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Zhumabayeva E.
Atyrau state university named Kh.Dosmukhamedov
Atyrau, Kazakhstan

elmira_zhumabayeva@hotmail.com

LEADING AND MANAGING CHANGE: POSSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES IN THE CONTEXT OF TEAMWORK

Abstract

This article explores leading and managing educational change in the terms of teamwork. It draws upon the existing western literature to consider whether educational changes influence development and change in schools. The article examines the research base relating to leadership, educational change, distributed leadership and organizational outcomes. It focuses on how different patterns or configurations of educational changes contribute to organizational development, namely teamwork. The article concludes by highlighting issues that require further study and more empirical confirmation.

Key words: leading and managing change, education, change models, teamwork.

Introduction

The article aims to provide an analysis in order to understand the issue of leading and managing educational change in English primary schools in the terms of teamwork. It is suggested that English primary schools have undergone significant and complex reforms over the last two decades, as (Burton & Brundrett, 2005, as cited in [2].

Educational change is not only a modernisation of schools and institutes with a view to adapting them to changing human values and environmental conditions.

(Wilkins, 2004) [29], but also it is a process of transition to new circumstances, rules, and requirements. This suggests that people can adapt to any changes and conditions. However, a key question arises: how people take these transitions. As the following author put it:

> "When habitus encounters a social world of which it is a
> product, it is like a fish in water: it does not feel the weight
> of the water and it takes the world about itself for granted"
> Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 127, as cited in [22].

It seems that this a scenario is echoed by the real true nature of individuals' behaviour and their abilities to adapt to change, which it is not entirely different from the nature of a range of other shifts occurring worldwide,

where it is likely that there will always be those who take educational changes for granted, and also those who resist them. This means that regardless of whether people strive for the changes or resist them, the reaction to change will always be ambiguous. It is ambiguous because it involves, for example, people's adjustment to "technology and teaching approaches to change", and the adjustment of the totality of the learning experience, which can be summarised as a 'culture' [13]. Hence, by analysing critically, in the process of change towards acquiring new knowledge and practices by the teachers, they change not only their established habits, but on the whole the culture of their approach to a teaching process. However, it should be noted that, such a renewing is often accompanied by many implications. This takes place partly because not all "teachers respond in the same way" [16, p.967]. Thus, it is not surprising that many educational changes have not succeeded [25]. Fullan and Pomfret (1977), stated that massive educational change has failed because the government was concentrated on the product development and implementation (Wedell, 2009) [25], rather than on developing school culture or districts, where change is actually implemented (Fullan, 2007) [11].On the other hand, ambiguity behind the motives for an implementation of change and blindness to the existing culture in education [25] are also possible reasons for the failure of reforms. Thus, it seems that a fiasco of reforms has happened as a result of people who were ignored by policy makers as being crucial to the process of change.

Yet, western literature suggests that leading and managing change can be achieved through effective leadership (Bush, 2007) [6], as based on democratic [24] and collegial approaches, with the emphases on the entire team learning (Cardno, 2002) [9]. So, it is possible to hypothesise that these strikingly influential factors are essential, because they lead to better outcomes in schools.

In this study, one question will be examined:

- To what extent can teamwork contribute to the effective implementation of change in education?

The following sections will describe what it means to lead and manage change in education, leading and managing change: teamwork and, suggestions for policy makers with regards to the future education perspectives.

What does it mean to lead and manage change in education?

Although leading and managing are different in their nature [6], both are crucial in order to generate educational change (Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000, as cited in Chapman, 2008) [8]. Yet, the difficulty in understanding the context is that "in practice, principles in their day-to-day work are rarely aware of whether they are leading or managing" (Leithwood et al., 1999, p. 393, as cited in Bush, 2007) [6]. For this reason, taking definitions as starting point, it is important to examine the concept of leading and managing change.

Leading change in the context of education is defined as an activity to be carried out collectively. In short, the key aspect, as Frost (2008) states, is the ability to build close relationships and connections among different individuals (as

cited in Wilkins, 2004) [29]. This evidence is also supported by research conducted by Díaz-Gibson (2014) [10], who points out that collaboration promotes not only educational improvement, but also enhances public value at all levels of the community. Yet, according to West-Burnham (1997) [28], the context of leading change is based on four components: vision (literate strategies and problem solving); creativity (the ability to accept criticism); sensitivity (good relationship and managing internal conflicts); and subsidiarity (the empowerment of every person). Miles (1997), however, indicated that leading change is possible through transformational leadership, given its radical nature (as cited in French et al., 2011) [11]. He stresses that this involves establishing the commitments of teaching staff and change agents through provision of resources, training, and symbolic and substantive actions (as cited in French et al., 2011) [11]. On the whole, his view of leading change in the context 'of transformational leadership', is accompanied by diagnosing both internal strengths and weaknesses for the awareness of real teachers' capacity to work culturally. This means that in school leading, change should focus on the structure and system of personal relationships and the ability to work with their emotions, because this is not only an issue of motivation, feelings, trust, learning, sense making and knowledge acquisition Karp & Helgø, 2008 [17], but also a problem of people's resistance to change. But, most importantly, there is an assumption that schools on the basis of these noted aspects, could develop the capacity to cope with change, as West-Burnham (1997) [28] stated, since they have the chance to become a learning and intelligent organisation, in turn enabling them to deal with change on the basis of regular improvement.

Change management is "the process by which an organization gets to its future state, its vision" [19, p.118], but the concept of managing change implies an attempt or series of attempts to modify educational performance, outcomes, or work tasks Ahn et al. (2004) [1], while Mintzberg (1973) [20] stated that the practice of management change is seen within the context of three key role positions: interpersonal relationships, informational, and decisional, in negotiating conflict situations, although Bush (2007) [6] states that managing change is seen within the framework of a maintenance activity. Thus, acknowledging these ideas, it is clear that the management of change is about putting planned tasks into practice by integrating change efforts at the top and bottom of an organisation (Morrison, 1998, as cited in James & Connolly 2000) [16]. However, Ahn et al. (2004) [1] argue that change management is a process accompanied by a series of dangers, because every managed change is faced with internal resistance, which may take place as a result of, for example, mandated change [7]. Mandated change, or so-called 'repetitive change syndrome' (Hargreaves, 2004) [15] of 'innovative overload' [12] (as cited in Clement, 2014) [7] often emerges at a rapid pace; as a result, teachers do not understand the nature of such changes. It implies that leaders should help teachers to cope with overloaded workloads by explaining to them the reasons for their occurrence.

Indeed, leading and managing educational change is a complex process, as all roles of management can be seen as being 'figurehead', because the manager plays a symbolic role in an organisation, and is obliged to put various duties into practice Mintzberg, 1973 [20]. Yet, the process can be facilitated through leadership qualities, as leadership and management may overlap (Bush, 2008) [5]. This means that the qualities of both activities are essential in leading and managing change. Hence, leaders need to be taught the skills of both practices, by virtue of the uncertainty of the nature of changes. Such an approach may help them cope more easily with many of the complexities in schools, including resistance to change.

Leading and managing change: Teamwork

Research shows that teamwork can contribute to the effective implementation of change in education; however, this requires skills, creativity, and courage (Cardno, 2002) [9]. Bush et al. (2010) [4] argue that a school, as an organization, is very complex, because different types of groups of individuals are intertwined with each other, sharing each other's values. Thus, it is not surprising that there are challenges and barriers to leading people. Nevertheless, to prevent complexities, teamwork should be aimed at clear, common goals, perspectives, and approaches (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993) [18], where depending on the teamwork subject and school context, appropriate strategies will be adapted, as will methods in leading and managing teams. Most importantly, of course, it is necessary to provide all members with a sense of their position and place in an organization when change is happened.

It should be noted that there is a common awareness of the context of teamwork, as it is associated with such notions as a command work, success, and the skills required working in a team. According to Guchait, Lei, and Tews [15, p.300], "team work is an inevitable part of organisational life", where people always work together in the hospitality industry, for instance. Hence a central argument of teamwork is that its structure is represented not by the individual, but by the whole of the working group, where a group is core to a life organisation Zaharia, Dogaru, & Boaja, 2014) [30]. However, some research argues that there is no clear link between working group and a team. A possible explanation for this might be that teamwork is a complex mix of collaborations, since its nature is one of 'discipline' requiring both individual and mutual accountability Katzenbach & Smith, 1993 [19]. This is an interesting belief, as it sheds light on the understanding of the issue in terms of to what extent these two seemingly similar notions are different. Of course, at first glance, there seems to be a consensus that to differentiate a working group from team-work is difficult, yet in the light of the above, there is a reason to make the assumption that teamwork is the more complex structure of the two, because teamwork requires constant effort to maintain operation. Here, it is worth returning to Katzenbach's and Smith's (1993) [19] study, who pointed out that teamwork, is all about a set of values. This is about the ability to listen to each other, the

readiness to support and recognise the interests of others. And, most importantly, they note that teamwork corresponds to performance results, because it is a complex of 'individuals' results' and 'collective work-products'. Cardno (2002) [9], however, argues that such a process can be achieved through team learning process by concentrating on the Senior Leadership Team (SMT). One of the implications of teamwork, however, is that by undertaking collective work towards a mutual set of goals, very often work is accompanied by conflict situations (Cardno, 2002) [9]; and this situation may equally take place in education, at least partly because different teachers may have different visions in relation to change. Nevertheless, teamwork is an ability to establish relationships with colleagues so that the joint effort efficiently carries appropriate tasks. For this reason, effective management strategies and literacy models and mechanisms to develop teams are needed to prevent a range of challenges arising within the school environment. In so doing, for effective implementation of educational change, teamwork requires a democratic leadership (Woods & Gronn, 2009) [24] that should be shared equally among staff (Wallace, 2001) [26]. These ideas seem to represent excellent opportunities for teamwork, because they bring everyone an opportunity to realise themselves. According to Wallace and Hall (1994) [27], shared leadership is crucial, as it gives the opportunity for all the people involved to gain valuable experience. Such an approach in teamwork promotes the possibility of making a contribution to help implement change and leadership tasks (Bell & Phoders, 1996, as cited in Wallace, 2001) [26]. Consequently, it can thus be argued that such a leadership could also enhance further professional development and career aspirations. Indeed, teamwork in a school is crucial, but its development requires enormous efforts and time before the team reaches an appropriate development. Here, it would be appropriate to refer to Tuckman's (1965) Team Development Model (see Figure 4) which identified five stages for team development, as follows: formation (forming), stage storm (storming), stage settlement (norming), stage productive activities (performing), and completion (adjourning). Hare (1976, as cited in Gersick, 1988) [14] maintained that Tuckman's five stages are necessary and inevitable for the growth of groups, since they may help in solving problems, finding solutions, work planning and achievement. However, by analysing the model, it is not clear whether this model is applicable to all types of teams, as the parameters for each stage of the model do not seem to be fixed. This means that it is difficult to define how and when a team can move from one stage to another. On the other hand, if Tuckman's stages are adapted for small groups (Tuckman & Jensen, 2010) [20], then this limitation will not allow this model to be considered for application to a huge group. In addition, the role of the individual group members is also seems questionable. Thus, a school team cannot totally rely on the context of Tuckman's model. Considering all of this evidence, without question, leading and managing change is a process through teamwork, by concentrating in the hands of an entire school teaching staff; however, the effectiveness of such a team will depend on how the team see and

understand the common goals of the school. In addition, the analysis shows that teamwork can contribute to the effective implementation of change in education, but it can be achieved through the creation of the common language and learning in the general process of teamwork. On the other hand, there is no better recipe to the organisation of literate teamwork in education as the active search for this based on the analysis of the reality of the school landscape. For this, school leaders have to constantly communicate with the members of the team to achieve greater confidence in their teamwork. As Bell (2013) [3] claims, in order to acquire much benefit from a management team, it is necessary to understand the people involved and their interaction within the organizational environment. This means that, in education, every teacher's voice should be heard by the leader and their opinion taken into account. In so doing, within the constructive dialogue of teamwork, not only can someone's mistakes be eliminated, but so can the leader's. Most importantly, collaboration results in an abandonment of withholding information that can erode any team. Adopting these qualities will allow for the creation an atmosphere of trust and willingness when relying on each other. Such a formula could allow the team not only to achieve its desired objectives, but also to implement educational change in a stress free manner.

Conclusion

An analysis of leading and managing educational change in the context of teamwork has been undertaken, and although not all aspects of educational change have been covered, this comparative analysis has nevertheless revealed that leading and managing change is a complex process. It seems that the effective implementation of educational change depends on both effective leadership and teamwork. In addition, the analysis was conducted on the basis of the published literature, much of which is quite old. This is a major limitation of this study, but despite this many important conclusions have been considered and put forward in relation to the future.

In the light of these findings, most important is that people are an essential part in the process of any change; however, change is not without any implications. For this reason, individuals need to be prepared not just practically, but also psychologically, in order to more easily accept change. In this matter, the role of managers and leaders are pivotal, but they should also be trained and equipped with better strategic programmes, ideas, and methods to deal with the people's emotions and their resistance to change. Setting such any aspects and issues out of change systematically makes the range of possibilities more clear. Thus, education policy makers must provide a systematic, broad kind of support to both leaders and teachers, since not only leaders needed greater expertise in order to adapt themselves fundamentally to new challenges, but also the people involved in this process. In this regard it should be hoped that, on the basis of the research done by gurus of educational change, the change initiators, focusing

their greater attention on the implementation and development of change will learn from past mistakes, in order to prevent them in the future.
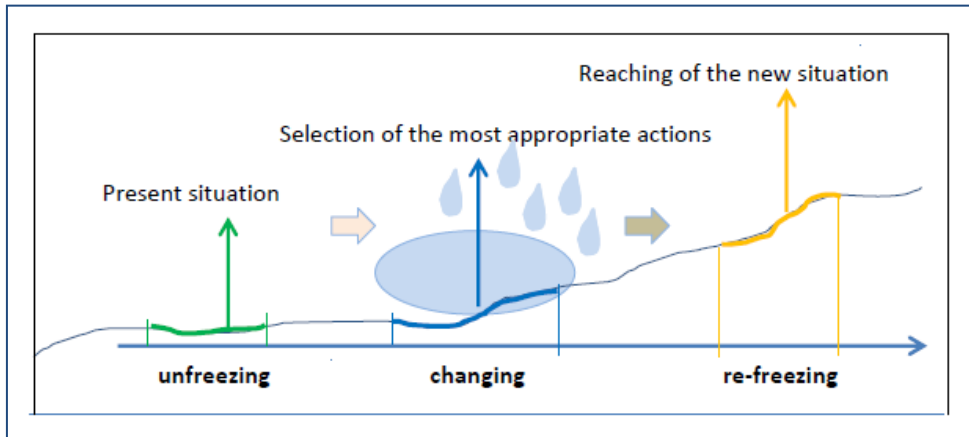
Appendices
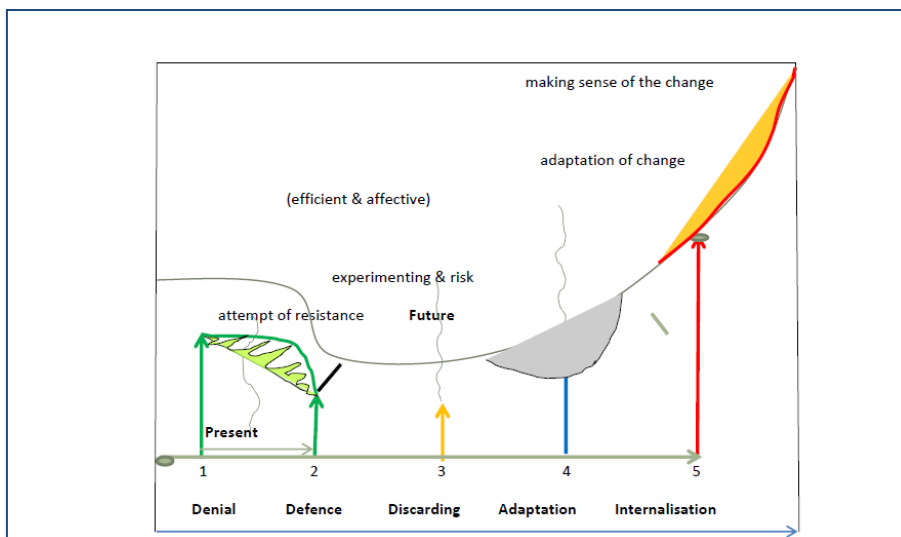

Figure 1. Lewin's three-stage model

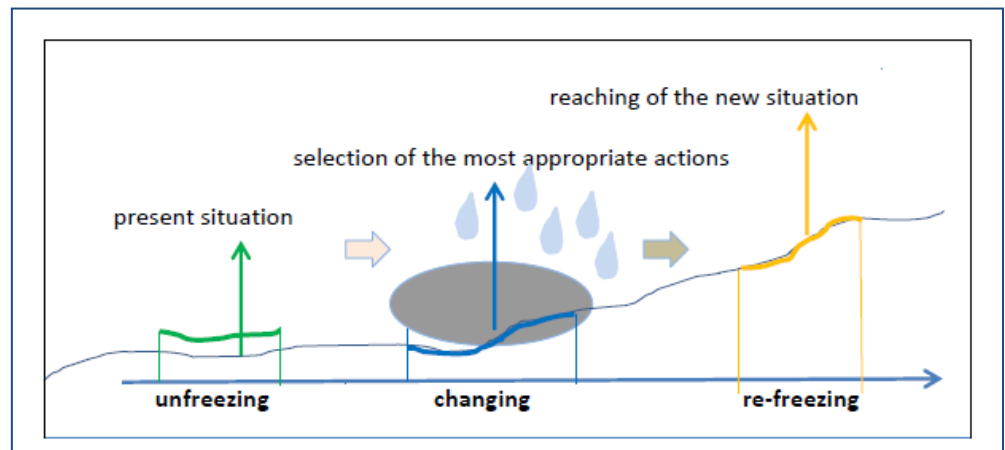**Figure 2**. Carnall's (2007) five-stage cycle of change model
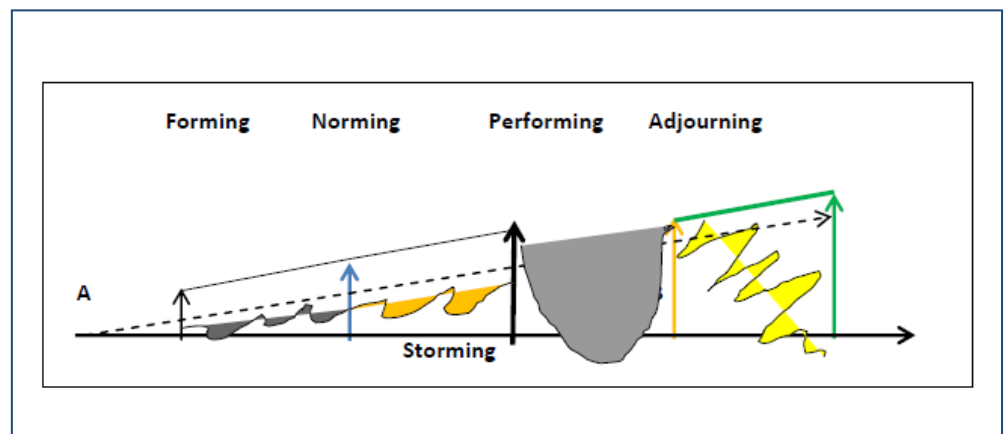
Figure 3. Fullan's (2007) model

Figure 4. Tuckman's model of team development (1965).

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Аннотация

В статье рассматриваются вопросы управления и руководства образовательными изменениями. Исследование опирается на существующую западную литературу с целью понять, влияют ли частые реформы в образовании на развитие и изменения в школах. В статье также исследуется база, касающаяся концепций лидерства, образовательных изменений, и командной работы в образовании. Основное внимание уделяется тому, как различные модели или конфигурации образовательных изменений способствуют организационному развитию, именно слаженной командной работе. Статья завершается освещением вопросов, которые требуют дальнейшего изучения и эмпирического подтверждения.

Ключевые слова: лидерство, управление изменениями, образование, модели изменений, командная работа.