Role of Stakeholders in Quality Sustaining

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Abstract

Sustainability is the ability of a staff to maintain the core beliefs and values (culture) of a program and use them to guide program adaptations over time while maintaining improved or enhanced outcomes (adapted from Century and Levy, 2002). Schools seeking improved outcomes usually have one or more "champions for change" on the inside of the organization, and these leaders can often engage other staff to produce better results in the short term.

In all aspects of the school and its surrounding education community, the rights of the whole child, and all children, to survival, protection, development and participation are at the centre. This means that the focus is on learning which strengthens the capacities of children to act progressively on their own behalf through the acquisition of relevant knowledge, useful skills & appropriate attitudes; and which creates for children, and helps them create for themselves and others, places of safety, security and healthy interaction. (Bernard, 1999)

We need quality learners, quality learning environment, quality content, quality processes, and quality outcomes and bringing it all together for quality programme development and interventions and amendments in the existing programmes for exactly The Quality Education.

This paper will be important for the educationists and the teachers to read as they plan programmes that focus on enhancing the quality of education programmes. Knowledge of, what has been done in the name of quality education around the world and what the outcomes have been, will be useful information for Programme Planning.

Keywords: Stakeholder, Quality Education, Quality Learner, Quality Content, Quality Outcome, Sustainability.

Introduction

Children have a right to an education, a quality education.

In all aspects of the school and its surrounding education community, the rights of the whole child, and all children, to survival, protection, development and participation are at the centre. This means that the focus is on learning which strengthens the capacities of children to act progressively on their own behalf through the acquisition of relevant knowledge, useful skills and appropriate attitudes; and which creates for children, and helps them create for themselves and others, places of safety, security and healthy interaction.

--- (Bernard, 1999)

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Aim of the Study

In present scenario, we all talk about the quality even education isn't remain untouched of this word….i.e. Quality Education. But how can we have that Quality in our education system? is the raising question around. If just a school or teacher or learner himself is responsible for crumble status of quality education? Then what is the role of the parents, community, & society? Basically they are known as the stakeholders and hold an important place in building nation. **Thus the present study aims 'To study the role of stakeholders in quality sustaining'**

What does quality mean in the context of education? Many definitions of quality in education exist, testifying to the complexity and multifaceted nature of the concept. The terms efficiency, effectiveness, equity and quality have often been used synonymously (Adams, 1993). Considerable consensus exists around the basic dimensions of quality education today, however.

Quality Education Includes

1. Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities;.
2. Environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities;
3. Content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace.
4. Processes through which trained teachers use child-centred teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities.
5. Outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society.

It is important to keep in mind education's systemic nature, however; these dimensions are interdependent, influencing each other in ways that are sometimes unforeseeable.

Definitions of quality must be open to change and evolution based on information, changing contexts, and new understandings of the nature of education's challenges. New research — ranging from multinational research to action research at the classroom level — contributes to this redefinition.

Systems that embrace change through data generation, use and self-assessment are more likely to offer quality education to students (Glasser, 1990). Continuous assessment and improvement can focus on any or all dimensions of system quality: learners, learning environments, content, process and outcomes.

Quality Learners

School systems work with the children who come into them. The quality of children's lives before beginning formal education greatly influences the kind of learners they can be. Many elements go into making a quality learner, including health, early childhood experiences and home support.

Good Health and Nutrition

Physically and psychosocially healthy children learn well. Healthy development in early childhood, especially during the first three years of life, plays an important role in providing the basis for a healthy life and a successful formal school experience (McCain & Mustard, 1999).

Early Childhood Psychosocial Development Experiences

Positive early experiences and interactions are also vital to preparing a quality learner. Evidence from the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Turkey, and has shown that children who participate in early intervention programmes do better in primary school than those who do not benefit from formal early child programmes, and studies from India, Morocco and Latin America demonstrate that disadvantaged children benefit the most from such programmes (UNICEF, 1998). In addition to cognitive effects, the benefits of good early childhood programmes include better psychosocial development. Effective and appropriate stimulation in a child's early years influences the brain development necessary for emotional regulation, arousal, and behavioural management. A child who misses positive stimulation or is subject to chronic stress in the pre-school years may have difficulty with psychosocial development later in life (McCain & Mustard, 1999). A high level of quality in early childhood development programmes can be achieved when health and nutrition components are combined with structured psychosocial development in the pre-school years.

Regular Attendance for Learning

When they reach school age, research demonstrates that to achieve academically, children must attend school consistently. A child's exposure to curriculum — his or her 'opportunity to learn' — significantly influences achievement, and exposure to curriculum comes from being in school (Fuller et al., 1999).

Family Support for Learning

Parents may not always have the tools and background to support their children's cognitive and psychosocial development throughout their school years. Parents' level of education, for example, has a multifaceted impact on children's ability to learn in school. In one study, children whose parents had primary school education or less were more than three times as likely to have low test scores or grade repetition than children whose parents had at least some secondary schooling (Willms, 2000). Parental education not only influences parent-child interactions related to learning, but also affects parents' income and need for help in the home or field — help that often comes at the expense of keeping children in school (Carron & Chau, 1996). Healthy children with positive early learning experiences and supportive, involved parents are thus most likely to succeed in school. Quality teachers need similar support for their tasks in schools. Another essential ingredient for a successful educational system is a quality learning environment.

Quality Learning Environments

Learning can occur anywhere, but the positive learning outcomes generally sought by educational systems happen in quality learning environments. Learning environments are made up of physical, psychosocial and service delivery elements.

Physical Elements

1. Quality of school facilities.
2. Interaction between school infrastructure and other quality dimensions.
3. Class size.

Psychosocial Elements

1. Peaceful, safe environments, especially for girls.
2. Teachers' behaviours that affect safety.
3. Effective school discipline policies.
4. Inclusive environments.
5. Non-violence.
6. Service delivery
7. Provision of health services.

Quality Content

Quality content refers to the intended and taught curriculum of schools. National goals for education, and outcome statements that translate those goals into measurable objectives should provide the starting point for the development and implementation of curriculum (UNICEF, 2000).

1. Student-centered, non-discriminatory, standards-based curriculum structures.
2. Uniqueness of local and national content.
3. Literacy.
4. Numeracy.
5. Life skills.
6. Peace education.
7. Challenges in reaching large numbers of children with quality content.

Quality Processes

Until recently, much discussion of educational quality centred on system inputs, such as infrastructure and pupil-teacher ratios, and on curricular content. In recent years, however, more attention has been paid to educational processes — how teachers and administrators use inputs to frame meaningful learning experiences for students. Their work represents a key factor in ensuring quality school processes.

Teachers

1. Professional learning for teachers.
2. Teacher competence and school efficiency.
3. Ongoing professional development.
4. Continuing support for student-centered learning.
5. Active, standards-based participation methods.
6. Teacher feedback mechanisms.
7. Teacher beliefs that all students can learn.
8. Teachers' working conditions.
9. Supervision and support
10. Administrative support and leadership.
11. Student access to languages used at school.
12. Using technologies to decrease rather than increase disparities.
13. Diversity of processes and facilities.

Quality Outcomes

The environment, content and processes that learners encounter in school lead to diverse results, some intended and others unintended. Quality learner outcomes are intentional, expected effects of the educational system. They include what children know and can do, as well as the attitudes and expectations they have for themselves and their societies.

1. Achievement in literacy and numeracy.
2. Using formative assessment to improve achievement outcomes.
3. Outcomes sought by parents.
4. Outcomes related to community participation, learner confidence and life-long learning.
5. Experiential approaches to achieving desired outcomes.
6. Health outcomes.
7. Life-skills and outcomes.

Bringing it Together

Bringing together the many dimensions that contribute to educational quality — learners, environment, content, process, and outcomes — is a difficult task. It requires knowledge, resources, commitment and willingness to change.

Schools seeking improved outcomes usually have one or more "champions for change" on the inside of the organization, and these leaders can often engage other staff to produce better results in the short term. But these instructional leaders often move to another school, climb the career ladder, or retire. When they do, gains that have been made often quickly fade away. If schools are going to build support for on-going success, they also need advocates for improved program outcomes outside the immediate organization—constituents who understand the mission of the school, who share the champions' vision and passion for student success, and who have a personal stake in the performance of the school and its students. In this brief, we identify schools' external stakeholders and offer ways in which these constituents can be a positive force for helping school staff achieve improved outcomes for all students and sustain them over time.

Who are the stakeholders?

A stakeholder is an individual or group with an interest in the success of an organization in fulfilling its mission—delivering intended results and maintaining the viability of its products, services and outcomes over time. Who are the stakeholders in the endeavor to improve student outcomes in reading and to sustain those increased levels of achievement? To whom does it matter that more students learn to read well and to succeed in school—and that improved outcomes hold up over time? Table 1 identifies key constituencies in the realm of reading outcomes and suggests what members of each group have at stake. Keep in mind that some "stakes," of course, are held by more than one constituent group.

Table 1: Key Educational Constituent Groups and their "Stake" in Students' Reading Success

Constituent Groups	What's at Stake?
Students	Personal success throughout school, future opportunity
Parents	Pride, success, and opportunity for the students they care about
School staff	Professional efficacy and job satisfaction
School & district staff	"Adequate yearly progress," meeting accountability expectations
School board	Fulfilling the district's mission, media coverage, accountability
Taxpayers	Getting a good return on their tax "investment" in schools
Business community	Ability to hire graduates with skills needed, community economics
Other community members	Community pride and "livability," real estate values

Internal and External Stakeholders

Internal stakeholders are those who work within the school system on a daily basis and who largely control what goes on there. They include

school staff, district staff, and, to some extent, school boards.

External stakeholders are those outside the day-to-day work of the schools who have a strong interest in school outcomes but who do not directly determine what goes into producing those outcomes.

Why involve Stakeholders?

The distinction between internal and external education stakeholders is important. With respect to a school improvement effort, such as a school-wide reading model, internal stakeholders clearly have greater capacity to produce positive change in schools, but they don't have all of the power needed to sustain it. Because of factors that can affect organizational performance over time (such as staff attrition, shifting priorities and "mission drift"), improved outcomes achieved one year can easily fade the next. For this reason, external stakeholders also have a critical role to play in sustaining improved outcomes. If they are informed of the school's effort to improve reading outcomes, they can help sustain the district's focus over time on "mission-oriented change"—improvement that lies squarely at the heart of the district's mission or purpose— thereby moderating the effects of staff turnover, maintaining reading as the top priority, and eliminating mission drift.

When the long-term success of a school system is deemed important, we must ask: "To whom do the schools belong?" and "Who has a long-term vested interest in the success of our schools and students?" In answering these questions, we quickly find ourselves at the doorstep of our constituents: the families who send their children to our schools, the taxpayers who support the schools, and the businesses who hire our graduates. In this light, external stakeholders can be highly motivated and can become powerful drivers to help achieve and sustain positive change in our schools.

Guidelines for engaging stakeholders:

1. The staff must take the lead to provide stakeholders the data and other information they need to be productive partners around student achievement.
2. Partnership activities must be directly aligned with student achievement goals.
3. Efforts must be collaborative and genuine. There are meaningful roles for each party to play and these must be clearly articulated.
4. Information sharing must be transparent. Achievement data must be clear, accurate, and meaningful.
5. All parties must operate from common values and a common vision for student achievement.
6. All efforts must be mission-oriented and data-driven.

To what extent can parent and community involvement impact student success in school? How might traditional involvement of external stakeholders be extended such that these constituents become a force for successfully implementing and sustaining effective school-wide reading practices?

Figure 1: Certain Factors of Economic Competitiveness and Education Reform
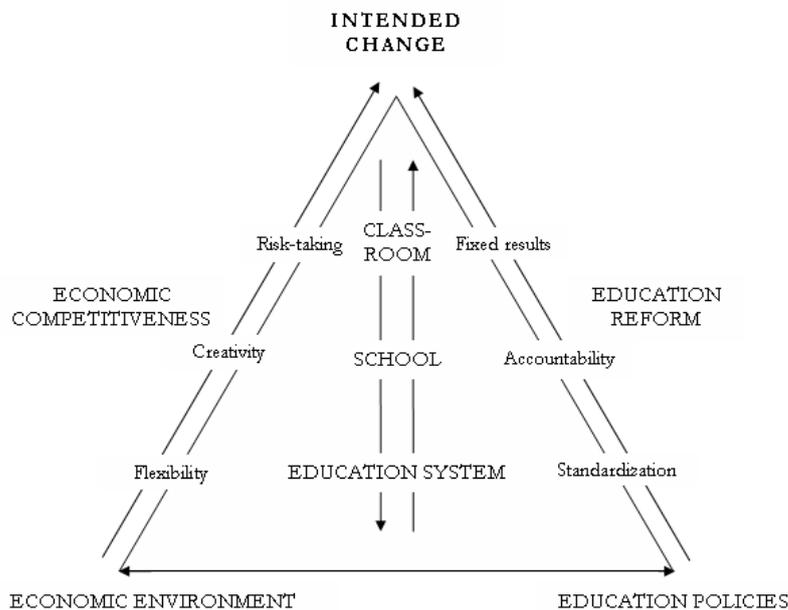
Historically, parent involvement in education has taken one of three forms:

1. Parent Taining

How to be a good parent; how to promote the importance of education to your child; how to talk to your child about important issues.

2. Parent Support

In terms of the school's homework practices and the child's homework efforts (including student independent reading outside of school).

3. Parent volunteering

Ranging from volunteering in the classroom to helping out with social activities at school (*e.g.,* class parties, school carnivals, field trips,) or with fundraising activities.

While all of these activities can enhance the academic or social dimensions of a child's school experience and extend what the school can provide, most parent involvement activities remain at a distance from the heart of the elementary school's mission—to impart basic skills and foundational knowledge in preparation for the more advanced learning required in middle school, high school and beyond. It is incumbent upon educators to engage parents and community members in ways that are aligned with critical outcomes and go deeper to impact school outcomes at scale.

From the beginning, school leaders must take the initiative in forming strong partnerships. This begins with identifying what we want constituents to know about our work and our results to date and articulating what they can do to achieve and sustain improved results. Schools exist to serve the educational needs of the community. A community's schools are at their best when they are sharply focused on specific, mission-oriented outcomes, such as empowering all students to become successful readers, and when they are consistently successful in delivering on the mission. The community itself is at its best when its stakeholders know how the schools are performing and when they advocate for and collaboratively support improved outcomes.

Educators know a great deal about "what works," but they can't bring about or sustain improvement on their own. Parents and community members must have a strong vested interest in the success of the schools and must co-own the outcomes produced. What is needed now is for schools to identify and actively engage all stakeholders in fulfilling the mission and enacting the vision of all students succeeding in school, starting with success in reading.

At the end we can say
What do we want Stakeholders
Parents can…
1. Read to their young children at home;
2. Learn the key information to know about supporting the school's effort to improve student reading outcomes;
3. Follow the progress of their own children and of the school as a whole, talking with teachers and school leaders about how the parent can help when results fall short of goals; and
4. Advocate at the school, district, and state levels for systems supports which will help produce and sustain improved results.

Community citizens and business leaders can…
1. Learn the key information to know about supporting the school's efforts to improve student reading outcomes;
2. Collaborate with school leaders to identify the variables they can influence which can make a difference in student outcomes;

3. Advocate at the community and state levels for systems supports-policies, priorities, training, and resources which will support improved outcomes; and;
4. Support and promote the improvement agenda of the schools and district.

Conclusion

We can conclude that stakeholders play a very important role in attaining quality in education. Quality is not just that we can expect from students or teachers or school but parents, society, community, friends all are so much important. Parents must help their wards to read at home, to learn the key information to know about supporting the school's effort to improve student reading outcomes, to follow the progress of their own children and of the school as a whole, talking with teachers and school leaders about how the parent can help when results fall short of goals, and advocate at the school, district, and state levels for systems supports which will help produce and sustain improved results. Learn the key information to know about supporting the school's efforts to improve student reading outcomes. Community can help by collaborating with school leaders to identify the variables they can influence which can make a difference in student outcomes, advocate at the community and state levels for systems supports-policies, priorities, training, and resources which will support improved outcomes; and support and promote the improvement agenda of the schools and district.

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