

Chapter 30

Ushering Change in 21st Century Schools and Who Should Lead: What Are the Prerequisites and Processes?

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ABSTRACT

In the fast-paced field of education, change in school settings has reached its momentum and the debate on who is supposed to lead the change in school settings has been intensified. Leading change in a 21st century school engages the school principal, teachers, students, the community, and the government. In driving the change, a learner's achievement should be the ultimate goal for every school leader, since learning is the core business of every educational institution. Beyond the school community, parents and people in the community have a major role to play in their child's education, success of implementing change in school, as well as government providing sponsorship/strategic support to facilitate teaching and learning. In light of this collaboration in making schools better, this research has chosen qualitative methods to explore teacher's understanding in Northern State Malaysia of the role of school principals, teachers, students, the community, and the government in leading change in 21st century school settings.

INTRODUCTION

In the fast-paced field of Education, change in school settings has reached its momentum and the debate on who is supposed to lead the change in school settings has been intensified. Leading change in a 21st Century School engages the school principal, teachers, students, the community and the government. In driving the change, a learner's achievement should be the ultimate goal for every school leader, since learning is the core business of every educational institution. In today's class, teachers would love to see their pupils responding to their teaching and every teacher will love to diversify their methods to

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meet students' learning needs and styles. Computer-based teaching or technology-based teaching has been reported worldwide to improve learning tremendously and teachers embrace technology to enrich their teaching. One should not forget the role the school principals play in the facilitation of teaching for better learning. The facilitation takes place when school principal plays the role of an instructional leader where improving teaching, learning and curriculum become their major function and concern. Studies have proven the roles both school principals and teachers play in the student learning achievement. A longitudinal study of Leithwood et al. (2004) on the influence of leadership on learning found leadership as a second factor contributing to student learning and achievement after classroom instruction. This is an indication of the centre roles that school leaders and teachers play in the performance of schools and students.

For the school to prosper and achieve its main objective in the community development, there is a need for community support and its involvement for the prosperity of the school. This is due to the fact that, after the family support, the community serves as the third institution for the school environment (Ihsan, 2010). For civil society or community to be established, the community needs to play a role of providing education and improving community welfare (Ihsan, 2011 in Nalle, Sogen and Tamunu, 2018). Hence, school development lies in everyone's hands and it is not a one-man show.

This is because, beyond the school community, parents and people in the community have a major role to play as the stakeholders in their child's education, the success of implementing change in school as well as and government providing sponsorship/strategic support to facilitate teaching and learning. In light of this collaboration in making schools better, this research has chosen qualitative methods to explore teachers' understanding in northern State Malaysia of the role of school principals, teachers, students, the community and the government in leading change in 21st- century school settings.

BACKGROUND

Education has been ensured by the UNESCO to be the birthright of every man and woman in the world. Since the inception of UNESCO 1945, the organization has committed to use education a mechanism to build peace, eradicate poverty and pave ways for development and intercultural discourse. A New Year with a new revolution ushers in new demands and expectations. In today's schools, the way things are done is completely different from the yesteryear ones. The 21st century education organization is full of complexes and even more difficult to understand and manage as ever. Today's world is at its fast-pace and in order to cope with these changes and pace, we must change the way education is taught in schools and the methods of learning in our classrooms. The emerging of technology, globalization and knowledge-driven economy has contributed greatly to the rapid changes (McNeill & Engelke, 2014) accelerating unprecedented changes in schools and societies (Friedman, 2016 and Adam, Kutty and Zabidi, 2017). Due to variation of educational conceptualization, tensions have raised among educational leaders on how to lead, manage and administrate. Hence, they found difficult to leverage between priority tasks designed to uplift the academic staff, maintaining daily routine and operation and lower order duties (Adams, Kutty and Zabidi, 2017).

In the midst of achieving the expected goals, school leaders are expected to excellent instructional leaders to ensure a successful implementation of urban school reform (White-Smith, 2012). Learning is the core function of any educational institution and it is empirically proven that teaching comes as

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