



School - Laboratory for Life

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General Principles

- The best schools are those who twin the needs to raise standards for all with the urgency to provide quality access to educational opportunities for the most vulnerable members of society.
- The best school organisations are inspired by visions of equity and are less quick to blame families and community for children's perceived educational failure.

General Principles

- The best school organisations are well equipped theoretically to understand the intersection between social and cultural capital and academic achievement.
- The best schools listen to the learners and promote educational resilience for all.

General Principles

- Quality School organisations interrogate structural barriers to quality access, combat covert or overt discriminatory behaviour of teachers and school leaders, and resist school-induced 'failures' (sic.).

General Principles

- Understanding social, cultural and academic exclusion is crucial to achieving inclusion.

General Principles

- Education is not a panacea to eliminating inequality. However, it can help reduce the effect of inequality on social exclusion by providing all children with the capabilities that many children regard as normal(NESSE, 2010).

Socially Inclusive Schools

- By preventing concentrations of socially-disadvantaged children, socially-inclusive schools prevent adverse effects such as social isolation, stigma and lowering of learning standards (NESSE, 2010).
- Needs-oriented funding ensures proper resourcing of schools committed to equity in education.

Early Childhood Provision

- A social-justice oriented, early childhood provision combines universal, holistic development of children with social return on investment.
- Early provision aimed at addressing the specific needs of disadvantaged children through a comprehensive, multi-dimensional approach.

Early Childhood Provision

- Flexible pedagogical approaches, early identification of learning difficulties, continuous monitoring of children's progress and regular contact with parents/guardians feature prominently in successful ece programmes.

Home-School Links

- Research repeatedly shows that when parents are involved children benefit holistically.
- The most effective school initiatives in parental involvement are those which engage parents in working directly with their children on learning activities at home.

Home-School Links

- The best school organisations adopt parental involvement models which promote genuine collaboration, eliminate roadblocks to involvement and are strong on parental education programmes.

Great Expectations

- Excellent schools set high expectations for all and transmit such expectations with passion and enthusiasm to all stakeholders.

Core Curriculum as Basic Entitlement

- Successful school communities are aware of the importance of the basic skills in guaranteeing a solid foundation for educational development and are strongly committed, starting from early childhood, to providing curricular experiences that help students master the basics.

Comprehensive Schooling

- Systems that show high performance and an equitable distribution of learning outcomes avoid early tracking and streaming and require teachers and schools to embrace diverse student populations through personalised educational pathways (OECD, 2010).

School climate

- Schools where students work in a climate characterised by expectations of high performance and a readiness to invest effort, good teacher-student relations, and high teacher morale tend to achieve better results.
- Such schools emphasise positive teacher-pupil and peer relationships rather than fear and punishment.

Supportive Schools

- Successful schools are well resourced and sufficiently funded to provide high-quality, specialised and ‘across the board’ support to students who fall behind.
- Support is also provided to teachers and parents.

Supportive Schools

- Under certain conditions, supportive schools are generally small, with smaller classrooms. Teachers in these schools receive specialised training to address the needs of disadvantaged children.
- Teacher retention is given due importance in such contexts. Ongoing support and career structures to retain high quality teachers are crucial.

Quality Teachers

- Successful schools invest in high-quality teachers, train them regularly, enable them, trust them, recognise and reward their efforts, respect them, treat them as experts and intellectuals, and support them emotionally.
- Relative autonomy is essential for teachers to exercise their role as experts in educational matters.

Quality Leaders

- Functioning schools are led by engaging educational leaders who believe that their educational community can make a difference, who are allergic to mediocrity, and who have the stamina, passion, vision and interpersonal skills to lead and empower communities of learning.

Self-Accountable Schools

- Schools with a high level of self-accountability, based on clear objectives, well-defined, quality indicators, collaborative mentoring, peer tutoring and ongoing reflection, provide the best emotional and professional environment for genuine growth in teaching and learning.

Schools that Listen

- Inclusive schools are fully aware that children use different mental processes to understand and produce knowledge and, therefore, allow for different intelligences, learning styles and learning patterns to inform the teaching-learning process.
- Schools that listen to the voice of the learners label less and refer less to special services. They also ask less children to repeat grades.

Pedagogies of Excellence

Classrooms are known to have the greatest impact on learning: Pedagogies of Excellence:

- Are learning and learner focused
- Maximise time-on-task
- Affirm diversity in all its dimensions
- Differentiate learning
- Promote integration of meaningful and relevant knowledges
- Adopt progressive assessment procedures

Pedagogies of Excellence

- Empower students through self-efficacy
- Motivate, stimulate and energise students
- Promote collective learning and peer tutoring
- Promote student engagement and stimulate curiosity and passion for learning
- Embrace technology critically
- Promote the emotional dimension as much as the cognitive aspect of learning

Pedagogy of Care

- Caring relationships in the classroom are at the heart of teaching and learning. Pupils learn more and achieve more in a school and classroom culture informed by love, care, mutual respect, safety, connection and belonging.

Resilient Schools

- Resilient schools promote socio-emotional competence and educational engagement in the classroom (Cefai, 2008).

Schools and the Community

- Multi-service schools that work with community services in promoting well-being and in addressing cycles of disadvantage.
- A symbiotic, two-way relationship with the community.

Research-oriented schools

- Excellent schools embrace and produce action-oriented, participatory research which maximises learning.
- Such schools promote data-information systems for diagnostic and remedial action.

Curriculum for Excellence

- Curricula with consistent, albeit critical orientation towards learning outcomes and sustainability, as well as cross-curricular teaching models which focus on the acquisition of key competences
- Smooth transitions between grades and sectors
- Space for curricular adaptation
- Stress on innovation and creativity rather than content-heavy

Curriculum for Excellence

- Allows for new ways of recognising and validating excellence
- Allows for excellence in vocational education
- Allows for in-depth and challenging study within the core curriculum framework
- Turns the extra into inter-curricular activities

Semi-Autonomous Schools

- Excellent schools allow for relative, teacher autonomy and for active participation in the co-production of curricula and in assessment for learning.

Well resourced schools

- Excellent schools match their claim for differentiated teaching and learning with a range of resources that allow for flexibility in the teaching-learning process.

Guiding Schools

- Comprehensive educational counselling and career guidance through multi-professional teams