

Improving Learner Outcomes: Quality Issues



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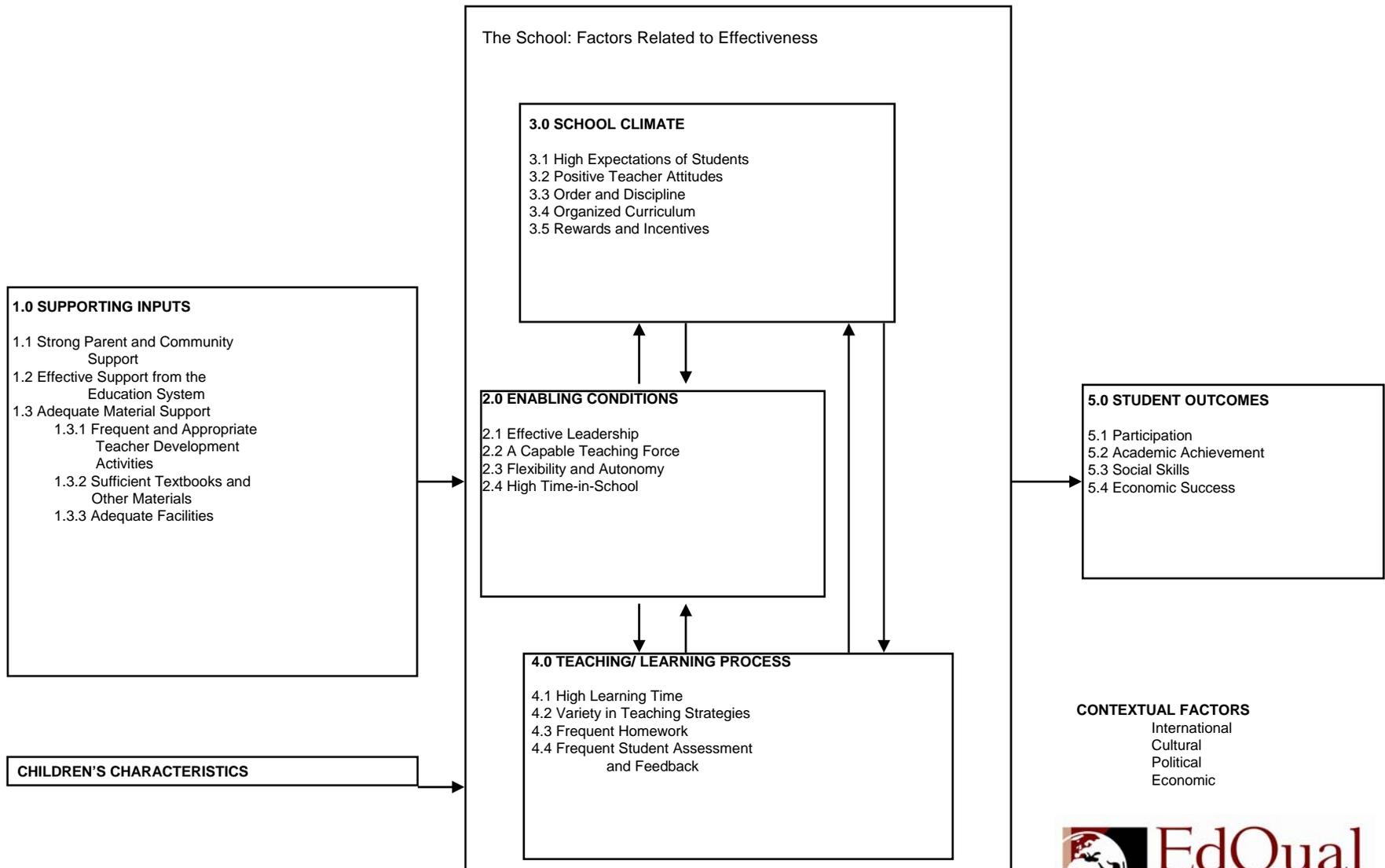
Outline

- Conceptual framework
- DfID support for quality
- Context matters
- Current issues
- A new approach
- Some priorities
- Discussion points

The Meaning of Quality

The central focus ought to be on the *processes* of teaching and learning in formal and non-formal settings that give rise to desired cognitive and affective outcomes and the range of inputs, policies, management and monitoring arrangements that are required to promote these.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework: Factors that Determine School Effectiveness



DfID support for the quality of basic education

- DfID investment in the quality of basic education is often subsumed within an overall emphasis on access issues;
- This is true of bilateral assistance and multilateral partnerships such as UNGEI and FTI;
- Investments in quality rarely linked to outcomes including those for disadvantaged learners;
- Emphasis on primary rather than lower secondary and pre-primary;
- Lack of coherence in quality investments between sectors e.g. focus on reading in early years; link between the quality of HE and that of basic education.

Existing priorities and context

| State | Emphasis within quality debate |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Post-conflict; newly founded | Subsistence, security, trust - school system, curriculum |
| Low Income | Access , livelihoods (coping; lasting; flexibility) - primary schools |
| Middle income | Continuation - secondary school Disadvantaged groups |
| OECD | Competencies , responsibility, life-long learning, sustainability |

A changing global context

- A focus on quality must take account of:
 - New demands for skills in a globalised economy;
 - Growing digital divide;
 - Increasing levels of poverty and inequality within and between countries and regions;
 - Globalisation impacts on different groups in different ways, e.g. men/women, rural/urban, minority/majority culture etc. ;
 - Increasing levels of conflict including religious conflict;
 - Growing environmental risk;
 - Increasing risks from disease;
- Need for a quality education to support sustainable livelihoods and well-being.

Key Current Issues

- Curriculum content
 - too much content,
 - not enough competences/skills,
 - generally out of date
 - Imported models have not taken account of context
- Teaching and learning
 - Pedagogical styles
 - Lack of instructional materials
 - Subject knowledge/pedagogical skills of teachers
 - Class sizes
 - LOI issues
 - Rigid assessment
- What can be done in large classes with few resources with teachers with limited subject/pedagogical knowledge and materials?

A new approach

- Interventions have largely been at input level – need to focus on *processes* of teaching and learning that a) raise achievement and b) close the achievement gap;
- Linking investments in quality to outcomes including those for disadvantaged groups;
- Move from ‘one size fits all’ to differentiated approach;
- This requires developing capacity to effectively monitor learner achievement and progress;
- Context really does matter enormously. Need to assess relevance of global reforms/ initiatives in local context and nurture the roots of local innovation and change;
- Need joined up approach across sub-sectors (ECD/BE/SE/HE) and sectors (e.g. health/ education)

Some priorities

- The recruitment, retention, motivation and development of suitably qualified teachers, particularly in rural areas;
- Developing effective practice in teaching language and literacy in the learners' first language and a language of wider communication;
- Increasing the relevance of outmoded curricula and assessment frameworks particularly in the areas of science, maths, technology, values education and life skills and in a way that reflects diversity;

Some priorities

- Developing the capacity of practitioners to make use of ICTs to support teaching and learning and for ICTs to become fully integrated into policy frameworks;
- To improve the quality and ensure the effective distribution of learning resources including text books;
- Developing capacity to effectively monitor quality including learner achievement and progress;
- To develop leadership capacity to implement and manage change at institutional level, to effectively mobilise community support and to make effective use of resources.

Putting quality on the change agenda: some discussion points

- What policy levers and incentives can be used to make quality issues more of a priority at national and sub-national level?
- How can quality issues assume a greater prominence in relation to initiatives such as FTI?
- How can we link quality more clearly to outcomes, both short term (learner achievement/skills) and long term (social/economic development)?
- How useful/ appropriate is it to think in terms of minimum standards in relation to education quality?