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Current Perspectives On Educational Leadership: Opportunities And Constraints For Improvement

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Abstract

The public management reforms promoted by the New Public Management (NPM) have produced several arrangements to the administrative structure and processes, distancing these from the classic bureaucratic paradigms. However, the power of this reformist current and its controversies have marked the application of reforms that claim to be inspired by it, opening a debate on its contents and sustainability over time. A central aspect in this controversy lies in the degree of adjustment that would exist between the assumptions underlying the NPM and the culture that tends to predominate administration. The literature on effectiveness and school improvement has highlighted the critical role that management plays in organizing good pedagogical practices in educational centers and increasing learning outcomes. A current review of research is made on how educational leadership is a first-order factor in improving results; However, new directions in research and educational policies are promoting pedagogical leadership. The management profile is therefore being extended to include pedagogical leadership. Leadership for learning, beyond management, must be extended in a distributed manner through the leadership of teachers and professional learning communities. The serious limitations that current management has in designing environments to improve learning for all students are also discussed.

Keywords: directive leadership; learning-centered leadership; school improvement; educational outcomes .

Introduction

The article defends the thesis that improving education, among other factors, requires changes in the management model of educational establishments. The administrative-bureaucratic model of school management, both in Spain and in Chile, in late modernity, presents serious deficiencies in influencing the improvement of the results of its establishment. In this regard, pedagogical or instructional leadership in Anglo-Saxon contexts can be extremely useful to promote such improvement, as shown by the literature and experiences reviewed in this work. If the school as an institution is the basic unit of analysis of educational improvement, the management team must be ultimately responsible for increasing student learning (Printy, 2010). In line with other Chilean researchers (Weinstein *et al.*, 2009), we advocate for the corresponding political, legislative and training changes to make this possible.

In this context, both in Chile (Garay and Uribe, 2006) and in Spain (Bolívar, 2006), it is appropriate to consider what tasks and responsibilities the principals of educational centers should have and, in accordance with these, promote the appropriate changes in the organizational structure of educational establishments. This type of approach and discussion can no longer be carried out outside of how the issue is situated at an international level. In particular, knowing that the pedagogical leadership of the principals is a critical factor of the first order in the improvement of education. Therefore, in this work we are going to move between a review of the main lines of action in the current literature and the desirable reflection in the legislative guidelines. However, the great obstacle is the established school culture, which prevents the principals from exercising a role of pedagogical leadership, capable of promoting improvement (Kruse and Louis, 2008).

The change in the 21st century is to create schools that ensure educational success for all students everywhere, that is, a good education (Darling-Hammond, 2001). Educational centers must guarantee all students the essential learning and the school management is there to make it possible, focusing its efforts on this goal. Autonomy, support and supplementary resources must be put at their service. It happens that, just as when the management is limited to mere administrative management, the responsibilities for student learning are diluted; when it is focused on leadership for learning, this responsibility is central. Therefore, a next agenda in the improvement of the exercise of management is to understand it as a "leadership for learning", which links its exercise with student learning and the results of the school.

The ability of a school to improve depends, in a relevant way, on management teams with leadership that contribute to energizing, supporting and encouraging the school to learn to develop, contributing to building the internal capacity for improvement. Thus, the McKinsey Report (Barber and Mourshed, 2007) and the OECD itself (Pont, Nusche and Moorman, 2008) place educational leadership as the second internal factor in the school that has the greatest relevance in learning achievements, after the teaching action of its teaching staff. In this sense, as we argue in this work, an outstanding issue is the current model of management of schools, which prevents the exercise of pedagogical leadership (Weinstein, 2009; Bolívar, 2006). A break in the powers and competencies of the managers is required, in order to enhance their impact on the improvement of learning in the respective educational establishments. Turning to what international research has revealed can make a decisive contribution to identifying ways of acting in this strategic area.

From bureaucratic leadership to educational leadership

Limiting oneself to the bureaucratic management of schools, in the current conditions, is increasingly becoming insufficient. If, as the primary responsibility of

the educational establishment, it is necessary to guarantee educational success for all its students, this cannot be left entirely to the discretion of what each teacher, with greater or lesser luck, does in his or her classroom. Hence, school management must inevitably enter into the improvement of teaching and learning offered by the educational establishment. It is a point, undoubtedly controversial, but in international experiences and literature, it is increasingly clear: if teachers are key to improvement, directors must create the appropriate climate for teachers to be better, supervising results and encouraging progress. However, it must be recognized that both in Chile and in Spain we have a set of pending challenges to be able to move from the current way of exercising management to leadership for learning (Maureira, 2006).

Instead of this merely bureaucratic management, as is also the case in other non-educational organizations, more flexible school organizations are being demanded, capable of adapting to complex social contexts. Therefore, as we have analyzed in other writings (Bolívar, 2000), organizations with a future are those that have the capacity to learn to develop and face change. To achieve this, they need, among other things, autonomy that enables them to start their own projects and learn from experience. At the same time, they need to strengthen the local capacity of each establishment to improve, providing the necessary resources and impelling a commitment to improvement. All of which will not be possible if schools are not redesigned or restructured so that they become genuine learning organizations, not only for students but for teachers themselves. As Stoll and Temperley (2009) say:

School leaders can only influence student outcomes if they have sufficient autonomy to make important decisions about curriculum and teacher selection and training, and their primary areas of responsibility should focus on improving student learning. Countries are increasingly opting for decentralized decision-making and balancing

this with greater centralization of accountability regimes, such as standardized testing (p. 13).

In parallel with the crisis of models based on vertical and bureaucratic control, there has been a loss of confidence in externally planned changes to improve education, as shown by the "failure" of successive reforms. We now place more trust in mobilizing the internal capacity for change (of centers as organizations, of individuals and groups) to internally regenerate the improvement of education. The aim is to favor the emergence of lateral and autonomous dynamics of change, which can return the leading role to the agents and –for this reason– could have a greater degree of sustainability. Changes must therefore be initiated internally from within, preferably in a collective manner, inducing those involved to seek their own development and improvement objectives, as has been shown by the experiences and current literature on "professional learning communities" (Bolam, Stoll, Thomas and Wallace, 2005; Escudero, 2009; Stoll and Louis, 2007). In this context, leadership – not restricted to the management team, but shared or distributed – occupies a privileged place (Harris, 2008).

In this situation we can consider what management does or can do in Spain to improve the teaching work of teachers in their classrooms and, consequently, the learning of students. Of course, it is necessary to move from a "transactional" model, as we have had in Spain (Bolívar and Moreno, 2006), in which colleagues elect –according to their interests, sometimes corporate– the director, to a "transformative" one, as Leithwood (1994) saw, among others. Dependence on voters, as in politics, makes it vulnerable to being able to go further in a proactive and transformative sense. Breaking these links of dependence (Fullan, 1998), together with other external regulations, is necessary for educational change.

We understand "leadership" fundamentally as the ability to exert influence over other people, so that they can take the proposed lines as a premise for their action. This influence, not based on power or formal authority, can be exercised in different dimensions, especially at the organizational level, when a management manages to reach consensus and mobilizes the organization around common goals (Leithwood , Day, Sammons, Harris and Hopkins, 2006). When these efforts are directed at improving student learning, we speak of educational or *pedagogical leadership* . In this sense, certain administrative routines associated with the management of the organization are not part of pedagogical leadership. Although, realistically, in current conditions, in many cases, it is necessary to ensure the management and operation of the organization, exercising leadership means going further by inducing the group to work on certain specifically pedagogical goals.

In this regard, the TALIS report (OECD, 2009) indicates that there is no opposition between an administrative model and a pedagogical one: the principals who exercise outstanding pedagogical leadership are, in general, those who also exercise administrative leadership better. In Chile this seems to be confirmed, as shown by the report (Carbone, 2008) on the situation of school leadership, which maintains the hypothesis that such leadership is channeled through management devices, as a way of impacting student learning. However, it is true that the overload of bureaucratic-administrative activities prevents the exercise of pedagogical leadership (Weinstein, 2009). In the Spanish case, in the TALIS report, according to the perception of teachers and principals, the lowest score is obtained in pedagogical leadership and also in administrative leadership, well below the average. Although both dimensions (management and leadership) are compatible, it is also true that attending to the first can limit the development of the second. As the McKinsey Report (Barber &

Mourshed, 2007) states, roles, expectations, and incentives must be structured to ensure that principals focus on instructional leadership rather than school administration. This contrasts with educational systems where many principals spend most of their time on tasks that do not directly relate to improving instruction in their schools, thereby limiting their abilities to make concrete improvements in student outcomes a reality (p. 34).

All this has contributed to the pedagogical direction of educational centers becoming, at international and national level, a first-rate factor in the improvement of education, as well as a priority on the agendas of educational policies. Various international reports highlight this. On the one hand, the TALIS report (OECD, 2009) analyses the relevance of leadership for learning.[1] of the students, the teachers and the school itself as an organization. The OECD itself has decided to intervene in this dimension, through its program entitled Improving school leadership , in which Chile (Mineduc, 2007) and Spain (Ministry of Education, 2007) participate, among others. It justifies entering into this dimension given that, as it states at the beginning of its study:

School leadership has become a priority in educational policy agendas at the international level. It plays a decisive role in improving school results by influencing teachers' motivations and capabilities, as well as the school environment and climate. Effective school leadership is indispensable for increasing the efficiency and equity of education. [...] Educational policy makers need to improve the quality of school leadership and make it viable (Pont, Nusche and Moorman, 2008, pp. 9-19).

Leadership focused on learning

The next agenda for improving the performance of leadership, according to the most powerful orientations in the literature (Day, Sammons and Hopkins 2009; Macbeath and Nempster, 2009), is learning-centered leadership *;* that is, linking leadership with student learning. Leadership for learning takes as its core action the quality of

teaching offered and the learning results achieved by students. The priority issue is, therefore, which practices of school management create a context for better work by teachers and, jointly, by the entire educational establishment, positively impacting on the improvement of student learning (Weinstein *et al* ., 2009). To achieve this, among others, it ceases to be a role reserved for the director, and this mission is shared by other members of the teaching team. In this sense, Elmore (2000, p. 25) says that "improvement is more a quality of the organization, not of pre-existing characteristics of the individuals who work in it"; for this reason, leadership must be conceived as something separate from the person and the role that person can play at a given time. Leadership is in the school and not in the person of the director; who must build his own leadership capacity. The transformational dimensions of leadership (redesigning the organization), together with instructive or educational leadership (improving the education offered), in recent years have converged in a leadership focused on learning (of the students, of the teachers and of the school itself as an organization). More specifically, it is understood as a leadership focused on or for learning (*leadership for learning*). This perspective is not one more model of those that have paraded around leadership but expresses, in the school context, the essential dimension of leadership, whose causal relationship is collected by various investigations (Swaffield and Macbeath, 2009). Leadership for learning involves at least five principles in practice (Macbeath, Swaffield, & Frost, 2009): focusing on learning as an activity, creating enabling conditions for learning, promoting dialogue about leadership and learning, sharing leadership, and shared accountability for results. Creating a culture focused on student learning requires: promoting cooperation and cohesion among teachers, a sense of a job well done, developing understandings and visions of what is to be achieved.

In the aforementioned program (*Improving School Leadership*) promoted by the OECD, the improvement of school leadership involves four major lines of action: (re)defining responsibilities; distributing school leadership; acquiring the necessary skills to exercise effective leadership; and making leadership an attractive profession. This report indicates that the responsibilities of school leadership must be redefined for better student learning, recognizing that "leadership for learning is the fundamental character of school leadership" (Pont *et al.* , 2008, p. 10). One of the central tasks of school management, until now understood as far removed from its competence, is to contribute to improving teaching practices and the professional performance of teachers, with the ultimate goal of increasing student learning, that is, "leadership focused on supporting, evaluating and developing teaching quality is widely recognized as an essential component of effective leadership" (Pont *et al* ., 2008, p. 44).

Leadership practices have changed dramatically in the last two decades, particularly in educational policy contexts where schools have greater autonomy and, at the same time, greater responsibility for school results (Stoll and Temperley, 2009). As improvement becomes more dependent on each educational establishment and the latter, with greater levels of autonomy, must account for the results obtained, the educational leadership of management teams becomes more relevant. Although the forms and uses of the evaluation of schools based on the performance of their students may be debatable, the truth is that they are seriously affecting school management (Elmore, 2005). Therefore, leadership for learning takes as its core action the quality of teaching offered and the learning results achieved by students. In fact, beyond resolving daily management issues, management teams are already developing new practices in line with current demands.

Despite the importance of management in improving teaching, as previously highlighted, we do not want to fall into attributing causal factors to management that do not belong to it. In this sense, as Elmore (2000) says, it is necessary to deromanticize leadership; that is, to stop projecting onto it what should be good qualities for the functioning of the organization; and –instead– to advocate for distributed leadership among all members (Harris, 2008), which contributes to training staff in improvement. Leadership –as naive proposals proclaim, in a leap into the void– is not the solution to all problems, but part of it. In parallel, it is necessary to focus attention, on the one hand, on strengthening teacher leadership (Lieberman and Miller, 2004; Harris, 2004); on the other, schools as effective professional learning communities (Stoll and Louis, 2007). It is about generating a robust school culture, with the involvement of all stakeholders (including family and community), in a process that Kruse and Louis (2008) call "leadership intensification." Without building a sense of community that values learning, leadership can only go so far.

The impact of leadership on improving learning: effects and practices

Current literature, derived from studies on school effectiveness and improvement, has highlighted the role played by pedagogical leadership in organizing good educational practices in schools and in contributing to the increase in learning outcomes. The "director effect" is usually an indirect effect: it is not the director who works in the classrooms, but he or she can contribute to building the conditions for good work to be done there. Undoubtedly, the effectiveness of a teacher in the classroom depends on his or her abilities, motivations and commitment, and the characteristics of the context in which he or she works and the external environment (social and political). But the creation of an environment and working conditions that in turn favor good work in the classroom is something that depends on the management teams. Therefore, although other factors and variables have their impact, the role of the

management team becomes a "catalytic" in the improvement of educational centers, especially in the promotion and management of teaching. For this reason, there is no revitalization or improvement project in a center that does not involve the management team, even if it is not the direct protagonist.

At the research level, current literature, derived from studies on school effectiveness and improvement, has highlighted the role played by educational leadership in organizing good educational practices in schools and in contributing to the increase in learning outcomes (Weinstein *et al* ., 2009). The effects studied by the research refer to leadership in the Anglo-Saxon context, with roles and capabilities very different from those of the director or management teams in Spain. Research is consistent on the effects of leadership in improving results, although these effects are mediated by teaching practices in the classroom (Waters Marzano & McNulty, 2003; Leithwood & Jantzi , 2008; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom , 2004; Robinson, 2007). These researchers conclude that, within all the internal factors of the school, after the work of the teachers in the classroom, leadership is the second factor that contributes to what students learn at school, explaining around 25% of all school effects. Leaders generally contribute to student learning indirectly, through their influence on other people or characteristics of their organization. Their success depends greatly on their decisions about where to dedicate time, attention and support. In a research carried out in Chile by Sergio Garay (2008), leadership explains 11% of the variance in school effectiveness, due to the different configuration and competencies that it has in Chile. In parallel, in another research carried out by Paulo Volante (2008, p. 210) it is concluded that "in organizations in which instructional leadership practices are perceived in school management, it is possible to expect higher academic achievements and higher expectations regarding learning results by teachers and directors."

Reviews of research produced in recent decades (Hallinger and Heck, 1998; Marzano, Waters and McNulty, 2005) indicate that management teams can make a critical difference in the quality of schools and in the education of students. Furthermore, the quality of teachers themselves can be enhanced, in turn, by the action of leaders in this area. As the OECD report notes, based on the review of research:

School leaders exert a measurable, mostly indirect, influence on learning outcomes. This means that school leaders' impact on student learning is typically mediated by other people, events, and organizational factors, such as teachers, classroom practices, and school climate (Pont *et al.* , 2008, p. 34).

Other reviews (Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009) show that certain forms of leadership have even greater effects in schools located in vulnerable and poor contexts, where good educational leadership can decisively contribute to increasing their improvement rates. Therefore, although external factors (socio-family, economic or cultural) are conditioning factors, they do not determine what the school can do. These investigations explore the direct and indirect, statistically significant relationships between the actions of leaders and student results. Likewise, those interventions in teacher professional learning that have a positive impact on student learning and the role played by leaders in creating the appropriate conditions for it to take place. Leaders generally contribute to student learning indirectly, through their influence on other people or characteristics of their organization. Their success depends greatly on their decisions about where to devote time, attention and support. Researchers have identified, according to the review, five dimensions that have a significant impact (measured from 0–1) on student learning:

1. Promote and participate in the learning and professional development of their faculty (0.84)

2. Plan, coordinate and evaluate teaching and the curriculum (0.42)
3. Establish goals and expectations (0.35)
4. Strategic use of resources (0.34)
5. Ensure a supportive and orderly environment (0.27)

In a broad research project, in which renowned researchers have participated (Day, *et al* ., 2009), on the impact of leadership on student outcomes, it is understood that student outcomes (cognitive, affective, social behavior) depend, first of all, as a mediating variable, on the conditions of the teaching work, whose impact on learning will be moderated by other variables such as the cultural capital of the family or the organizational context. Both can be influenced by those who exercise leadership roles, thus producing improvements in student learning. In particular, as described later, how can one intervene in the professional teaching culture, continuing training or working conditions of teachers in ways that favor the desired objectives.

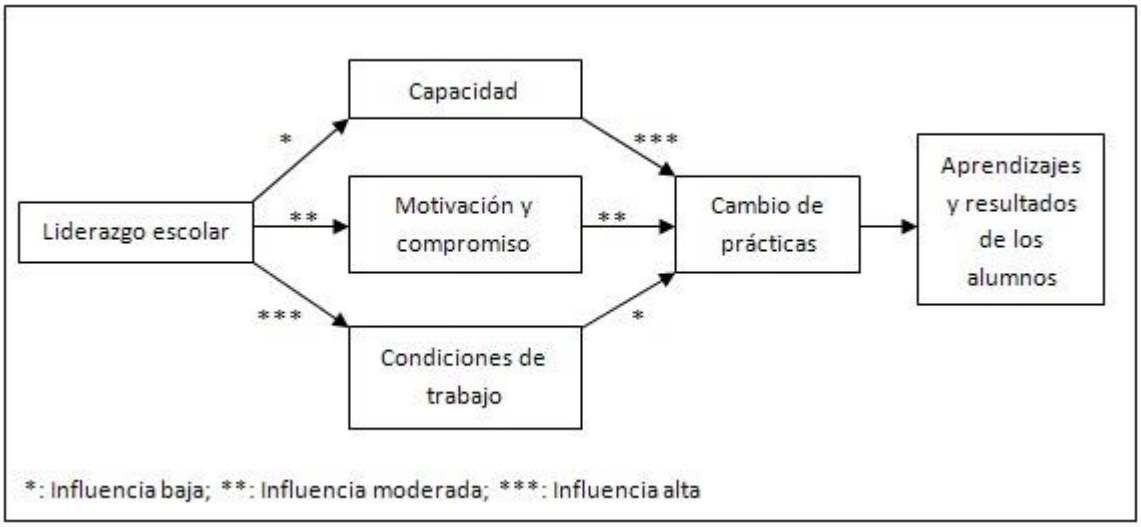

Figure 1. The effects of school leadership

As Figure 1 indicates , to improve student learning and outcomes, teacher performance must be improved. Teacher performance is a function of motivation and commitment, ability or competence, and the conditions in which they work. Although

they may have a less direct influence on teaching skills, they can nevertheless exert a strong influence on the other variables (motivations and commitments, conditions of teaching work). Figure 1 shows, in a simplified form, the strength of the relationships (low, moderate, or high influence), according to the results of the research. When principals exercised this type of leadership, they had a greater influence on these intermediate variables of the teachers, which in turn condition new teaching practices and, ultimately, student results. Figure 1 also shows that teaching skills are those that have the greatest influence on practices, although the degree of intervention of the principal in them is less. This is a challenge that will have to be faced in the future. Likewise, the sense of efficacy constitutes a first-order variable. Successful school leaders therefore improve teaching and learning and therefore, indirectly, student outcomes, primarily through their influence on staff motivation, engagement, teaching practices and by developing teachers' leadership capacities.

The successful effects of leadership on student learning will depend greatly on the practices developed, whether leadership is distributed or shared, and on its decisions about which dimensions of the school to devote time and attention to. In a model study, Leithwood, Day *et al.* (2006) have described four broad types of leadership practices that impact student learning:

1. Establish a direction (vision, expectations, group goals). Effective principals provide a clear vision and purpose for the school, developing a shared understanding and common mission for the organization, focused on student progress. To do this, they develop practices such as: identifying new opportunities for the organization, motivating and incentivizing staff to achieve common goals. This involves establishing values and aligning staff and students around them.

2. Developing staff. The leader's ability to enhance the capabilities of the organization's members that are necessary to mobilize productively in order to achieve these goals. Consistent practices include: professional development, attention, incentives or support, and deliberative processes that expand the capacity of members to better respond to situations.

3. Redesign the organization. Establish working conditions that allow staff to develop their motivations and capabilities, with practices that build a collaborative culture, facilitate teamwork, and manage the environment. To do this, it is necessary to create common planning times for teachers, establish group structures for problem solving, distribute leadership and have greater involvement of teachers in decision making.

4. Managing teaching and learning programs. A set of tasks aimed at supervising and evaluating teaching, coordinating the curriculum, providing the necessary resources and monitoring student progress. Good practices include: supervising the classroom; emotionally motivating teachers, with an attitude of trust towards them and their abilities, promoting their initiative and openness to new ideas and practices.

For her part, Viviane Robinson (2007), based on quantitative studies that link leadership with student results, defines five dimensions of leadership that make it effective:

1. Setting goals and expectations. This dimension includes setting relevant and measurable learning objectives, communicating them clearly to all parties and monitoring them, and involving faculty and others in the process. Clear goals generate good performance and a sense of priorities in the midst of new demands and allow teachers to enjoy their work by feeling in control of the situation, rather than being controlled by it.

2. Strategic resource allocation. This involves aligning resource selection with the priorities of teaching objectives. It also includes the appropriate selection and provision of teaching staff. It also involves a concentrated, non-fragmented approach to school improvement.

3. Planning, coordination and evaluation of teaching and the curriculum. Direct involvement in supporting and evaluating teaching through regular classroom visits and the provision of appropriate formative and summative feedback to teachers. Direct supervision of the curriculum through coordination between teachers across levels and stages of the school and within each year or cycle. Coherence increases learning opportunities. Evidence-based assessment enables inquiry for improvement.

4. Promoting and participating in teacher learning and development. If teacher quality has a direct impact on the opportunities children will have, leadership will need to promote opportunities, both formal and informal, for professional learning. In addition to promoting these, leadership must engage directly with teachers in professional development.

5. Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment. Organize classrooms to reduce waiting times, external pressures and disruptions to protect students' learning opportunities. An orderly environment that is conducive to learning should be established both inside and outside the classroom.

Overall, therefore, in parallel, there is a consensus on practices that promote effective leadership. Since learning does not usually appear contingently or accidentally, the management team must create environments, provide spaces and times that facilitate and support the learning of teachers, the organization and, ultimately, the students. Obviously, if the central element is student learning, those structures that make improvement possible at the classroom level must be redesigned, supporting and

stimulating the work of teachers in class (Robinson, Hohepa and Lloyd, 2009). To this extent, management teams direct their action to redesign the work contexts and professional relationships, and are therefore called to be "pedagogical leaders of the school" (Leithwood, 2009). Creating a culture focused on student learning requires: promoting cooperation and cohesion among teachers, a sense of a job well done, developing understandings and visions of what we want to achieve (Waters, Marzano and McNulty, 2003).

Towards an educational direction. Spain and Chile

Although each country has its own history and tradition, which weighs heavily on its current configuration and which –at the same time– conditions possible future changes; at a comparative level, they share in this matter a diagnosis and a way out. In the last two decades, Chile and Spain have experienced spectacular development in education (level of coverage, extension of years of compulsory schooling, changes in the curriculum, educational compensation programs, substantial increase in funding, improvement of teacher remuneration, etc.). However, this has not translated, in a significant way, into an improvement in learning, as shown by the results in PISA and, in the case of Chile, also in SERCE. Of course, there are many factors that condition this improvement, in particular the training of teachers and the quality of the instructional processes developed (Uribe, 2007). But, as we have just argued, the leadership of the directors has a role of first order.

In the Spanish case, due to a particular history (Viñao, 2005), school directors have had few powers to exercise educational leadership. Institutionally, it has been situated with a structural weakness and serious limitations to design environments to improve the learning of all students (Ministry of Education, 2007). It is not enough to trust in the commitment or voluntarism of all the teaching staff of a school, because in such a case little could be done to go beyond the contingency and luck with the teaching

staff that is available in the school. However, significant changes are beginning in the exercise of management in Spain, already reflected in the new legislative regulations, in a transition from a bureaucratic model to a pedagogical management, aimed at improving learning and the results of the school, in accordance with the guidelines reflected in international literature.

In recent decades, in general, a double process has taken place. While there is a whole set of possibilities to support this policy of improvement aimed at promoting educational leadership, on the other hand, we start from a school culture with serious impediments for school directors to be able to exercise this role. Spain, together with Portugal, have shared a singular (and unique) way of school management within the European Union (Ministry of Education, 2007; Bolívar and Moreno, 2006), in both cases the director is elected by his colleagues. In Spain, the expectations raised by a culture of participation have not corresponded with reality. Being "elective" does not always mean being democratic, since it can also be "corporate". For this reason, it is not the access procedure that guarantees its democratic character, but rather the way of functioning and how the organization is structured. The crisis has been due to various causes: the election mechanisms have not worked in a high percentage (40%) due to a lack or scarcity of candidates, who have to be appointed by the Administration; the unavoidable mechanisms of transaction with the colleagues who have elected them do not allow for improvement in the long term; finally, they have not motivated the exercise of distributed, shared or democratic leadership in a professional learning community. The collegial logic of a corporate nature prevents the exercise of pedagogical leadership (Bolívar, 2006). For this reason, the new regulation in Spain has changed the election for "selection".

A critical point regarding the management and organisation of schools in Spain is what the management does or can do to improve the teaching work of teachers in

their classrooms and, consequently, the learning of students (Bolívar and Moreno, 2006). In addition to other processes or conditions, it also seems evident that a collegial model of choosing directors presents serious difficulties for pedagogical or educational leadership. Thus, the TALIS Report (OECD, 2008) describes a management in Spain with little capacity to improve teaching-learning processes because, according to the perception of educational agents, it obtains the lowest score in pedagogical leadership and also in administrative leadership, well below the average. Therefore, we have a set of pending challenges to be able to get closer to the aforementioned way of working (Bolívar, 2006).

Influenced by current trends, which consider the role of educational leadership to be a priority, we now have a progressive convergence of our legislation and educational policy with these orientations. In this regard, the current Organic Law on Education (LOE) introduces (art. 132) as a novelty, among the director's responsibilities, "to exercise pedagogical direction, promote educational innovation and promote plans to achieve the objectives of the educational project of the center." Similarly, to limit ourselves to those approved and published, the Andalusian Education Law reaffirms the function of "pedagogical direction" (art. 132.1). For its part, the Catalan Education Law specifies that it has functions of "pedagogical leadership" (art. 142), in particular in the exercise of pedagogical autonomy; in parallel, the educational Administration must promote and support "the capacity of the leadership capacity of the professionals of the organization and management of educational centers" (art. 100). In turn, the new Organic Regulations for schools (in Andalusia and other communities) or the "Decree of Autonomy for Educational Centres" of Catalonia, both in draft phase, are specifying – and expanding – the exercise of pedagogical leadership. The latter speaks of "the management of schools acquiring a role of global leadership in the action of public schools".

At the same time, a Eurydice Report (2008) on school autonomy reforms in Europe points out that the general trend is the progressive increase in decentralisation and autonomy in European countries, with the responsibility for its exercise and for improving quality falling – within a "new public management" – on the head teacher. As has just been pointed out, in Spain, being one of the countries where management teams have the least organisational, pedagogical and management skills, we are currently in a process of real expansion of this autonomy. Given that circumstances (autonomy, responsibility for results) force us to go down this path, we are, therefore, in a situation of no return (Bolívar, 2009; 2010). If the teaching staff is key to improvement, head teachers must create the conditions and context so that teachers can improve their professional performance. Therefore, a critical point regarding the management and organization of schools in Spain is what the management does or can do to improve the teaching work of the teaching staff in their classroom and, consequently, the learning of the students (Bolívar and Moreno, 2006).

The Chilean Ministry of Education has developed a series of models, systems and legal modifications. In a laudable initiative, in 2005 it presented the Framework for Good Management (FGM), determining the professional competencies that managers must possess with the criteria and descriptors in four major areas (leadership, curricular management, management of coexistence and management of resources). Recognizing the undoubted progress that FGM represents, as indicated by various studies (Garay and Uribe, 2006), the normative framework and the inherited situation do not allow the adequate exercise of said leadership; therefore "it is key that it stops having a merely indicative character, to go through the effective policies that are developed daily, in particular by the sponsors, in relation to the managers (Weinstein, 2009).

Reforms have been initiated in the legal framework (powers and functions of directors of educational establishments, performance assignment, competition, etc.), as well as others in the area of evaluation and quality (National Performance Evaluation System, School Management Quality Assurance System and the Performance Evaluation System for Directors and Technical-Pedagogical Teachers). If these measures have not been adequately reflected in a substantial improvement in the quality of education, it is because directors do not exercise pedagogical leadership. This requires influencing this dimension, both at the regulatory level, in terms of training and selection-access to management. The Framework for Good Management, as well as the School Management Quality Assurance System, require educational leadership for an adequate implementation, beyond current administrative management. The upcoming extensive renewal of current managers, who, due to their advanced age (55.9 on average), especially in municipal establishments (Carbone, 2008), must be undertaken in the coming years, makes it advisable to attract the best pedagogical leaders. Making management an attractive profession and developing the skills for effective leadership are two lines of action recommended by the OECD (2008) in its well-known report (*Improving School Leadership*).

However, it is difficult to exercise educational leadership under current structures. Schools as organizations, as the sociology of teaching has clearly shown, are "weakly articulated," with each teacher functioning independently in his or her classroom, so that there are few, if not zero, possibilities for managers to supervise what happens in classes, and therefore, there are no "educational leadership" either. The inviolability of the choices and actions that teachers take in class regarding what they teach and how they do it, prevent any educational supervision by management. The atomization and fragmentation of teaching, the habitual individualism, in effect, impedes both collaboration and joint evaluation of what is planned at a general level and of specific

practice in the classroom. When the organization is weakly articulated and individual teaching practices depend on the voluntarism of each teacher and the "logic of trust," talking about pedagogical leadership is hardly meaningful, as Elmore (2000) comments, given that the institutional structure, in principle, prevents it. There is a resistance by teachers to any kind of supervision or guidance in their teaching, based on corporatism and individualism, which translates into a lack of intervention by the management. A long tradition, embedded in school culture (particularly in Secondary Education), means that the director of public schools does not usually know what happens in the classrooms; the information that he may have usually reaches him through indirect means. Given that isolation is one of the main enemies of improvement, a pedagogical management should contribute to creating a shared vision of the school.

If management is limited to keeping things running well (the first necessary level), leadership in a transformational sense involves involving others in a goal of change and improvement of the organization. Between resolving the most pressing management tasks and reacting to the numerous administrative requirements (paradoxically, increased, in a more complex way, in recent times), and inducing a proactive sense of collective action, the transformative role that management teams can play in the curricular innovation of a school is played (Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach, 1999). School management is mostly –in the best cases– transactional; in others, it is simply reactive to the numerous requirements of the different instances. Leadership must therefore be directed to transforming the usual ways of teaching into new learning scenarios. The management team must play a role between the transaction with colleagues and the needs for transformation that may be demanded from other instances. In this regard, Elmore (2008) says:

For a principal, improvement practice is largely about making visible what is not seen. Most people who hold leadership positions in schools are more or less socialized into a relatively dysfunctional culture. This socialization consists, among other things, of learning to view most aspects of the school and its culture as givens, focusing on a small number of things that the culture defines as possible . In order for principals to learn to actively manage the improvement process, all the implicit rules, norms, and conventions that constitute obstacles to action must be updated, analyzed, and modified (p. 51).

Discussion and conclusions

In their review of the Educational Reforms in Chile in recent decades (Weinstein and Muñoz, 2009) they state that the reforms have not given a significant role to the directors, who are not considered a key actor for the success of the changes. A break is required, in several dimensions, converting this body into a catalyst for change in schools. Within the critical review of the reform policies of the 90s and their results, the improvement of teaching in the classroom, as already pointed out by the Framework for Good Management, demands new ways of exercising the management of the establishments. In parallel in Spain, Bolívar (2006), based on a research carried out for the National Institute of Quality and Evaluation (INCE), points out how the elective model by the School Council, established in 1985, has not adequately resolved the management of schools, among other things due to the absence of candidates and their non-professional nature, advocating for pedagogical leadership. It is therefore surprising that educational policy has neglected for so long professionals who play such a decisive role in academic results. We will point out some conclusions that, in accordance with the previous analyses, may suggest proposals of interest for both countries.

Firstly, a priority objective of educational policies in the 21st century is to guarantee all students the essential learning that will enable them, without risk of exclusion, to integrate and actively participate in public life. Leadership in education is undoubtedly there to make this possible. We therefore need the best management teams that can exercise educational leadership. To achieve this, firstly, as suggested by the OECD report (Pont *et al* ., 2008), it is necessary to make school management an attractive profession. To attract the best candidates, we must promote remuneration, professional career and training.

Secondly, appropriate initial and in-service training is required. School leaders need specific training to respond to the increase in their roles and responsibilities, particularly on strategies to improve school results. The OECD report (Pont *et al* ., 2008) devotes Chapter 4 to "Developing skills for effective school leadership". The Framework for Good Leadership recognises the complex role of the principal and teachers who fulfil management functions today, which requires competencies in four major areas of action to properly exercise leadership and management of the educational establishment: leadership, curriculum management, resource management and management of the institutional climate and coexistence.

If school management has settled on a set of regularities that govern the organization of the centers, the new management is demanding a change of role that, precisely because there has been no organizational restructuring, prevents it. Hence the need for a leadership of the management that encourages, in a "transformative" way, the development of the school establishment as an organization. Making educational leadership (pedagogical or instructional) possible, therefore, demands changes in the current organizational structure. If the action of educational leadership should be directed at creating contexts for learning and established school structures rather favor isolated idiosyncratic values and individualistic learning, transformational

changes are necessary at the organizational level that make the desired actions possible. A transformational leadership, in the formulation of Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999), has as fundamental goals: to stimulate and develop a climate of collegiality, contribute to the professional development of its teachers, and increase the capacity of the school to solve its problems.

In turn, this leadership is not linked to occupying a formal position at the top of the pyramid, but rather the initiative and influence is distributed among all the members (distributed leadership) of the school. Assigning the initiative for change to one person, preventing the leadership of others, would prevent the organization from learning. From the "learning organizations" the need to distribute or disperse the dynamic tasks among the entire teaching staff is emphasized, as we have commented elsewhere (Bolívar, 2000). Ultimately, the capacity for change in a school will depend not on a top, but on the leadership of the management being diluted, so that - as a quality of the organization - it generates the multiple leadership of the members and groups, being - therefore - something shared. If we want teachers to assume a more professional role, with leadership functions in their respective areas and fields, they must assume direction and authority in their respective fields. On the other hand, setting up schools as professional learning communities that can enable learning through joint work.

The principal, in this sense, has to play a "transformative" role: stimulating and developing a climate of collegiality, contributing to the professional development of his teachers, and increasing the school's capacity to solve its problems. Building a collective vision and setting practical goals, creating collaborative cultures, high expectations of levels of achievement, and providing psychological and material support to staff are other dimensions of these transformative functions. The pedagogical leadership model has three important characteristics (Elmore, 2008):

> (1) It focuses on the practice of improving teaching quality and student achievement, (2) It deals with leadership as a distributed function rather than an activity-based role, and (3) It requires more or less continuous training and updating of knowledge and skills, both because the knowledge base of teaching practice is constantly changing and because the population of current leaders must be replenished (p. 58).

In any case, once we have definitively abandoned any longing for heroic leaders with exceptional qualities and skills and instead advocated for shared or distributed leadership, what we are dealing with is "sustainable leadership", as Hargreaves and Fink (2008) have maintained. The responsibility of ensuring a good education for all, in a context that increases differences and splits society and schools themselves between integrated and marginalized, demands a social and moral space that is sustainable over time, with the aim of promoting broad and deep learning for all citizens. Ultimately, what we are dealing with is how to guarantee the entire population in compulsory schooling, as a right and as a condition of citizenship, that set of basic knowledge and skills that make possible, without risk of exclusion, integration and active participation in public life. To do this, it is not enough to have some good schools that work well, but to make each school a great school. Leadership in teaching undoubtedly has a place in this task.

Grades

[1] Review: Ch. 6, titled “Leading to learn: School Leadership and Management Styles” (pp. 189-217).

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