

P A R T I

LEADERSHIP IN THE MANAGEMENT
OF EDUCATION

CHAPTER 1

OBJECTIVES AND LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

Educational Goals

The broad aims of education are formulated in most countries of the Commonwealth by the national or state governments, or put forward by special commissions. They usually attract a wide measure of agreement and are an expression of the society's concern for human values, for the social and economic development of the community and for individual growth.

The following are some of the aspirations which are often included in statements of educational goals:

1. A greater awareness of national heritage and identity.
2. The fostering of attitudes and values conducive to the development of the individual and the community.
3. The ideal of equal educational opportunity for all.
4. Increasing life expectancy through widespread education in health and nutrition.
5. Educating and training the skilled manpower required for the localisation of the work force and the expansion of industry.

Such goals are expressed in general terms, but can nevertheless be very significant as an indication of the long term outcomes which evoke widespread assent within the society.

Educational Objectives

Whereas goals are usually long-term and general, objectives tend to be short term and specific. They therefore have the merit that, if they are realistically determined, there is reason to expect that they can be achieved in a specified period of time. The progressive achievement of the stated educational objectives of the system is then expected to contribute to the ultimate achievement of the educational goals of the society.

Statement of Objectives

If the objectives are to be helpful as a guide to action, they should be stated as precisely as possible, preferably in terms of numbers, time period, and standards of performance. Two examples are given on page 3 which show the broad aims and goals of education being approached through specific programmes and learning strategies at school and district levels respectively.

Behavioural Objectives

The objectives specified in Example 1 may be characterised as behavioural objectives, as they specify precise behaviours which the pupils should be able to display at the end of each course. Behavioural objectives can most readily be identified at the level of basic skills, which can be reduced to directly observable or measurable outcomes. At a higher level the complexities become formidable, and one soon has to compromise by identifying behaviours which, though not expressive of the whole learning task, provide some indication of its achievement. This can never be wholly satisfactory.

Programme Objectives

The objectives given in Example 2 are described as programme objectives. These are expressed in terms of measurable operational assignments, which are again stated as precisely as possible. In this instance behavioural objectives for the adult population are implied, but programme objectives may simply relate to support activities, e.g. the provision of X books, Y hours of instruction, or the making of Z inspection visits. Such programme objectives have their value, but are no substitute for seeking a clearer formulation of intended educational outcomes, whether or not these can be precisely stated in behavioural terms.

Considerations in the Formulation of Objectives

In seeking to formulate practicable and useful objectives which will contribute to the achievement of national goals, there are three basic factors to be taken into account.

1. The present educational state of the learners, whether adults or children, their interests and abilities.
2. The opportunities and problems which face the learners and which lie ahead of them (after completing the course).
3. The contribution which the subject matter of the course can make to the personal development of the learners, and, through them, to the development of the society.

Example 1

SCHOOL LEVEL

Objectives

A Goal for the school

To prepare pupils for effective participation as citizens in the social life of the nation.

Objective 1: By the end of form X all pupils should be able to describe the functions of ministers, the political party(ies) and para-statal organisations.

Objective 2: By the end of form Y all pupils should be able to analyse the issues involved in a major development affecting their environment and indicate the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

Objective 3: By the end of form Z all pupils should be able to demonstrate responsibility for agreed tasks in the maintenance and leadership of the school and its organisations.

Further objectives might include the membership and the activities of a youth club, and participation in community development.

Example 2

DISTRICT LEVEL

Objectives

A Goal for the adult education programme

Literacy for all: literacy defined as the ability to read and understand information that matches the reader's vocabulary or interests; and the ability to write a letter to a friend.

Objective 1: To raise the level of literacy (as defined) to 50 per cent in X years in sub-districts which are currently below this level.

Objective 2: To raise the level of literacy (as defined) to 80 per cent throughout the district in Y years.

Further objectives might be developed in terms of enrolments and classes each year and the availability of appropriate and sufficient reading materials.

There are also two general considerations to be borne in mind when educational objectives are being formulated. These are:

1. The fact that objectives at a local and school level should be conceived within the framework of national goals and objectives.
2. The fact that objectives have to be achieved within the resources available, including any permitted reallocation of existing resources or additional resources from community help.

A further constraint which must not be overlooked is that objectives have to be realistic, in terms both of time and of expected level of achievement. Mass literacy in one month, or for all secondary leavers to be able to write an orchestral symphony would not qualify!

Finally, it should be remembered that significant change will occur over time in the context in which the objectives are being formulated. Some flexibility is, therefore, desirable, so that objectives can be modified to take account of changing circumstances. This will also have implications for timing and implementation.

The Role of Educational Leaders in Identifying Objectives

The establishing within a community of sound educational objectives and their re-consideration from time to time to ensure that they retain validity and realism in a changing world, are not easy tasks. They make considerable demands on the combined wisdom and leadership qualities of the education profession, and in this respect the district/regional education officer, the school principal and the subject inspector each have a vital part to play. A point to stress is the inter-relatedness of the three roles, which makes it particularly important that there should be a generous measure of mutual understanding and a readiness to work together in the formulation and review of objectives.

The School Principal

School principals are:

- (a) The front-line managers of learning.
- (b) The educational leaders of their schools.

Their primary task is to ensure that their pupils are educated, and to do so within a framework of external guidance and constraint which will strongly influence, if not wholly determine, school objectives.

Goals,
Objectives
and School
Practice

The principal must thoroughly understand the goals and objectives agreed at national and regional levels, to which the timetable and organisation of the school must have regard. The amount of discretion he is formally given will vary from country to country, but there will always be situations in which, preferably in consultation with the teaching staff, he will have to use his judgement in considering how the general rule is to be applied in the particular circumstances. The relationship between what actually happens in the school and the educational objectives, whether determined at national, regional or school level, is his particular concern.

Evaluation

Both as manager and professional leader of the teaching staff, the principal is thus inevitably concerned with evaluation. Where objectives have been spelled out in detail for the learning of a subject in each school year, the principal can encourage the teachers to see these objectives in relation to other subjects in the curriculum and the conduct of the school as a whole. Where there is some latitude, it is for the principal, acting in appropriate circumstances through senior colleagues, to guide the teachers in developing their own teaching objectives within the general framework of school policy. Much will then depend on the quality of the professional leadership provided by the principal. In the most favourable circumstances, the teachers will critically assess their own performance against previously stated objectives, and will be jointly involved with the principal in a corporate exercise of school self assessment.

Such an appraisal needs to be wider ranging, for school teaching and learning comprise more than a collection of subjects, each with its particular objectives. In particular the relationship of the school to the community it serves needs to be examined in various ways, including the following up of school leavers, in order to discover whether desired objectives are being reached in school and society. In all this the school principal has a leading part to play.

The Subject Inspector

The formulation of objectives in a particular subject area will be a concern of the subject inspector, who will be well aware both of the need of the schools and of the constraints of the wider system. As a part of his job he will constantly interact both with school personnel and with the central office.

Professional Expertise

Let us consider the position of a science inspector. Apart from the formal authority of his position, it may be presumed that he has expertise in science teaching and thus has the professional authority of a man who is a specialist in his particular area. This expertise has to be maintained through study and through continuing contact with other science educators.

Like his colleagues in other subject areas, the science inspector is likely to work with a subject panel or task force set up to examine different areas of the curriculum. He is also likely to work with technical training instructors, with inspectors in related scientific fields, and perhaps with representatives of industry, health or agriculture to ensure that their needs are considered.

Co-ordination

When changes are proposed in the science curriculum, it is important that the teachers in the schools should participate with the inspector in the discussions leading to the new curriculum, both through representation in a central body and through contributing individually to decisions relating to the adoption of new objectives in their own schools.

Evaluation and Professional Development

As an acknowledged educational leader in his own subject area, it is for the inspector to ensure that objectives and methods are reviewed periodically in the schools. By providing the continuing programmes of in-service education, he will provide opportunities for teachers to think about their objectives and the best use of local resources to achieve them. Through such activities the teachers will develop the professional confidence to assess their own performance, so as to relate their practice more closely to the objectives which they have helped to formulate.

The District/Regional Education Officer

The district or regional education officer carries out his responsibilities within a well defined administrative structure. The latter may include an education committee or advisory board at the regional or district level. There are three levels at which the education officer may contribute to the formulation of educational objectives:

National or
State Level

1. Indirectly he may play some part in the adoption of realistic goals and objectives at national or state level through:

(a) The regional information he is able to provide, both factual (e.g. school enrolments, staff numbers) and evaluative (e.g. views on the implementation of new curricula).

(b) His availability to provide a regional or district viewpoint, if desired, on national or state policies.

Regional or
District Level

2. The formulation of educational goals and objectives for the district or region depends essentially on his leadership. His appreciation of educational issues will thus be as important as his administrative expertise and a good working relationship with the inspectorate will clearly be helpful.

School Level

3. He has the responsibility to provide information, guidance and encouragement to the principals and staff of schools who have to formulate objectives, within national and regional guidelines, and implement programmes which have already been determined at a higher level.

Routine tasks
and Leadership

Much of the education officer's time will in practice be taken up by routine executive functions and dealing with crises that arise from day to day. It is very easy for the pressure of this activity to become so great that, unless he consciously determines otherwise, the purpose of the activity is lost and the officer forgets that he is an educational leader as well as a manager or administrator. Hence the importance of appropriate and clearly stated objectives at the district/regional level in order that the goals set for the country as a whole (not only in education but also in other fields of social and economic development) should be translated into educational programmes and achieved in practice.

Co-ordination

Thus it is at the district/regional level that the work of primary and secondary schools and post-secondary training institutions has to be co-ordinated in relation to national goals and objectives. Account must also be taken of the pre-school and the non-formal educational activities, both for school leavers and those without schooling, which have a contribution to make, alongside formal schools, to the achievement of educational objectives. The education officer will

need to find ways of associating those responsible for such non-formal activities with the formulation of district/regional educational objectives, and it may well be desirable to establish means of collaborating as appropriate with regional offices of Ministries of Labour, Economic Development, Communication, Agriculture or Rural Development. Through such procedures both the agencies and others will understand better how their work fits into the larger development pattern.

Conclusion

In briefly considering aspects of the leadership role of the school principal, the subject inspector and the district/regional education officer, it has been shown that the identification of objectives in one area is often dependent on the identification of objectives, and programmes for their achievement, in another. The objectives themselves become meaningful as an attempt is made to implement them and to evaluate outcomes against agreed criteria.

Reservations about Objectives

At this point it is salutary to recognise that substantial reservations can be expressed concerning exclusive reliance on an objectives approach to educational planning and administration. Among these reservations are the following:

1. The difficulty of stating precisely and definitively what the objectives of an educational programme should be.
2. The difficulty of achieving a match between publicly agreed objectives and the private aspirations which also influence behaviours.
3. The difficulty of constructing evaluative procedures which do not themselves distort the educational process, a point implicit in the discussion of behavioural objectives.

Making full allowance for such difficulties, which cannot easily be resolved, it also has to be recognised that in all walks of life people have to make some assumptions, however tentative and provisional, regarding the objectives of their work, the main tasks they are expected to perform, and the criteria by which their work will be evaluated. If they are wise they will also provide for the possibility of adaptation and adjustment to meet changing conditions.

What is suggested in this chapter is that the world of education is no exception. The formulation of specific educational objectives, which may be revised in the light of experience, is an aid to clear thinking at every level of the system, making it easier to develop appropriate learning activities and providing a rational, objective basis for evaluation.

The next chapter considers some of the main task areas of educational leadership. It is concerned with how the basic task of formulating objectives can be translated into programmes for action which can then be evaluated by agreed criteria.