An important, but infrequently neglected aspect of educational change process concerns the implementation of educational policies. The mutual adaptation approach focuses on implementation as a process of learning by doing where as the technicist approach emphasizes the merit of technology and theory. For implementation to succeed, the mutual adaptation approach focuses on consensus and commitment, through active participation of all relevant actors and a considerable degree of discretion for implementers. Implementation effectiveness is facilitated through regular staff meetings, local staff training, local material development, administrative support, and incentives and commitment. This article concludes with a brief discussion of major problems associated with employing the mutual adaptation approach.

The purpose of this article is to discuss the underlying assumptions of the mutual adaptation approach and to describe its main components for effective implementation. In addition to these, some theoretical and practical problems associated with employing this approach are discussed.

"Implementation is a difficult topic, partly because it embraces a number of seemingly paradoxical notions", Walter Williams (1975, p. 564) states in his article implementation Analysis and Assessment. There has been increasing number of research projects completed in the policy implementation area since the late 1960s, and implementation is still in vogue. Much of the discussion has been focused on complexities of implementation. It has been argued that the immediate need is not for methodological breakthroughs, but for the application of simple techniques with some common sense (Meter & Horn, 1975; Williams, 1975).

The neglect of the implementation process as a field of scholarly attention in the early days of wide spread social and educational reform policies of 1960s can be traced to three general sources:

1. In most cases, there is an implicit assumption that the success of implementation depends upon the inherent merit of policy design and planning. If once policy has been formulated and designed, it will be implemented and its outcomes will be near to those objectives stated in the policy design (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978; McLaughlin, 1987; Meter & Horn, 1975).
POLICY İMPLEMENTATİON
Mutual Adaptation of Educational Policy

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An important, but infrequently neglected aspect of educational change process concerns the implementation of educational policies. The mutual adaptation approach focuses on implementation as a process of learning by doing whereas the technicist approach emphasizes the merit of technology and theory. For implementation to succeed, the mutual adaptation approach focuses on consensus and commitment through active participation of all relevant actors and a considerable degree of discretion for implementers. Implementation effectiveness is facilitated through regular staff meetings, local staff training, local material development, administrative support, and incentives and commitment. This article concludes with a brief discussion of major problems associated with employing the mutual adaptation approach.

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"Implementation is a difficult topic, partly because it embraces a number of seemingly paradoxical notions," Walter Williams (1975, p. 564) states in his article Implementation Analysis and Assessment. There has been increasing number of research projects completed in the policy implementation area since the late 1960s and early 1970s, and implementation is still in vogue. Much of the discussion has been focused on complexities of implementation. It has been argued that the immediate need is not for methodological breakthroughs, but for the application of simple techniques with some common sense (Meter & Horn, 1975; Williams, 1975).

The neglect of the implementation process as a field of scholarly attention in the early days of widespread social and educational reform policies of 1960s can be traced to three general sources:

1. In most cases, there is an implicit assumption that the success of implementation depends upon the inherent merit of policy design and planning. If once policy has been formulated and designed, it will be implemented and its outcomes will be near to those objectives stated in the policy design (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978; McLaughlin, 1987; Meter & Horn, 1975).
2. The idea of "rational man" and the growth of Planning Programming Budgeting Systems (PPBS) may have encouraged policy makers and policy analysts to ignore problems of policy implementation (Meter & Horn, 1975). Analytical techniques of PPBS emphasized the primary importance of setting alternative rational policy objectives and alternative means of reaching them rather than the importance of problems associated with delivering public services.

3. The methodological and conceptual difficulty of the task may have discouraged and constrained the detailed study of implementation as a process. Elmore (1978) refers to the current state of political and organizational theories as "conceptual anarchy". There are conflicting and contradictory theories for practical problems of implementing social and educational policies. Most often researchers are faced with empirical data constraints. The analysis of the implementation process as well as policy making raises serious boundary problems. It is difficult to define relevant actors and variables involved in the process.

Despite the neglect of the field because of some faulty assumptions about implementation process and conceptual or methodological constraints, experiences of failure in implementing large scale social and educational reform policies have made it necessary to question traditional technicist models and underlying assumptions of policy implementation. Underlying assumptions and models of implementing educational and social policies were challenged by number of studies undertaken during the 1970s. McLaughlin (1987) points out that "initial surprise about the myth of the rational man and the immutability of implementation issues was heralded by Pressman and Wildawsky in 1973" (p. 177).

As a result of these circumstances, a number of scholars have developed a new approach to policy implementation primarily based on findings from Rand Studies of "Head Start" and other policies identified with the "War on Poverty" in the United States. This approach is well known as the "mutual adaptation approach".

**Mutual Adaptation of Policy**

The technicist approach and the mutual adaptation approach reflect two contradictory views of policy implementation. In fact, the emergence of mutual adaptation approach may be seen as a response to failures of technicist approach in the implementation of large scale social and educational policies. Each one of these two approaches identifies implementation problems arising from three opposite general sources as listed in Figure 1.

In view of the technicist approach, the success of a new practice depends on the inherent merit of technology itself and design of the policy. Therefore, outcomes of implementation are predictable from the technology of innovation. Policy and design specifications should be considered before the final decision on policy alternatives. The technicist approach requires that goals, objectives and operational steps must be completely specified and
**Figure 1. Sources of Implementation Problems**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technicist Approach</th>
<th>Mutual Adaptation Approach</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>• Ambiguity in policy goals resulting in or caused by misunderstanding, confusion, or value conflict.</td>
<td>• Over specification and rigidity of goals and objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participation of too many actors with overlapping authority.</td>
<td>• Failure to engage all relevant actors in policy making and planning process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Implementers resistance, ineffectualness, or inefficiency.</td>
<td>• Excessive control over implementers or deliverers of social services.</td>
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discretion for implementers at all levels should be minimized. Implementation plans are assumed to have clear and detailed objectives, clean lines of authority and responsibility and limited participation in policy making. Educational change and teaching-learning process is thought of as a technological process which can be replicated once it is pre-tested and well designed (Berman, 1980, 1981). Success of implementation depends heavily both on the clarity and specificity of the operation package. There must be detailed instructions and firm guidance throughout (VWilliams, 1975).

From the perspective of the mutual adaptation approach, policy should be modified constantly, defined, re-defined and revised in the process of implementation. In other words, this model considers implementation as a process of learning by doing which requires active participation of all relevant actors. Excessive control by way of standard operating procedures and detailed prescriptive programs can have counter-effects on implementers which may lead to ineffective implementation.

Berman and McLaughlin (1978a) identify the basic characteristic of effective implementation as the "mutual adaptation" of technology and implementation strategies to institutional settings in which events occurring after the adoption of technology determine outcomes to a large extent. These events can not be accurately predicted from the content of policy itself. Implementers at various levels of the organizational system respond to policy in quite idiosyncratic, frustratingly unpredictable, if not downright resistant ways (McLaughlin, 1977). The merit of policy design neither predicts the responses of street-level bureaucrats, nor assures that certain outcomes will be obtained. Rand study indicates that not only program outcomes fail short of stated objectives in many cases, but also enormous
variability is observed in what constitutes an effective program in different organizational or community settings (Berman and McLaughlin, 1975).

Street-level bureaucrats respond in different ways to the same sets of policy objectives (Weatherley & Lipsky, 1977). Although every organization has a formal bureaucratic system to control implementers' actions in performing required tasks, implementers interact directly with their clients in the course of their jobs. They have substantial discretion in the execution of their work. Within the limitations of personal and organizational resources, implementers have to find ways to accommodate the demands placed upon them by their clients. Implementers develop their own practical solutions to problems and practices to perform required tasks through "modifying goals, rationing services, asserting priorities, and limiting or controlling clientele" (Weatherley & Lipsky, 1977, p. 172). Thus, policy is reformulated, redefined, and revised constantly through informal bargaining and negotiation by implementers in the process of mutual adaptation.

One of the critical assumptions of the mutual adaptation perspective is that there is no one best implementation method. Strategies must be contingent upon situational parameters (Berman, 1980). The organizational, political, social and legal contexts in which a policy is implemented profoundly affects its chances for success (Weatherley and Lipsky, 1977; Berman and McLaughlin, 1978). The context varies not only at the micro level, but also at the macro level. However, the overall implementation of policy exclusively reflects local differences. That is why characteristics of local settings must be carefully examined in identifying appropriate implementation strategies. However, the generalization of situational parameters is somewhat problematic. The dimensions of policy situations that provide a general guideline for matching strategies to situations are illustrated in Figure 2.

If the unstructured situation types are present in an implementation process, then mutual adaptation strategies would be appropriate for implementation. These situation types are descriptive conditions to some extent for policy contexts. The scope of change required by policy may be either incremental or major in any policy situation. Despite the presumption that the smaller the scope of change, the more likely effective is implementation, Berman (1980) reports that:

... projects demanding little change in teacher behavior were likely to be implemented in a pro-forma fashion, whereas ambitious change efforts that engaged the sense of professionalism among teachers could be made to work with appropriate implementation strategies (p. 215).

The degree of conflict or consensus over policy goals and objectives is another critical factor in the implementation process. Since the goals of educational systems are unclear, conflicting and contradictory, and politically determined, conflict over policy goals and objectives is expected to be great in most situations. As pointed out by Berman (1980), the mutual adaptation perspective "seeks only general, perhaps vague, or even tacit
agreement on goals”. If there is not an agreement on goals, then "agreement on means would suffice" (p. 211). Through negotiation and bargaining among interest groups or relevant actors, people having different values or interests may be able to compromise to reach common acceptable sets of objectives or means.

**Figure 2. Situational parameters and types of policy situations.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situational Parameters</th>
<th>Situation type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Structured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope of Change</td>
<td>Incremental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certainty of technology or theory</td>
<td>Certain within risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict over goals and means</td>
<td>Low conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of need for change</td>
<td>Clear to all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations of beneficiaries regarding involvement in implementation</td>
<td>High expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure of institutional setting</td>
<td>Tightly coupled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability of environment</td>
<td>Stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of the organization</td>
<td>Large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentration of Knowledge</td>
<td>Located at the top</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pace of change</td>
<td>Fast</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:** derman, Paul (1980).

The clarity and specificity of goals and objectives, technology or its underlying causal theory, and the need for change determines the extent of mutual adaptation. Multiple or confusing goals lead to failure by complicating the implementation process. Programs survive that adopt to the environment over time (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984, p. 116).

**Major Components of Adaptive Implementation Strategies**

**Local Staff Training:** Berman and McLaughlin (1976) describe local staff training "as a key factor" affecting implementation outcomes. Amount, timing and the type of training can be determined by the implementation approach employed for a particular situation. It may be logical to consider that training is more important in complex and unspecified projects than in projects where details of the actual implementation are provided by policy makers (Greenwood and others, 1975). Although pre-service training can help users develop competencies necessary for successful implementation of the policy, concentrated pre-service training may be ineffective in most
Poliey implementation

Although schools and teachers need help in day to day operations, highly specified and "narrowly technical" assistance is found unworkable or dismissed by local staff in many cases. Assistance by outsiders is usually ineffective if it is considered as an input rather than as an integrative part of implementation efforts (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978a, 1978b). The Rand Study indicates that most teachers who participate in innovative projects perceive local staff training as a part of successful implementation, but they complain about outside consultants in that their assistance is not related to particular problems experienced at the classroom level (McLaughlin, 1976). Thus, ongoing staff training supported by local sources rather than direct technical assistance by outsiders may be more likely to increase implementation success.

Regular Staff Meetings: Regular staff meetings can be useful, especially if implementation project requires change in organizational behavior and day to day classroom activities. When regular staff meetings are associated with staff training, project staff can have opportunity to share ideas, to discuss problems and to support each other (McLaughlin, 1976). As pointed out by Berman and McLaughlin (1978a), regular meetings concentrated on day to day operation of the project provide:

... (a) a forum for the feedback necessary to adaptation -which requires online planning activities-; (b) an opportunity to share success, problems and suggestions; and (c) a vehicle for building the staff morale and cohesiveness important to effective implementation" (p. 29).

Greenwood and others (1975) also state that frequent and regular staff meetings associated with staff training reduce friction within the staff, increase staff morale and establish a sense of project purpose and cohesiveness.

Local Material Development: Local material development activities contribute to effective implementation. For the project staff, local material development provides them with a feeling that their professional judgment is valued. It also gives a sense of ownership and an opportunity to practice concepts of the change project (Greenwood and others, 1975; Berman and McLaughlin, 1978a).

Material development is considered as a central focus for adaptive implementation. Commercially produced materials may not fit the particular needs of implementers. However, even when well designed, commercially produced materials fitting projects needs are available, local material
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development is more desirable. For example, Greenwood and others (1975) report that when project materials are developed at local level, change projects are more effectively implemented than those projects where prepackaged and commercially produced materials are used. When projects materials are not produced at local level, the staff do not internalize the concepts of change projects, and they are not able to "create spirit of project and cohesiveness" (p. 35).

**Administrative Support:** Generating external support from community and internal support from teachers and administrators is necessary for effective implementation (Berman, 1981). In view of adaptive implementation, the concept of support assumes that information on new practice is necessary, but not a sufficient antecedent to the implementation of a particular innovation or change. Without a supportive administrative attitude, the process of implementation will not get under way (Berman and McLaughlin, 1974). When principals oppose innovative projects, implementation outcomes tend to be lower in terms of perceived success and student outcomes. Active support of principals lead to a higher level of project goal attainment, improvement in student achievement, and more extensive continuation of project methods and materials (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978b).

Greenwood and others (1975) report that administrative support at all levels of the district significantly effects the course of project implementation. When principals do not give sufficient support to teachers, the project fails to achieve its goals. They concluded that administrative support is especially vital if the project is highly complex and change in existing practices is substantial.

The support from the principal creates an organizational climate which increases teacher morale, a factor which may be considered as a prerequisite for effective implementation. Typically, the principal sets the educational style of the school and it is almost impossible to implement and sustain a substantial change without formal and informal support from the principal.

**incentives and Commitment:** Intangible professional and psychological incentives are more effective than tangible incentives in motivating implementers. Although tangible incentives are more frequently used, they do not show long term significant effects on teacher motivation. Teachers spend extra time and effort if they believe that they can improve their professional effectiveness throughout the implementation of an educational innovation (Berman and others, 1979). Berman and McLaughlin (1978a) state that "extrinsic rewards such as extra pay cannot stimulate the commitment of teachers if they do not see it to be in their professional self interest" (p. 27). Greenwood and others (1975) also find that tangible extrinsic incentives do "little or nothing to secure good project implementation" (p. 37). Continued incentives for innovative behavior are necessary if classroom changes are to be maintained long enough for the
new practice to become routine. Classroom changes rarely become routine if teachers do not continue to receive incentives (Corbet, 1982).

The mutual adaptation perspective suggests that the commitment of individual actors significantly affects the implementation effectiveness. A classical study done by Lortie (1975) on school teachers indicates that much of teachers' work motivation rotates around actual instruction of students rather than long term goals. Thus, psychic rewards, especially ones that are linked to achievement with students, significantly affects teacher motivation and commitment. Commitment can be defined as the strength of an individual's identification and degree of involvement in project implementation. Commitment is characterized by (a) a strong belief in and acceptance of project goals and objectives; (b) willingness to spent extra time and effort for project implementation; (c) cooperation with others participating in the project; and (d) willingness to continue to practice new methods or new ways of teaching (Oliver and others, 1988, p. 122).

Discussion and Conclusions

The mutual adaptation approach assumes that general agreement may be, reached on ambiguous policy objectives through bargaining and negotiation. This assumption may oversimplify the conflicting and contradictory values of participants. Williams (1975) argues that "if the directional guides of policy design are so broadly nebulous that wide agreement is achieved simply because of their vagueness, we have the usual problem of unarticulated goals and it is hard to see how incentives would work" (p. 542). Elmore (1978) also points out that a strong bias toward consensus and cooperation may lead us to ignore or downplay the role of conflict, conditions of dissent, and violence in organizations.

The mutual adaptation approach requires autonomy and control for implementers over their own work, participation in decision making, and commitment to the purpose of organization. Street-level bureaucrats need and have a considerable degree of discretion in performing required tasks in policy implementation process. However, there is a problem of power which is distributed in a top-down order in hierarchically structured educational organizations. Under these circumstances, autonomy and control for implementers over their own work and their participation in decisions affecting them becomes a very complex issue. Furthermore, the model does not directly confront the issue of "what happens in the organization when control, routine and consensus fail" (Elmore, 1978, p. 217).

The mutual adaptation approach requires the maximization of intangible incentives for implementers through participation, control over their own work and interpersonal relations. However, the bureaucratic structure of educational organizations limits these things for people in lower levels of the organization (Elmore, 1978).

Elmore (1978) suggests that the capacity to implement originates at the bottom of the organizations, not at the top and variations in implementation outcomes cannot be explained by the Standard devices of hierarchical
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control. He points out that "implementation failures are not the result of poor management control or persistence of bureaucratic routines, but arise out of a lack of consensus and commitment among implementers" (p. 212). Top level administrators have very limited control over main components of effective implementation. However, administrators claim to control, direct and shape the implementers behavior. Although top level administrators provide and control resources that implementers need to perform required tasks, "they cannot exert direct control over the factors that determine the success or failure of that work" (Elmore, 1978, p.215).

- The mutual adaptation approach focuses on interest groups, individuals, and implementers at the point of actual service delivery. For implementation to succeed, the implementers must "learn it, shape it, and claim it for their own" (Berman, 1981, p. 261). For implementers to learn, shape, and claim the change project for their own, they need to participate in local staff training tied to specific operational aspects of the project, regular staff meetings for establishing a sense of ownership and cohesiveness, and local material development. Furthermore, implementers must receive continued administrative support from principals and administrators at all levels, and incentives to build individual commitment. This approach does not offer any readily available prescriptions which may be put into practice across various organizational settings or policy situations, but it can offer successful strategies to enhance the self-starting capacity of the smallest unit rather than seeking more complicated methods of bureaucratic control in a top-down order. As a practically oriented approach, it also recognizes the fact that the appropriateness of strategies depends on the conditions and context of the particular educational change project.

References


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