

Application of Change Management Theory to Command New Teaching Activities in High Schools

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Today's science and technology revolution is developing rapidly, leading to an explosion of information. The world is now entering the Industrial Revolution 4.0, which requires each individual to acquire and update a large amount of knowledge, modern achievements in the fields of natural sciences, social sciences and humanities so they can adapt quickly to modern life. The teaching process in high schools is struggling to maintain pace, as the volume of knowledge is increasing and becoming more complicated, but the available learning time is limited. To resolve such conflicts, innovative education and teaching methods are required, oriented to developing students' capacity to foster an ability for self-study and the capacity for lifelong learning. The Ministry of Education and Training issued a draft general education program in August 2015, which includes essential innovations. Therefore, the management of schools – and particularly the management of teaching activities – must also make changes to meet the requirements of the program. Leaders of secondary schools need to master and actively direct the renovation of teaching activities in inclusive schools in order to implement the general school education program. With regard to change management, the author proposes measures to direct innovation in teaching activities in schools towards the implementation of general education.

Key words: *Management of change, teaching, general education program.*

Introduction

After more than 35 years of development, Vietnam has overcome many difficulties and challenges to accomplish great achievements of historical significance. It has escaped from under-development and entered the middle-income cohort of developing countries. However, Vietnam's economic achievements are not yet stable, the quality of human resources and the

competitiveness of the economy are not high and the cultural environment still has many limitations, with some of the elements required to develop quickly and sustainably still not in place. During the period before and after Vietnam's development, the world witnessed profound changes. The third and fourth industrial revolutions followed successively, with the thriving knowledge economy bringing tremendous development opportunities, but also posing significant challenges – especially for developing and under-developed countries (Kieu, Singer & Gannon, 2016). On the other hand, changes in climate, resource depletion, environmental pollution, ecological imbalances and an evolving social and political environment also posed global challenges. To ensure sustainable development, many countries have been continuously renovating their education systems to improve the quality of human resources and equip future generations with a strong cultural foundation and high adaptive capacity be prepared for dramatic changes to nature and society. Educational innovation has become both an urgent need and a global trend (Vu Anh & Le Quoc, 2019).

Resolution No. 29-NQ/TW of November 4, 2013 of the 8th Conference of the Party Central Committee (Session XI) on radical and comprehensive renovation of education and training was designed to meet the requirements of industrialisation and modernisation in the context of a socialist-oriented market economy and international integration. On 27 March 2015, the prime minister approved the program renovation scheme, including general education textbooks. On 5 August 2015, the Ministry of Education and Training published the draft General Education Program (subsequently referred to as the Master Program) (Zhang, Jiang, Hu & Pan, 2017). The overall program includes the general direction and plan of the general education curriculum, which sets out the general issues of general education, including: viewpoints on formulating curricula; objectives of general education programs and educational program objectives of each educational level; the requirement to achieve the leading quality and ordinary competence of the last students of each grade; fields of education and system of subjects; duration of each subject. The compulsory education content in each field of education is presented, divided into the subjects at each educational level for all students nationwide. The program also provides orientation regarding teaching methods, organisational forms of education and evaluation methods to ascertain the quality of education for each subject, as well as the minimum conditions of the school required to implement the program (Hoang, Le, Pham & Tham, 2019).

The general education curriculum expresses the goals of general education, specifying the quality and ability of students required, educational content, and educational and evaluation methods as a basis for managing the quality of general education. At the same time, the state is committed to ensuring the quality of both the system and each general education institution. In the Master Program, many new subjects will be formed, based on the integration of traditional subjects, or subject names will be changed to match the evolving content, nature and educational significance of information and learning (Nguyen, 2019).

The number of compulsory subjects will be significantly reduced for all three levels of education. The new program identifies two compulsory and elective subject systems. For the system of elective subjects, the program also further divides the groups. Students studying elective subjects are required to choose one or several subjects in the group (Chen, Tabssum & Nguyen, 2019). Compared with the current program, the General Program identifies the goals of each level in detail; this represents a transition from attaching importance to knowledge to developing quality competencies on the basis of knowledge equipment, as well as appreciating creative experience. It also involves more productive forms of teaching and testing methods, to promote initiative, creativity, self-learning and gradual evolution to higher levels. The overall program will therefore help to overcome the overlap between subjects, ensuring harmony and unity in each subject, between subjects, as well as in each class, at each level and between classes and levels (Hornstein, 2015).

At present, teaching activities in high schools hold a central position, providing a basis for the successful implementation of the broad educational goals of high schools. At the same time, they determine the training results of the school. The management of teaching activities plays a vital role in school management, and is the central task of the principal to improve the quality of school training to meet the requirements of society. New points of the General Education Program have set new requirements for the management of secondary schools, especially the renovation of the management of teaching activities in schools. Advocacy and change are central to social life, so people must have the capacity to identify and adapt to these changes (Zhang, Li & Phuong, 2019).

Being aware of the need to change is vital, and successfully leading change in schools is among the greatest challenges of our time. In the world, change management theory has been applied very successfully in the management and development of many economic and educational institutions (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2019). In Vietnam, leadership and change management are relatively new issues, but this growing field has also attracted the attention of some scientists. The process of vigorously and synchronously renovating the essential elements of education and training is occurring by attaching importance to developing the quality and capacity of learners and introducing and managing innovating teaching methods at schools. High schools need to approach this process by utilising change management theory (Cummings, Bridgman & Brown, 2016).

The task of directing innovation in teaching activities in high schools can be carried out from the perspectives of various management theories, including change management theory. In order to innovate school management towards the implementation of the General Education Program, administrators of high schools need to master the theory of change to apply it

appropriately to the management of teaching activities in schools, in order to help schools proactively change to adapt to the requirements of the new program's teaching activities.

The Concept of Change and Change Management

Change is an evolving process due to the interaction and interaction of internal and external factors; change is a common attribute of an extraordinary thing. It can include changes in quantity, quality and structure. Change is understood at different levels – as innovation, innovation, reform and revolution. The change that occurs in schools may be due to both external and internal factors; it can be natural, regular and planned change. In education, changes occur in curriculum, textbooks, methods and school facilities. Change is essential for the success of a school. If it fails to adapt quickly to change, a school cannot maintain its position and the quality of its education. Change management is a way for organisations to adapt to change. According to Henry and colleagues (2015), 'Change management is essentially planning, operating and directing the implementation of change to achieve the set goals for that change.' The principal of a secondary school has a dual role in leadership and administration, with leadership always involving change and sustainable development. Activities must be managed so to provide stability in order to achieve the required goals. Many countries have paid particular attention to the leadership role of the principal, and focused on leading change in the school (Quandt, Beinke, Ait-Alla & Freitag, 2017). The process of leading and managing change builds a bridge between vision and action (Phuong, 2019).

The Process of Managing Change

Step 1: Prepare for Change

In this step, the manager identifies and chooses what to do to change the school. The school administrator must identify the characteristics of the change they must manage in order to address it. The manager must analyse the school's ability to accept change, anticipate school trends, opportunities and risks, and prepare to implement the change process within the school.

Step 2: Develop a Change Plan

The purpose of a plan is to help people understand the change and avoid unnecessary interference. Planning to implement the target system means finding the resources (human, material and financial), as well as the time and space needed to accomplish the goals. The cost of all aspects must be determined, as it is necessary to find the least expensive plan for implementing each goal. Planning change is common today.

Step 3: Organise the Implementation of Changes

This involves drafting and making decisions about school changes, as well as identifying the activities needed to achieve the goals, and implementing group activities according to the existing human and other resources available to form the organisational structure. Tasks include selecting appropriate staff to make changes, assigning authority to departments, binding parts vertically and horizontally in the relationship of responsibility, establishing authority and gathering information.

Step 4: Test and Evaluate the Implementation of Change and Consolidate the Change

Schools need to monitor progress, maintain a balance, and review results, successes and failures in order to adjust goals and plans. At the same time, it is necessary to test and evaluate the change results and evaluate the quality and changing capacity of the school.

Applying the Theory of Change in Directing Innovation in Teaching Activities in Schools towards the Implementation of the General Education Program

The Need to Direct Innovation in Teaching Activities in General Schools

Although our education reform is slower than economic reform, it has been occurring over 20 years, albeit with too few results. Education in Vietnam is still based on the thinking of traditional society, so the quality of education in general and human resource training in particular no longer meets the needs of a rapidly growing and diverse society. Traditional society often divides human life into three stages: attending school; working; and retirement. Due to the slow development of science and technology in traditional society, students must be equipped with knowledge so they can work throughout their lives; however, this does not take into account the fostering of learners' ability to apply that knowledge to solve the problems posed by work and life.

At the school level, the educational program is very theoretical and not particularly suitable for students' psychology and receptive ability – especially at the primary and lower secondary levels. This has several consequences:

- Because the program is too large and too heavy, with a rigorous examination system, plus achievement and management delivered in a hands-on manner, it has put enormous pressure on teachers and students. The working regime of teachers is too stressful, and students have almost no time to think for themselves and gain knowledge – the only way is to memorise for exams. This situation creates bad habits in learners, not only at the high school level but also when they move into universities and vocational training.

- Increasingly, this learning situation is causing enormous harm to the younger generation, not only while they are still in school, but also later in life. It creeps into every corner of life, ruining morality and efficiency of work. Once such an attitude has become a habit, people no longer realise its harm.
- Instead of creating motivated people who are able to discover problems in professional work or everyday life, then analyse and solve them, our educational system is creating many people who are both highly sensitive to their own immediate interests and lacking consideration for the long-term interests of the country. Education does not function appropriately as ‘training people’.
- One consequence that we did not anticipate is that the intense study and examination-focused program has stolen the childhood of the young generations, taking a major toll on students’ health and fitness; this has a long-lasting influence on their ability to work in the future. It is also one reason why the labour productivity of Vietnamese people is the lowest in the region.

The content and teaching methods have not focused on organisational requirements for student activities; students are not encouraged to become active subjects. They usually focus only on acquiring and re-creating the knowledge that teachers teach or that they read in textbooks. Teachers do not pay much attention to training students to solve problems when facing a new task or situation. Teaching needs to move in the direction of promoting the positive, self-conscious, proactive, creative, self-training habits and abilities; engendering a spirit of cooperation for students in accordance with the characteristics of each class and subject; using innovative teaching methods to train students to apply the knowledge they have learned to solve different learning and practical situations; and to trigger students’ emotions, bringing joy and excitement from learning.

Practice shows that testing and evaluating teaching activities is one way for schools to review their plans, grasping the advantages, difficulties and obstacles facing teachers who are developing problem-solving capacity in students.

However, the awareness of some managers and teachers about innovative management and teaching policies remains limited. The number of students is growing faster than the number of schools and classrooms, and the available teaching equipment. The transformation of teaching activities in some schools has not been adequately focused, leading to differences in the quality of education between localities. Innovation of teaching activities takes place in an environment of interaction between teachers and learners; without the participation of managers and other teachers, the quality of the innovation depends significantly on the efforts of individual teachers and students.



In the context of changes in our country's education system, improving the quality of teaching is still the most important task for the education and training sector. The Overall Education Program draft has identified many 'new things' about potential teaching activities in schools. Therefore, school management mechanisms should be directed towards democratisation and socialisation, making the school autonomous, supervised and accountable. When managing and directing innovation in teaching activities in schools, it is necessary to apply the principles of change management.

Applying the Theory of Change in Directing Innovation in Teaching Activities Towards the Implementation of the General Education Program

Teachers and staff need to be trained and encouraged to understand the policy of fundamental and comprehensive innovation in education and training, in order to meet the requirements of industrialisation and modernisation in the socialist-oriented market economy and international integration of the party and the state. The management team needs to work closely with teachers to educate them about the importance and the necessity of transforming teaching activities in schools in order to implement the transformation roadmap. Documents related to the overall education program should be disseminated among all teachers and staff of the school. New points related to teaching activities in the school and the content of the new program need to be analysed closely. Suggestions include soliciting ideas and organising for a group of teachers to discuss new points in the overall program from which teachers plan their own changes towards the implementation of the overall program from 2018.

Implementing Change Management to Transform Teaching Activities in Schools

Step 1: Prepare for Change

This involves analysing the situation of the school to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges with regard to innovating teaching activities in schools. It is important to reconcile the change with the requirements for transforming teaching activities in the General Program to identify the changes that the school needs to make. The number and quality of staff and teachers in the school should be ascertained, along with teaching facilities and equipment; the status of the school; and the habits and inertia of teachers when it comes to teaching activities. Identify the advantages and disadvantages of implementing the policy. It is vital to learn and understand the opinions and aspirations of all those involved (including students and their parents) about the desire to change.

Step 2: Develop a Change Plan

A teaching plan for the school should be developed in a flexible way that still meets the program requirements. The objectives of renovating teaching activities in schools towards the

implementation of the Master Program in 2018 need to be defined in a clear and concise way. The plan for transforming teaching activities should be implemented gradually in a focused way. The role of principals, professional vice-principals and experts in the process of directing innovation in teaching activities in schools needs to be promoted, and a roadmap should be developed to implement solutions.

Step 3: Organise the Implementation of Changes

The factors that encourage and support change need to be established. Typical examples of enthusiastic participation and innovative teaching methods need to be found, and teaching activities should be organised in schools to encourage movement. To create favourable conditions for teachers who have excellent achievements or are enthusiastic about learning about innovative teaching methods to study at some pilot schools, teachers should be trained. Each teacher involved in transforming teaching activities should be guided towards the implementation of the new program. The level of implementation of the contents and targets set for each activity should be objectively assessed in a timely manner. Conditions should be created for teachers to deploy, replicate and maintain innovation. Implement a system of identified solutions to innovate teaching and learning activities in schools.

Step 4: Test and Evaluate the Implementation of Change and Consolidate the Change

The change in awareness of innovative teaching activities in schools needs to be assessed. It is important to analyse, evaluate and draw on experience to plan to teach innovation in the coming years. It is necessary to directly supervise teachers and create a favorable environment for them to continue the renewal of teaching activities in schools. The transformation of teaching activities is included in the action plan of the school, and is the responsibility of professional groups and all teachers.

Innovating Training Methods to Encourage Students' Self-Study Ability

There are many ways of to understand educational goals based on modern educational approaches, including knowledge, skills and attitudes. Social competence is currently assessed on all three aspects, so the goals of high school are:

- forming and developing the basis of human intellectual thinking in the new era
- basic knowledge and skills
- scientific thinking skills – analytical thinking skills, reasoning, synthesis, logic
- skills to detect and solve problems
- creative thinking skills
- effective self-study skills
- personality and life skills



- leadership skills such as honesty, initiative, self-esteem and confidence
- Skills to set goals, motivate and organise work effectively
- conducting skills – communication, listening, negotiation, presentation
- teamwork skills.

Instead of just imparting knowledge, the mission of the contemporary school is to equip learners with the ability to learn on their own so each person can learn for life. Educated people know that they have to learn more and know how to study more to foster their knowledge, skills and personality. For this reason, teaching, learning and assessment all have to change. Teaching how to learn and learning how to learn are central to today's education system, and this process is lifelong.

The function of the school now is to provide learners with a reasonable way to learn by themselves, and to continuously improve their thinking skills. Assessment needs to measure students' ability to solve problems instead of the knowledge gained through lectures and rote learning.

Conclusion

In the national education system, high school education plays an important role, contributing to improving people's intellectual development, training human resources and fostering talent. It is necessary for the teaching process to shift from knowledge transfer to the quality formation and capacity development of learners. An open, practical and professional education process is required, which focuses on combining personality education with promoting individual potential, and that moves towards the conception that knowledge is only one essential element of competence.

Innovative teaching methods are one an essential activity of high schools. Every school needs to make a major effort to transform its teaching methods, with the aim of creating breakthroughs in teaching and learning. This process has not yet been achieved: much teaching is still one-way communication, with students still learning passively, listening, memorising and reproducing. There are many reasons for these limitations, but from a management perspective, it can be seen that the school transformation process and innovations in teaching methods are directly affected by the principal's management method. In many places, school principals lack specific measures to influence and engage teachers with learners; they have not created motivation for innovative teaching, have not selected practical and focused innovation content, and have not organised and managed the process of transforming teaching methods scientifically and effectively. Clearly, it is necessary to strengthen the management of principals to transform teaching activities in order to improve the capacity of students, thereby improving the overall quality of teaching and learning.



Advocacy and change are part of all aspects of social life, so in order to survive and develop, people must have the capacity to identify and adapt to these changes. Being aware of the need for change is vital, and successfully leading change in schools is the greatest challenge of our time. The theory of change management has been successfully applied in the management and development of many economic and educational institutions. In Vietnam, leadership and change management is a relatively new issue, but it has attracted the attention of some scientists. The process of synchronous and robust transformation of essential elements of education and training towards attaching importance to developing the quality and capacity of learners, introducing innovative teaching methods and developing innovative management of teaching methods at high schools need to adopt a change management theory approach.

The theory of change management can be applied in three stages – the thawing phase (preparing to innovate teaching method); the innovation implementation phase (organise and direct the renovation of teaching method); and the period of freezing back (sustainable development of the innovation of teaching method). Combined with effective management of innovation in teaching methods, this will contribute enormously to improving the quality of teaching and education in Vietnamese schools.

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