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IMPROVEMENTS REQUIRED IN OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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Abstract:

Our education system is pretty much designed to benefit only the corporations that run this world. I'm talking about the heavy emphasis on mathematics and sciences and not enough focus on helping the children find their passion by planting dreams in their capable minds.

KEY WORDS:

economic and social outcomes, system wide change.

INTRODUCTION

New understandings about the contribution that education can make to economic and social outcomes for diverse populations are driving the present policy impetus for schooling improvement. However, reports of failed educational reform efforts continue to come in from around the world. What seem to be common-sense policies result in unproductive change or unintended consequences. Even when based on evidence about 'what works', policies often fail because insufficient attention is paid to the 'how' of implementation. This booklet brings together emerging evidence about how to bring about lasting, system-wide improvement in schooling performance.

The evidence we have at this point does not allow for definitive conclusions; we still have much to learn about what it takes to build and maintain high-quality, mass education systems. This much is certain: achieving real and lasting improvement in student outcomes takes a sustained effort to change teaching and learning practices in thousands and thousands of classrooms, and this in turn requires focused and sustained effort by all parts of the education system and its partners. Key aspects of this collaborative effort include careful attention to goal-setting, positive engagement, capacity building, effective communication, learning from research and innovation, maintaining focus in the midst of multiple pressures, and use of resources. Effective large-scale change requires careful attention to implementation as well as policy, and to the building of an implementation system that is up to the task of bringing about the necessary changes in daily practice.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Creating change in education is easy. Many governments have done it by changing funding or policies or governance structures. But change is not the same as improvement, and our interest is change strategies that create lasting improvement in terms of a broad range of student outcomes. The challenge for education systems around the world, regardless of their current situations, can be expressed this way: Bringing more students than ever before to higher levels of achievement than ever before, on a broader range of skills and attributes than ever before, with less inequity in outcomes than ever before. This is much harder than simply creating change, and many reform programmes have tried but failed (Levin and Fullan, 2008).

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An effective system has organized processes by which it learns about its own performance and adapts accordingly. Out of these processes comes disciplined innovation. Disciplined innovation starts with knowledge and builds on what is learned. Altogether different from the endless succession of pilot projects for which there is little supporting evidence and no follow-up that has been characteristic of many education systems, disciplined innovation involves experimenting in thoughtful ways and studying the outcomes, thereby increasing what is known about effective policy and practice (Levin, 2012b).

An effective, system-wide change strategy requires the following elements:

1. A small number of ambitious yet achievable and well-grounded goals, publicly stated;
2. A positive stance on improving all schools and success for all students;
3. An emphasis on capacity building and a focus on results;
4. Multi-level engagement with strong leadership and a 'guiding coalition';
5. Continuous learning through innovation and effective use of research and data;
6. A focus on key strategies while also managing other interests and issues;
7. Effective use of resources;
8. A strong implementation effort to support the change process.

Improvement must also address achievement gaps and inequities. In all systems, some groups of students do better than others for reasons that have nothing to do with their ability. Specific efforts to reduce these gaps, whether focused on gender, ethnicity, language or other factors, must be part of any overall improvement strategy (Glaze, Mattingly, and Levin, 2012).

THE AIM OF EDUCATION

The world we live in is a vast, wondrous, and intricate system. Every part of it is connected to and dependent upon all the other parts. For many decades, this complexity was hidden from us. We'd see the world as a collection of elements not necessarily connected to each other, and certainly not as interdependent as we are now discovering.

Within the education systems, the perception of reality as separate elements divided into discrete topics is still the predominant paradigm. The new, integral view, relates to the world as an interconnected system. This perception is the basis of the Integral Education, and thus defines a new, integrated approach to teaching. In doing so, it ushers the students into an integrated perception of reality, aligning them with today's integrated reality. In the integral education method, the student does not learn separate topics in a "linear" fashion. Rather, each topic is presented from the "circular" perspective, illustrating its connection to all the other topics.

The method of this education is based on the idea that everyone is unique, and hence children/students develop through discussions that allow them to learn other children's/student's opinions no matter how numerous these opinions are.

In this system, each student absorbs from the others, becomes imbued with their way of being, and grows to be even more unique. The student receives from everyone else and grows on that, developing his own properties.

The students' desires are important in long-term education. We feel it's a balance of education (to draw out that which is latent in someone) and training. Education is based in the moment, the unknown; because the teacher can't know for certain what is needed in the classroom until the student(s) initiate a need, a desire. It might be a subtle initiation, but it must come from the student for the information to stick.

Training is based in the past "these are the steps, this is how it works and how it'll always work". Most schooling is really training, not education, unfortunately.

But we and we say 'we' because we believe it's important to be life-long learners, need a mixture of both to explore the world and how we want to shape it. You can teach me how to cut vegetable with a knife (training) and we may or may not really remember it, even after drilling and testing, unless we originally came to you with the desire or curiosity about cooking. Then the knife skill is needed... wanted. It supports my exploration in to my curiosity about cooking.

School can and should be like that. Math is important... to those that want to use it. The arts are important... to those that want to use it.

There are universal skills that can be taught and/or supported to help us all recognize our interests: empathy, vulnerability, failing gloriously, ownership, awareness, self-observation, group dynamics, collective leadership, intention, commitment and play. The last skill, play, is vitally important. It's the work of children, how they original explore the world and they're place in it. So, it doesn't need to be taught, it needs to be supported and extended into every day activities. Play is curiosity. Play is creativity. Play is the

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key to joyful learning, which has no end-date.

This is what we want to achieve with this method of education. People unite correctly, making a contact, communicating with each other, and build a human society themselves, a society which is based on mutual inclusion of each into all and all into each. As a result, everybody's uniqueness flourishes even more. "This crippling of individuals I consider the worst evil of capitalism. Our whole educational system suffers from this evil. An exaggerated competitive attitude is inculcated into the student, who is trained to worship acquisitive success as a preparation." - Albert Einstein

Our challenge today is not so much to acquire knowledge as it is to acquire the social skills to help ourselves and our children overcome and abundant alienation, suspicion, and mistrust we encounter today. To prepare us and our children for life in the 21st century, we need a school that teaches what makes our reality what it is, and what can we do to change it.

This does not mean that disseminating knowledge should stop, but that these lessons should be part of a larger story that reaches students how to cope in the world they are about to enter. They should be able to leave the classroom and use this knowledge to grasp the full picture of reality and the forces that design it, and to understand how they can use it to their benefit.

In nearly every country in the world, education systems are designed to prod students to aim for personal achievements. The higher the student's grades, the higher his or her social status. In America, as in many countries in the West, this system not only measures how students perform, but how they perform in relation to others. This makes students not only want to excel, but inevitably makes them want their fellow students to fail.

In a globalized world where every person is dependent on the success and well-being of every other person, this Educational system must be reformed from its root. Instead of trying to achieve personal distinction, the objectives should be to excel in promoting the success of the collective. This is the achievement that should ideally be most recognized and revered in our schools.

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