Leadership and management in education in rural context essay

Technology, Development

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Introduction

There are serious challenges in rural education which require greater leadership and innovative approaches in order to be solved. The traditional system of education cannot do what needs to be done in the new century without reforms and new partnerships in the educational realms. The bottom line remains the total quality education which is more needed by the students in a globally competitive world. Thus, it is paramount for educational services to develop more globally participative citizens and this must extend even to the most remote areas of the different nations (te Velde, 2005).

Good quality schooling is a major purveyor for high quality products and services. Its processes should be well integrated with the processes of globalization which inherently leads to further growth and development in aggregate terms. At present, the demands of economic growth put a stress on the quality of education and training which are not uniform among countries (Krueger & Lindahl, 2001). This leads to a prospective gap in the supply and demand of education if education and training systems are not

effective in the global world (Tan, 2000). Further, the proper type of education enables nations to participate in economic globalization processes with maximum advantage in terms of development.

The crucial issue which must be addressed by the educational leadership and management is the proper combination between the supply of education and training and the new requirements of a globalized world (Thomas-Hope, 2002). The globalized world is characterized by a knowledge economy where innovative concepts and technical expertise are required. Hence, students of today must be more competitive in these terms. The respective policies and reforms must ensure that human resource development is best aligned with the opportunities and consequences of the global economy (Stevens & Weale, 2003). An equipped human resource must be ready for the changing requirements of the global, knowledge economy as described above.

Good quality and appropriate education is one of the major drivers of competitiveness and successful participation in the era of globalization. Johansen and Adams (2004) contend that globalization and competition require higher skills and productivity among workers, both in global and small scale businesses which carry them. As such, new century education should be focused on trade, growth and poverty reduction. It should pursue greater economic development and total human development (Johanson & Adams, 2004). It is a dynamic tool which can be traded in various global services. This is because knowledge and skills are the key instruments in the global industries of today.

A new education is also very much related to migration, as people with higher and technical skills move from one geographic placement to another

(Johanson & Adams, 2004). A resource of highly educated citizens in both home country and abroad means a distinct advantage for a nation. They can serve as a source for exports goods and services as well as a source for " diaspora" investment back into the home country (Lall, 2000). A well developed education system in one country can mean a very well managed economy as the excellent education sector may be well utilized in boosting the trade in services performance of a country. In this respect, the new approach to education should also fully coordinate with different sectors – private, international, domestic, among others. This is because knowledge which fuels the industries of today is knowledge which can be generated by the endeavors of the educational agencies in partnerships with worthy industrial and social organizations. Synergy of these agencies will lead to successful ventures in education and in the corporate world.

Indeed, education and training can affect the participation of countries in the new global era. As reiterated by te Velde (2005), good quality schooling establishes trade and inward investment. However, there must always be a continuous human resource upgrading and retraining. Even when the primary and secondary education has little effect on the chances of migration, the vocational training and tertiary education are important in attracting more local and overseas investments (The State of Queensland, 2003). It should also be stressed that students also require engineering and other technical skills.

Approaches to Rural Educational Leadership and Management

A major paradigm which should guide the different approaches to rural education leadership and management is the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Rural Paradigm (2006) which requires significant changes in how policies are created and applied using a multi agency approach. This can be very helpful in administering new educational policies along major governance dimensions: horizontally at both the central and the local levels and vertically across levels of government. This paradigm further proceeds with three factors that can make rural policy making across OECD countries effective: 1) greater focus on natural and cultural amenities; 2) acknowledgment of the limits of agriculture policy and international pressures to reform it; and 3) decentralization and new trends in regional policy.

As an educational vision, it is set that rural schools should develop productive partnerships with learners, staff, parents and their communities to enhance greater student learning opportunities to bring out better achievement and promote community confidence and pride in the school's ability to meet the needs of all students (Action Plan for Rural and Remote Education 2011-2015). It also improves the schools' performance. The education department must also acknowledge the challenges faced in engaging students in rural and distant locations.

In clustering or collaborative autonomy, quality learning opportunities and outcomes are guaranteed for the rural communities (Brown, 2013). This is because the educational clusters work hard and collaborate with the local

community to further provide for learning. Through collaboration, the rural stakeholders, most especially the learners, accomplish educational goals which are not possible if independently pursued. Generally, the approach to this educational management include the following: shared specialists; the delivery of a regional center of excellence across institutions; the provision of cluster professional development; and the further implementation of shared governance approaches (Brown, 2013). The educational development is anchored into the growing interest of the local autonomy.

The strategies in clustering should connect classrooms and communities. This is an important way for rural education to be sustainable (Miles, 2013). This shall address the issues of rural-regional educational disadvantages such as isolation, small school sizes, long distances to major cities and capitals, and the need for more educational choices. To guarantee sustainability, rural education should have a wide access to greater community networks, proximity to large lands, and a host of multi-skilled and cross-generational rural community members who intend to share their skills and local knowledge (Miles, 2013). Sustainability should be central in the new curriculum for rural education.

Also, the approach to educational management should also apply ample resources to the needs of the indigenous students. The rural educational agencies should see to it that the indigenous students in rural and remote must strive to expand and further develop and implement action plans which carry local initiatives and solutions to meet the education needs of the indigenous students (Action Plan for Rural and Remote Education 2011-2015).

The leadership should develop a special resource and/or a practical guide for indigenous students. It must provide school administrators and teachers proposed strategies to embed the indigenous perspectives with the local community perspectives in all areas of school practices, which inherently provide all students access to a well rounded educational curriculum (Action Plan for Rural and Remote Education 2011-2015). This guide should offer a framework for the right inclusion of the indigenous perspectives within the whole rural school's environment. This is because learning in the local context becomes more effective if all the members of the community are involved in the learning processes.

As it is, various rural and remote schools have remarkable enrolments of indigenous students. They face challenges in accessing materials to support development of curriculum resources. This initiative is vital to the generic tool kits. Access to educational services is also more limited in the outer regional areas (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2011). This is also true even with the students' engagement in extracurricular activities. Different learning environment definitely leads to differences in children's developmental outcomes across geographic segments. Hence, it is very important that access and provisions across rural educational systems are placed well.

Another important approach is to offer a wide range of incentives to recruit and retain a high quality teaching workforce in rural areas (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2011). Along with the strategy of inviting high-caliber pre-service teachers to undertake placements in rural and remote areas, the selected high-achieving pre-service teachers should also get

financial assistance and a specific pre-placement program to allow these teachers to undertake a field experience in a rural or remote schools and obtain a wider understanding of the benefits of service in these areas (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2011).

Another innovative approach is the utilization of information communication technologies (ICT) in rural education. The ICT must be utilized to give an innovative range of learning and professional development tools. It should deliver various professional development instruments to engage teachers. Examples of the ICT tools include eLearning Explorations, an online digital delivery of professional development via web conferencing, etc. Rural schools must also be funded to pursue new and emerging learning technologies such as digital and mobile technologies, eLearning spaces, digital pedagogy, and digital content (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2011).

There should also be a general professional framework which will serve as a learning guide to foster the teacher's digital pedagogy inclination. This framework should extend the other support programs available for rural teachers. This is very important since most of the pre qualified rural education teachers are just starting their teaching professions. To kick it off, teachers and staff should be provided with laptops and important digital gadgets. They should also be provided with the relevant training to enable them to be equipped to access professional development, eLearning environments and other important resources to meet the modern needs of their rural learners.

Conclusion

It is evident from the above cited approaches to clustering and other educational leadership and innovative management are deemed effective and highly applicable for rural and remote areas. The major challenge now is the growth and extension of the education and training choices for the rural school students. This is especially true in the midst of the application of various ICTs and a range of curriculum delivery systems. Distance, population size and selection of means signify the shift from the traditional methods of education to the more advanced and technologically driven tools of learning. This particularly relates to the global phenomenon of the expansive use of different technological tools for learning and skills developments. Pre qualified teachers will be given ample choices to effective equip and empower their students along the educational process and objectives. Indeed, there is a requirement for a multimodal approach to delivery, given the diversity of rural and remote areas which need quality, global education. Yet, the success of reaching out to these rural students with state of the art education still rest on the teaching component. This heavily depends on the quality of the teachers which will determine the success of their new century education.

There is also the need to suport these apporaches with effective career development practices and curricula, particularly those which address the needs of the rural school studnets, from elementary through secondary school levels. There must be a very effective Guidance Counselor who will be assigned to establish career counseling. Overall, the success of rural education also rests in the support and cooperation of faculty,

administrators, parents, community organizations, and the local business community. This goes well for any educaitonal system even in the urban zones.

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