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THEORETICAL REVIEW

A literature review about Argentinian educational management in times of change

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Received 7 June 2016; accepted 28 October 2016

KEYWORDS

Educational management;
Education reform;
Social inclusion;
Secondary education;
Argentina

PALABRAS CLAVE

Gestión educativa;
Reforma educativa;
Inclusión social;
Educación secundaria;
Argentina

Abstract The aim of this article is to collect appropriate information on the characteristics of educational management in times of reforms or changes in its institutional structures.

This review adopts a descriptive qualitative methodology and applies documentary analysis as a technique to identify, describe and represent the content of the documents in a way other than the originals', in order to enable its diffusion and use for other research studies and documents on educational management.

The findings are intended to participate in a discussion about the set of routines, habits and institutional practices that form educational management in times of reform.

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Una revisión bibliográfica sobre la gestión educativa argentina en tiempos de cambio

Resumen Este artículo tiene el objetivo de recopilar la información relevante sobre las características que presenta la gestión educativa en momentos de reformas o cambios en sus estructuras institucionales.

La metodología responde a un diseño de tipo cualitativo descriptivo y la técnica utilizada es el análisis documental; está dirigida a identificar, describir y representar el contenido de los documentos de forma distinta a la original, con el propósito de posibilitar su difusión y uso para otras investigaciones y documentos sobre gestión educativa.

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.magis.2016.10.002>

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Please cite this article in press as: Vicente, M.E. A literature review about Argentinian educational management in times of change. *Magister* (2016), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.magis.2016.10.002>

Las conclusiones están destinadas a participar en un debate sobre el conjunto de rutinas, hábitos y prácticas institucionales que configuran la gestión educativa en tiempos de reforma. © 2016 Facultad de Formación del Profesorado y Educación de la Universidad de Oviedo. Publicado por Elsevier España, S.L.U. Todos los derechos reservados.

Introduction

In Argentina, the first attempts to achieve social inclusion at secondary school through national education policies date back to the 1990s. The educational context of the time was characterized by increased enrollment rates and the incorporation of middle-class and popular sectors to secondary school. The criteria for democratization, participation, equity and transformation, as set forth by Section 51 of Federal Education Law No. 24195 enacted in 1993 (Ministerio de Educación de la Nación, 1993), would provide the institutional framework to promote equal educational opportunities and possibilities.

Thus, the aim of the education policy was to change the traditional administrative structures, characterized as vertical and repetitive of certain social orders, to become a model that could represent the interests of broad sectors of the population through institutional decentralization. Institutions would presumably be able to define their modes of operation and objectives autonomously, according to their needs.

However, in reality, the geographical location, the socio-economic characteristics of the population, the quality of learning and the perceived requirement level formed a secondary education defined in terms of categorization of schools whose diplomas did not have the same value in society (Tenti Fanfani, 2003; Tiramonti, 1989).

In this regard, some educational research contributions (Dussel, 2005; Gimeno Sacristán, 2005; Jacinto, 2009; Terigi, 2008) noted that the differential system showed that equality was only theoretical and not real. Contrary to expectations, institutional uniformity proved to be an element of inequality given the wide variety of cultural, geographical, social and economic factors. Furthermore, these studies also showed that educational institutions continued to operate under a traditional mechanism (Tedesco, 1986), more suited to organize inequality among school children than to make room for the coexistence of a plethora of skills, levels, pace of learning, and varied motivations of youths and adolescents.

Later in the 2000s, social inclusion became the center of national education policies again, this time through the implementation of a new inclusion strategy that made secondary education compulsory throughout the Argentinian territory and acknowledged different types of educational management (state-run, private, cooperative and civil society managed schools) and institutional formats capable of organizing the diversity of demands, profiles and trajectories of the level. This education reform began in 2006, through the enactment of the National Education Law (LEN)

No. 26206 (Ministerio de Educación de la Nación, 2006), which gave special importance to the recovery of students who have dropped out of school (Feldfeber & Gluz, 2011).

As regards the features of secondary school students, Tenti Fanfani (2009), and Briscioli and Toscano (2012) pointed out that compulsory secondary education was accompanied by a significant change in the social morphology of students since it entailed not only an increase in schooling rates but also the incorporation of a different set of students traditionally excluded from the level that bring their own class and culture to school.

Likewise, changes in social and family structure, and the instances of production and dissemination of meaning (culture) affect subjectivity construction processes. In this sense, the characteristics of access, permanence and graduation constitute a complex process that interweaves with other social and personal processes, such as the need to work, the poverty conditions of youths and their families, the will to continue studying or not, the freedom to decide on one's own future, as well as the expectations that certified completion of secondary studies generates. In fact, until 2011, Argentina kept a low secondary graduation rate in the poorest segment of the population (40% of quintile 1), whereas the richest segment of the population showed a high graduation rate (87% of quintile 5) (IDB, 2011). Thus, the enactment of the law proves to be insufficient to resolve the complex youths and adolescents' educational processes.

Institutions (DiNIECE, 2009), understood as a set of rules and resources that structure social and educational practices, changed their shape and meaning. As regards organizational structures that support social inclusion, there are two different perspectives. On the one hand, it is believed that social inclusion is achieved when everybody takes part in the same school (homogeneous structures in organizational and curricular terms). Some authors (Arroyo & Nobile, 2015; Montes & Ziegler, 2012; Tenti Fanfani, 2009; Tiramonti, 2012) argue that social justice in education implies that those social sectors that were expelled or never accessed secondary school must remain in and graduate from those very same schools.

On the other hand, there is a second perspective which acknowledges that educational offers must adapt to each socio-economic group so that they could find some meaning in attending and remaining at school. Along this line, the importance of the availability of a plethora of organizational structures is stressed in order to achieve true social inclusion, i.e. each school involves not only a general mandate or predetermined sense at a macro-educational system level, but also its own mandate, on the basis of which it was founded at a set time and place to address specific local

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