

# EDUCATIONAL PLANNING



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# International Society for Educational Planning

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**EDUCATIONAL PLANNING**  
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## PREFACE

Virginia Roach

This edition of Educational Planning continues our celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Society for Educational Planning (ISEP) by focusing on the vital role that planning plays in ensuring equity in educational access and achievement throughout the world.

Our 2010 Presidential Address, authored by T.C. Chan, provides the overall context of this edition by providing an overview of the symbols of planning. This overview helps to set the stage for the possibilities of planning. Dr. Chan describes the use of the symbols, but also suggests that without careful listening and responsiveness, planners fall short in their role to ensure equitable access to education. In this way, planning is more than just a set of procedures to be completed for the sake of bureaucratic expediency, planning is a tool for change, perhaps even a tool for liberation. The other articles of this journal edition provide a worldwide tour of this larger theme with contributors from Hong Kong, Turkey, Swaziland, and the United States.

Equity and liberation from economic repression is the theme of the article by Sukati. Sukati delineates the role that comprehensive planning can play in eradicating poverty through access to mass education and by fostering interagency support between education and other social service sectors. Sukati calls on the government of Swaziland to immediately fund comprehensive mass education. He sees comprehensive planning and adequate government funding as the vehicle for developing the national education system. In this way, planning is the vehicle of social action.

Yet, governments are not always in a position to immediately raise such sums of money, as noted in the article by Kesar and Ozgan. These authors continue the discussion of equity by describing the role of philanthropy in ensuring access to education in Turkey. In this article, the two authors discuss the Turkish program of public-private partnership in the provision of school facilities in Turkey. School facilities provide the basic infrastructure of a mass education system and planning for such is vital in ensuring equitable access to learning. Through this country's policy, Turkish officials have successfully developed an innovative way to ensure equity in a manner that allows for wealth distribution to an extent that is difficult for government taxing systems.

Moving to the school level, Hue focuses on equity within the system as he explores the equitable access to education of ethnic minorities living in Hong Kong. This author reminds us that even with access and the proper physical infrastructure, students are virtually excluded in classrooms every day due to language and cultural differences that become barriers to *learning*, albeit not necessarily the education system per se. Hue reminds us that equity must be lived on a daily basis, in the attitudes held by teachers and families, in the commitment educators demonstrate in attracting and keeping children in school, and by the messages educators send about who belongs in school and who deserves strong, academically challenging instruction.

Finally, Myran, Crum and Clayton, in this article about the supports needed to foster successful school-university partnerships unmask inequities that linger in US schools as a result of a fragmented, multi-layered system that prepares and supports school improvement. In their article, these authors provide concrete, on-the-ground advice for how universities and school districts can foster strong relationships that focus on school improvement, not turf. This is especially important in the rural district that the authors partnered with as these districts are disproportionately isolated from other kinds of programmatic support that we know enhance student achievement in more populated regions of the country. The key role of planning for respectful, reciprocal relationships among professionals in the pursuit of equity rounds out the "world tour" of this journal, transcending national access, infrastructure, school programming, and professional development and change.

Our 2010 president, T.C. Chan, reminds us that planning is the glue that holds nations, communities, and schools together in the equitable pursuit of education. The International Society for Educational Planning maintains its commitment to these virtues as it enters the next forty years!

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# THE IMPLICATIONS OF SYMBOLS IN EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

Tak Cheung Chan  
2009-2010 PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

## ABSTRACT

*Educational planning phenomena, processes, and functions can be more vividly illustrated by the use of appropriate symbols and their interactions. The creation of new configurations by using symbols further inspires one's ideas in educational planning. This paper focuses on the interpretation and implication of symbols used in educational planning.*

## INTRODUCTION

Tanner (1980) in his presidential address to the International Society of Educational Planning identified change as a significant outcome of educational planning. Since then, scholars have tried to explore the horizon of educational planning to draw a possible boundary to the field. This can be seen in the variety of topics addressed in *Educational Planning* in the last three decades (Lindahl and Beach, 2010). Embedded among the areas identified as educational planning, are many symbols as representations of educational planning. These symbols sometimes exist individually to indicate certain planning functions. They also appear as combinations or interactions to stand for complex planning phenomena or processes. These symbols help draw graphic pictures depicting an international language of understanding. This paper attempts to highlight some of these often used planning symbols to assist in understanding their specific representations through which more intelligent and sensible planning functions can be derived.

## THE SYMBOLS OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

### *The Heart*

The heart of educational planning relates to the attitudes, consciences and professional ethics of educational planners. Fullan (2001) simply described it as a moral purpose with the intention of making a positive difference in the lives of employees, customers, and society as a whole. The ethics of educational planning was addressed by Tanner (1980) as disaggregating disparities and determining the factors that caused the disparities. When planning decisions are made, many alternative values emerge for planners' consideration. Referencing the planning process, Heywood (1974) stated that "the whole complex mechanism of the modern city, with all its diverse and sophisticated activities, should be no more than a device to enable its residents to fulfill as many of their values as fully as possible" (p.67). He identified three principles for planners in decision-making:

1. The people most directly affected by a decision should be those whose interests are given greatest weight.
2. Life-preserving and sustaining objectives, concerned with shelter, sustenance, and safety should take preference over life-enhancing ones of movement, personal fulfillment, and profit.
3. Positive discrimination should be practiced in the allocation of public resources, and in the preparation of public policies in favor of the least affluent and least competitive groups, who would otherwise be pushed into increasingly deprived conditions of life. (p. 66)

The heart of educational planning has not been given enough weight in the past years as evidenced by Lindahl and Beach (2010) in their special tribute to the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the International Society for Educational Planning (ISEP). They clearly pointed out that "considering the importance, remarkably little attention was given to the human aspects of these processes" (p. 4).

### *The Diamond*

The diamond of educational planning refers to the quality of educational planning in terms of

content and delivery techniques. The diamond sparkles with the finer qualities of educational planning. As identified by Tanner (1980), the weakness of educational planning has been to emphasize how many people flew through the various levels of education while undermining the kinds of learning experiences to which they were exposed. As important as *which* educational programs are planned is *how* educational programs are planned. The appropriate use of planning techniques leads to the validity and reliability of data collected for planning use. The quality of educational planning can be improved by performing needs assessments to understand the nature of the problem and how the problem can be addressed by educational planning. Quality control of educational planning can be enhanced by conducting both formative and summative evaluations. Results of evaluation can be used as guidelines to improve the diamond quality of educational plans.

### *The Ladder*

The ladder symbolizes the steps to be followed in developing and implementing educational plans. While situations differ, planning procedures follow more or less the same basic principles. Lewis (1983) developed the strategic planning process of a school district as follows:

1. Conducting a critical analysis of the school district.
2. Establishing the guidance system for strategic planning.
3. Setting long-range goals.
4. Selecting program strategies.
5. Developing operational plans.
6. Preparing short-range objectives.
7. Establishing performance standards.
8. Establishing an action plan.
9. Reporting operational performance results.
10. Evaluating planning effectiveness.

These procedures are planned and conducted in such a way that one needs to stay securely in one step before attempting another with administrators always looking up to the program goal to avoid deviation from the track. Through this symbol, one step up means one step closer toward achieving the program goal.

### *The Star*

The star that shines signifies the successful development and implementation of an educational plan. It is a display of high level wisdom and the skills of a group of planning professionals who are determined to create their plans as models for others. The success of an educational plan relies a great deal on the balance of the four planning components (time, place, people and resources) and the eight planning functions (changing, charging, directing, dramatizing, preparing, projecting, reviewing and risking) as discussed later in this paper. A rising star is a well developed educational plan that has experienced initial success. A falling star is an outdated educational plan that needs major revision and realignment to stand the test of time.

### *The Inverted Triangle*

The inverted triangle is an excellent way to demonstrate the scope of coverage in educational planning at different levels. Since educational planning could start from the national level all the way down to the classroom level, the effect size of educational planning varies from level to level. This is where macro planners come in to take a panoramic view of the entire landscape and draw a big picture of the anticipated future. On the other hand, micro planning takes into consideration fine details of the scope of work to ensure that it aligns with the goals and objectives of the macro plan. The macro plan at a higher level establishes planning guidelines to be followed by micro planners who focus on fine-tuning of essential elements for plan implementation. Obviously, macro planning at the top level covers a larger territory with greater impact on the people it serves.

### *The Equilateral Triangle*

The equilateral triangle has been used as a planning concept to convey the idea of relative overall effects as a result of change in one side, or aspect of the plan. The characteristics of an equilateral triangle help explain the phenomenon that the lengths of all sides as well as the total area of the triangle change as the length of one side changes. Thompson and Wood (2001) illustrated well the effect of budget constraint on educational programs by using the equilateral triangle with revenue, expenditure and program as the three sides. They claimed that “the definition of a budget is first based on quality programs and well supported by revenue and expenditure plans that make envisioned outcomes possible” (p. 142). Budgeting is undoubtedly an essential element in educational planning.

### *The Cycle*

The cycle starts at a designated point and moves forward with a sequence of steps. The tour of the cycle eventually comes back to the starting point. It is best used in planning situations where a process is followed step by step and ends in an outcome to feedback to the initial planning effort. A classic example of this cycle effect can be seen in Tyler’s curriculum planning model (Hewitt, 2006) which begins with goal setting as Step One followed by objective development as Step Two. Step Three includes activities and procedures to implement the curriculum to achieve the goal. An evaluation component of the curriculum planning process as Step Four leads back to Step One. An essential function of the cycle model is feedback after evaluation. Planners can then review the evaluation feedback to consider alignment with the original goal. Another example of the use of a planning cycle is shown in Chan’s educational facility planning model (Chan, 1999) which identified six planning phases (preparing, programming, designing, bidding and contracting, constructing and warranting). Feedback during the warranty phase is provided to the facility planners for design improvement in the next planning cycle.

### *The Square*

The square symbolized by the four equal sides indicates the four major components of educational planning: time, place, people and resources. These components are equally important in the successful implementation of educational plans. Some of these planning components were illustrated by Polka (2007) as a vast array of real and potential intervening variables (people, things, and ideas) that may impact on the implementation of change.

### *Time*

Planning is involved in the study of the past and understanding of the present. The major task of educational planning is based on past and present experiences to develop strategies to address anticipated future happenings.

### *Place*

The place component of educational planning not only relates to the physical planning location but also refers to the professional climate that prevails in the educational setting. In addition, the cultural environment also has significant impact on the way educational plans are developed.

### *People*

The people of educational planning refer to the people who serve (planners) and the people to be served (students). Different elements of these two groups will determine the different directions and steps in developing educational plans. Educational planners need to exercise a high standard of professionalism to address the educational needs of students.

### *Resources*

Resources in educational planning refer to the expertise, the financial support, and the hardware and software availability in the planning processes. Resources provide the basis of success in educational planning.

### *The One-Way Arrow*

The one-way arrow denotes action or movement pointing toward one direction of educational planning. One-way arrows are usually used as ways to show directionality toward the goals to be achieved. Most of the one-way arrows are either pointing horizontally or vertically. These one-way arrows can be classified into three types: (1) Setting goals and timelines to bring poor performance to an acceptable level; (2) Setting goals and timelines for sustainability of satisfactory performance; and (3) Setting goals and timelines to challenge current acceptable performance to a higher level of excellence (Jiang and Chan, 1990). One-way arrows are often used in school improvement plans and their evaluation reports to indicate the benchmarks and the outcomes of planning efforts.

### *Two-Way Arrows (Vertical and Horizontal)*

Two-way arrows in educational planning indicate an action and reaction model of communication between two or more stakeholders in the planning process. It is a participatory approach to achieve a shared purpose. Two-way arrows express two modes of communication: vertical and horizontal.

Vertical two-way arrows symbolize directional movements in educational planning. The arrow going downward can be interpreted as instructions from a centralized authority while the arrow moving upward can be seen as recommendations to a governing body from subordinates as a result of decentralization efforts. In plain language, Scott (2009) simply described the approach of “top-down” as mandates and “bottom-up” as reflections of assessed local needs.

Horizontal two-way arrows are demonstrations of communication within the same level. They express a clear collaborative effort in getting special interest parties involved to achieve a common goal. Recent examples of these horizontal directions are shown in the development of professional learning communities for continuous improvement to enhance student achievement (DuFour, DuFour & Eaker, 2008).

### *The Octagon*

The octagon symbolizes the eight major functions of educational planning. The eight functions are summarized as the two Cs (Changing and Charging), the two Ds (Directing and Dramatizing), the two Ps (Preparing and Projecting), and two Rs (Reviewing and Risking). For sure, educational planning means that *change* is needed – change for improvement (Polka, 2007). The *charge* of educational planning is to move forward for a better future. Educational planning is conducted with reference to future scenarios as a result of *projection* and *dramatization*. In *preparation* for educational plans, *directions* are formulated by *reviewing* present situations and past experiences. Working on many assumptions and unknown features, educational planners try their very best to come up with the most efficient and effective plan to achieve goals. Yet, it is inevitable that certain *risks* are involved in the process of educational planning. Furthermore, no matter how well a plan is developed, during the course of implementation, the plan may be impacted by a combination and interaction of these eight planning functions.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

Symbols provide meaningful graphic designs for the interpretation of educational planning phenomena. Their special shapes serve as a common language with which to communicate that span across culture and language, supporting multicultural planning purposes. In reviewing the symbols discussed in this paper, the following educational conceptualizations can be summarized:

### *The Domino Effect of Educational Planning*

Many components in educational planning are interdependent and rely upon one another for existence. When one component fails, it impacts other related components. As a result, all the components fail, one after another. The seriousness of the domino effect in educational planning can be seen in the revenue, program, and student achievement example cited earlier. As revenue, educational program, and student achievement are so interrelated, the success or failure of any part of that three-part structure will cause the entire planning structure to change.

### *The Levels and Scopes of Educational Planning*

Educational planning was once thought of as only an administrative function to be performed at the policy making level. But, educators soon realized that educational planning involves stakeholders at all levels. It is a task with a scope that stretches both vertically and horizontally. It can start as a micro class planning activity to a macro national policy setting. Educational planning includes all aspects of education: academic disciplines, school and system operations, and the panoramic view of strategic planning encompassing the very purposes of education.

### *Planning Effectiveness and Planning Experiences*

The process of educational planning is not linear by nature. It actually follows an arc, the extension of which is the formation of a cycle. When more cycles of planning are performed, the cumulative experiences are fed back into the process for more effective planning in the upcoming cycles. In this fashion, the quality of educational planning can improve over time.

### *Projection Accuracy and Planning Success*

The effort of projection is to construct a scenario of the future upon which educational planning targets are focused. The closer the scenarios are drawn to reflect reality, the greater are the chances educational plans will be successful. Many educational plans have failed because either the dataset used for projection was wrong or the projection methodology was inappropriate.

### *Alternative Planning For Education*

Successful planning depends on a high degree of projection accuracy. Often, specific educational plans are so critical they cannot afford to fail. Therefore, careful educational planners always generate alternative plans to address contingency situations. Alternative plans are like safety nets to diminish the likelihood that planning efforts will get off track.

### *Chances to Engage Risks and Opportunities*

Changes in educational systems offer chances for improvement and innovative attempts. Yet, while educational planners are searching for opportunities of positive changes, they also encounter possible risks. Many successful educational planners neutralize risks with their planning confidence and excellence.

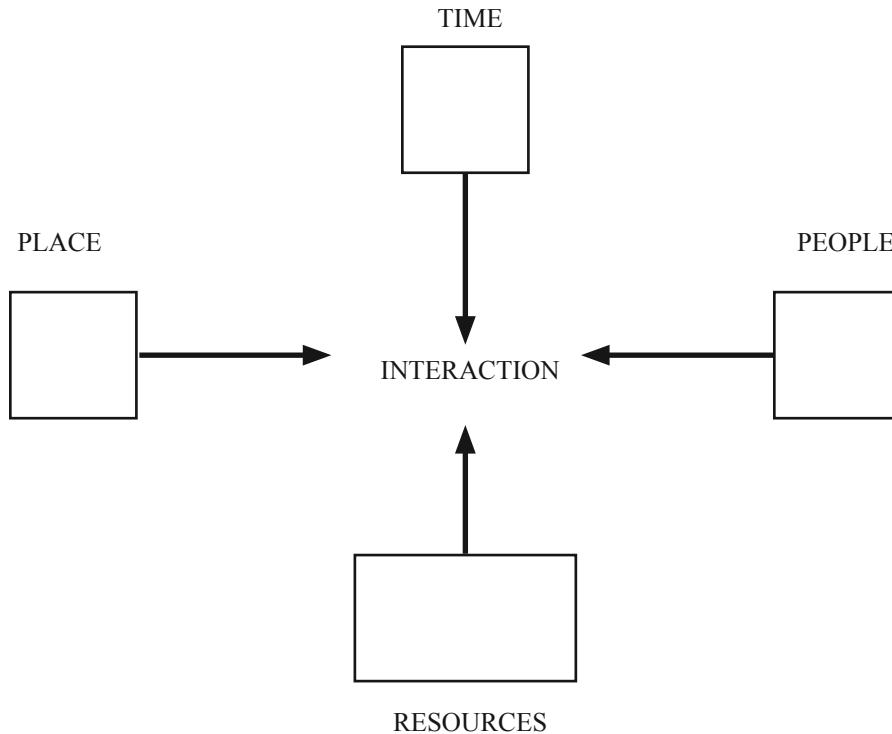
### *Planning as a Collaborative Process*

As seen in the many symbols and configurations, the planning process is complicated. Many components are involved and many factors are considered in carefully monitoring the planning progress in education to ensure successful planning and implementation. As the African proverb notes, "It takes a village to raise a child." Meaningful educational planning is surely a collaborative process. As Krug (1957) noted, planning must be undertaken by large groups of stakeholders working in cooperative settings to develop implementation projects.

### *The Right Combination and Interaction*

The best educational planning outcome is the result of a combination and interaction of the right time, the right place, the right people and the right resources (see Figure 1). The challenge for educational planners is to launch educational plans in the right direction, to the right extent, and at the right moment. Educational plans (and planners) have to maintain a certain flexibility to adapt to unexpected changes of time, place, people and resources to proceed.

Figure 1. The Interaction of Planning Symbols



### CONCLUSION

Educational planning is an art and a skill. It is a combination of many elements and situational factors. It particularly involves human resources as the essential motivational framework. Many symbols seem to be able to reflect the essence of educational planning, especially the planning intent, direction, process, components, and features. I would like to conclude this paper by introducing Taoism, a Chinese philosophy symbolized by the Tai Ji (the extremes) Circle (see Figure 2) within which two areas Yin (shade) and Yang (brightness) are divided (Hutchinson Encyclopedia, 2010). It was designed in such a way that one area starts small and continues to develop to its maximum potential. It will then begin to wane and merge into the small starting point of the other area. Each area contains an element or seed of the other, and they cannot exist without each other. The concept of Yin and Yang describes two opposing and, at the same time, complementary aspects of any one phenomenon or comparison of any two phenomena. The two areas represent the two extremes of educational planning. As the two areas continue to move so does the planning cycle. There are always new cycles to start and new areas to grow. For years, educational planners have tried to explore and define the parameters of the field of educational planning. New ground has been identified and developed. Through the configuration of different combinations of symbols, educational planners may be stimulated to discover and explore new territory and expand our understanding of educational planning. Educational planning is a fertile and active field. Many new lands of educational planning are waiting to be found and cultivated.

Figure 2. The Tai Ji Symbol showing the two areas of Yin and Yang.



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# REDUCING POVERTY: EDUCATION PLANNING AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR SWAZILAND

C. W. S. Sukati

## ABSTRACT

*Poverty is a global problem that affects multitudes of people around the globe and leads to illiteracy, hunger, disease and death, and hence needs to be eradicated. This article examines the role that education plays in poverty reduction, and how the education system in Swaziland should be planned to assist in alleviating poverty in that country. This article compares previously published information on the relationship between education and poverty reduction with current plans, policies, and practices in education in Swaziland, to reveal the shortcomings and the necessary transformations required for the current system to play a key role in poverty reduction. The analysis points to the need for systemic education reform to ensure that access to a quality education is increased; the curriculum, teaching methods, teacher quality and motivation is improved; relevant technical, practical and health education is offered; and courses on research, innovation and entrepreneurship are introduced.*

## INTRODUCTION

Poverty is a global problem that affects multitudes of people around the world, and leads to illiteracy, hunger, disease and death. It is therefore a threat to national and world peace and stability as the poor cannot meet their basic needs. Hence, the first goal of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) agreed by the World Community in 2000 is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. The target and commitment on this goal is to reduce poverty by half by 2015 (UNDP, 2005a). This set target however represents a formidable challenge to developing countries in general, and to Swaziland in particular, where poverty is widespread and is at an alarming rate of 69% (one of the highest in the world) (Central Bank of Swaziland (CBS), 2008; Ministry of Economic Planning and Development (MOEPD), 2005a; UNDP, 2008).

Alleviation and in fact eradication of poverty is therefore at the top of many governments' agendas (Nhamo & Nhamo, 2006), and perhaps that is the reason former President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, speaking at the opening of the sixth session of the Pan African Parliament in Midrand, South Africa, urged African Parliamentarians to be the voice of the poor in the continent (World News, 2006). "Poverty is one of the greatest moral challenges that we face", said United Kingdom's Tony Blair (quoted in Dorward, 2006, p.11). Dorward (2006) further added that global poverty is not just a moral challenge, but also a great political and policy challenge. "All in all, poverty is at the centre of all the country's problems" (Zwane, 2006, p.1); "We are not doing enough to fight poverty" (Masuku, 2007, p.1), are some of the headlines that have appeared in Swaziland's newspapers.

The Swaziland government has therefore spelled out its central objective to substantially reduce levels of poverty through the adoption of policies that mainstream poverty reduction in all development programmes, with the specific objective being to reduce it from 69% to no more than 30% by 2015 and eradicate poverty completely by 2022 (Sande, 2008; MOEPD, 2005b). The critical question that arises is: Can the country half the poverty rate by 2015, and further eradicate it by 2022? The stark reality is that in many sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries, poverty has not abated, despite many adopted policies, solutions and strategies for poverty eradication (Gaventa, 2004; Meth and Dias, 2004; UNDP, 2003; UNDP, 2005a). In fact, in a number of the countries, such as Swaziland, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Kenya and Zimbabwe, it is increasing (Arimah, 2004; Mualuko, 2007; Polelo, 2003; Sithole, 2005). This raises questions regarding the adequacy and relevance of the policies and strategies proposed, adopted and implemented, and on the commitment of the nations to the full implementation of these.

A great deal of literature shows that education plays a major role in poverty reduction, but very few studies have been carried out to compare this body of knowledge to actual education plans, policies and practices in developing countries, to determine where there are shortcomings and what should be done. Further, no such study has been carried out in Swaziland. This situation is surprising and disturbing, given the plight of many people in the World who languish in poverty and the urgency to address this scourge.

This study is an attempt to fill this gap, and reports on an analysis conducted to explore links between education and poverty, and how the education system should be planned, organized and transformed to combat poverty and achieve the MDGs. The study starts by describing the Swaziland context and this is followed by a description of the education policies of the country. The next section presents a review of literature which serves as the conceptual framework for the evaluation of the education policies. This is followed by an evaluation of the current plans, policies and practices in the Swaziland education system to reveal areas of agreement, contradictions and shortcomings with framework, and thereby enable the writer to make conclusions and recommend necessary changes on the system to redress poverty.

## BRIEF OVERVIEW OF POVERTY DIMENSIONS, PERSPECTIVES AND IMPLICATIONS IN SWAZILAND

Swaziland is classified as a lower middle income developing country. Long-term per capita growth declined from 4.7 percent in the 1980s, to 1.7 percent in the 1990s, and to only 0.9 percent since 1995. The country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate fell to 2.1 percent in 2004 and further to 1.8 percent in 2005 (World Bank, 2006a). In 1985, about 62% of the Swazi population lived below the poverty line, in 1999 the rate had increased to 66%, and currently it is estimated at 69% (MOEPD, 2005a). As a result, the poverty situation has worsened, notwithstanding the Government's poverty alleviation programmes that are supposedly in place. The Swaziland Minister of Finance in his Budget Speech for 2005 confirmed this and stated that it saddened him to report that despite their efforts, poverty seemed to have increased (Sithole, 2005).

The country's Gini coefficient, (which measures the degree of distribution of income in a country) is one of the highest in the World at 0.609 (World Bank 2006b). Hence only a small share of the population benefits from the national income, as the richest 10% of the population controls over 50% of the total income of the country (Crouch, 2005; Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland, 2002; World Bank, 2006b). Considering that economic growth generally reduces poverty at different rates in different contexts, with the greatest reduction in those countries with the most equitable income distribution (Downing and Campbell, 2006; USAID, 2006), it follows that this high rate of inequality in Swaziland will slow down the influences of economic growth on poverty reduction.

Swaziland has a very high level of unemployment, estimated at about 29% (CBS, 2008; UNDP, 2008; World Bank, 2006a), and further, the number of those in formal employment has declined from 93,213 in 1999 to 62,600 in 2004 (CBS, 2006; CBS, 2000). The Swaziland economy has therefore performed poorly and very few employment opportunities have been created. Unemployment has therefore escalated and many people have become poor. As Sukati (1994) reported, the people who tend to be unemployed in Swaziland are females, children from rural areas, public school, and from parents who were not well known. If this pattern continues, more of the poor people (who need jobs and income the most) would be unemployed and the few available jobs would be disproportionately given to the upper class children, and this would aggravate inequality, jeopardize peace and stability, and prevent the country from achieving the MDGs.

The country further has high rates of child mortality and malnutrition, high numbers of orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC), high rate of HIV/AIDS (the highest adult HIV infection rate in the world at 42.6%) and tuberculosis (UNDP, 2008; World Bank, 2006b). In addition, it has been ravaged by several natural disasters such as droughts, storms, floods, changing weather patterns and poor soils, and though these factors affect all the people in the country, they hit especially hard on the rural poor. As the majority of people who live in rural areas depend on agriculture, these natural disasters affect their crops and livestock, and they do not produce enough for their own consumption and for sale, and thus they become poorer.

These dimensions and perspectives point to a country in crisis. They pose a threat to peace and stability, and a great political challenge to the country as studies elsewhere have pointed out to links between poverty, inequality and political instability (Government of South Africa, 2000). Hence, Swaziland needs to overcome abject poverty and to have strategies for growth with redistribution to uplift those who are in the poorest groups. To this end, the country has come up with an Action Programme for the Reduction of Poverty. The Action Programme (see Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland, 2002)

revealed that the poverty reduction philosophy of the country incorporated a three pronged strategy:

1. rapid acceleration of economic growth based on broad participation;
2. empowering the poor to generate income through economic restructuring; and
3. fair and equitable distribution of the benefits of growth through public spending.

Such a three pronged strategy is common among countries (Craig and Porter, 2003). However, as the poverty rate has continued to rise in Swaziland, it means that the above three-pronged strategy has failed to produce the desired results. This could mean that there has been no commitment in implementing the strategy, or that perhaps, some other important factor or factors have been overlooked. Rather than three, perhaps it should have been four pronged. Craig and Porter (2003) report that poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) tend to reproduce three or four pronged approaches to poverty reduction, and that one of these is “enhancing security” especially involving investments in human capital. In support to this, a Department for International Development (DFID) report (2001) clearly articulates that the elimination of poverty and progress towards sustainable development will only take place with increased and improved levels of education. This article presents the critical role that education plays in poverty alleviation and as a cross cutting issue for all other MDGs, and argues that it should be linked to the poverty reduction strategies, and hence that it should be added as the fourth prong.

## DESCRIPTION OF EDUCATION POLICIES UNDER REVIEW

The vision of the Ministry of Education is to provide “relevant and affordable education and training opportunities for all age groups of the entire populace of the Kingdom of Swaziland in order to develop all positive aspects of life for self-reliance, social and economic development and global competitiveness” (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 19) To achieve this vision, the Ministry pursues a number of policies.

### *Increased access to education*

To realize its vision, Swaziland has aligned itself with global initiatives on education, notably the Education For All (EFA) agenda and the MDGs. In pursuing the EFA agenda, the country aims at ensuring efficient and equitable distribution of educational resources; guaranteeing that all citizens, irrespective of status, gender, geographical location, political affiliation, colour, religion, disability, social class and race, have access to a basic education of high quality (Kingdom of Swaziland, 1999; Ministry of Education, 2009). The Ministry’s policy therefore has been spelt out as expansion of participation in education, particularly at the primary/basic school level to achieve universal primary education. This was to focus mainly at children from rural settings, in peri-urban poor areas, those with disabilities and those affected by HIV/AIDS (Ministry of Education, 2009).

### *Diversification of the curriculum*

Policy on the curriculum is to provide a diversified school curriculum that would enable the pupils to change their attitudes towards practical subjects and develop intellectual, moral, aesthetic, emotional, physical and practical capacities that are needed to enable them to take advantage of all opportunities available and adapt to a fast-changing complex and uncertain socio-economic environment (Ministry of Education, 2009; Kingdom of Swaziland, 1999). To do this, the Ministry policy is to strengthen and expand the provision of practical subjects, such as agriculture, metalwork, woodwork, home economics, technical drawing, business studies, etc. in schools, and in addition strengthen the pre-vocational education programme in the schools.

### *Teaching methods, assessment, and evaluation*

One major teaching method to be adopted, according to the policy of the Ministry, was continuous assessment, which would reduce the repetition and drop-out rates (Ministry of Education, 2009). This was to be followed because this method recognizes that individual pupils have different abilities and learning capabilities, and hence this program emphasizes remediation and provision of enrichment materials to help and support weak students. Further, the education system was changed from offering the Cambridge O-Level examination at the end of high school to using the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE). This was to ensure that students were rewarded for positive

achievement on the basis of what they know, understand and can do, rather than being penalized for an accumulation of errors. This curriculum assessment further encouraged the development of oral and practical skills; an investigative approach to learning; use of initiative to solve problems; application of skills, knowledge and understanding; ability to undertake individual projects; and aptitude to work collaboratively with others (Kingdom of Swaziland, 1999; Ministry of Education, 2009).

### *Funding education*

The cost of education in Swaziland has continued to be a major cause of concern and conflict to the Government and to the parents. These costs have traditionally been shared between the Government, the parents, various Christian missionaries and donors. This policy still stands, but in an effort to meet targets set for the realization of the equity-driven reforms, the Ministry is implementing programs aimed at removing cost barriers at the primary school level. These include the provision of free primary school textbooks and stationery, bursaries to the needy pupils and the OVCs, some school infrastructure, primary school capitation grants, teachers, and equipment and machinery (Ministry of Education, 2009).

### *Teacher numbers, quality, and motivation*

As the education system has continued to have untrained and under-qualified teachers, particularly in rural areas and in science and mathematics, the major policy here therefore has been to expand teacher education and training so that all schools are provided with appropriately qualified teachers (Ministry of Education, 2009). In addition, in-service courses would be held regularly to keep teachers up to date with the latest teaching methodologies to ensure that there is quality teaching. The policy statements however do not indicate the defined set of knowledge, skills, competencies and attitudes that teachers should possess to teach at each level, and does not state how the motivation of the teachers will be maintained so that good teaching takes place.

## THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN POVERTY REDUCTION

This topic has an extensive literature base, which is used in this study to provide a conceptual framework for the evaluation of the Swaziland education plans and policies. Klees (2002) has argued that the relationship between education, poverty and development needs to be exposed and discussed, to give an idea of how education needs to be reformed to contribute to poverty alleviation and development. All agree that the single most important key to development and to poverty alleviation is education (Wolfensohn quoted in Klees, 2002, p. 457). Prioritizing education to overcome poverty should therefore become a legitimate and necessary goal, hence investment in human capital features in all agencies' strategies (Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2006; Benzeval, Judge, Johnson, & Taylor, 2000; Bonal, 2004; Cox and Healey, 2003; Kemper, 2001; Morrison, 2002;).

Using a dynamic microsimulation model to analyze the distributional effects of educational policies in Cote d'Ivoire, Grimm (2005) found that even if the most optimistic policy considered was actually set up, the effects on poverty would be very modest. Despite this modest effect, the education policies do have an effect on poverty. DFID (2001) reveals that education is at the heart of development and that countries which have made the greatest progress in reducing poverty are those which have combined effective and equitable investment in education with sound economic policies. Caillods (1998) adds that education and training can do a great deal to break the vicious circle of marginalization, exclusion and poverty, in that better educated people are more productive. Buarque, Spolar, and Zhang (2006) as a result, calls for a 21<sup>st</sup> century plan, that should be social rather than economic, and should focus on education rather than infrastructure. Education therefore plays the following roles in poverty reduction.

### *It is a human right*

The importance of education to individual, community and national development is reflected in its recognition as a human right, and this is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Avalos, 1992; DFID, 2001), and also in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland (Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland, 2005). Spreen and Vally (2006) recognize the link between education rights and human rights in that education operates as a multiplier, enhancing the enjoyment of all individual

rights and freedoms where the right to education is effectively guaranteed, while depriving people the enjoyment of many rights and freedoms where the right is denied or violated.

Education enables people to increase their capacity to think, reflect on issues and reason to reach correct conclusions, encourages initiative, flexibility and adaptability, necessary behavioural changes and access to a wider range of livelihood possibilities and life skills (DFID, 2001). This encourages people to take charge of their future and reduce poverty as it allows for the promotion of transparency, good governance, democracy and the achievement of other fundamental human rights. Tomasevski (2003) contends that denial of the right to education triggers exclusion from the labour market, accompanied by exclusion from social security schemes, and hence that a large number of problems cannot be solved unless the right to education is addressed as the key to unlock other human rights. Making education accessible and affordable contributes to the realisation of other rights like gender equality for women. Investment in girls education has shown to be one of the most important determinants of development, and further empowers them, and all other members of the society, to participate in decision making and in the transformation of their own lives and societies (Deiningner & Okidi, 2003; DFID, 2001; UNDP, 2005b).

### *It improves the quality of the labour force and reduces inequalities*

Getting children to attend school, on its own, is not enough for poverty reduction; the quality of the education that is offered plays an important part as well. Writing on Tanzania, Wedgwood (2007) indicated that the quality of the labour force had been so poor that many of the potential benefits of education had not been realised. Quality education develops skills, knowledge, new values, attitudes and perspectives, increases choices and professional competences, and one can become more efficient, innovative, productive, competitive in the labour market, and increase his/her earning potential and improve his livelihood (Durstun and Nashire, 2001; Harvey, 2005; Ishchenko & Sazonova, 2007; Literacy Watch Committee of Nepal, 1997; UNESCO, 2006). It has been observed therefore, that many programmes and projects aimed at poverty reduction had not succeeded mainly because they had no inbuilt quality education component (Walingo, 2006).

Speaking in Swaziland, the Director of the UNESCO Cluster Office in Windhoek, Namibia, Dr. Claudia Harvey (2005) pointed out that education can be the road out of poverty, that it is a catalyst for human development and provides people with the necessary skills and knowledge that enables them to participate in society. A report entitled *Promoting relevant education and training for employment – Youth development and employment in South Africa; further education and training (FET) college sector*, for example, indicated that a vocationally-oriented level of secondary-tertiary education had the potential to play a significant role in the “skills revolution” (USAID, 2007). Horn (2006) and Vakalisa (2005) writing on the new skills required in South Africa indicated that these new skills included proficiency in mathematics, computing, reading, writing and reasoning, the ability to use resources and information constructively, interpersonal skills, the ability to understand systems and to master technology, as well as the flexibility to cope with change in the workplace. Njikam, Binam, and Tachi, (2006) attest that for SSA, the variation in the level of education embodied in the labour force is one of the primary reasons for the observed differences in productivity among countries. Enhancement of the quality of education is thus necessary as there is a strong and robust inverse relationship between poverty and level of higher education, economic growth and poverty, and as poor education is negatively related to economic growth (Morrison, 2002; Moser & Ichida, 2001; Njikam et al., 2006; Tilak, 2007; Wedgwood, 2007).

### *It improves people's health*

There is a relationship between education, health and poverty as poor health and HIV/AIDS have been found to have a profound effect on poverty outcomes in Africa (Christiaensen et al., 2002; UNDP, 2008, Whiteside, 2002). Research studies (e.g. by Arimah, 2004) have shown that improvements in health leads to a reduction in poverty. Accumulation of human capital in education and health, with the availability of public health services, is essential to fight poverty (Kerapeletswe & Moremi, 2001; Olavarria-Gambi, 2003). Studies have shown that higher levels of education are associated with the likelihood of women choosing to have smaller families, sending their children to school, reduced fertility,

decreased infant and child mortality, increased labour force participation, and relatively higher incomes (Caillods, 1998; James, 1995; Nhamo & Nhamo, 2006; Rowe, Thapa, Levine, Levine, & Tuladhar, 2005). Malherbe (as cited in Christie & Gordon, 1992) found that the effects of ill-health, malnutrition, destitution, and physical and mental defects manifested in poor school performance, failure and leaving school, all of which lead to poverty. Education contributes significantly to the improvement of health by enhancing people's capacities to care for their own health, that of their next of kin, and further enables them to utilize the health services.

#### *It increases and improves research and development skills*

Education, and in particular higher education, enables people to use and extend their capacities, and provide, promote and improve the research and development skills which help improve processes and products and allows for innovation (DFID, 2001). This helps in increasing the number and variety of products produced for the market and results in increased revenues for all to benefit (in terms of employment and tax revenues) and in economic growth and development.

### EVALUATION OF EDUCATION PLANS AND POLICIES TO ADDRESS POVERTY IN SWAZILAND

An evaluation of the current plans, policies, and practises in education in Swaziland, using the conceptual framework indicated above, reveals certain shortcomings in the system.

#### *Inadequate access to education at all levels*

The net enrolment rates of 84% at primary, 39% at secondary, and 4% at tertiary (Kingdom of Swaziland, 2005) schools are too low, particularly at the higher levels, and do not demonstrate that education has been made a human right. Increasing access to only primary education will have little impact because, as some authors have argued, it is secondary, higher and adult and lifelong education that provide the skills that have proven to be useful in the labour market and that can keep the people above the poverty line (Avalos, 1992; Bhola, 2005, 2006; Nhamo & Nhamo, 2006; Tilak, 2007; Tomasevski, 2003; van der Veen & Preece, 2005). This is essential as illiteracy and poverty have been found to be connected (Tilak, 2007) and as children of illiterate parents tend to be less healthy, enrol in school later and leave at an early age, and perform less well in school, all of which lowers their future earning potential and leads them to poverty (Morrison, 2002). Without rapid and substantial improvements in education access and quality, broader poverty reduction efforts in SSA and the achievement of the MDGs, will be thwarted (Lawin, 2005). In Swaziland, increasing access to education would entail adding more school places at all levels in the system, expanding distance learning programmes and enrolments (particularly at the higher levels), and adding adult and lifelong training programmes in practical skills, numeracy, and entrepreneurial knowledge. The provision of free and compulsory primary education, and a highly subsidized secondary and higher education (with necessary targeted bursaries for the needy) and an adult lifelong education programme would go a long way in increasing access, making education a human right, improving literacy and supplying required knowledge and skills, which would lead to reducing the poverty rate in the country.

#### *Inappropriate school curriculum*

As early as 1970, renowned education planners like Coombs (1970) had written about the problem of many students in developing nations receiving the wrong type of education for the world of work they would live in, and seemingly, this has not changed in many countries, including Swaziland. The Swaziland school curriculum has to be improved. While teaching the three R's (Reading, wRiting and aRithmetic) is still important, and should be done, the curriculum should however include other important and relevant subjects in science and practical arts to ensure that it also provides skills that are necessary for employment and self employment (Tilak, 2007; Zhang & Minxia, 2006; Vakalisa, 2005). Stressing the importance of technical and vocational education, Quisumbing (2005) has declared that while education is a key to any development strategy, technical and vocational education and training is the master key that can transform the world of work and the economy, alleviate poverty, save the

environment and improve the quality of life. These skills and credentials are linked to growth and access to better jobs (Relave, 2000). Skills development has however been neglected in developing countries and does not appear in the MDGs or in much poverty reduction strategies (Palmer, 2006; Palmer, 2007).

The current situation in Swaziland is that only a few secondary schools offer practical subjects. These subjects are optional and degree qualifications on practical, vocational and technology subjects are not available. Such degrees could go a long way in ensuring the practical stream is not seen as inferior and a dead end, and hence taken by the less capable students only. It is known that if one wants to attain a high level of education and get a degree, and earn a good salary, one should pursue the academic stream. The result then is that students either take academic subjects (if they are smart) or practical subjects (if weak). The practical skills, which are mostly needed by the employers and are also critical for employment creation and self-employment are then downgraded and overlooked, and thus unemployment and poverty escalates.

The author further doubts that the introduction of pre-vocational programmes in the 16 secondary schools that offer vocational and technology subjects will address the problem as only the weak students take the pre-vocational stream. It is thus recommended that streaming, should stop, and all students should take both academic and practical subjects. This does not necessarily have to increase the number of subjects that students take as some of them could be combined, such as carpentry with metalwork, fabrication and welding, and bookkeeping with commerce and entrepreneurship.

### *Poor teaching methods*

The lecture method is the norm for teaching in the country's schools. Other teaching methods such as discussions, practical work, online, audio/video tapes and video conferencing need to be explored and utilized to catch the students' attention and retention of the content. While teaching of theory is important, practical work (not demonstrations) is equally important and must also be done. The students should be afforded hands-on experience in all their subjects. This provides them with necessary knowledge, experience, expertise and hands-on skills to be able to practice for the world of work, even if they are unable to complete school.

Swazi schools should be appropriately equipped and given adequate time to do practical work, and these should be connected with the production of useful products.. An effective education should integrate education with the world of work, and pupils should come out of school with adaptable skills and be disposed to working with their hands and minds to gain employment or be self employed. Njikam et al. (2006) is correct therefore in concluding that SSA countries should implement policies aimed at training and improving the skill of the labour force.

### *Lack of courses on research, innovation, entrepreneurship and development*

School graduates need to improve existing products to add value and/or come up with new products that the market requires. This calls for innovative minds, high level research skills and good production and entrepreneurial skills. Mabumada, (as cited in Vakalisa, 2005) suggests training for entrepreneurship as the solution to unemployment in South Africa as it equips the students who leave the system, whether as a result of dropping out or graduating,. with skills needed not only to employ themselves, but also to create jobs for others. With improved production and innovation, companies become more competitive in the market, their revenues increase, and the workers' incomes increase. The author's views are that innovations are lacking in Swaziland . Perhaps this could be a result of the Swazi culture, where one is expected to conform to societal norms and do what others do and never be different. Emeagwali (2006) has articulated the need for innovations in Africa:

Unless Africa significantly increases its intellectual capital, the continent will remain irrelevant in the 21<sup>st</sup>. century and even beyond. Africa needs innovators, producers of knowledge, and wise men and women who can discover, propose, and then implement progressive ideas. Africa's fate lies in the hands of Africans and the solution to poverty must come from its people. (p. 3)

Courses on research, innovation, entrepreneurship and development should be offered to all students, but with varying difficulty and complexity depending on the grade the student is doing. Added to this is the need to provide funds for development research, research parks and incubator industries.

Attachments to industry, providing tools and equipment, capital and other logistical support to enable school leavers to start their own businesses rather than only providing them with paper certificates on completion would greatly promote self employment and reduce poverty.

### *Lack of health education*

The introduction of health education would help arrest the devastation by HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and other diseases, and improve the wellness of the Swazi people. The HIV/AIDS pandemic, as many (UNDP, 2008; Whiteside, 2002; World Bank, 2006a;), have pointed out, is a serious threat to development, economic growth, poverty alleviation, achieving the MDGs and to making substantial progress in education. In Swaziland there are no courses on health education in the schools. Yet, the good health status of the people would ensure they remain healthy and productive in the workplace and keep their companies competitive. It would further mean the highly trained and skilled personnel do not die early before they make a contribution to the country and the investment made in their education and training is recouped. Health education is critical for prevention purposes and to ensure people get medical help as soon as they realise they are unwell.

### *Shortage of qualified teachers*

When there are adequate numbers of qualified and motivated teachers in the schools, the quality of instruction and learning will improve. Various studies have shown that pupils' performance at school tends to improve when teachers have participated in training courses, have more years of experience in teaching and undergo more frequent teacher evaluations (Morrisson, 2002). Swaziland does not have adequate numbers of qualified teachers and has some inequities in the deployment of the teachers as rural schools tend to have less qualified teachers (Ministry of Education, 2009). Furthermore, there are no effective teacher monitoring and evaluation systems that are in place to ensure that quality is maintained. Judging by the high number of teacher protests and strikes often reported in the media, the author would say that teacher motivation is at its lowest level as well, and that the teachers experience very little job satisfaction. There is a need to provide appropriate monitoring and evaluation systems and incentives to attract and retain quality teachers, as well as motivate them to remain productive.

### *Inequities in financing education*

There is a need to change the way education is funded in Swaziland to ensure that the poor can equally access education. Policies are needed that target the poor, transfer resources from the rich to the poor, and increase the resources of the poor to thereby facilitate their education, social integration and general well-being. Writing on four countries in Southern Africa, Avenstrup, Liang, and Nellemann (2004) indicated that the removal of school fees contributed to poverty reduction by ensuring universal access to basic education, which in turn could help break the cycle of poverty; and yet in Swaziland all schools still charge fees. Zhang and Minxia (2006), writing on China, also recommended the establishment and improvement of the stipend system to support poor students and enable them to access education. Swaziland needs to implement its policy of free primary education immediately if it is to address these inequities. This will help, but not solve all the problems, and hence the Ministry of Education has to further ensure that bursaries are offered to the OVC and all other children from poor families. These bursaries would have to cover fees, stationery, uniforms, transportation, and other necessities to facilitate schooling. This is currently not the case. Hence, although some of the school fees for the OVCs are provided by the Government, many of the students still drop out because of lack of funds. Unless this is done, the required fees and other school needs shall remain a prohibiting factor, as the poor cannot afford them. This leads to poor students not enrolling in school, and if enrolled, not completing their schooling (ADB, 2006).

### *Lack of integration of education plans with those of other key sectors*

Education alone cannot solve all the poverty problems, and hence education plans need to be integrated with those of other sectors, (e.g. economic planning, health, agriculture, social security, enterprise and employment, etc.) to ensure they all work in tandem towards reducing poverty. As Phillip

Coombs (1970) state, educational policy should be integrated with the plans of broader economic and social development as it cannot go its own way, ignoring the realities of the world around it. In the National Policy Statement on Education (Kingdom of Swaziland, 1999), there is no mention of integrating the education policies with that of other sectors. This is puzzling, given that education plans and policies need to work in tandem and be integrated with those of other sectors to achieve maximal efficiency and effectiveness in the system.

### *Lack of commitment to the cause of poverty alleviation*

Political commitment to education needs to be strong, and a favourable environment for the participation of other stakeholders like the private sector, civil society and communities should be created and maintained in policy/strategy formulation and programme implementation. Providing lip service to this task, to get more votes during elections and to look good to donors and international development agencies will not achieve the required results. For example, although reducing inequalities is often indicated as an objective of the Swaziland government, it is however noted that very little action has been taken on this, and hence the high Gini coefficient (World Bank, 2006b). Looking at the measures to empower the poor and reduce inequalities that are reflected in the Action Plan (MOEPD, 2005b), it is noticed there are no clear policies, timelines, procedures and/or actions indicated that would shift resources from the rich to the poor.

There is a great need in Swaziland for a supportive macro-economic environment, good governance, political commitment, openness, stability, accountability and the country's commitment to "action". Governance has for example been found to be an important factor in poverty alleviation (Arimah, 2004; Grindle, 2004; Harber, 2002; Nayyar, 2000; Oyen, 1999). Harber (2002), after listing a number of ways that authoritarian rule has exacerbated levels of poverty in Africa concluded that democracy would be a better option than authoritarianism in helping to reduce poverty in Africa. Hence, democratic rule is one of the necessary factors for success in poverty eradication. Nyanchama (2006) supports this view by declaring there is a correlation between freedom, democracy and economic development. Nayyar (2000) found that improvement in governance brought about by constitutional reform assisted in the task of poverty alleviation. Jan Sithole, Secretary General of the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions is quoted by Mordaunt (2006) to have in fact gone further to declare that "Governments inflict poverty on citizens through bad policies and governance" (p. 15).

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Poverty is a major problem and challenge faced by Swaziland and many other developing nations, and needs to be urgently addressed. Education plays a key role in poverty reduction. However, the relationship between education and poverty is very complex, and may be place and time bound, and the education system cannot perform an act of magic and "go it alone" to solve the country's poverty crises. Education's role depends greatly on other enabling sectors and factors. This study suggests the Swaziland education system needs to be appropriately transformed and planned to: increase access to formal and non-formal schooling; improve the quality and content of education offered; use suitable and effective teaching methods; offer relevant technical and practical subjects at all school grades; offer new courses on health education, research, innovation and entrepreneurship; and increase the number, quality, and motivation of the teachers.

It is recommended therefore that Swaziland should take action and develop a blueprint for its education system, so that it can make a maximum contribution towards alleviating poverty and enable the country to achieve the MDGs. The people living in poverty should be included in the design, planning and implementation of the policies, strategies, and reforms devised to address their plight. No one knows their problems and needs better than the individuals themselves, and hence they should be part of the solution. What might seem good policies imported from elsewhere and imposed on them, without consultation and their consent and input, can potentially fail.

It is also recommended that further studies be undertaken on the following issues: First, what are the most important skills, knowledge and attitudes that are necessary for children to find employment, be self employed, or be creators of employment, and how should these be taught? Second, how best

should available resources and aid be targeted to poor children to enable them to attend school and succeed in their studies? Third, how should each of the proposed policies and reforms be organized and implemented? Fourth, why does the government fail to implement its policies and what should be done to make sure policies and strategies that have been designed are fully implemented? Last, how can the commitment of the government and the Swazi leaders towards poverty eradication be increased and the appropriate actions undertaken?

Education plays a critical role in poverty reduction, is a cross cutting issue and is key to the achievement of the MDGs. Swaziland should not neglect education and should incorporate it in its strategies so that these become four- rather than the current three-pronged strategies. As the DFID report (2001) correctly articulated, a more strategic approach is required, one which recognises the centrality of education with the wider development policies, and gives it strong political backing with appropriate resource priority. If this is not done, and if the country continues to give only lip service and not tackle these issues with the urgency that they deserve, reducing poverty and achieving the MDGs shall always remain a mirage, and peace and stability that has been enjoyed by the country for decades jeopardised.

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# AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND FINANCING: 100% PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION

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## ABSTRACT

*Many countries cannot completely solve problems concerning education, health and environment because of rapid population growth and political and economic problems. Today there are 19 million students in Turkey and they are in need of school buildings, structures and all types of instructional materials. In order to solve fiscal problems, the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) aimed to attract public support in financing the construction of school buildings. For this reason, a campaign called "100 % Support for Education" was started in 2003. The aim of this descriptive study is to analyze the contributions of this campaign, and explain it within the framework of philanthropy focusing on five dimensions. In fact, 21.6% of the total number of classrooms, which were built between 2004 and 2008, were constructed within the realm of this campaign. The campaign, which continues today with great success, has contributed much towards solving the financial and organizational problems of Turkish national education.*

## INTRODUCTION

Social responsibility is a significant factor for the social and cultural development of a country which sustains its influence on such application fields as human service, culture and arts, religion, youth development, education and health (Lagemann, 1992; Wymer, 1997). Indeed, social responsibility has gained much importance since the Great Depression in 1929, which caused unemployment and production losses to a large extent in many countries (mainly in the United States of America and industrialized Western Europe) (Üstunel, 1994). Since that time, the effects of philanthropic services have been discussed in research and publications throughout the world. Historians, economists, sociologists as well as those investigating medicine, science, education, and social work have included philanthropic activities in their research (Lagemann, 1992). Further, countries with lower participation in philanthropy such as Australia, England and Canada, than some American and European countries, started to give importance to social responsibility and national philanthropic services and considered them as a government policy (Madden, 2006).

In Turkey, during the last decade, many external factors (such as mobilization during natural disasters and reforms undertaken to facilitate the nation's accession to the European Union), reforms about civil society (such as the Law on Associations) and projects financed by the European Union funds became important in the development of Civil Society Organizations, increasing their recognition (Zincir & Bikmen, 2006).

### *Philanthropy*

Philanthropy, which is beginning to gain an institutional identity, has been defined in various ways in different communities. The basic definition of philanthropy is a planned or structured activity, such as granting money, donating time, providing information, donating goods and services, or providing voice and influence, to improve the well-being of humanity and the community (Welcome to Philanthropy Australia, 2008).

In general terms, philanthropy can be defined as an individual's support for activities in the structure of a civil society organization or a social attempt to achieve a certain aim considered to be beneficial for increasing the living quality of people (outside of their family or close environment) or for contributing to society in general terms (Güder, 2006). Philanthropists include individuals at different ages who have various interest and ability areas (Bussell & Forbes, 2002). In addition, philanthropic activities are not limited to the supports of certain civil society organizations, but also include services provided to charity organizations, sport clubs, business associations, social clubs, political and religious groups, or other support organizations (Wilson & Pimm, 1996). There is a misunderstanding about philanthropy

in that it is often perceived only as activities involving financial assets (Madden, 2006). An example of the spiritual aspect of philanthropy, besides its financial aspect, is the campaign of “Give Five” which started in 1987 in the USA to encourage people to sacrifice five hours a week and 5% of their income to the causes and charities of their choice (Eikenberry, 2005).

A question of interest at this point is: Why people have served the society as volunteers for so many years? The wish for helping others may be the basic aim of philanthropy (Frank, 1996; Nichols & King, 1999). When humanistic emotions are considered, it is a source of pleasure for a person to perform activities beneficial to society, knowing that people need him/her. In this way, people who contribute to society in one way or another are respected. They prove themselves in the society by supporting people who need help. They gain prestige in society with the activities they realize and they rise to a certain status (Harbaugh, 1998; Lindahl & Conley, 2002; Mueller, 1975 as cited in Bussell & Forbes, 2002). People who perform these activities feel psychologically and social satisfied (Burlingame, 1993; Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991; Piliavin & Charng, 1990). People who support others may also gain popularity and are respected in the society as people sensitive to social problems. In doing so, they gain the trust of people and hence public confidence. Since they also contribute to such services as health and education, which are among the liabilities of the government, they become people known and respected by government entities as well. When we consider the basis for the charitable services performed for centuries, we can see the effects of religious beliefs as well. In religion, people bear more responsibilities compared to other living beings, and are expected to achieve certain tasks. People serving as volunteers share what they have with other people, and so they feel fulfilled in their responsibilities requested by God (Jeavons; 1991; Oates, 1995; Wuthnow & Hodgkinson, 1990).

## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

### *Philanthropy and Education*

In Turkey, there are some delays in the services provided by a social state, such as education, health, environment, and transportation. Rapid population growth, economic and political problems that countries encounter, and unplanned settlement, among other things, can be the reason for such delays, and these services are not provided at adequate levels in Turkey. Recently, despite the increase in the activities of the state in coordination with private institutions, philanthropic activities are not at the desired level (Özdemir, 2003). In fact, such services are expected only from the government. The public does not consider itself responsible for social services, but it is difficult for a country to meet those expectations on its own, considering the economic, social and demographic conditions in Turkey (Zincir & Bikmen, 2006). It is wrong to give all of this responsibility to the state, and impossible to meet all of the nation’s needs. Problems with unemployment, housing and nutrition, irregularities in the justice system, and delays in the health system affect the whole country. Also, problems in the education sector cause serious damage to the development of the country, as education is the most important resource required by citizens who are working to succeed in and make contributions to society. The financial problems related to educational services are among the main concerns that the modern state treasury has difficulty in affording. Provision of needed funds for educational activities puts pressure on the state’s budgets. For this reason, alternative methods of obtaining funds are being explored, such as acquiring financial support from the beneficiaries of the service, or instituting an additional tax to fund the price of education services (Çizikakça, 2006). When we look at recent examples, we see that philanthropic activities are again given importance. In the world and in Turkey, many civil society organizations perform various projects in the social, health, environment and education fields and try to fulfill the social responsibilities that befall on them.

In Turkey, civil society organizations and philanthropic citizens coordinate with the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) to target the extension of educational services to the masses. We can now observe in Turkey that from preschool to higher education, there are attempts to increase the rate of schooling at all levels of education; girls are encouraged to go to school, especially in rural areas; there are attempts to overcome obstacles in secondary education; professional education is highly emphasized; and disabled students are encouraged to benefit from education through the projects being carried out. Among these projects are: 7 is Too Late, Long Live Our School, Snowdrops, Let Girls Go to School,

Vocational Schools are National Matters, Not-Handicapped Education, and Adding School. An additional project, and the focus of this paper, is “100% Support for Education.” This campaign works to fulfill the material and structural needs of schools through the donations of philanthropists.

Philanthropic services related to education are typically performed through providing scholarships for students experiencing financial problems, especially in developed countries (Grossman, 2000). However, in developing countries like Turkey, philanthropic attempts involve eliminating the deficiencies that arise from the lack of educational equipment and materials, school buildings, and classes, since the physical needs of schooling have not yet been met. In this study, 100% Support for Education, which can be considered in the context of philanthropic services in Turkey, will be examined, and several issues to which this examination gave rise with regard to social responsibility projects will be discussed. This campaign has been selected as the focus of this study since it provides a good example of an alternative guide to solving problems encountered in planning for and financing education, especially in developing countries.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

This paper is based on a descriptive study. Description gives detailed and accurate information about events and situations, presents how events occur and develop, portrays what people and events are like, and explains key issues (Punch, 2005; Robson, 1993). Description is a first step towards explaining a phenomenon. If one wants to know about the occurrence of an event and the reasons leading to that event, then it is important to portray the event in full terms (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this study, several methods are used in accordance with the structure of descriptive research and information is collected from various data sources.

Statistical data were examined to show the current situation, after a general literature review was completed. Since the 100% Support for Education campaign is supported by the Ministry, information about the campaign that can be found on the MoNE website (<http://www.egitimedestek.meb.gov.tr>) was examined, including the current state of the project, the project's aims, and the application for the campaign. In addition, written statements from the Prime Minister, the Minister of National Education, and the coordinators of the project; their views at the assembly sessions; and negotiations with them about the project were considered as important sources of information for collecting data on the campaign. Reports prepared about the latest state of the campaign provided information for general evaluations of the campaign as well. Finally, the points to be taken into account are discussed in light of the relevant literature with regard to the philanthropic services.

In the first section of this study, the occurrence of social responsibility, the concept of philanthropy, the realization of philanthropy in Turkey, philanthropic activities reflected in education, underlying reasons for philanthropic activities, and relations between the state and charitable organizations were briefly explained. After these general explanations, the rest of this study is designed around five key questions:

1. Why was such a campaign needed?
2. Who are the shareholders of the campaign?
3. How is the 100% Support for Education project implemented?
4. What are the effects/consequences of the campaign?
5. What are the suggestions about fostering philanthropy and management of campaigns?

We now briefly describe how each of these questions guided our analysis, and what kinds of data were presented with regard to each aspect of the campaign. In our description of 100% Support for Education, the first aspect of the campaign that we focus on is why such a campaign was needed. Statistical data such as the current youth population, literacy and schooling rates, number of students per class, and the amount of money allotted for education from the public budget in Turkey are presented. In addition to these data, the need for public contribution to education through campaigns is emphasized in the views of the Prime Minister and the project coordinators.

The second section focuses on identifying the beneficiaries of this campaign. However well-prepared and well-developed a project might be, one must consider who holds major roles in implementing

the project. Additionally, the extensiveness of the target group of the project, its contribution to the development of society, and its role in the economy and development of the country will concretely explain the importance of the project for Turkey. For this reason, the second question “For whom?” was put on the agenda.

The issue of what the project is, and what activities are performed in the content of this project, bears such importance for Turkey that the method for carrying out the campaign was examined as the third aspect of this study. We define the campaign in general terms and consider the issue of a tax discount with quotations from the related laws. Actions taken in the world related to tax discounts and views of governments on this issue are also attended to in this section. Activities that have been realized for the introduction of the campaign, which started in 2003, are presented at the end of the section on the basis of the information obtained from the project’s official website. The project was introduced to the public by MoNE with the help of the media. It attracted the attention of the public within a short time, and many wondered how the campaign would be supported. The fact that philanthropic citizens can easily contribute to the campaign, and can deliver their assistance through various ways are explained. The issue of how the public will participate in the project by contributing small amounts of money is also emphasized in this section as well.

For the fourth aspect of the study, the results of the campaign were examined. In light of statistical data obtained from the project reports, information is provided about the number of classes offered, number of schools constructed, and the amount of land granted up to the present. The effects of giving the names of philanthropists to the schools they constructed in the context of the campaign are also explained. Lastly, projections of the future effects of the project on the students are presented.

Finally, on the basis of the literature review, the issue of which points need to be considered in social responsibility projects will be the focus of attention. Furthermore, some recommendations are presented about what should be done to increase the participation and successful implementation of this campaign and similar campaigns. Evaluating the project and preventing exploitations are among important issues to be addressed, however well-intended a project might be. For this reason, a few points related to the evaluation of such projects are mentioned in this study.

## DIMENSIONS OF THE STUDY

### *Why was such a campaign needed?*

There can be little doubt regarding the importance of education. Education, which is the basis for modernization and economic development, is one of Turkey’s most important issues, as it is in many other developing countries. Turkey has a large youth population. According to the 2007 data, the percentage of 0 - 25 year population was 53% (TUIK, 2008). While providing an advantage in terms of the available workforce for countries, this young population rate also presents qualitative and quantitative problems in terms of providing an adequate education to all youth. The kind of qualitative and quantitative problems we have in mind are related, though not necessarily limited, to the increasing population overall.

In Turkey, approximately 1.3 million children start school every year. Approximately 758,000 teachers, over 1 million school personnel, and 21 million students are registered in MoNE (MoNE, 2009). The number of students in Turkey is twice as high as the number of students in some European countries such as Greece, Belgium, Bulgaria, and the Czech Republic. It is unfortunately impossible to meet all the school, classroom, laboratory, and technological needs of such a large student population with only the facilities provided by the state. These facts create a significant problem; overcrowded classes. For instance, in primary education, the number of students per class in Istanbul is 49, with 37 in Ankara and 33 students per class in Izmir. Among the other provinces, this rate increases to 40 in Adana, 47 in Gaziantep, and 39 in Bursa. In addition to these, in Eastern and Southeastern Regions of Turkey where birth rates are high, crowded classes are a big problem. In the Eastern regions, the number of students per class is even higher: 53 in Sanliurfa and 44 in Diyarbakir (MoNE, 2009).

The research carried out in Turkey provides convincing evidence that overcrowded classes pose serious difficulties and also create qualitative problems for both teachers and students. Low student motivation, difficulties in classroom management, lack of necessary feedback as to students’ learning outcomes and low student achievements are related to the number of students in overcrowded classes

(Bakioğlu & Polat; 2002 Güçlü, 2002). These difficulties obviously affect the quality of teaching and learning in schools. To address problems stemming from overcrowded classes, and in order to decrease the number of students in classes at every stage of education (from preschool education to higher education), new school buildings, the rehabilitation of school equipment and structures, and educational materials are required.

Moreover, when it is considered that 80% of the education budget is allotted for personnel expenses, it is mathematically impossible to accommodate the needs of students new to the system with the remaining 20% of the budget (Aydogdu, 2003). The Minister of National Education, Hüseyin Çelik, also mentioned the necessity of the campaign in his speech at the Turkish Grand National Assembly, stating:

The budget of the MoNE is 14 billion dollars. This is a big amount but this is not enough in order to catch up with the education quality of the developed countries. Therefore, not only the facilities of the consolidated budget but also the facilities of the private sector shall be assigned for the command of the National Education, shall be obtained. Meanwhile, the associations, civil society organizations, we title as the third sector, shall be attracted for the education field and encouraged to invest in this sector (2004),

Here, the Minister clearly suggests that to solve both the qualitative and quantitative problems of the Turkish Education System, the government, private sector and civil society organizations (called the third sector), and the public should provide supports. The project “100% Support for Education” has been developed from this point of view.

In brief, the aim of this campaign is to minimize problems encountered in the education sector through new legal regulations, by encouraging contributions to education and making this supported mobilization successful. For the aim of gaining new educational institutions and hence giving students a chance to receive a deserved, high-quality education, the long-term Educational mobilization of the MoNE has been put into effect.

This was certainly a philanthropic campaign, launched by the government, in the sense that it was planned and structured to get support of any kind from charitable people in order to improve the quality of education (Welcome to Philanthropy Australia, 2008).

### *Who are the shareholders of the campaign?*

In the campaign of 100% Support for Education, both the donors and the beneficiaries are students, their parents, and in general - the whole community. It can be said that all of the participants in the project have a key role. The ones supporting the campaign are charitable citizens, and the beneficiaries are the students, and, in fact, the whole society. The mediator between the donor and the beneficiary, and the coordinator of the campaign, is MoNE. A Project Coordination department is formed in order to organize the activities. In every province, a Vice President or Branch Director is assigned to carry out the Project at National Education Directorates. In order to have access to the charitable people who are the target group of the campaign, the press bears an important role. Moreover, artists, sportsmen, businessmen and other famous people respected in society have also worked to support the project and maintain the interest of the public.

In the introduction of the project and the publication of announcements, media authorities have important responsibilities. It is very important that the media respects and supports such social responsibility projects, and considers them as important news, in order for the public to understand and support the projects (Cigerdelen, 2006). With this project, the attention of the public has been attracted to education again. Municipalities also support the projects (Özdemir, 2003).

It is also important to discuss the beneficiaries of the project. A holistic viewing of the project enables one to see that all levels of schooling, preschool to high school, are included - 19 million students and their families. Furthermore, education does not only provide individual benefits, but it also has a role in the development, improvement and well-being of the society. Education can therefore be considered as an investment that benefits all people.

### *How is the 100 % Support for Education project implemented?*

Participation of philanthropic activities has started to decline in recent years. Authors such as Bussell

and Forbes (2002) relate this decline to economic reasons and people's growing ignorance. Therefore, the state needs to encourage an increase in philanthropic services. In Australia, as well as in England and Canada, politicians have advocated for tax discounts that have increased people's awareness about philanthropy (Lagemann, 1992; Madden, 2006). In 2005, thanks in part to the tax discount in Australia, the rate of donations for the education sector increased from 16% to 30% (Madden, 2006).

In the content of the project 100% Support for Education, the previous 5% tax discount was increased to 100% with the legal amendment dated April 24, 2003 (Official Gazette, 2003). With the articles related to this issue added to the Value Added Tax (VAT) Law, (with 4842 and 4962 numbered Laws), all the expenses, donations and assistance made toward the construction of schools, health centers and student dormitories and to the public administration have been discounted from taxes without limitation of a certain rate.

After these legal regulations, on September 11, 2003, the campaign of 100% Support for Education was officially started. In fact, the statement of 100% in the name of the project has double meaning; the first one is 100% support of the public for education, and the other is the emphasis of the increase of the tax discount to 100% from 5%.

In order to put such a large campaign into practice, the support of the press is needed. The press should first understand the importance of the campaign and then find the materials to introduce the project (Cigerdelen, 2006). With the facilities of the press and the Ministry, the following activities have been realized:

- ✓ Construction of the project website,
- ✓ Opening of free bank accounts,
- ✓ Opening of free telephone lines,
- ✓ Introductory activities have been conducted,
- ✓ Introductory brochures and hand-outs of the project were provided to the public and private enterprises in all provinces,
- ✓ All the national newspapers, radio and TV channels were sent introductory CDs and cassettes for broadcasting,
- ✓ In some provinces, project-focused introductory meetings were organized,
- ✓ Publications and interviews have been held with various TV, radio and newspapers,
- ✓ The project has been introduced to 500 companies, 150 unions, 200 associations and various institutions throughout Turkey, and
- ✓ Face- to- face negotiations have been held with various associations and charities to begin joint projects (MoNE, 2007).

In order to carry out the campaign, the needs of schools in all of the provinces have been determined. Online, donors can search to determine the needs of specific schools in particular provinces (see <http://www.egitimedestek.meb.gov.tr>). A form designates the various needs of the school, such as archive room, atelier, computer, building, laundry room, classroom, education materials, library, laboratory materials, food, photocopy room, heating unit, conference room, stationery materials, canteen, infirmary, kitchen, playground, projection device, landscape work, sports room, central, meeting room, telephone, toilet, dormitory, dining hall, fuel and so on, so that these supports can be provided and approved; later, the donor will be contacted through the address he/she submits.

There is a common belief among the public that for philanthropic and grant-making activities, one needs to be rich (Eikenberry, 2005). But this campaign does not necessarily require people to construct school buildings or make huge donations; one can contribute to this campaign through small donations as well.

Another factor for the success of the project is the fact that the project is being carried out with the slogan "Build a School, Make Your Name Long Live". Schools are named after philanthropists who provide more than 50% of the construction funding for that site. In this way, the name of the philanthropist is known by the public and that person is respected as he/she deserves. Özdemir (2003) stated that an architectural competition arose in the context of the campaign as well.

In order to continue philanthropic services, people need to be satisfied in both social and psychological terms (Bussell & Forbes, 2002; Eikenberry, 2005). Naming schools after philanthropists

can be considered as one such activity serving this aim by increasing the respectability of the person. In this way, philanthropists, as well as famous public figures, have provided funds to build schools that are then named for them.

*What are the consequences of the campaign?*

The construction of new schools in big provinces is critical because the rate of schooling and the number of students per class need to be at the level of the European Union. Turkey is faced with a dense education demand from preschool to higher education. As Table 1 shows, 21.6% of the total number of classrooms built within the realm of this campaign came in a five year period (2004-2008). This indicates the campaign is being successful. This success becomes even more evident when we consider that 2002 schools and 54 vocational training centers have been constructed, and 1366219.70 square meters of land have been granted in the content of the campaign (MoNE, 2009).

Table 1

*Classrooms built within the last five years*

Year	Kindergarten/ Nursery class	Primary education	Secondary education	Non-formal education	Total	Classrooms built within the context of 100% support for education campaign
2004	884	17,471	2476	104	28,078	7,143
2005	951	20,256	683	155	28,698	6,653
2006	748	19,301	1336	114	28,243	6,744
2007	425	10,721	928	124	15,728	3 530
2008	505	14,169	716	42	16,790	1,358

The 100% Support for Education project also permits donors to spend one's tax dollars in whichever field they wish. Since donors can audit the school construction themselves, they have the opportunity to see where the grants are used. As Aydogdu (2003) states, the project is transparent, dynamic and hardworking. These are important features of the campaign as philanthropists give their support on a voluntary basis, and this necessarily requires the involvement of the "trust" factor (Eikenberry, 2005). Transparency contributes to the establishment of the "trust" factor in the sense that the donors can have access to expenditure documents, allowing them the chance to inspect how their donations are spent and used.

Another benefit of the project for the future is that the children receiving education at these schools will be raised with the concept of philanthropy. It is possible that the children will grow to become charitable people in the years ahead as well, recognizing that their school has been constructed by philanthropists. This result could be considered as a non-financial hidden benefit of the campaign.

## SUGGESTIONS ABOUT FOSTERING PHILANTHROPY AND MANAGEMENT OF CAMPAIGNS

Public campaigns based on philanthropic attempts/initiatives can only be beneficial for the society if they are performed in a conscious and planned way within the framework of certain rules (Cigerdelen, 2006). We believe that the 100% Support for Education launched by Turkey constitutes a good example of an effective and successful campaign which came into being through philanthropic attempts. On the basis of our analyses of the project, we will discuss certain project elements required for the success of such philanthropic campaigns. First, the details of the campaign need to be well-planned. Determining the targets and strategies at the beginning is very important for the sustainability of the campaign. This was quite evident in the 100% Support for Education campaign. The campaign's targets were clear (for example, to construct schools, provide necessary equipment, and so on) and the strategies to reach those targets were communicated well throughout (e.g., giving the names of philanthropists to the school, allowing donors to see and check how their money is spent, increasing tax deductions to 100%, and so on). With appropriate planning, problems about where to use the grants provided by philanthropists could be overcome. Planned projects such as this one based on robust grounds will continue to be effective and sustainable even if the project coordinator changes. As in every field, attempts at institutionalization and continuation are required in these campaigns as well. Even though the 100% Support for Education is accepted as a government policy, it is a project that can be continued even if the government changes. The issue of education is of vital importance, irrespective of governments, and is one of the main concerns of a social state.

In addition to planning, sustainability and institutionalization, long-term campaigns are preferred because they have long-lasting impacts, are effective, and are consistent. A campaign having long-term targets is considered by the participants as more serious and trustworthy. The campaign for 100% Support for Education started in 2003 and is a long-term project that is still ongoing.

To foster the successful continuation of projects, their focus should be in tandem with the public needs and aim to find solutions to certain problems. Rapid population growth, migration, and attempts to increase standards of quality keep qualitative and quantitative problems alive in Turkey. The economic situation in Turkey and the aforementioned issues (e.g. construction of new schools and classrooms, supplying schools with educational materials) are problems that cannot be solved by mere efforts of educators or the state. Each step taken in education positively contributes to the well-being of the society and of the country. Performing activities in a field concerning all of society is important in terms of recognition, sustainability, and acceptability (Cigerdelen, 2006).

Especially in campaigns that aim to yield concrete and tangible results for which financial grants are made, the measurability of the results is important. In the context of this campaign, since in-kind and monetary contributions meet the needs of the education sector, there are more measurable results, and this feature is an important point with regard to the sustainability of philanthropy campaigns. In terms of classroom construction or in the provision of other needs of schools, concrete results can be obtained. Since the results are measurable, the future can be planned in more realistic terms, and evidence of the success of the project can be reported.

In projects related to philanthropy, even though citizens devote grants on a voluntary basis, philanthropists need to be informed systematically about fields where these grants are used in a transparent and calculable manner. This is highly important for the success of large-scale projects. Use of the grants in trustworthy ways increases philanthropic participation as a low-level of trust between campaigners and participants forms an obstacle in attracting support and in developing civil society (Bikmen & Meydanoglu, 2006; Eikenberry, 2005).

Receiving the support of the press is another key element for a successful philanthropic campaign. There is a sense that the press is the driving force in the introduction and announcement of the project to the public, and in encouraging philanthropists to participate in such campaigns. In the case of the 100% Support for Education campaign, as explained previously, the coordinators effectively used the press not only in advertising the campaign, but also in creating an awareness of the importance of education among the public; hence, the press played a critical role in the campaign's success. The press also bears the role of a hidden auditor. If a campaign, carried out in a determined way, cannot succeed to survive the audits of the press, it is highly likely to lose its efficacy (Madden, 2006). Hence, in order to gain the support of the public for the sustainability of campaigns being carried out and for the launch of new ones, it is important to provide transparency and clarity, as well as to adequately inform the public. In this aspect, the project coordinators have great responsibility. They should fit the roles to which they are assigned, and their duties and responsibilities should be well-determined. Most importantly, the concept of philanthropy should be considered as a field of expertise and needs to be acted on accordingly (Madden, 2006).

Civil society activities act as catalysts in the development of a country. Many actions of the government perceived as force or impositions can easily be solved by gaining the support of society. Not only in the field of education, but also in many other vital fields, such as health, culture, and environment, problems can be solved with the help of civil society organizations. It should also be noted that according to 2006 data every family in Turkey spares \$53 for philanthropic activities (Çarkoglu, 2006) such a low amount shows the limited structure of organizational life in Turkey. When compared with 20 years earlier, the speed of development of society and of non-profit organizations in the country were impressive. However, the social, economic and political instabilities, and desires to accumulate individual wealth, have all formed obstacles to civil society activities. The only way to change this picture into a positive one is through education. Educated people are more sensitive towards philanthropy and voluntary concepts and the number of members in civil society organizations increase through education (Bussell & Forbes, 2002; Eikenberry, 2005). It is through non-profit organizations that the state and philanthropists might be brought together.

## CONCLUSION

Education is a basic way of making a nation live as an independent, advanced and modern society. The importance of education is invariably true for all nations, yet there are certain problems encountered in educational systems. The financial shortfalls of education serve as barriers in addressing the qualitative and quantitative problems of the field. Developing countries cannot allocate sufficient budgets for education and hence become particularly susceptible to the difficulties stemming from a lack of educational funds.

Turkey is a country encountering quantitative problems in education with a student population of almost 20 million. Being aware of the situation, MoNE started a campaign in 2003 aimed at catching students up to meet educational standards by bringing the state and the nation together with philanthropic citizens. The campaign of 100% Support for Education is a project aiming to solve quantitative problems in the education sector by allowing charitable people to support education with in-kind and monetary donations to the regions in need. All of the grants in the project are subject to a 100% tax deduction with the legal amendment realized. In this way, philanthropists can seize the opportunity to use the taxes they already have to pay to invest in education without granting this donation separately.

From 2003 through 2009, the number of the classrooms constructed in the campaign constituted 21.6 % of the total classrooms constructed in Turkey. This number is concrete proof indicating how efficient and beneficial the campaign has been so far. By receiving the support of the public in the finance

and planning of education, progress has been achieved. One factor contributing to the success of the campaign was public awareness of the importance of education; however, this success is also strongly related to the tax reduction policy of the government. Yet, we feel it necessary to note here that every measurement needs to be taken to prevent people from possible abuse of tax reduction. It might happen that a so-called 'philanthropist' could claim to construct a school building at a much higher cost than publicly-financed schools. Hence, careful inspection during the course of such campaigns is necessary to prevent such mischievous attempts so that campaigns cannot be used as a means of tax evasion. We also suggest that cost-efficiency analysis of the donations in terms of tax deduction should be carried out to find out the true benefits of such campaigns and their implications with more realistic and concrete terms. This is an issue that warrants further research and consideration.

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# EDUCATIONAL PLANNING FOR SCHOOL GUIDANCE: TEACHERS' NARRATIVES OF THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF ETHNIC MINORITY STUDENTS IN HONG KONG SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Ming-Tak Hue

## ABSTRACT

*Many Hong Kong schools are concerned about the effective use of educational planning for fulfilling the diverse needs of ethnic minority students particularly given their growing numbers. No matter what educational plans for ethnic minority students are made, how they are implemented becomes critical. This article examines teachers' narratives of the cross-cultural experiences of ethnic minority students from India, Pakistan, Philippines, Nepal and Thailand, and the diversity of those students' different learning needs. Qualitative data were collected from interviews, through which the constructs of thirty-two teachers from three secondary schools were explored. This paper argues that when devising and implementing an educational plan for promoting the welfare of ethnic minority students, it is not only necessary for the plan to promote the intercultural sensitivity of all practitioners, but it is equally important to develop a connected school system where ethnic minority students and parents can be consistently supported in the subsystems of classroom, school, and home.*

## INTRODUCTION

Hong Kong schools are responsible for catering to the diverse needs of students, regardless of their background, ethnicity, and spoken languages (Education Commission, 2000; Education and Manpower Bureau, 2004a, 2004b). School guidance, also known as pastoral care, has a crucial role to play in recognizing students' individual differences and uniqueness and in creating a safe, positive, and nurturing environment wherein differences among students can be explored. The ultimate goal of pastoral care is to care for students in need, help them deal with difficulties, and promote the whole-person growth of all students (Best, Ribbins, Jarvis & Oddy, 1983; Hamblin, 1978; Marland, 1974; McGuinness, 1989; Watkins, 2001; Watkins & Wagner, 1987, 2000). School guidance also aims to encourage student's self-esteem and the development of various aspects of *self*, including personal, moral, and social dimensions and to help all school practitioners embrace and celebrate the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each student. It has been suggested that it be made an integral part of any educational program (Marland, 1974; Miller, Fruchling & Lewis, 1978; Watkins, 1992, 1995), and could include educational planning for supporting the learning of ethnic minority students. In Hong Kong schools, school guidance is offered at two levels: individual and departmental. At the individual level, all teachers are expected to have a guidance role in caring. At the department level, the guidance team or department, also known as the counseling team or department, is formed to offer counseling services for students, to support students in need, and to organize whole-school programs for enhancing the personal growth of students (Education Department, 1986). The counseling team is responsible for formal educational planning for school guidance.

Since the introduction of quality assurance, school self-evaluation, and the external school review in 2004 (Cheng, 2006; Cheng & Chan, 2000; Cheng & Cheung, 2001; Education and Manpower Bureau, 2001, 2004), educational planning for school improvement and the development of caring work, congruent with the school ethos and mission, has become a crucial task for all school managers and leaders involved in school guidance. This is a challenging task as there are no official government policies or guidelines about school guidance upon which educational planning could be devised, implemented and evaluated. Since 2002, with the Postgraduate Diploma in Education Program, guidance teachers are more intent on making the management and leadership of their caring work more accountable. Accordingly, the department or team of school guidance has focused more on measurable performance. The department head has put effort into linking the organizational aims of caring with organizational processes, whereas guidance teachers feel it is necessary to engage in various planning efforts which lead other school practitioners to implement the developed plan.

In Hong Kong, the majority of the ethnic minority students who do not speak Chinese are assigned

to special schools that have traditionally served these students. In 2006-07, 20 schools were designated by the government for this purpose. Among them, five were secondary schools. To date, no study has explored the views of teachers from these designated schools and particularly examined their narratives of planning for school guidance. This study, therefore, aimed to examine how teachers involved in school guidance addressed the diverse needs of ethnic minority students from India, Pakistan, Philippines, Nepal and Thailand. The concept of diverse needs underlying this study is built upon the conventional understanding of diversity, related to race, ethnicity, languages, socio-economic status, religious beliefs, and other ideologies. Understanding teachers' views about the schooling experience of these students is a way to help school managers plan for effective school guidance relating to the challenges both teachers and students face. Researchers have explored the learning difficulties of ethnic minority students in schools and recommended factors for enhancing the effectiveness of educational planning for school improvement and development. This article first explores that literature, posits a theoretical framework to examine the cross-cultural experiences and diverse needs of ethnic minority students, and describes this study of teacher perceptions of the student experiences. Last, the implications for educational planning for the provision of education to ethnic minority students will be discussed.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the Hong Kong population census statistics, the number of ethnic minority students has been growing in Hong Kong while their needs and rights have not been properly addressed. In 2001, the number of ethnic minority students under 15 years, who were legally required to be enrolled in schools with free education, was 11,204. By 2006, the number had grown by 20% to 13,472, and in 2007 there were 28,722 ethnic minority students studying full-time in schools or educational institutions in Hong Kong (Census and Statistics Department, 2007). Compared with local Chinese students, the rate of school attendance of ethnic minority students, aged above 15, was relatively low, particularly for those enrolled in educational programs at the post-secondary level. This difference in attendance rate can be compared between the whole population of students in the two age groups of 17 to 18 and 19 to 24, which are 82.8% and 37.3% respectively, whereas, for the population of ethnic minority students in these two age groups, the rates are 74.3% and 6.7% respectively (Census and Statistics Department, 2007).

There is a developing body of literature on the education of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong. Loper (2004) found that many ethnic minority students such as Indians, Pakistanis, Nepalese and Filipinos were excluded from Hong Kong schools (Loper, 2004; Yang Memorial Methodist Social Service, 2000, 2002). Public concern about the education of ethnic minority students has been reflected in stories reported in Hong Kong newspapers of these students' experiences, difficulties, and struggles in Hong Kong schools and communities (Ku, Chan & Sandhu, 2005; South China Morning Post, 2006a, 2006b). Yet, some positive experiences have been reported from teachers in classrooms where ethnic minority students participated. Kennedy, Hue and Tsui (2008) showed that teachers reported a higher level of self-efficacy when teaching non-Chinese compared to Chinese students and that they were equally able to engage all students in their learning.

Educational planning for supporting the learning of ethnic minority students is also an issue of great concern in western societies. It is accepted that the enrollment of ethnic minority students has brought diversity to schools. The diverse needs of these students have been highlighted in studies into their cross-cultural experiences in mainstream schools (Codjoe, 2001; Haque, 2000; He, Phillion, Chan & Xu, 2008; Mansouri & Trembath, 2005; Rassool, 1999). In general, these ethnic minority students had difficulty in learning the local language, while their families struggled with economic insecurity or poverty (Cummins, 1989, 2000; Cuypers, 2001; Rutter, 1994; Stevenson & Willott, 2007). It is evident that for these students, their personal growth as well as associated economic insecurity is exacerbated by language barriers, migration and acculturation processes (Ruiz-de-Velasco, Fix & Clewell, 2000; Rutter, 1994).

While the diverse needs of ethnic minority students have been examined, extensive research has been done on multiculturalism and other diversity issues that should be addressed by school managers when relevant educational plans are developed. These studies seek to discover how ethnic minority students can be better supported in schools (Caballero, Haynes & Tikly, 2007; Cheminais, 2001; Dentler

& Hafner, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Phillion, 2002), and how an educational plan which is congruent with the school mission and ethos could be made at the classroom level (Erwin, 2003; Marzano, 2003). They include studies on the management of students' behavior problems (Atzaba-Poria, Pike & Deater-Deckard, 2004; Fuligni, 1998) and learning styles for students from different ethnic groups in different school subjects (Ali, 2003; Nabobo & Teasdale, 1994; Paku, Zegwaard & Coll, 2003; Taylor & Coll, 2002). Some studies have raised concerns for teacher education in the context of multicultural education and the understanding of ethnic minority students (Arora, 2005; Garcia & Lopez, 2005; Santoro, 2009; Solomon, Portelli, Daniel & Campbell, 2005; Thomas & Kearney, 2008).

Having examined the studies into the education of ethnic minority students, many authors look closely at educational planning from an organizational perspective. Educational planning is a strategic process for school improvement and problem solving (Fullan, 2005). This is also regarded as a crucial way to deal with changes and transitions, especially during the time when new challenges and reform initiatives are dealt with (Spillane, 2004). This process is dynamic, continuous and organic (Ferara, 2000; Fullan, 2005; Morgan, 2007). To ensure effective educational planning, researchers have suggested that leadership should not be centralized but distributed both vertically and horizontally within a school organization (Spillane, 2004), and the commitment from school managers and leaders should be maintained and enhanced (Detert, Bauerly Kopel, Mauriel & Jenni, 2000; Detert, Louis & Schroeder, 2001), otherwise teachers merely make sense of educational planning as an administrative and executive task and view it as a function of the school superintendent (Casey, 2005; Lily, 1985). It is further suggested that culture and values are crucial elements forming an effective school organization and determine how schools are managed (Brytting & Trollestad, 2000; Hofstede, 1980, 1991). Only by understanding the culture of practitioners can communication, leadership, and program administration be conducted effectively. In contrast, possible constraints to quality management and educational planning include insufficient knowledge, lack of tools, lack of financial support, lack of feasible leadership commitment, inflexibility, piecemeal implementation, unrealistic expectations, and inadequate managerial skill (Chan & Wan, 2009; Detert, et al., 2000; Munro, 2008; Sergiovanni, 2001). The findings of these studies lead school managers to rethink their educational planning for supporting the learning of ethnic minority students from school-wide and school-based perspectives.

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the sociological framework of social construction of reality to help make sense of the ethnic minority students' schooling experience as described by the teachers, and how their knowledge of social realities was constructed in everyday school life (Berger & Luckmann, 1973; Holzner, 1968). To explore this knowledge, the methodological approaches of narrative analysis and personal experience were employed for interviews (Anderson, 1991; Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Denzin, 1998; Geertz, 1973; Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). Specifically, the methodological approach suggested by Clandinin and Connelly (1995) was used to explore what constructs the teachers used when talking about the cross-cultural experiences of ethnic minority students across three dimensions, namely 1) the change of the *space* from the school to the home of ethnic minority people; 2) in the *place* of the Hong Kong schools where they participated, and 3) throughout the *time* when they were in the school and the home and how they interacted with others. Furthermore, the analytical framework of moving *inward*, *outward*, *backward* and *forward* was adopted. *Inward* analysis was to discover teachers' and students' inner feelings towards the others' cross-cultural experience, whereas with *outward*, the constructs of the host society of Hong Kong and the community of the ethnic minority people were explored. Regarding *backward* and *forward*, this was to narrate how these teachers related the stories of their *past* experience to *the present* and how it shaped their aspirations for *the future*.

This study was qualitative in nature. Unstructured interviews were conducted in three designated secondary schools where large numbers of ethnic minority students were enrolled. Having received school permissions, 32 teachers were invited to attend one-on-one interviews. Among them, 20 participated as part of the school guidance department or team. Each interview lasted about sixty minutes and was tape-recorded. This was intended to provide the interviewees with substantial freedom to talk about the issues concerned. The unstructured interview method adopted for this study could be considered

a type of active interview as proposed by Holstein and Gubrium (1995), in which the teachers and the interviewer play significant roles in constructing a conversation regarding the foci of this study, that is, the plan of school guidance and support for the diverse needs of ethnic minority students. Because this kind of study involved gathering information about individuals or individual situations, as suggested in the literature (Alderson, 1995; Ball, 1981; Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 1999; Hargreaves, 1967; Hill, Laybourn & Borland, 1996; Lacey, 1974), precautions were taken to ensure ethical data collection and confidentiality (Bentley, Oakley, Gibson & Kilgour, 1999).

## FINDINGS

The study showed that diversity was constructed as a challenge for planning school guidance. While the ethnic minority students enjoyed studying in Hong Kong schools, they experienced cultural differences and struggled with differences in school systems and academic programs. The findings also showed that when developing educational plans for supporting the learning of ethnic minority students, teachers developed a sense of intercultural sensitivity, struggled to fulfill the diverse needs of students using the streaming policy, built up a partnership with parents, and worked on broadening students' aspirations of education and a future career. These themes are illustrated below.

### *Developing a Sense of Intercultural Sensitivity*

When a plan for school guidance was developed and implemented, the teachers incorporated knowledge of cultural differences into their caring work. They engaged in an intercultural process when interacting with ethnic minority students which enriched teachers' understanding of the differences, similarities and uniqueness of all students. During one interview, this point of view was highlighted by a teacher who further insisted that understandings of cultural differences between the majority and the minority groups should be adjusted to ensure that ethnic minority students should not be understood only in relation to the culture of the dominant group, that is, the Chinese. As she narrated,

We don't see them (ethnic minority students) as non-Chinese students. It is very wrong for you to put ethnic minority students as a single category of students, especially compared to Chinese. If you look at them (ethnic minority students) closely, you would understand that they are all so different. The differences are so vast, much more different than you could imagine. They occur because the students come from different countries, with different religions. They have different family backgrounds, and different characters. Even students with the same ethnic background, can be so different. It is just like Chinese students. They are so vastly different. . . . In my eyes, there is no distinction between Chinese students and non-Chinese students. Rather, I try to see them all individually. Race is one of the differences between them.

The insistence on intercultural sensitivity was reflected by the teachers' strong sense of empathy that was developed to understand the social behavior of ethnic minority students from the perspective of the ethnic minority peoples. They reflected on their interpretation of social signs related to ethnic minority students and avoided stereotyping ethnic minority people. For example, one teacher explained why some ethnic minority students liked sitting with their peers on the ground in the park and on the floor in the compartment of MTR (underground train) while chatting loudly. This behavior was described as a way of expressing friendship and togetherness. Negative perceptions of such behavior as *selfish*, *noisy* and *the result of poor parenting*, comments made by some Hong Kong Chinese, were considered inappropriate.

According to the teachers' narratives, the educational plan for caring should be developed and implemented based upon an understanding of the ethnic minority students' culture and traditions. One example was how a teacher helped his Pakistani student examine his viewpoint on the September 11 incident. The teacher engaged in an intercultural process reflecting a frame of reference based upon his interpretation of the student's behavior and needs. As the teacher reflected,

After the incident of 9-11, a Pakistani student just felt very happy about what happened in New York; he laughed and in the classroom said loudly how happy he was. How could he be so happy? I was surprised at first. Certainly, I realized it was something I really needed to handle carefully. It would not be good if I told the student directly that his view was wrong, as I assumed that not only his family members, but also most of his relatives and mosque tutors

might also feel happy and hold the same view as he did. Therefore, I remained calm and had a long talk with him, and tried to encourage him to examine the incident from different angles. I asked him many questions, like ‘If something like this happened in your country, or in Hong Kong, how would you feel?’

### *Fulfilling Students’ Needs under Streaming Policy*

When talking about the development of an educational plan for fulfilling the diverse needs of ethnic minority students, four categories of students were discussed: Hong Kong Chinese students, ethnic minority students born in Hong Kong, new immigrant ethnic minority students, and new immigrant students from Mainland China. The different combinations of these students brought a number of unique characteristics to the schools involved. One example was the learning behavior of Hong Kong-born ethnic minority students. As the teachers narrated, when compared to Hong Kong Chinese students, this category of students liked engaging in learning activities. They responded quickly to teachers’ requests in the classroom, and raised hands when questions were posed by teachers. However, they had relatively short concentration spans, and disliked the *chalk-and-talk* teaching approach, which they usually found boring. Understanding this, teachers tended to make learning more student-centered and activities-based.

In addition to learning behavior, language was the most prominent type of diversity among the students which needed to be fully addressed, especially for the two categories of immigrant students. Because of the wide range of students’ abilities in English and Chinese, as highlighted by the narratives of teachers, the policy of streaming [commonly known as “tracking” in the U.S.] was adopted in which students were streamed into different classes according to their language abilities. The three types of classes included *Chinese classes*, *ethnic minority classes* and *mixed classes*. Basically, students who could be taught in Chinese were streamed into Chinese classes, whereas students who could not speak and read Chinese were streamed into one of the other classes. Chinese classes were mainly for local Hong Kong students and immigrant students from Mainland China, while ethnic minority classes were for the other two categories of ethnic minority students - new ethnic minority student immigrants and ethnic minority students born in Hong Kong. Some Chinese students who had an ability to learn in English were put in mixed classes to learn with ethnic minority students.

The teachers found that this streaming policy was “a relatively good strategy” for the school to adopt. They also described it as “the no-other-alternative way, the only way or the relatively good way” to manage the diverse learning needs of students, especially in those schools where the percentages of Chinese students and ethnic minority students were almost the same. While the positive aspects of the streaming policy were discussed, one of the prominent side effects caused by this policy was segregation between Chinese students and ethnic minority students. In both Chinese and ethnic minority classes, Chinese students and ethnic minority students had no opportunity to interact with each other, except when brought together in other school contexts beyond the classroom. In mixed classes, segregation could also be seen. Even though Chinese students and ethnic minority students were in the same class, the interaction between these groups tended to be limited. They seemed to interact only when requested by their teachers to engage in collaborative learning activities. Most of the time, Chinese students stayed together and ethnic minority students did the same.

### *Collaborating with Ethnic Minority Parents*

To develop an educational plan for promoting school guidance, teachers realized that it was crucial to take parents into account and devise various ways to establish a positive partnership with them. However, when the plan was put into practice, they experienced difficulty in achieving their targets. This was partly because, compared to Chinese parents, ethnic minority parents had different expectations of their parental role and different aspirations for their children’s education and future careers. As the teachers narrated, minority parents, especially of Pakistani and Indian students, made sense of their role only in terms of complying with the law, which required them to send their children under age 15 to school. Most were not keen on helping teachers improve their children’s classroom behavior and only very few worked with teachers to supervise their children’s learning at home. The teachers estimated that almost 70% of ethnic minority students did not submit assigned homework by the date requested.

Although the parents acknowledged that they had to take responsibility for working with teachers, they did not have sufficient knowledge about how to support their children's success in school, especially those parents who did not speak and read any Chinese or English. The underlying message of teachers' narratives was that the parents were overwhelmed with a sense of powerlessness. This feeling was intensified when teachers attempted to engage the ethnic minority parents in collaborating with the school, but were rejected by the parents.

When teachers developed a plan for enhancing home-school collaboration, they realized that cultural and religious perspectives should be taken into account. The gender roles of ethnic minority students' families impacted the ability to collaborate. This was particularly the case for Pakistani and Indian parents. Mothers were expected to stay at home and do housework and cooking whereas fathers should earn money and refrain from all housework. In general, a wife was not supposed to leave home or get in touch with males without the permission of her husband. There was no exception made even when male teachers needed to discuss a student's learning. This was one of the reasons why teachers found it hard to work with ethnic minority parents. As one teacher explained,

If the males (in a student's family) work outside, they definitely do not have any holidays or have to stay at home (rarely leave home by their own). For the females, it may be their natural tendency. They keep 'the self' from the outside world. Ever since they arrived in Hong Kong, they have rarely gone outside. More often, they are subordinated to their husband. They even feel shy when they participate in school activities, even in the company of their husband. It may be related to their religious beliefs.

From the religious perspective, what made ethnic minority students distinctive from Chinese students was that most ethnic minority students were devoted to their religion, this included, Muslim, Sikh and Hindu faiths. Many students had to attend classes after school to learn the holy texts in Mosques or Sikh Temples, and these finished at approximately 7:00 pm. When students went back home, they felt too tired to study and complete their homework for school. For most ethnic minority students, religion played a very important role in their everyday life and it should be taken account when caring or guidance is offered to them. As a teacher narrated,

The Muslim church puts a very strong emphasis on children's religious education. The first priority is to pray and participate in religious activities. It is completely different from what our school emphasizes, that is, academic achievement. If the schedule of their religious activities clashes with the schedule organized by school, especially religious activities not relevant to academic matters, it goes without saying that they will certainly choose praying and chanting.

The narratives of teachers showed that religion was regarded as first priority, especially for Pakistanis and Indians, whereas academic matters came second. In the school setting, the teachers insisted this religious priority be put aside, so that academic matters should always have first priority. Due to the differences in priorities between home and school, any practices or policies from the school which went against the teaching of the home religion was abandoned or ignored at home. For example, in an art lesson, *Fai Chun*, the poster displayed over walls and doors during Chinese New Year, with blessings printed on it, was made but some students were not allowed to display it at home, as it was in school, because it was considered to be against the teaching of Muslims. Parents of ethnic minority students were also unable to understand why it was inappropriate to encourage their children to be absent from school when celebrating religious or cultural festivals which were not included in the school calendar. In summary, the differences in religious values between the school and the ethnic minority students' family, and between teachers and ethnic minority parents, sometimes became a factor which made teachers find it hard to work with ethnic minority parents.

### *Broadening Ethnic Minority Students' Aspirations of Education and Career*

In addition to building a connection with ethnic minority parents, teachers found it challenging to develop an educational plan for broadening ethnic minority students' aspirations for their education and future career. As the teachers narrated, most students did not establish a plan for pursuing their education at post-secondary levels. Nor did they have any plan for their career development in Hong Kong society. Even if they had a vision of becoming a professional, they had no idea how it could be realized, or in

which programs offered by local universities they should enroll. What they envisioned was completing the public examination of The Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE), equivalent to The General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in the United Kingdom; even though very few declared they planned to further their study either aboard or in their home country. Most ethnic minority students were not confident of getting good results on the public examinations and being able to master the local Chinese language, and so the students planned to engage in the same careers as their parents, such as musicians, chefs, and construction workers.

When talking about the diverse needs of ethnic minority students, teachers found that ethnic minority students and their parents were used to comparing opportunities offered in the host society, Hong Kong, with what were the likely opportunities in their home country. They believed that they would have more and better opportunities in Hong Kong. The frame of reference which allowed them to maintain an optimistic view of their future possibilities was, as related by the teachers, the notion that “life in Hong Kong will be a lot better than in the home country; at least they [ethnic minority students] would be able to find a job and earn a living in this city.” Once ethnic minority students completed their secondary education, they were expected to assume culturally prescribed roles. Girls were encouraged to take on women’s domestic roles and marry at a very young age, such as fifteen years old. They were not expected to achieve a high level of education. Boys were expected to start working and earn money to support the family. They were normally introduced and encouraged to get involved in the careers or businesses run by their family, relatives, and friends. Most careers were types of laboring work, such as working on construction sites, loading and unloading goods, and working in restaurants as waiters or waitresses. As one teacher put it,

I have discussed it with many colleagues. We think that they do not have any sense of belonging (to the society of Hong Kong). What they want to do is to earn more money and transfer it to their family (in their own country). They hold the belief that education is not important. Even without education, they can easily access the career of their parents or relatives, such as chefs, construction-site workers, waiters and so on. Most ethnic minority students in this area rely on the social welfare subsidy from the government. In their mind, there is not such a strong sense of ‘future’. If they can live today, it’s fine for them; and they do not think it is necessary to think about tomorrow. Probably it is their religious belief too, so it is easy for them to feel satisfied. . . . They know they have not yet been accepted by the [local] society, so they think they are merely ‘visitors’. Even if their children do well in education, they [the children] still find it hard to get a job.

When teachers talked about the school lives of ethnic minority students, the students were found to make sense of their social reality by using a frame of reference based on their perception of their own country’s social reality, rather than that of the host society, Hong Kong. It allowed them to compare their present situation in their host society with their former situation or with their *back-home* experience. Although such a frame of reference enabled them to develop and maintain an optimistic view of their school lives, and diverted their thoughts to positive aspects of their schooling experience, their teachers aimed to broaden the way they thought about their future. The teachers passed onto ethnic minority students a belief that education was a means of integration into the host society and a way towards occupational and social mobility. In the view of some students, deciding to stay in Hong Kong appeared the most likely way to break the cycle of poverty and create different lives from their parents.

Under the current government education plan for school guidance, in particular at the levels of individual counseling, classroom learning, and whole-school programs, ethnic minority students were encouraged to think about their future in more expanded ways. In doing this, the teachers had to simultaneously work with the values of two cultures, that is, the examination-oriented culture of local Hong Kong society and the traditional culture of the students’ home. On one hand, they intended to help ethnic minority students deal with the local examination-oriented culture and so taught according to the examination syllabus, rather than to the academic ability of the students, all the while encouraging them to think about possible careers and offer information on educational programs at post-secondary level. On the other hand, they stressed gender equality, which was lacking in most ethnic minority students’ homes and intentionally encouraged girls to develop their full potential and create a vision of their own future.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

Teachers' views of ethnic minority students were expressed through the use of stories, showing vividly how they could narrate the diversity students' needs and cross-cultural experiences in school and home, and how they underwent a process of cultural integration into the host society of Hong Kong. This study has shown that teachers intended to develop an educational plan for fulfilling students' diverse needs. The plan was composed of four elements: (a) developing intercultural sensitivity, (b) adjusting teaching strategies under the streaming policy by dealing with the segregation between Chinese students and ethnic minority students, (c) establishing partnerships with parents, and (d) helping students broaden their aspirations for their education and careers. Based upon these findings, this article argues that when educational planning for school guidance is undertaken, two challenges should be dealt with: making caring connections between classroom, school, and home, and enhancing school practitioners' intercultural sensitivity.

With regard to the first challenge, an educational plan should ensure that caring is connected across the various subsystems of classroom, school, and home within the school organization. Teachers were aware that students' home life and values have a great impact on their academic success and their ability to deal with the difficulties encountered with acculturation. The weak connection between these subsystems is partially rooted in the differences in expectations of schooling and aspirations for education and future careers between the minority and the majority, that is, between the Chinese and the non-Chinese, and between the school and the home. It is suggested that these differences are linked to the weak connection of the subsystems, which makes the school organization unable to function effectively as a system caring for the diverse needs of students. This is evident from the fact that within the subsystems of classroom and school, teachers are not connected in appropriate ways to care for students where the peer relationship between Chinese students and ethnic minority students is segregated. Furthermore, teachers feel that they are working against the examination-oriented culture, streaming policy, and some traditional values of students' families when promoting positive peer relationships between Chinese students and ethnic minority students, and broadening students' aspirations for education and future careers. With the weak connection of the subsystems in mind, there is a need to formulate an educational plan for building a school environment wherein the key sub-systems of classroom, school, and home can be connected in dynamic ways, rather than improving each of them separately. This connected approach will promote culturally responsive approaches to school guidance and ensure that every individual student can be treated equitably by receiving equal opportunities for caring and learning.

Furthermore, this study argues that whenever any educational plans for school guidance are devised and implemented, school practitioners' mutual understanding of students' differences, similarities, and uniqueness should be taken into account. Caring should also be built upon an understanding of ethnic minority students, from the point of view of the minorities themselves, rather than an evaluation or interpretation made from the perspective of the dominant group or local people's narrative of their social reality. To achieve this, under the educational plan for school guidance, school practitioners' intercultural sensitivity should be enhanced. As well, the frame of reference they adopt for making sense of the cultural background of others has to be broadened. When interacting with ethnic minority groups, school practitioners should be aware of engaging in a cross-cultural process. In this process, they should learn each other's culture, re-learn their own culture, and re-examine the rationale underlying cultural responsiveness. This is proposed to apply, not only to teachers as shown in this study, but to all other school practitioners such as students, parents, and professional parties who work closely with teachers.

Developing an educational plan for promoting the welfare of ethnic minority students is an educational challenge for school guidance. It is also a crucial aim of schooling that school managers ensure the values of caring and cultural responsiveness are connected across the various subsystems of classroom, school, and home, and the intercultural sensitivity of all school practitioners is enhanced. The points made above may not be the only ways to make caring culturally responsive. By identifying the unique organizational features of schools in terms of the combinations of different ethnic groups of students, and the relationships between the majority and the minority groups of students, it would be easier for the school to develop appropriate educational plans for identifying the diverse needs of all students and identifying effective strategies for putting caring into practice. This is one of the ways to

create a just and fair society and as such school managers and all teachers have a vital role to play if this important goal is to be achieved.

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# FOUR PILLARS OF EFFECTIVE UNIVERSITY-SCHOOL DISTRICT PARTNERSHIPS: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

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## ABSTRACT

*Continued calls for greater accountability in the PK-12 U.S. schools have placed increased demands and accountability upon universities to help schools meet state and federal student achievement requirements. This is evidence of a trend that is here to stay and will have profound effects on postsecondary education (Kolb, 1995). This trend amplifies the need to better understand how to effectively plan for, create and maintain university-school district partnerships. These partnerships also offer significant promise for simultaneous educational renewal in both PK-12 and higher education (Goodlad, 1994). Based upon a number of partnership efforts with public schools dating back to 2004, we suggest four key pillars necessary for successful partnerships: 1) the need to take a developmental view and recognize that change, understanding of new structures, and deep engagement take time to develop and transfer to generalizable teaching and leadership practices; 2) the need to find balance between theory and practice; 3) the need to develop clear shared goals and maintain an effective communication system to keep these goals central; and 4) the need to develop and support the instructionally focused leadership practices required to shepherd in a new normative structure. We suggest that these four pillars are critical to effective planning of university-school district partnerships.*

## INTRODUCTION

Continued calls for greater accountability in the PK-12 schools placed increased demands upon universities to help schools meet state and federal student achievement requirements in the United States. While university-school district partnerships are not new, the intensifying accountability environment has created a stronger need, greater than ever before, to understand better how to plan effectively for and foster effective partnerships. Partnerships between universities and public schools offer significant promise for simultaneous educational renewal in both PK-12 and higher education (Goodlad, 1994).

A number of university-school partnership efforts, including the professional development school (PDS) movement, grew out of the concerns raised in the 1980's about educational quality and accountability, each with varying degrees of success (Essex, 2001). Intensifying demands from both state and federal policy requirements have fueled the interest and need in establishing and refining university-school partnerships. In the Commonwealth of Virginia, a number of current pressures have reemphasized the importance of partnerships between PK-12 and higher education. The Virginia Higher Education Restructuring Act requires institutions of higher education (IHEs) to work actively with public schools to improve student achievement. Similarly, the Virginia P-16 Council has called for K-16 coordination of its education system and approaches to improve transitions among levels of education. The result of these changes has been an unprecedented level of accountability placed onto the state's universities; evidence of a trend that is here to stay and will have profound effects on postsecondary education (Kolb, 1995). The movement to hold higher education more directly responsible for the success of PK-12 amplifies the need to better understand how to effectively plan for, create, and maintain these partnerships.

As educators venture into this ever changing climate, both university and school personnel should be cognizant of the potential benefits as well as the pitfalls of partnerships and work to develop and evolve collaborative efforts that will bear measureable improvements in student achievement. In our work in various university-school partnerships over the past 5 years, we have identified what we believe are four critical areas that should be considered in planning and implementing partnerships. Couturier (2006) emphasized that IHEs in the United States are carefully observing the results of the partnerships. Our hope is to contribute to the knowledge base on effective university-school partnerships and help the field make a successful transition to this new accountability environment.

## BACKGROUND

In 2004, a team from our university signed a memorandum of agreement with a small rural school division to assist them with school improvement, leadership development, and data-based decision making with the overall goals of improving school performance and closing achievement gaps among different student groups. An important aspect of this partnership was to create teams of educators from both the university and school system to work together on activities related to the division's needs. There are few programs where the connection between school and university is authentic (Blumenfeld, Fishman, Krajcik, & Marx, Soloway, 2000), and we hoped to find more genuine and effective ways of collaborating with the public schools.

Early efforts in this partnership ranged from test score data disaggregation training to professional development in mathematics instruction. These first-hand experiences within the schools, working shoulder to shoulder with school personnel, allowed us to gain a depth of understanding about the complexities and challenges school personnel currently face. This work revealed a number of critical issues within the school division in the areas of special education, staffing, and geographic isolation; and professional development needs in differentiated instruction, language development, mathematics, and assessment.

These early efforts with the growing partnership helped to form the basis for numerous external funding proposals. In an era of enhanced accountability and reduced funding for both local districts and IHEs, one of the benefits of the partnership was the ability to leverage these efforts to facilitate a clear rationale to fund both service and research projects. As a result, several state and federal grants have been awarded, in part to address not only the previously identified needs, but also to provide financial support for Instructional Support Team (IST) teachers and partially fund a distance learning lab that would help address the geographic isolation of the division.

Concurrent with the efforts with this rural division, we were also working with other school divisions on parallel programs in the area of formative assessment training and leadership development. These projects allowed us greater opportunity to work directly with students, teachers, school principals, staff developers, and central office subject area specialists to gain even greater experience working in a variety of collaborative environments. Most notable has been an ongoing partnership with a large urban school division that we have partnered with since 2006 training teachers and school leaders in formative assessment practices.

## QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

Over the course of our work with our school district partners we have collected a host of descriptive qualitative data. These have included copious field and debriefing notes; email communications between university and school staff; and various documents related to our efforts including, school improvement and division strategic plans, participant journals, focus group interviews, notes and documents from project and grant writing planning meetings, and individual communications with key stakeholders. These data were maintained in both physical and electronic files. Initially these data were evaluated in an ongoing and iterative manner. Through extensive memoing to capture insights gained throughout the process, an interim analysis was developed. This early stage of analysis helped to narrow our focus to two key areas we identified as central to the mission of university-school district partnerships: teacher quality and instructionally-focused leadership.

This interim analysis was followed by a period of more formal inductive coding and the development of categories that eventually lead to the identification of the four pillars described in this paper. The current model evolved from further iterations of our categories through feedback from various stakeholder groups. The first iteration of the model was presented at the 2006 International Conference on School Reform, in Vancouver British Columbia in a paper titled *Models for Effective and Scalable K12-Higher Education Partnerships in a Culture of Change*, (Blackburn, Myran, Robinson, & English, 2006). Further refinements to the model were presented in two related papers at the 2008 American Educational Research Association Annual Convention. With the feedback from reviewers, conference participants, as well as well as our school district partners, the authors conducted a final round of more comprehensive coding and significantly reorganized our codes into a hierarchical system with four main categories.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Based upon our interactions with administrators, teachers, and students; as well as our observations across numerous classrooms in several different school divisions, we grew concerned about the ability of schools to escape the gravitational pull of their own history and the increasing pressures of testing and accountability. We assert that schools as we know them have reached their functional and philosophic limitations. Currently schools appear to be unable to move beyond the dominant values and beliefs that assume the student is the product of schooling and as such is passive and compliant in their orientation and behavior in school.

The current iteration of the modern day school house has its foundations in the industrial revolution (Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith, Dutton, & Kleiner, 2000). As such, many contemporary schools still reflect factories, “producing” their products in an assembly line fashion (Senge, et al.). Time and time again, we have seen teachers and administrators attempt good faith efforts to facilitate the often difficult transition to more “student centered” teaching practices and provide greater opportunities for engagement and self-directed learning. Yet, because of these historically rooted assumptions about the role of staff and students, the relationships between students, staff, and content are often unaltered and the student-centered practices not realized. An implied contract between the staff and students, rooted in the institutional norms of the school division, limit the degree to which students are able to take an active role in their own learning and intellectual development.

As we grappled with the challenges of working with schools and IHEs, we considered the differing cultures, norms, expectations, and rewards of these two institutions. As scholars interested in using our knowledge and experiences to help schools better meet students’ needs, we encountered many barriers that stemmed from deeply rooted institutional differences. While the differences are substantive and represent real challenges to effective partnerships, we felt focusing on these differences would take our effort in the wrong direction. Instead, we identified teacher quality and instructionally-focused leadership as central to the mission of university-school district partnerships.

Our focus in this project was on examining the central mission of quality instruction to improve student learning. Because there is clear consensus that teacher quality is the most significant school-based determinant of student achievement (Cochran-Smith, 2003), university-school partnership efforts must be well designed to bring about meaningful changes and improvements to teacher quality. Similarly, as the norms and standards for school leadership have shifted from largely management views to a more instructionally focused vision, university-school partnerships must also address how leadership preparation can help to foster and sustain improvements in teacher quality. Without these related foci, we risk what Blau and Scott (1962) have called “goal displacement” and losing sight of the purpose of partnerships by chasing accountability measures. Elmore (2002) notes educators often emphasize restructuring organizations, but they often do not change the practices within those organizations. In this way we narrowed our analysis to factors within the various partnership efforts that promoted teacher quality and instructionally-focused leadership, which are factors impacting the instructional core.

### *The Four Pillars*

As we critically analyzed our data, through the lens of teacher quality and instructionally-focused leadership, we identified four key themes that fall within a hierarchical model we assert are necessary for successful partnerships. We identified these four as being able to help build the internal professional capacity of schools to improve and sustain changes to create new and more productive normative structures. These four “Pillars” provide an instructionally and leadership-focused means to foster effective university-school district partnerships. The first two Pillars, *Take a Developmental View* and *Finding the Balance between Theory and Practice* are hierarchical and have several sub-themes, each which help to capture their relative complexity. The second two Pillars, *Maintaining an Effective Communication System* and *Instructionally Focused Leadership*, are more straight forward, but are critical for supporting the other two.

The Four Pillars of Effective University-School Distract Partnerships are as follows:

1. Take a Developmental View
  - a. An Iterative and Additive view of Growth
  - b. Transformative Growth
2. Finding the Balance between Theory and Practice
  - a. An Alternative Approach to Professional Development
  - b. Integrating Partnership Activities into Division Initiatives
  - c. Authentic Research
3. The Need to Develop and Maintain an Effective Communication System
4. The Need for Instructionally Focused Leadership Practices

### *Take a Developmental View*

A review of existing data from various university-school partnerships revealed an overwhelming number of initiatives our partnering school divisions had underway at any given time. Often the initiatives appeared to be operating independently of one another, and occasionally counter-productive to one another. Focus group interviews and teacher work sessions revealed conversations among staff members revolving around the myriad of division mandates, internal and external professional development, and test preparation focused requirements. It is important to note that most of the teachers we have worked with have not been able to articulate how these different initiatives fit together and what the long term goals were beyond raising test scores.

In our earlier work with the rural division, we asked teachers to list the different initiatives they felt responsible for and thought might be reflected in their evaluations. After compiling the results, we developed a common list of 32 initiatives that were identified by at least 80% of the participants. When we asked the division leadership to make their own list, they identified only nine. Not only was the teachers' list significantly longer than their administrative peers, but they discussed how each year the focus was different. Many teachers expressed frustration with putting effort and time into training, developing materials, and lesson planning only to have the initiative quietly removed from the agenda. They had become accustomed to a revolving door of new foci and as a result had developed a degree of skepticism about the usefulness and longevity of these ever changing initiatives. This revolving door of initiatives and the commonly shared skepticism about them helped to create a form of institutional immunity to the short-lived initiatives. Just as an incomplete dose of antibiotics can result in a strain of bacteria more resistant to treatment, the incomplete or short lived school improvement efforts created an environment where teachers and the larger school culture itself were resistant to future improvement efforts.

What seemed to be lacking was a strategic and developmental view of division initiatives. We know both intuitively and from related literature that real school improvement takes time (Copland, 2003; Streshly & Bernd, 1992). Most of the partnership initiatives involved significant shifts in the culture of leadership, teaching, and learning, and as such involved more than simply acquiring a new set of discrete skills. Instead, success would depend on acquiring a new set of skills and background knowledge, in addition to also establishing new institutional norms and beliefs to support the long term intended use of these updated skills. A developmental view of school improvement recognizes that new understanding takes time and deep engagement to develop into well understood and generalizable teaching practices. This kind of change requires a developmental view that understands an organization's improvement efforts will need to go through a number of developmental phases and each phase will require different types of support and encouragement.

### *An Iterative and Additive View of Growth*

An important aspect of a developmental view is that it needs to be iterative. That is, improvement efforts require a consistent, ongoing focus strategically linked to teachers' daily work, professional development, and formative assessment efforts that capitalize on ongoing teacher discourse and inquiry. An iterative approach fosters teachers' active involvement in improvement efforts to continually refine

and give shape to subsequent iterations and allows teachers to be active agents in their own intellectual and personal development and be central to building new educative normative structures within their schools.

Similarly we have recognized that an *additive approach* to school improvement efforts can capitalize on various investments that personnel have already made. In many cases, sound programs were dropped and teachers felt disenfranchised as their efforts appeared to be wasted. Examining what existing knowledge, skill, and material resources already exist as a result of previous efforts can help teachers recognize a common focus and direction. As we have worked with teachers on formative assessment strategies, for example, we have discovered that many teachers already effectively utilize aspects of these practices. Through these experiences we recognized that much of the processes, strategies, and innovations that are the focus of professional development and school reform are already embedded in teachers' daily practice.

Teachers may not have used the same language or utilized variations of the concepts, but with guided discussion, we were able to easily identify common knowledge and skills. In this way, university-based reformers need to create opportunities for teachers to share, expand, and refine these strengths to further develop/strengthen local capacity. We have referred to this as "mining reform". That is, facilitating building better internal capacity by identifying teacher and leader strengths and assisting in building school and/or division goals on this foundation. Mining reform is similar to asset-based community development, common in successful community-building initiatives (McKnight, 1993). We explored how we might work towards creating better partnership mechanisms for matching expectations among partners and drawing out the internal and human resources to best facilitate the reform or improvement effort. In our view, university faculty and school administrators cannot impose or manage change – teachers need to have active responsibility for reform and change efforts.

### *Transformative Growth*

Another important observation along these lines is that a developmental view of school improvement efforts can be transformative. In our various efforts working with teams of teachers we have seen numerous examples of how teachers cycled through resistance to adoption to commitment. As we have facilitated opportunities for teachers to try out, evaluate, and share their experiences utilizing innovative instructional practices, they developed clearer understandings of the strategies themselves, as well as the underlying principles. Not only has the self-assessment and teacher dialogue influenced this transition, but more importantly, as they have collected evidence of the impacts on student learning and seen changes for themselves in students' learning behaviors, teachers' commitments to continuing to push deeper into these instructional strategies intensified. In focus group interviews, we heard numerous examples of how the students themselves began pushing their teachers to use certain strategies. What we found was when teachers had opportunities to iteratively develop new skills and strategies, using current strengths as a starting point; they increasingly integrated these practices into the fabric of their classrooms. As students recognized these changes and saw for themselves the benefits to their learning, they advocated for their continued use and further influenced the teachers' professional development. In this way the developmental view recognizes school improvement through a systems lens, understanding the complex dynamics of the school organization including students' contributions.

These observations about the need for a developmental view are consistent with the literature on teacher professional development and school reform. The Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE), has pointed out a need for substantial and long-term resource commitments as well as working beyond the usual channels and broadening the roles stakeholders might play in professional development and curricular reform (Corcoran 1995). Hargreaves and Fullan (1998) suggested teachers need opportunities to collaborate with one another with trust, candor, openness, risk-taking, and commitment to continuous improvement in order to bring about a culture of educational change. In this way developing stronger collaborative working relationships between teachers and administrators, among teachers themselves, and with university faculty and other educators is critical in reculturing schools to become places that stimulate and support teachers to make important changes.

### *Finding the Balance between Theory and Practice*

Perhaps one of the more important insights gained from our early partnerships was the strength of teachers' desire for training in immediately useable instructional strategies. Teachers often argued that the university's approach was too academic with limited directly useful information. This is consistent with Hargreaves (1999) comment that in the current climate of high-stakes testing and accountability, there is an urgent need for better professional knowledge about effective teaching and learning. In one training session in the first year of our partnership with our rural division, one teacher interrupted the professor and said, "Just give me three strategies that work!" This "toolkit" mindset, where participants were primarily focused on acquiring specific and immediately actionable strategies was very prevalent. Teachers, assistant principals, and principals articulated that spending a lot of time on theoretical concepts was not a good use of their valuable time. They certainly acknowledged the value of theory; however, the need to survive the daily expectations involved in teaching and the pressures to increase student performance far outweighed what they often viewed as an intellectual exercise of developing in-depth understandings' of theoretical constructs. "Just give us strategies that work," was the frame of mind that many of our public school partners had.

From the university perspective we struggled with how providing this more directive, user-friendly training, actually risked undermining the very teaching practices we were encouraging. In our view, in order to assure the high impact use of these training areas, teachers needed professional development that facilitated discretionary authority and clinical professional judgment. We were concerned that an overly pragmatic approach could promote a type of mechanized teaching where the focus was on procedural certitude over ability to apply practices in flexible, non-rote ways. The development of clinical professional judgment, flexibly applied, we feel is a critical building block of sound pedagogy.

In the early phases of our partnerships, we spent significant time observing classrooms and talking to teachers and logging examples of surface or mechanical uses of progressive teaching strategies. For example, we saw many instances of teachers asking students to cut out notes from handouts and paste them in their interactive notebooks. We reviewed dozens of these notebooks and found little to no evidence of any "interactive" behaviors; in nearly all of the classrooms using the notebooks, each students' notebook looked exactly like the next. It appeared the teachers had received very pragmatic training on using interactive notebooks and the school's administration had added them to their teacher supervision and evaluation plans, but no one really seemed to understand the underlying purpose. As a result, teachers and administrators alike approached the use and supervision of the notebooks in rote, mechanical ways. This behavior suggested an overall lack of clinical judgment and discretionary authority with respect to instruction and supervision.

While our interpretations of these observations are unfavorable, we also came to understand that this rote tendency is tied into a lack of strategically aligned professional development efforts that take a long view of school improvement. As with taking a developmental view of school improvement, we came to understand that acquiring new or updated skills was dependent, in large measure, on establishing new institutional norms and beliefs that supported the use of updated skills. In this way, finding the balance between theory and practice involved leadership that supported a developmental view of school improvement; one that recognized effective teaching is not routine, students are not passive, and teaching is not simple, predictable or standardized (Darling Hammond, 1997). To acquire professional clinical judgment about how, when, and why to utilize various instructional practices required teachers develop sound understandings of both theory and practice.

Given our observations about the tendency to use newer instructional strategies in rote or mechanical ways, we worked with our partners to address these concerns. First, we evolved our approaches to inservice training to offer an alternative to the often ineffective or minimally effective approach to supporting professional development in public schools (Borko, 2004). Namely, we designed professional development that was job embedded, built on, or supported by building expertise and resources, long-term, and strategically linked to other on-going improvement efforts. Second, we carefully coordinated these efforts with the broader scope of the school(s) and division initiatives and helped school personnel understand what the overarching goals of reform were.

## *An Alternative Approach to Professional Development*

We have found there is a large gap between what can be referred to as “Utopian” theories of how schools should operate and the day-to-day realities of school practice. Educators are often locked in the daily rigors of teaching and have a difficult time transitioning to new structures and practices, while academics look at the ideal, often without addressing in pragmatic terms how one bridges vision and reality. The space in between these two divergent states is often left unexplored by professional development processes, leaving no structure or support for an educator which undermines the purpose of the professional development. There is a need to break down theories into useable knowledge, without losing the deeper meaning and fidelity to the practice.

Throughout our various partnership activities, we have not found teachers receptive to topically or academically abstracted or thematic approaches to professional development. Instead they have been more receptive to incorporating aspects of the professional development topic as part of their ongoing, day-to-day subject matter teaching responsibilities. Based on teacher feedback, observations, and our ongoing dialogue, we determined that professional development activities should (1) have immediately actionable strategies that exemplify some key aspect of the training, that is, “pragmatic anchors”; (2) provide iterative opportunities for teachers to test and refine strategies in the classroom, based on their lived experiences with the pragmatic anchors; (3) provide timely feedback to teachers about their experiences using the new strategy; and (4) provide opportunities for teachers to share their own expertise and experience with each other to enhance knowledge sharing and professional networking. In part, we worked to create opportunities for teachers and administrators to “see” how theory translates into their classroom experiences. We believed that in the absence of these pragmatic anchors and ongoing interactions to address professional learning questions, professional development efforts had little hope of being effectively utilized or sustained.

Conventional professional development can often approach teaching as a set of discrete tools that can be collected in a “toolkit”. While this conception of professional development has appeal, it lacks the underlying conceptual understanding of what makes such tools effective. Thus, the approach does not promote the development of professional clinical judgment that will allow teachers better to select the appropriate tools, given particular contexts. Most professional development (PD) programs do not create any lasting scaffolding for teachers to explore, try out, and refine. Langer (2000) points out the need for teacher training to “fit” in the context of the classroom in order for teachers to reasonably try-on new teaching strategies and orientations. The inability of most PD programs to allow this exploration means the various instructional and assessment strategies teachers were exposed to do not bridge the gap between generalized theory and daily pragmatic classroom practices. Without the time and other critical resources, the transition from ideas to application in the classroom simply does not happen. Therefore, organizing teacher professional development around a “toolkit” model invites failure.

In our approach, pragmatic anchors serve as conceptual building blocks to developing deep substantive understandings from one’s own contextualized, firsthand experiences. Our approach moves much closer to addressing the theory-to-practice divide by reshaping the fundamental question to articulating theory *from* practice, capitalizing on educators’ lived experience working with students and using this contextual knowledge to build usable knowledge (Glaser, 1998), or what some have called, “action knowledge” (Goldkuhl, 1999). In addition, this approach capitalizes on what Lave and Wenger (1991) call “*situated learning*,” that is engagement in a collaborative and contextual community of practice.

We have to work towards developing better classroom materials that teachers can readily utilize and that will sustain teachers through the difficult process of adopting new practices into their daily work. These materials need to be carefully thought out, bridging the difficult area between being unstructured and overly prescriptive. Yet, carefully designed materials alone will not help teachers make these important transitions. The partnership efforts must also provide a structure for teachers’ active collaboration with colleagues, opportunities to share their experiences utilizing new practices, and a means of directly linking these experiences with student academic achievement.

### *Integrating Partnership Activities into Division Initiatives*

There is a significant need to integrate carefully all partnership activities into ongoing division initiatives. We found our school partners had numerous, and sometimes competing and/or overlapping initiatives. The lack of integration was a significant source of frustration for many teachers as they grappled with managing time and resource limitations and determining where to spend their professional energies. Those initiatives that are not clearly aligned with and supportive of their primary teaching responsibilities were put on the back burner. Over the course of our various partnership efforts, we have encountered many teachers who shared examples of professional development efforts, university partnerships, and school and division mandates that lacked clearly focused goals and expectations. Several teachers showed us binders full of training materials that they received during professional development or staff meetings they had never had time or purpose to review, let alone utilize. These teachers expressed concerns about the burden of constantly having to assess which training, initiative, or mandate required their attention and which would be forgotten and not fully implemented.

As we listened to teachers describe their experiences navigating this unclear territory, we were often struck by how potentially interrelated and mutually supportive many of the initiatives and mandates were. A number of the teachers we worked with recognized this as well, but felt these links were rarely articulated or supported administratively and never became part of the normative structure of their school. Without a way to focus and prioritize one's teaching efforts, many teachers seemed to default to a compliance mindset where they did what they were told to do even if they did not see an educative value.

As Hatch (2001) pointed out, managing and coordinating numerous initiatives are not part of teachers' formal job descriptions and incentives are often not clear for the effective management and coordination of school improvement efforts. In addition both pre-service and in-service training may not adequately foster teachers' ability to assess multiple initiatives and make sound clinical judgments about them. In our experience because of a lack of administrative structure, strategic visioning and incentives for coordinating multiple initiatives, many teachers looked to their superiors or to the university to provide direction. This created a decision making vacuum and left the various stakeholders feeling powerless to act in coordinated and proactive ways. This feeling of powerlessness helped to create an environment where the myriad of initiatives felt like a set of requirements that have to be complied with as opposed to a coherent set of efforts that we were collaboratively working on that would lead to school improvement.

Given the lack of integration and associated professional authority to help bring focus and clarity to these various initiatives, we speculate that the collective efficacy (Goddard, Hoy, Wolfolk-Hoy, 2004) for these initiatives may have been negatively affected. Throughout our partnership experiences, we heard teachers and administrators express skepticism about the ability of the many initiatives to have a positive impact on student learning. This apparent lack of collective efficacy for various efforts has the potential of influencing the group's behaviors and course of action, potentially undermining an initiative's real potential (Goddard, 2001; Goddard, Logerfo, & Hoy, 2004; Ross, Hogaboam-Gray, & Gray, 2004).

### *Related Consideration: Authentic Research*

A notable barrier to partnerships that promote a balance between theory and practice is the pressure most higher education faculty feel to publish research articles in "high impact" journals. University faculty promotion and tenure has historically been assessed in large measure by their research productivity. Action research, teacher research, and other more authentic or practitioner-oriented forms of research have typically not been viewed as being rigorous enough to fully meet the standards of tenure and promotion committees. As such, faculty often experience institutional pressure to work in areas of research that practitioners often complain is not well designed to make a practical difference.

As Rakow and Robinson (1997) asserted, "for many years the dichotomy between the ivory tower of the university and the trenches of public school have been both an ideological perception and a reality." As a result, practitioners often argue that too much research addresses esoteric topics with limited directly useful information. In fact, in one study (Kezar, 1998) researchers and practitioners differed in what forms and formats of research they found useful, in their criteria for quality, in their definition of what

makes a study significant, and in their opinion of future directions for research. Clearly researchers and practitioners work in different environments with different cultures and institutional norms, however, because of the pressures to publish forms of research practitioners generally do not find useful, faculty who work in university-school partnerships can find themselves serving two masters. For many higher education faculty members, this presents a conflict that makes working in collaboration with public schools too time consuming and at odds with the norms and expectations of their own institutions.

One potential form of educational research that may help to bridge the conflict between the researchers and practitioner views is design-based research. Design-based research communicates findings to practitioners as well as other researchers (Brophy, 2002); takes place through continuous cycles of design, enactment, analysis, and redesign (Cobb, 2001; Collins, 1992); seeks to understand how educational issues play themselves out in authentic settings; and uses research methodologies that can document and connect outcomes to program implementation. This approach can produce findings that can aid practitioners in creating learning conditions that theory suggests are productive, but that are not commonly practiced or well understood as well as formatively feeding back into program improvement.

In design-based research, the primary goal is not global propositions or theories, but the creation of products, artifacts, and processes that leverage findings by making insights usable, actionable, and adoptable. The question becomes not simply one of abstract effectiveness, but one of deep contextual understanding of the transference of research to real school settings. Design-based research seeks to understand how educational issues play themselves out in authentic settings and uses research methodologies that can document and connect outcomes to program implementation. This approach goes beyond simply testing theoretical constructs, theories, or interventions, but seeks to understanding the complex relationships among theory, designed artifacts, and practice (Zaritsky, Kelly, Flowers, Rogers, O'Neil 2003).

In our view, university faculty working in this area need to understand the value of more authentic research methodologies such as design-based research and help point the way to research that can more directly impact quality leadership and teacher preparation. We call for colleges and universities to carefully assess their own meanings of academic quality and how these views impact faculty work with their school constituents.

### *The Need to Develop and Maintain an Effective Communication System*

Among the most important lessons learned in our partnerships over the past five years has been in the area of communication. At the center of this issue has been an overall feeling among participants that goals and expectations were unclear. While grants and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) may specify goals and expectations at an administrative and structural level, the various lines of communication needed to make this clear and actionable to all of the stakeholders, particularly teachers were often missing or inadequate. Peel, Peel & Baker (2002) stress the importance of partnerships where schools and universities work collaboratively with shared leadership, common vision, support of top leaders, flexibility, respect and trust, and open communication.

University-school partnerships have great promise for helping to improve schools (Essex, 2001), but must be supported and advanced by top leadership at both types of institutions. In order for this to happen, more effective lines of communication are needed. Public schools and universities are very different places. Roles, expectations, standards, schedules, rewards and the like are very different for schools and universities. Communication is no exception and can be a significant issue in university school partnerships (Teitel, 2003).

Our experience is consistent with the literature in the presumption from some PK-12 educators that the university is going to “fix” their school (LePage, Bordreau, Maier, Robinson, & Cox, 2001; Clarcken, 1999; Day, 1998; Lieberman & McLaughlin, 1992; Simpson, Payne, Munro & Hughes, 1999). This top-down mentality creates obstacles for authentically meeting shared goals (Yamagata-Lynch, & Smaldino 2007).

### *The Need for Instructionally Focused Leadership Practices*

Throughout our work, it became increasingly evident that without an instructionally focused and

strategically aligned mission, our efforts were at serious risk of withering on the vine. While individual efforts may have been valuable, they often lacked clearly articulated links to the strategic goals of the school division and how these goals could be met at the central office, principal, assistant principal, and teacher levels. Because of the communication issues outlined earlier, the various stakeholders did not always understand their roles and the goals of participating. We did not have any problems showing teachers the value of using formative assessment strategies, for example, but how specific strategies fit into the school's and division's various agendas was not often fully thought through and/or articulated.

As DeVita (2007) points out, efforts to bring about meaningful change have rarely been effectively organized and result in what she called “a crazy quilt of reform strategies – a try something, anything attitude that has left successful reforms isolated, uncoordinated, uninstitutionalized and unexamined” (para 6). Similarly, Hargreaves and Fink (2006) noted, “Pilot projects show promise but are rarely converted into successful system-wide change” (p. 1). Despite 25 years of reform efforts after the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) most reform efforts have failed (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006) and students, particularly poor children, still do not receive an adequate education (DeVita, 2007). While there are individual exceptions, education as we know it has remained largely unchanged.

In the current educational climate, dominated by frequent testing and decontextualized pacing guides, we tend to focus on teaching the canon itself and miss opportunities to engage students and teachers in using the canon to develop strong self-efficacy known to impact student learning (Pajares, Johnson, 1994; Urdan, Pajares, Lapin, 1997) Working harder within these confines, we argue, will not meet our long term goals. There is a possibility of becoming what is measured (Wergin, 2003), and focusing solely on the standards runs the risk of underestimating the need to teach higher-order cognitive skills and promoting self-efficacy. These are widely recognized as being necessary for advancement to upper level courses and as fundamental life skills in today's complex society (Bandura, 1986; National Science Foundation, 1992; Pintrich, 1989; Pintrich, De Groot 1990; Schunk, 1989) A primary focus on teaching to the test can take the life out of school programs and deflect teaching from its deeper purposes.

A central issue is the dominant training-and-coaching model which focuses on expanding teachers skills is not adequate to the current climate of school improvement and reform; this knowledge dissemination model does not embody most of the basic assumptions about teaching and learning found within school improvement efforts (Little, 1993). In this way, school improvement and reform initiatives project a vision of teaching and learning that the teachers themselves have not experienced (Little, 1993). Structural changes without clear understanding about how these changes support instructional goals (Elmore, 2002) do not impact student performance. What is often missing is instructionally focused leadership that can help move beyond simple structural change and facilitate changes in the instructional core and foster a more dynamic learning environment for students.

Leadership for learning has increasingly become the default way of conceptualizing educational leadership. We can see this in the foci of professional conferences, leadership and instructional supervision textbooks, journal articles, professional development workshops and the mission statements and program descriptions of colleges of education across the country. While few would argue that the real value to this emerging perspective on school leadership, just what is meant by the term *learning* is not well defined and the “folk” understanding of learning within our educational institutions from preschools to doctoral programs tends to be dominated by a “banking” concept of learning (Freire, 1970), that is an approach to teaching that views the student as the passive recipient of knowledge handed down by the teacher who is viewed as the knowledge authority. If we examine the attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, practices and habits of both teachers and learners, we observe that they tend to be dominated by epistemological perspectives that lean towards omniscient knowledge authority, certain and simple knowledge, and innate ability (Schommer, 1993). These are the beliefs that dominate the educational landscape.

We argue that most, if not all, “high yield” (Marzano, 2007) instructional and assessment practices require an active agency orientation on the part of both the teacher and the student in order to meet their educative potential. In order to meet this potential, school leaders need to understand better how to structure and facilitate this orientation in their buildings and school divisions. There is a need to more carefully and purposefully embed these fundamental concepts into pre-service and in-service teacher

and leadership training. In order to avoid the “crazy quilt of reform strategies” (DeVita, 2007) we need a better overarching framework that will help to align strategically our efforts around a sound conceptual center that promotes the effective use of these research-based, high-yield instructional and assessment practices.

## CONCLUSION

The need to better understand how to effectively create and maintain university-school district partnerships is clear. Because teacher quality is the most significant in-school determinant of student achievement (Cochran-Smith, 2003), and the norms and standards for school leadership have shifted, university-school district partnership efforts must be well designed to bring about meaningful changes and improvements to both teacher quality and leadership preparation that fosters and sustains improvements in teacher quality. Educators venturing into this ever-changing climate, both university and school personnel, should be cognizant of the potential benefits and burdens of partnership efforts. Our suggested pillars provide a possible model to help to navigate these challenging waters, and to design, plan for, and assess future efforts.

Our model is based in a teacher quality and an instructionally-focused leadership framework that is designed to facilitate building the internal professional capacity of schools to improve and sustain changes and create new and productive normative structures. The components of this framework are: 1) the need to take a developmental view and recognize that change, understanding of new structures, and deep engagement take time to develop and transfer to generalizable teaching and leadership practices; 2) the need to find balance between theory and practice; 3) the need to develop clear shared goals and maintain an effective communication system to keep these goals central; and 4) the need to develop and support instructionally focused leadership practices required to shepherd in a new normative structure.

Many of the initiatives we worked together on in our various partnerships involved significant shifts in the culture of leadership, teaching, and learning. This involved much more than simply acquiring a new set of discrete skills; rather, success was dependent on establishing new institutional norms and beliefs that would support the long term intended use of these updated skills. A developmental view of school improvement recognizes that new understanding takes time and deep engagement to develop into well understood and generalizable teaching practices.

Throughout our partnership efforts we noted teachers’ desire for training in immediately useable instructional strategies; teachers often argued the university’s approach was too academic. Based on teacher feedback, observations, and our ongoing dialogue, we developed an approach we believe provides potential guidance to overcome this barrier. When teachers had opportunities to utilize actionable strategies that exemplified some key aspect of the training, had iterative opportunities to test and refine strategies, received timely formative feedback and had opportunities to share their own expertise and experience with each other, we found training to be far more effective. In the absence of these pragmatic anchors and ongoing interactions to address professional learning questions, professional development efforts have little hope of being effectively utilized or sustained.

Another important partnership consideration is the need to carefully integrate all partnership activities into ongoing division initiatives. Our school partners had numerous, and sometimes competing and/or overlapping, initiatives. This lack of integration was a significant source of frustration for many teachers. Without a way to focus and prioritize one’s teaching efforts, many seemed to default to a compliance mindset where they did what they were told to do and suspended their professional judgment.

University-school partnerships have great promise, but public schools and universities are very different places and communication problems can undermine this potential. Roles, expectations, standards, schedules, and rewards in these two settings are all very different and as such more effective lines of communication are needed.

Lastly, without an instructionally-focused and strategically-aligned mission, partnership efforts are at serious risk of failing. Individual efforts may have merit, but if there are not clearly articulated links to the strategic goals of the school division and how these goals could be met at the central office, principal, assistant principal, and teacher levels, this potential is not met. In the current educational climate, dominated by frequent testing and decontextualized pacing guides, we tend to focus on teaching

the canon itself, which is teaching to the test. This can take the “life” out of school programs and deflect teaching from its deeper purposes. Instructionally-focused leadership can help move beyond simple structural change and facilitate changes in the instructional core and foster a more dynamic learning environment for students.

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