. On the one hand, decentralization with an emphasis on school-based management encourages innovations and willingness to change. On the other hand, increasing accountability makes change agents pay closer attention to standards, performance quality and quality management.

¹ Please refer to the Appendix.

Organizational Culture in Dealing with Teachers' Resistance to Change

A note should be made at this point is that not all resistance is bad or negative. Some resist or disagree to seek a better solution, or some may criticize a policy to wake up change-producers to negotiate with change agents. From a macro view, there are many reasons why teachers and people at school levels tend to resist change. First, an educational reform in many western democratic countries is generated on "electoral time" as presidential candidates' "promises" (Fullan, 1993, p. 263) when education is an effective tool for governments to exercise political influence towards citizens. Being able to convince teachers to change their perceptions is a hard task for governments, except in countries where there is a limited amount of democracy, and pressure can be used to "stuff" people with certain political ideology. Some teachers, who think that traditional purpose of schooling is to provide young people with adequate knowledge and full development in aesthetic, intellectual, physical, spiritual, emotional, social and moral values (Willcocks, 1981, p. 27), tend to get morally dissatisfied with the political-driven factor in addition to the market (economic) imperative in education, hence they are against change. Second, governments always initiate a change for common goods which are thought to be beneficial to most of society's members. However, one single policy cannot always satisfy or suit all individuals in different geographical and social contexts. From a psychoanalytic perspective, inadequacy of understanding people's psychology and conflicts in interests may create teachers' resistance to new ideas and innovative practices (Baum, 2002). Third, policy-makers who are often at the top levels may seldom enter classrooms. Therefore, there is a discrepancy between state's views and teachers', and it is usually teachers and people at school levels who specify the guidelines in their everyday operations. Different schools operate differently depending on their geographical, demographic, social and cultural contexts. Policy-makers, consequently, cannot mandate implementation, and the more they are away from the implementation sites, the less influential they turn to be to these sites (Fullan, 1993). In this case, power which is defined as "the ability to get someone to do something that she or he would not otherwise do" (Dahl, 1957, cited in Luke, 1974, p. 11) cannot always guarantee success. Teachers' ideas and even feelings about a reform become a critical factor; because they are not only professionals working directly with students, they are also held responsible for the results through the reward and/or punishment systems. Balance between pressure and support and between bureaucracy and democracy in a specific context is another issue for leadership to take into consideration (Elmore, 1996; Fullan, 1993; McLaughlin, 1987). Pressure is applied to focus on a reform objective, legitimize large-scale and national reform programs as well as provide legal protection from any obstructions or uneven consensus (McLaughlin, 1987). Pressure without support leads to strong resistance and alienation; support without pressure results in drifts, laziness and passing-the-buck.

From an institutional view, teachers' resistance to change can be explained in terms of their own culture. According to Hargreaves (1994), there are four forms of teachers' culture. First, at the individualistic level, some teachers prefer to teach alone "behind the closed door". This is their own characteristic which prevents them from

socialization and sharing experiences with others. Some of them lack confidence in handling criticism from colleagues and leaders. Also, their isolation can result from the nature of their work at the office and administrative or situational constraints that create barriers or discouragements to their work. Conversely, there are teachers who tend to collaborate in working, and there are still others who are forced to collaborate. This is where leadership cannot be monopolized, but should be empowered. Groups of teachers in collaboration working styles form collegiality which is again classified into two kinds: genuine and contrived collegiality. In the latter form, teachers' collaborative working relationships are often administrative-regulated, compulsory, implementation-oriented, fixed in time and space, and predictable about outcomes. Contrived collegiality is sometimes needed in order to ensure that everyone is actually working together towards a certain goal. Yet, the true nature of such a relationship just exists at that surface level which may remain for a short period of time. Finally, the balkanization form of teachers' culture consists of teachers' working patterns in sub-groups with low permeability and sometimes with high competition among different departments. In addition to the four levels of teachers' culture, there is also a difference between male and female culture which influences the way they work. Wallace and Hall (1997) suggest that leaders should equally consider the integration of both a cultural approach which ignores the ways the distribution of power between women and men and their interests have impacts on their behaviors at work, and a political approach which does not place a sufficient emphasis on the culture of teamwork.

Changes in structures are related to changes in culture. According to Child (1984, cited in Law & Glover, 2000, p. 108), structures have two fundamental elements: the basic structures and the operating mechanisms. The basic structures signal the behaviors of members, and the latter indicate what is expected of an organization's members and motivate them to work towards organizational goals. Within this level, there also needs to be an understanding of people's culture, and an attempt to change such a structure requires leaders to radically understand how people feel and what they perceive of the situation. To innovate a change initiative requires "a clear understanding of the organizational culture and how to modify that culture in a desired direction" (Kashner, 1990, p. 20). Each kind of organizational structures² has a different culture and sub-cultures in it. Values and beliefs in such sub-cultures contribute a great deal to resistance towards a change effort. There is usually a clash between change-initiators and teachers who are charged with the implementing change (Swenk, 1999) due to the following reasons. First, failures to change are normally caused by a lack of trust among members themselves and between the lead and led. While trust can be achieved through open communication between individuals and groups, it is also enhanced by emotional intelligence (EQ) that leaders can apply at work. In addition to technical skills like accounting, business planning and the like, such cognitive abilities as analytical reasoning and EQ are proven to be twice as important as the former competencies (Goleman, 1998). In fact, the ability to manage others, especially in dynamic times, is to be empathetic with them and to demonstrate social skills in building relationships with both internal and external agents. Communication is another critical factor that counts in managing organizational culture because communication directly influences

² For more details, please see Law & Glover (2000, p. 110) and Stace & Dunphy (2001, pp. 85-98).

organizational operations and the “climate of beliefs” (Harsham & Harsham, 1999, p. 5; Langford, 2001; Seel, 2000). Communication is, indeed, a double-sided knife leaders have to be aware of. On the one hand, it is an effective tool to transmit messages and values vertically from higher authorities or horizontally among members. On the other, rumor and distorted information can be harmful to the process of influencing people’s perceptions and actions. Once people are not convinced, they tend to resist change, or are coerced to do it without willingness and commitment. Third, failures to a change innovation can emerge from the lack of “compatibility and profitability” (Levine, 1980, p. 19). Compatibility refers to the degree of congruence between the innovation and the norms, values, and goals that teachers hold. Profitability is defined as “the measure of effectiveness of an innovation in satisfying the adopter’s needs” (ibid.). Very few people want to do something that does not give them any real profits. In other words, there must be an alignment between policy-makers and change agents who find change truly meaningful.

Teachers, in common sense, tend to favor stability (Langford, 2001), so implementing a change program, especially those related to changes in ingrained beliefs, may lead to frustration to many members. Schein (1992, pp. 298-303) recommends a cultural change process with three main phases: unfreezing, cognitive restructuring, and refreezing. First, as part of the “intellectual agenda” (Stace & Dunphy, 2001, p. 64), there need to be “disconfirming data”³ to cause some serious discomfort and “disequilibrium” that force people to stretch their thinking and perceptions out of their normal comfort zone. This stage may most of the time lead them to a feeling of anxiety and a need to change. During the change process in forms of strategic plans, new learning occurs at all times to understand the opportunities as well as challenges that the environment can bring to the organization. Cognitive redefinition of some core concepts in the basic assumptions has to be applied, and change in behavior is sometimes needed as a result of changing perceptions and attitudes. The stage of refreezing refers to the need to reinforce new behaviors and sets of cognition in order to produce confirming data again, or as Denning (2001, p. 46) states, the organization can begin with a “new story”. The whole process must include members’ values and beliefs so that consensus and commitment can be acquired in the implementation phase. Mostly, individual characteristics determine values which influence behaviors which can make reputation (or sometimes destroy the image and fame) of the whole organization. In other words, reputation is driven by behaviors which are driven by characteristics which are, in turn, driven by values. In fact, Bushe (1995) suggests a model of an appreciative inquiry intervention that amplifies the search of organizational strengths and weaknesses, an understanding of factors that can create the best future of the organization, and more importantly, an emphasis on the values the system is seeking to actualize during the change process. In other words, incorporating teachers’ basic beliefs and discovering the necessity to change in the organization is significant in bringing members’ values and commitment into the change process.

In short, there are three roles classroom teachers may play in carrying out a change. First, they are implementers who have daily opportunities to interact with

³ “Disconfirming data” are also termed as “breakpoints” (Strebel, 1992, cited in Stace & Dunphy, 2001).

students, and who may disagree with a reform strategy if they think it is unfeasible. Second, they are authors of change practice in the sense that by using their own experiences and knowledge, they can devise their own ways to achieve the requirements set out by the government. Third, they can be “the final policy brokers” (Spillane, 1999, p. 144) who willingly negotiate with the government and authorities to seek a more appropriate solution. In fact, what matters to most policy outcomes are local capacity and will (McLaughlin, 1987).

Changing the Culture of the Organization: Changing the Basic and Underlying Assumptions, Behaviors, and Processes

“The way we do things around here” is an efficient and frequently cited definition of culture. Organizational culture is seen as the total sum of assumptions, beliefs, and values that most members in that organization share, and is expressed through “what is done, how it is done, and who is doing it” (Farmer, 1990, p. 8). Carrol (1982) posits that culture, like morals, laws, and customs shapes behaviors, and it is something that older generations pass to younger ones. Culture can be analogous to a computer program made by programmers inside and outside the organization in forms of people’s responses, actions, and reactions. Individuals have to learn to fit themselves in such a program to survive in the organization and to make the system work (Hall & Hall, 1987). Prosser (1991) goes even further in stating that culture or the ethos of the organization is often perceived by outsiders as a sum of all aspects and their opinions about the system. In the same vein, Schein (1992) assumes that culture is something that most people can feel it, but it is hard to define clearly. Culture is made by groups of people coming together to create shared basic assumptions and beliefs in order to adapt themselves in an external environment and integrate themselves internally in the organization. Therefore, individuals with their own cultures have to adjust theirs into the group’s culture which may sometimes result in cultural clashes. It is especially harder for leaders and managers to deal with such a “cultural mix” comprising different sub-cultures (Law & Glover, 2000, p. 116).

Schein (1992) points out that there are three levels of culture. Organizational structures and processes, which are mostly visible but hard to decipher, are called artifacts. The second layer named espoused values comprises of strategies, goals, and philosophies of the organization. The deepest level, which includes basic assumptions with taken-for-granted beliefs, is often associated with “organizational myths” including institutional history, stories, and rumors that are passed between individuals (Wallace & Hall, 1997). Groups of people at this level usually hold a strong belief in what they are doing no matter how good or bad it can appear back to them as well as to other people. Changing people’s attitudes at this level seems hard but may lead to deep-rooted change.

There is a human relationship throughout these three levels, and this is what Hargreaves (1994) defines as the form of culture which exists along with the content consisting of shared values, attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and habits. The way people get to understand and communicate with their organizational culture is through communication channels via the use of language. The deep values and beliefs implied in

the language of the organization's culture, which are also expressed in the organization's visions, values, missions, rules, and operational procedures, are included in the organizational climate. Such a climate, which exists at four levels: individuals, the organization, the macro level within the boundaries of the region or department of education, and the mega context such as society, is often manifested in the observable routines and everyday conversations at the office. In other words, there is always a link between the three layers of culture and the larger social context.

According to Lingard et al. (2003, p. 2) (also Christie & Lingard, 2001, p. 8), the central task of school leadership is to create and maintain "the conditions which maximize students' learning", and this is also in alignment with the ultimate goal of any policies set out by higher authorities, which is to ensure possible and good outcomes to emerge. Nevertheless, what actually happens as a result of a policy depends very much on how this policy is implemented at each stage in the process and responses from individuals at the end of the line. What indeed matters to the success of this policy are local capacity and will (McLaughlin, 1987 & 1990). Individuals, especially those in sinking-down institutions and in culture where they traditionally tend to follow the lead, are sometimes forced to carry out strategies in the strategic planning proposed by policy-makers. Reward/punishment systems can make change implementers aim to work harder towards the set goals, but this turns to be an ethical concern with the balance between pressure and support and between bureaucracy and democracy which policy-makers have to take into consideration (Elmore, 1996; Fullan, 1993; McLaughlin, 1987). Behavior change can be coerced, but it will not last long if people cannot see the true meaning behind it.

From economists' viewpoint, Limerick, Cunnington, and Crother (1998, p. 162) stress the significance of the meta-strategic management model which involves "transcendental values" consisting of three main ethical elements: honesty, respect for individuals, and care. This model develops structures and strategies through networking in order to proactively bring strategic planning and implementation together to handle discontinuity in the new times. To put it in a simpler way, dealing with organizational culture is the main approach in developing meta-strategic management which stems from the ethical concern of individuals in the organization. Change is not for the sake of change without putting human substance in the process. Proper consideration of people's values and their perceptions is more likely to culminate in success in the change process.

The Policy-Maker's Understanding of the Policy-Practitioner

Another important factor the policy-maker should take into account is to understand the change agents' world in relation to the whole system. First, linking different units in the system to change is necessary. Teachers' characteristics have certain impact on their responses to reform efforts. They are the main actors in interpreting and translating the "vocabulary of reform" (Schifter & O'Brien, 1997, p. 202). Additionally, the realities in schools and classrooms are of significance in the implementation phase. Students may even resist a new policy which, in their own views, does not benefit and disturbs their daily routines. Other external agencies like school councils, or provincial or

district governments are an important source of assistance in terms of financial, spiritual and social support. They also set out regional guidelines and cultural and social reference points in which schools in the area are supposed to operate accordingly. Therefore, there must be a “thread” relationship, i.e. a thorough consensus, going through from the highest level to the bottom level. Ignoring such realities leads reform efforts to jeopardy and forces teachers and students to confront centrally-imposed rules that neglect their own values, experiences and expectations. Spillane (1999, p. 144) proposes zones of enactment where “reform initiatives are encountered by the world of practitioners... [T]eachers notice, construe, construct and operationalize the instructional ideas advocated by reformers”. To put it in another way, change agents should be encouraged to bring macro-level guidance into micro-level operations (Fullan, 1993; McLaughlin, 1987).

Second, the whole change process from initiation to implementation to continuation (Fullan, 1993, p. 48) is not linear. Different individuals at different levels interpret and carry out a policy in different ways. According to McLaughlin (1987), the first generation of implementation analysts asserts that policy initiatives depend on what happens as individuals interpret and act on them. The second generation analysts even go further to focus on discovering relations between policy and practice, and they point out that policy cannot always mandate what matters to outcomes at the local level. Therefore, the important lesson for those of the third generation is to integrate the macro world of the policy-makers into the micro world of individual implementers at lower levels. Elmore (1979/1980) suggests policy-makers apply “forward mapping” which begins with the original statement of intent from the top level and proceeds with specific steps to expect what to do at each level. However, implementation does not always occur in such a straight direction. The process of “backward mapping” (ibid.) becomes a useful technique which involves with a statement with a specific behavior at the lowest level that generates the objectives of a new policy. Nonetheless, this method is not without problems. For example, “backward mapping” might not be easily carried out on a national level where there are many schools and teachers holding different perspectives in different contexts. Also, the government may turn to be too confused to select the representatives for the whole group while the common good or public interest had better be the sum of individual preferences. If a new policy for educational reform does not include the public interest that may varies amongst people and areas, the educational reform movement may be ensnared in the trap of individualism.

People-Centeredness in Organizational Change

This section places the main argument about the importance of organizational culture in educational change because of “people-centeredness and high dependence on the nature and effectiveness of interpersonal relationships” (Law & Glover, 2000, p. 116). In fact, change is made by people, for people, and it must be about people. According to Scott (1999), there are two main kinds of educational change: changes in learning programs and changes in the milieu where these changes are developed, delivered, and supported. Aspects in these changes are all aimed to increase the effectiveness of schools’ operations, and individuals are often concerned with four elements in any change: feasibility, relevance, desirability, and clarity (ibid, pp. 12-13) that enhance their

commitment to carry out the change process. In fact, Limerick et al. (1998) strongly emphasize human substance in the new organization which must comprise human values and expectations. No one wants to work in an organization where their values and expectations are never recognized while organizations are traditionally considered as the vehicle through which groups; collectives and individuals work to achieve their goals, aims, and objectives (Bredenkamp, 2002; Huczynski & Buchanan, 1991).

Moreover, Schneider (1987) states that the organization includes people who make the place, and in order to change the organization, changes in structures and processes are needed. Yet, this is not sufficient. In fact, with changes in people, necessary changes in structures and processes will emerge because they may bring in different cultures, perceptions, and values that influence their behaviors. It is also important to identify the existing attitudes and beliefs throughout the organization (Sashkin, 1997) because these attitudes and beliefs form the boundary within which schools function. By developing awareness of the patterns of shared beliefs, school leaders can cope more effectively with culture-based problems. Furthermore, given a new awareness of these shared values and beliefs, school leaders have the option of using that understanding to take actions to improve the culture in ways that have a positive and lasting effect in schools. In short, there must be a shift from change in a mechanistic or fordist way to a more humanistic manner.

Finally, there are always different kinds of human relationships, languages, and interactions within the organization that make human beings different from other animals. No matter what kind of working relationships in different structures they have like hierarchical or team-based types, such advanced forms of human interactions bind different individuals and parts of the organization together. Being unable to tie the separate parts in an organization means that conflict has already occurred, and the organization is breaking up and/or sinking down. In this case, values amongst individuals and subgroups are not recognized, and people tend to resist or ignore the changes which are being implemented. Therefore, being able to effectively communicate with other members and having good social skills are critical factors to success of school change. IQ solely is not enough, EQ is also needed (Cooper, 1997; Goleman, 1998) because the organization consists of people who design the structure, create the infrastructure, operate the business, and also decide the fate of the whole organization.

Conclusion

Fullan (1993) asserts that there are three barriers to change including the complexity of change itself, the settings, and the social contexts. Therefore, policy-makers and practitioners must “go deeper” in exploring the internal strengths, weaknesses and needs, and “go wider” in seeking external support and guidelines (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992). Policy-makers must take into account the representative situations of different schools at the lowest level and formulate into objectives of a new policy because it is teachers and students at this low level who are going to implement the change. Change is a complicated process which involves loss, anxiety and struggle (Fullan, 1993), and understanding change-implementers’ psychology is always advisable.

Although there are certainly other factors that should be taken into account when dealing with school change such as issues of power, ethics, technical competencies, or operational structures, the author would still insist that having an understanding of and being able to handle organizational culture be the most important priorities because organizational culture is concerned with people's shared values and beliefs. In other words, if individuals can find it meaningful in what they are doing or are told to do, they can feel more motivated to achieve better results.

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Appendix: Key Features in School Reform

Levin (2001) proposes three elements in a typical reform package in Canada and the US.

1. decentralization of operating authority to schools and the creation of school or parent councils to share in that authority
2. increased achievement testing with publication of results and its corollary, more centralized curriculum
3. various forms of choice or other market-like mechanisms

(2001, p. 15)

McKinney and Garrison (1994) suggest another set which is summarized as follow.

1. stressing accountability within formal hierarchical systems
2. decentralization and empowerment
3. recognizing principles of learning organizations

And the following are the international trends in school reform:

1. school performance
2. complex configurations of state funding
3. school-based management
4. the state centralization and school autonomy
5. school and community relations
6. teachers' professional development
7. curriculum changes
8. new technologies
9. identity politics (including race, gender, ethnicity and sex)
10. new social inequalities

(Christie, 2004)

This is another set of improvement strategies:

1. enhancing quality of students' learning
2. the vision of the school should be shared by all members of the school community as both learners and contributors
3. external pressures for change as opportunities to secure its internal priorities
4. schools encourage, develop collaboration and lead to the empowerment of individuals and groups
5. promoting the view that monitoring and evaluation of quality is a responsibility shared by all staff members

(Hopkins, Ainscow, & West, 1997, p. 262)

Here are the three key considerations for educational change:

1. the structure of schooling
2. the content of the curriculum
3. the process of learning

(Whitaker, 1993, pp. 3, 4)