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Public management of educational changes : problems and contradictions

I.A. SEMENETS-ORLOVA

National academy for public administration under the President of Ukraine, Kyiv,
Ukraine

Abstract

The author has analyzed the problem aspects of public administration of educational change in modern Ukraine. Special frameworks of public administration of educational change in an information society have been determined. The author has analyzed the categories of the implementation process of educational change. The author has explored the key features of external environment of such activity, formed by regulatory acts for settling relations in a particular area. The author has highlighted a set of contradictions of public management of educational change and recommendations for state agencies regarding the organization of an effective process of implementation of educational change as a social and political process with an emphasis on peculiar properties of the educational change.

Key words: educational change; public management of educational change; education innovation; education renovation; education reform.

Державне управління освітніми змінами : проблеми та протиріччя

I.A. СЕМЕНЕЦЬ-ОРЛОВА

Національна академія державного управління при Президентові України, Київ,
Україна

Авторське резюме

У статті здійснено аналіз проблемних аспектів державного управління освітніми змінами в сучасній Україні. Автор визначає особливості державного управління освітніми змінами в інформаційному суспільстві, аналізує категорії актуальної практики освітніх змін. У роботі досліджено ключові особливості зовнішнього середовища освітніх змін, що формується нормативно-правовими актами, які врегульовують відносини в даній галузі. Автор виділяє суперечності державного управління освітніми змінами та окреслює рекомендації для державних органів щодо організації ефективного процесу реалізації освітніх змін як соціально-політичного процесу з акцентом на специфічних властивостях освітніх перетворень.

Ключові слова: освітня зміна; публічне управління освітніми змінами; освітня інновація; оновлення освіти; реформа освіти.

Государственное управление образовательными изменениями: проблемы и противоречия

И.А. СЕМЕНЕЦЬ-ОРЛОВА

Национальная академия государственного управления при Президенте Украины,
Киев, Украина

Авторское резюме

В статье осуществлен анализ проблемных аспектов государственного управления об-

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разовательными изменениями в современной Украине. Автор определяет особенности государственного управления образовательными изменениями в информационном обществе, анализирует категории современной практики образовательных изменений. В работе исследованы ключевые особенности внешней среды образовательных изменений, которые формируются нормативно-правовыми актами. Автор выделяет противоречия государственного управления образовательными изменениями и определяет рекомендации для государственных органов по организации эффективного процесса реализации образовательных изменений как социально-политического процесса с акцентом на специфических свойствах образовательных преобразований.

Ключевые слова: образовательное изменение; публичное управление образовательными изменениями; образовательная инновация; обновления образования; реформа образования.

Issue formulation. The main aim of educational changes is not only enhancement of education quality, but also the increase of efficiency and competitiveness of education for a person, a society, and a government. Nowadays, a need for prospective innovations is a strategic need of the society, which prepares for becoming an educational environment for everyone.

Due to the multiplicity of motives that govern the organizational behavior and the behavior of individual members of changes, and competitive incentives and priorities that take place at considerable politicization of education update issue, it is impossible to accurately predict the results of innovative content of this educational policy, which is objectified in government as educational changes.

Educational reform in modern Ukraine coincided with the reform of the public service. It significantly complicated the process of designing and implementing the educational changes, increased feelings of uncertainty among educational administrators, influenced the emergence of a number of contradictional trends in the system of transformation of Ukrainian education. Given the urgency and impetuosity, timeliness of the initiated reforms, the systematic analysis of the public management of educational changes seems topical.

Analysis of the latest researches and publications. Having analyzed practical experience of educational change administration, the author determined that this issue is insufficiently researched in the Ukrainian science. However, in the first and second decades of the XXI century

some thorough papers have appeared. Numerous domestic and foreign scientists take notice of a matter of the innovations. It is worth mentioning papers of Ukrainian scholars such as V. Kremen, S. Nikolaienko, V. Hromovyi, T. Finikov, L. Parashchenko and western theoreticians of educational changes such as M. Barber [3], T. Kovalskyi, P. McLaren, F. Reimers, S. Sarason, T. Sergiovanni, and T. Timar.

An article purpose is to identify problems and contradictions of the contemporary transitional phase of educational reform on the basis of a comprehensive analysis of the public management practice of the national education renovation processes.

Main material presentation. Due to challenges, which threat modern Ukraine under conditions of the protracted social and economic crisis, a matter of innovative fulfillment of education is of considerable importance. Theoreticians M. Ponomar'ov and B. Smyrnov point out that due to the large size and complex structure of the educational sphere, its relationship and interaction with other public policy areas it is difficult to implement planned changes [5, p. 10].

One of the central places in the methodology of studying the educational changes is taken by contradictions inherent to them. The contradictions of educational change and educational change management can be defined as a natural presence in the field of innovation of the opposing interests, assessments, actions, parameters, trends, forms that are both objective and subjective or of a mixed na-

ture. According to N. Ponomarev, innovative contradictions can be of slowing (generating effective resistance to change) or accelerating nature (fair competition in the organizational niches that becomes the basis of benchmarking tools) [5]. That's why a modern manager must be able to overcome the slowing character and to use the accelerating one of the innovative contradictions.

In our opinion, critical element of the effective public governance of the educational changes is the external environment of such activity, formed by regulatory acts for settling relations in a particular area. The main piece of legislation that clearly defines areas and forms of state educational change is the National Strategy of education development in Ukraine until 2021 (hereinafter – the National Strategy), approved by the Decree of the President of Ukraine on June 25, 2013 [7]. The Strategy defines development of thinking, based on the future and postulates transition from a society of knowledge vital to the society of competent citizens as the key task of the XXI century education. Pressing educational challenges that must be overcome, outlined in the National Strategy, are: limited access to quality education for certain categories of the population, insufficient development of public self-governance of educational institutions, inadequate mechanisms of involving to education management and its public updating.

The idea of the need to involve to education management the local community is designated as a priority area in the National Strategy (quite progressive document by its content) has contradictions, for example, with the process of competition on the opening of demonstration schools in the regions of Ukraine. In the spring of 2016 in the process of such involvement only one representative from the society was allowed (by the way, beyond understanding, a representative of parent, student, business community or civil society institutions it should be), along with numerous representatives from different authorities [4]. It leveled the right of local community to contribute to

decision to open the demonstration schools in the region and clashed with state decentralization reform, proclaimed in Ukraine a year ago [6].

The National Strategy stressed that processes of certain socio-economic instability (unstable economy, the limited amount of resources, stratification of the financial situation of families, rejection of the new reforms by the part of the society) entail a number of risks that could complicate the implementation of the goals and objectives of the strategy [7]. It should be noted that if these problems are to some extent relevant for Ukraine in 2013, «unstable in its stability», when the document was adopted, it is now, in terms of military conflict in the eastern Ukraine and the rapid devaluation of the Ukrainian currency, that happened in 2014, protracted energy crisis, rising unemployment, outlined problems become more actual. Context of the educational changes management became more scarce: time reduced for urgent reforms, covering of the development expenditures for educational reforms has become more unstable. However, more important is that the education authorities have become more institutionally unprepared to solve new complex tasks, ensure coordination of all departments and institutions through the coincidence in time of education reform and public service reform. Protracted political crisis in Ukraine against the background of military aggression negatively affect the process of renovation of the educational legislation (as described in the Strategy as a priority), slowing it.

It is natural that more than half of Educators appear unprepared for educational innovation in the deficit context, on the verge of their own survival. Australian scientist G. Stanley points out that adequate funding of educational change is the motive for their introduction to their members [1].

The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine does not fully («within available budget funds») provide many educational standards legislation on social security for teachers. It seems difficult to understand how in these conditions we can bring up

the generation of teachers-innovators needed to support the sustainability of educational change. The feelings of uncertainty and anxiety through semi-closed nature of the conceptualization and design of educational changes without proper broad public discussion, the necessary preparatory stage, experimental stage and large-scale monitoring studies, the results of which would enrich with evidence the domestic educational discourse and add the confidence in the efficiency of changes in the Ukrainian realities, strengthen the unwillingness of teachers to innovations. Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine engaged many foreign consultants and experts working in contexts different from Ukrainian activity to the development of innovations. Empirical research of the original state of the educational system of Ukraine has not been carried out. Much time was lost due to a government crisis during the tenure of Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk.

In our opinion, such deficit context of the educational changes must be compensated through additional stimulating management of the system and its components. Otherwise, the likelihood of successful change seems small.

The National Strategy for Development of Education determines that the strategic directions of the state policy in education should be [7]:

1) up-to-date renovation of the education system (adoption of a new framework law of Ukraine «On education» was announced in 2013, but is not adopted yet – author);

2) creating and providing the opportunities for implementation of various educational models (in fact the creation of schools of various types and forms of property linked to the ability of local communities to provide such capital expenditures, therefore, this rule can not be implemented in the economic stagnation region – author);

3) development of research and innovation activities in education, improving the quality of education based on innovative and modern material and technical basis of the education system (the gap in

access to quality education in Ukraine still grows, as with the introduction of educational grants on 28.12.2014 expenditure on the development of education has been shifted on local budgets – author).

Neoliberal economic reforms that were a priority of public policy of Ukraine in the aftermath of the events of civil protest called Revolution of Dignity, on the one hand, enable support for Ukraine from the International Monetary Fund, and on the other - do not solve the pressing social problems of society. In such circumstances, customers of alternative educational services as well as the resources to develop them are becoming less. In particular, private secondary education institutions in the region are forced to close, because currently state does not provide any such support.

The National strategy postulates the need to improve the system of training, retraining and advanced training of pedagogical and scientific-pedagogical staff of the educational system [7]. Now, when the current system of management, including education, under the new law «On civil service» is frozen in anticipation of staffing reductions, and the new one in the context of decentralization reform has not yet been formed, it seems difficult to predict the motivation to self-development of the employee because he/she does not understand his/her place in the system of the future.

In general, the text of the National Strategy often uses the concept of «innovation» in the sense of progressive educational change, unlike the law «On education». However, the gap between declared in the document and the actual state of the system is now enormous, although the adoption of the document was three years ago, and in the developed Western world, the postulated ideas were embodied in practice even 15-25 years ago (including expanding types of public schools and public education services range [3]). The process is significantly slowed by the lack of continuity in the vision and implementation of education reforms among the Ukrainian elite, which is in the process of prompt changes. Of course, frequent gov-

ernment crises are commonplace of the transition state, but within the vision of common views of the socially significant reforms, in our opinion, it is critically important to keep the consistency and continuity. In the National Strategy some goals are described too blurry, in this case, a more accurate description, using certain empirical data outlining the expected results would have significantly strengthened the importance of the document. In general, for the deficit context of the educational changes, it seems valuable to identify at the national level several most foreground directions of the educational reform, that are currently enough secured with the resources to some extent (material, time, personnel), and to start from them a consistent course of implementing the educational reforms.

Innovations not secured with resources will have more negative effects than positive, because, being under constant threat of failure will increase persistent resistance among the participants of the educational changes to any innovative initiatives in the future [1].

Circumstances of the innovative activity in education are as follows:

1) those determining actions of a subject – factors of perception of a potential subject of the innovation: readiness of authorities to renovate the managerial activity; compliance of the authorities with the changes that will occur; readiness to a risk of the authoritative status loss; quality of the interaction with innovative groups; the ability to select and accumulate new ideas;

2) group perception of the proposed novelties: a degree of involvement of organization participants at different stages of initiation of a decision-making process; quality of channels of information transferring (communication); nature of control and a managerial influence on innovation groups; professionalism, competency, and quality of training staffs, who participate in the innovative groups; stratification of the structure of administrative staffs and the innovative groups.

3) those stipulating innovative processes: properties of a managerial innova-

tion; quality of regulation of innovative processes on the part of an innovation subject and the innovation groups; compliance of the organizational structure and organization management system with the innovative process;

4) those determining the social and adaptive basis of an organization: innovation culture, a policy of implementation of changes, staff policy, quality of information support of the changes.

According to Australian scientists the main factors of implementation of an educational change in education are [2]:

- necessity of scientific and advisory support;

- gradual nature of processes of implementation and monitoring (because of a considerable risk to be affected by social and psychological factors compared to other educational novelties);

- complex application of the innovations;

- transparency and clarity of a managerial problem and results, which are planned to achieve;

- monitoring and estimation of risks;

- providing necessary informational flows;

- formation of unified innovative terminology at an organization;

- formation of the conducive social and adaptive basis, social encouragement of the innovative activity of staffs.

Conclusions of the research and prospects of further researches in this direction. General problems of management of the education innovative activity in Ukraine encompass the following ones: absence of sufficient funding of the innovative activity; prevalence of educational changes of organizational character; slow increase of a knowledge level of pedagogical staff being participators of educational changes; exclusion of a stage of approbation of the changes due to a lack of time and fund saving; absence of sufficient motivation for educational transformation into its participator; non-systematic character, insufficient efficacy, and compelled nature of innovative processes.

Of course, the current Ukrainian society needs reforms of the catch-up charac-

ter, but in education as a complex social organization, that is not possible, if not perfectly woven into converting to other sectors and complementing each other.

The following types of innovation contradictions in education both at the educational institution and the general transit society can be distinguished:

1) internal political, manifested in the dynamics over the choice of strategies and main actors of change management (for example, fighting between supporters of a strong state support for education and liberal supporters of innovative approaches to solving problems of education, the contradictions between the public and the shadow policies in the field of the educational reforms between subjects of political and administrative activity in education, serving for educational changes that differ by type, rate, priority implementation, other parameters);

2) the contradictions between the goals, objectives, priorities, resources and personnel management of the educational changes and similar components of the everyday educational activities management; the contradictions between the subjects of public educational policy and administrative entities in the field of education renovation due to differences in their interests, goals, conditions, over the choice of forms and methods of innovative transformations;

3) the contradictions of the education-

al changes management content: between the desire of the teachers to realize themselves in teaching and the need to engage in various types of organizational work; between the growing volume of high speed information the student has to learn and limited capacity to implement it in given terms by imperfect means of education; between the innovation potential of individual business units of the institution; between the desire to increase the effectiveness of learning process through educational innovation and temporary destabilization of the educational environment, descent in the quality of the educational process during its renovation;

4) the economic contradictions – appear in the context of the economic interests and mechanisms of action of each member of the educational changes as well as between their interests and the mechanisms of the election directly, evaluation and distribution of the educational changes, determination of the methods and the size of their motivations, sources and methods of funding of innovative programs. If the state chooses a course to create an innovative economy, during this period it should support the innovation orientation of education with all the resources;

5) social contradictions – the contradictions between the leaders-carrier of changes and passive part of the staff of the educational institutions.

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*Semenets-Orlova Inna A. – PhD in political science, doctoral candidate
National academy for public administration under the President of Ukraine
Address: 20, Ezhena Pottier Str., Kyiv, 03057, Ukraine*

*Семенець-Орлова Інна Андріївна – кандидат політичних наук, докторант
Національна академія державного управління при Президентові України
Адреса: 03057, Київ, вул. Єжена Пот'є, 20*

*Семенец-Орлова Инна Андреевна – кандидат политических наук, докторант
Национальная академия государственного управления при Президенте Украины
Адрес: 03057, Киев, ул. Эжена Потье, 20
E-mail: innaorlova@ukr.net*