

**Preparing Educational Organizations for International Education Programs: A  
Mexican Context**

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### **Abstract**

Like many beginner educators, I was eager for the opportunity to teach abroad and gain first hand experience in the implementation process of an International Education Program. After graduating from an Ontario education program, I left Canada to expand my knowledge and experience in the education field and taught abroad in Guadalajara, Mexico. There, I continued my learning at two private schools that are well known in the city to locals and foreigners for their incorporation of new International Education Programs. During these years, I collaborated with educators, administrators, parents and community members from countries all over the world to effectively realize an authentic and progressive international community, where students, families and staff members are exposed to a variety of perspectives, cultures, religions, and languages. It is through this, that I have become aware of the successes and the difficulties these educational organizations faced in the implementation process due to a lack of a prior profound analysis of their organizational readiness. In this paper I claim that implementing a new and effective International Education Program requires a prior organizational analysis to ensure the presence of organizational readiness, foundational learning concepts, and strategic planning. Without these pillar requirements, there may be a hindrance to the program's vision and objectives. An analysis of organizational readiness and assurance of prerequisites will allow students, staff and school community members to expand the academic experience by learning with a global perspective in an authentic multicultural learning environment. It is through the effective implementation of international programs, that our communities may be enhanced and global citizenship may be fostered.

*Keywords:* International Education Program, private schools, Mexico, organizational analysis, program implementation

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

Throughout my life, I have had many opportunities to travel and explore the world on a personal and professional level. From a young age, I travelled with family and friends to countries around the globe where I began to be exposed to different cultures and all that is encompassed within them. While I continued to gain new perspectives, learn new languages, and expand my worldview on personal trips, I further delved into the exploration of communities around the world through a variety of International Education Programs. In high school, I was able to participate in a two month exchange program to France. There, I developed a greater global perspective through connecting with a different society and belief system. This educational experience led me to later expand my international education by participating on two more excursions abroad in high school: a mission trip to India and a mission trip to Nicaragua.

As I continued to better understand and embrace cultural differences and similarities around the world, I grew more and more appreciative of International Education Programs and the opportunities they were providing me. For that reason, I sought to resume this form of education in University and studied a Trilingual International Bachelor of Arts. It was through this program, that I was able to participate in a three month internship in Uganda and a six month exchange program to Mexico.

After returning from Mexico and completing my International Education Program, I reflected on the value of an effective International Education Program. In order to gain experience in this subject in a new and different perspective from that of a student, I returned to Mexico to pursue a Masters of Education and a career in teaching.

### **Developing My Interest in this Topic**

My teaching experiences in a Mexican private elementary school, in addition to what I have learned throughout the M.Ed. program at Thompson Rivers University have provoked

my passion for developing global citizens. While an International Education Program has the potential to promote and foster an environment for this type of learning, it must be implemented effectively in order to do so.

In the course, *Understanding and Managing Conflict*, I gained perspective on the relationship between conflict and change and the role of the leader, as well as became aware of the Triangle of Satisfaction Model and the importance of visioning/goal setting in school leadership. These topics directly relate to how an educational organization may better reflect on its challenges and seek strategies to be more effective when implementing a new International Education Program.

In the course, *Educational Management*, I gained perspective on managing human resources, budgets, school operations, law and order, diversity, and change. Furthermore, I became educated on strategies regarding communication throughout the process of managing people. These factors, as those concerning conflict and change, must also all be considered prior to and throughout the implementation process of the program.

Finally, in the course, *Principles and Process of Educational Leadership*, I was introduced to current theories regarding concepts of leadership found in educational settings. This provided me with a better understanding of the processes involved in developing strong relationships, encouraging team building, facilitating conflict resolution, encouraging innovation and change, and effective organization. This course motivated me to consider how each style of leadership implemented in the new program process, would present unique challenges and strengths.

### **Significance of the Topic**

As our world becomes smaller, countries and communities are becoming more connected. Individuals have greater opportunity for travel and businesses have greater opportunity for operating on an international level. The implementation of a new International Education Program becomes more important as people increasingly travel to

and work with other communities worldwide. It is through the effective implementation of programs such as these that students may gain a global perspective and learn about different cultures, perspectives, ethnic groups, religions, and languages. An International Education Program has the ability to foster valuable principles in the upcoming generations. Education for empathy, education for solidarity, education for intercultural respect, and education against the nationalistic way of thinking will support student acquisition and performance of abilities that will prepare them for human communication and interaction around the world (Kesidou, 2019).

While an International Education Program is significant in the process of enhancing our society, as is its need for an initial organizational analysis prior to the implementation. If the program is implemented without the essential prior considerations, there is great risk of decreasing levels of students' learning and success, teachers' and leaders' cooperation, motivation and leadership, and school community and community members collaboration and understanding.

### **Presenting the Argument**

In this paper, I claim that implementing a new and effective International Education Program requires a prior organizational analysis to ensure the presence of organizational readiness, foundational learning concepts, and strategic planning. First, the school's analysis must assess their organization's level of readiness by determining facilitators and hindrances to the implementation of the program of the individual, internal context and external context. At these levels, research suggests that the use of the SWOT analysis in the initial organizational analysis stage is essential in assessing and implementing effective change (Pickton & Wright, 1998). It is in the process of assuring organizational readiness that the underlying meaning of the collected data may result in change and therefore in the development of global citizens (Deardorff, Psyarchik & Yun, 2009). Next, the school's



analysis must make certain that the organizational learning components of the program are present. Outstanding education is fostered when an aligned system of education is in place, comprising an international curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment, international recognition, and global community (Cambridge International, 2019). Last, the school's analysis must include strategic planning as it has been shown to be beneficial in gaining stakeholder consensus for organizational objectives and future action (Gurley, Peters, Collins et al. 2015). Core values and beliefs of the program leaders as well as the values and capacities of school community members will promote the development of a shared school vision, resulting in the effective teaching and learning of the program (Mulford, 2010.)

In the following chapter, the paper will begin by examining the significance of an organizational analysis and provide a framework for administration in the literature review. Next, the paper will explore the SWOT analysis and underline how it may be effectively used to determine an educational organization's level of readiness. Subsequently, foundational learning concepts of an International Education Program such as international curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment, international recognition and global community will be explained. To conclude, the literature review chapter will highlight the need for strategic planning in the implementation of the new program by advising organizations to follow three steps: sector analysis, policy design, and action planning.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

This chapter aims to review the pertinent literature and research that are related to the requirements for the implementation of a new International Education Program prior to and throughout its application. The chapter first discusses the definition of an organizational analysis as well as its significance. In addition, it defines and underlines the concept of organizational readiness and the SWOT analysis that is used as a tool for its evaluation. Next, the chapter highlights and considers foundational learning concepts that must be at the center of the International Education Program. Last, the literature review addresses the need for strategic planning, specifically how this part of the implementation process should allow for organizations to consider the implementation of sector analysis, policy design, and action planning.

### **Requirement of an Organizational Analysis**

Prior to implementing a new International Education Program, an educational institution must first undertake an organizational analysis. Organizational analysis is defined by Rocchigiani and Herbel (2012) as a diagnostic process that helps to better understand the performance of an organization, to obtain deeper knowledge about the causes of organizational weaknesses and to identify emerging opportunities. According to Weiner (2009), this tool is beneficial to educational organizations in the developmental process of the program as it allows program leaders to identify areas of weakness, and subsequently discover approaches for overcoming the obstacles.

Furthermore, an organizational analysis may assess and ensure the presence of organizational readiness. Implying that organizational members feel committed, confident, and prepared to implement change and undertake a significant new program, an organizational readiness assessment will assure the program prevents hindrances, makes the most of opportunities, and has the required resources to effectively be implemented at the

individual, group, and organizational level (Weiner, 2009). In the case where a low level of organizational readiness is identified, resistance may be philosophical, psychological or cultural in nature, and the organization must understand the resistance of participating people by strengthening their relationships with staff, being open minded and transparent, and building trust and acknowledging everyone's cooperation and efforts (Starr, 2011).

### ***SWOT Analysis***

To ensure that the required components of organizational readiness are in place, Stacey (1993) suggests that an educational organization should conduct a SWOT analysis. Defined as a list of an organization's strengths and weaknesses as indicated by an analysis of its resources and capabilities, as well as a list of threats and opportunities that may hinder and benefit the new program's implementation this method of analysis will provide the institution with a collection of information about internal and external factors which have, or may have, an impact on the program's effectiveness (Stacey, 1993). In addition to the valuable information gained from the use of the SWOT analysis, this form of organizational analysis has been praised for its simplicity and practicality (Pickton and Wright, 1998).

Furthermore, it is important to note that the SWOT model should not be viewed as a fixed analytical tool with a focus only on its output (Pickton and Wright, 1998). Alternatively, this tool should be used as a dynamic part of the management and development process (Pickton and Wright, 1998). To additionally enhance the potential of the SWOT analysis, Stacey (1993) specifies that after developing the analytical lists, the program leaders should take future actions and decisions that align strengths with opportunities, ward off threats, and seek to overcome weaknesses.

In their article, Pickton and Wright (1998) review the experiences of the use of the SWOT analysis as a management tool subsequent to the completion of the 'action' research project and present advantages such as; improvement in the quality of the SWOT analysis

produced, a clearer view of the information requirements for the organization, improved and shared understanding of the organization and factors affecting its performance, better understanding of manager and interdepartmental points of view and prejudices, opportunities for management development, improved team working and improved strategic plans for the organization.

Through the use of the SWOT analysis prior to an implementation of a new International Education Program, and through a continuous alignment of decisions and future actions with the information found in the analysis, an educational organization may also benefit from this tool and acquire similar advantages to those found in Pickton and Wright's (1998) research project.

### **Foundational Learning Concepts**

A new International Education Program, has the ability to structure its curriculum regarding how and what the program leaders want their students to learn. While there is flexibility in the implementation of the program, the curriculum is to be integrated into each of the core subjects in an adaptable and co-curricular manner.

In addition, the effectiveness of the program relies on the presence of five foundational learning concepts presented by Cambridge International (2019). To foster global citizenship and help students to acquire essential skills for an international life and to succeed at school and work, the International Education Program must ensure that international curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment, international recognition, and global community lies at the heart of the program (Cambridge International, 2019).

As a result of developing programs based on these five foundational learning concepts, over 10 000 Cambridge schools in 160 countries have benefited from qualifications internationally recognised by universities and employers worldwide (Cambridge International, 2019). Moreover, each uniquely developed International Education Program is

better able to align curriculum, teaching, learning, and assessment. Cambridge International underlines that this alignment built on the five foundational learning concepts results in leadership members who are aware of what they want their students to learn, understand how they will know that the learning is occurring, and encourage teaching and learning approaches that support it.

### ***International Curriculum***

In a recent survey, 100 percent of university admissions tutors stated that Cambridge programmes are effective in the preparation process for university and help students succeed throughout their undergraduate studies (Cambridge International, 2019). This excellence is based on the fact that this particular International Education Program, focuses on a strong foundation in their international curriculum. In an article by Lim (2011), sample questions and answers from this international curriculum program's exams were examined. According to Lim's findings, Cambridge students perform assessments collectively functioning as both necessary and sufficient constituents of 'more mature and sophisticated ways of thinking' about 'real life situations'.

The learning outcomes of international curriculum allow students to succeed in a variety of manners, and furthermore serve as a map to guide co-curricular programming and student services. The co-curriculum provides an important opportunity for students to apply their global and intercultural learning by demonstrating certain behaviors and through direct experience (Cambridge International, 2019). It is important to note the significance of a well-developed international curriculum to effectively implement a new International Education Program, however, we may question how program leaders can consider and select what learning outcomes will be taught through the international curriculum. Ward (2017) provides a brief review of co-curricular global and intercultural learning outcomes developed by a dozen U.S. institutions of different types (large, private, public, two-year, and PhD-level) and

suggests a consistent format. In this format, leaders may consider and select what learning outcomes will be taught by asking themselves three essential questions: 1) who is the learner; 2) what will the learner do; 3) for what purpose (Ward, 2017). Ward illustrates an example of this where the program leaders decide that students are the learners, that the learners will develop skills, and for the purpose of communicating effectively across cultures.

Once the program leaders have thoroughly selected the learning outcomes of their unique international curriculum, they may question how they may most adequately implement the curriculum into their school. Ward (2017) provides guidance on this concern as well, by suggesting four strategies to blend curricular and co-curricular learning to increase student success. First, Ward suggests that an educational organization expands the experiential learning attached to academic courses which occur outside of the classroom. Community service, internships, community engagement etc., may allow hands-on learners to succeed.

Second, Ward recommends academic credit for co-curricular programs. In cases where instructional faculty and student affairs staff have partnered to design a combined academic course and co-curricular program, students have had the opportunity to transform ideas into accomplishments. Ward provides the example of global living-learning communities that have an academic course requirement: Students who live together in a residence hall and participate in programs organized by the office of residence life also enroll together in a section of intercultural communication, global affairs, sociology, or any number of other disciplines taught by a faculty member.

Third, Ward proposes global or cultural centers that offer students both academic courses and extracurricular programs related to a particular issue. The result, Ward claims, is a more holistic and practical approach to text or theory-based pedagogies alone. Kronfli (2011), supports this claim and states that these learning opportunities defy conventional

expectations of schooling due to the core curriculum being invaded by extracurricular activities.

Fourth, Ward suggests school-wide themes that welcome all school community members to address the global, cross-cutting theme both in and out of the classroom. Program leaders may consider theme examples and activities provided by Kronfli in her article. For instance, students may become aware that they can make a positive difference in the world through the reinforcement of an on-going school-wide theme of *the power of one* (Kronfli, 2011). According to Kronfli, activities involved in this theme, for example an electronics recycle drive, students may gain a strong sense of self-efficacy and are more likely to become more effective and active volunteers, community representatives and activists.

### ***Teaching and Learning***

Once the international curriculum has been developed, and prior to the implementation of the new International Education program, Cambridge International encourages program leaders to ask themselves, "What are our aspirations for students when they leave school?" (Cambridge International, 2019). In doing so, teachers may motivate students to reflect on their learning, to articulate where they are in the learning process and plan and control their learning strategies (Cambridge International, 2019). More specifically, Cambridge International recommends developing five learner attributes in students that will provoke a love for learning. As a result, students are better equipped to succeed in their academic, professional, and personal lives (Cambridge International, 2019).

First, teachers and students may strive for developing confidence in working with information and ideas of themselves and of others (Cambridge International, 2019). Cambridge International highlights the need for confidence as it fosters an eagerness to explore and evaluate ideas and arguments in a structured, critical and analytical way. Second, learners should become responsible for themselves. This entails being responsive to and

respectful of others, collaborative and supportive, and taking ownership of their learning and goals (Cambridge International, 2019). Third, students should be reflective as learners and develop their ability to understand themselves as learners to take interest in the processes and products of their learning (Cambridge International, 2019). Fourth, students should be supported in becoming innovative and therefore, equipped for new and future challenges to meet them resourcefully and creatively by applying their prior knowledge and understanding. Fifth, students should be engaged intellectually and socially in order to develop a curiosity for learning new skills and a receptibility to new ideas (Cambridge International, 2019).

In their research, Cambridge International found that these five learner attributes have positive and strong effects on educational attainment, additional significant beneficial effects on important workplace and life outcomes, and an improved ability to predict life outcomes.

In addition to the students' love of learning and desirable learner attributes, research conducted by Cambridge International finds that the most important factor in improving student outcomes is quality teaching. While different educational organizations work in different contexts, Cambridge International underlines that they are responsible for appropriately corresponding the teaching approaches to the needs of their students. Not only are the five Cambridge suggested learner attributes beneficial to student learning, but can be further incorporated into teacher learning as well. In order to develop teachers' classroom practice, teachers should also be encouraged to be confident, responsible, reflective, innovative, and engaged. Through professional thinking and practice opportunities, teachers should become confident in teaching their subject and engaging each student in learning, responsible for themselves, responsive to and respectful of others, reflective as learners and in developing their practice, innovative and equipped for new challenges, and engaged intellectually, professionally, and socially, to be willing and prepared to make positive change (Cambridge International, 2019).



## *Assessment*

In conjunction with a quality international curriculum, as well as excellent teaching and learning, a distinguished education requires adequate assessment. When designing assessments, Cambridge International advises program leaders to begin by considering what they want their students to develop. In order for deep knowledge, conceptual understanding, and higher level thinking skills to occur, the design of the questions used to check for student understanding must be designed as well as the assessments themselves (Cambridge International, 2019). According to Cambridge International, this is as true for formative assessment and 'assessment for learning' as it is for summative assessment and 'assessment of learning'.

To ensure that the design of the assessments and of the questions used to test for understanding will be beneficial to teaching and student learning, Ghosh et al. (2017) indicate that assessment must be authentic, valid, and reliable.

First, Ghosh et al. (2017) recognize the use of traditional assessments that concentrate on written or oral examination of knowledge and recognize that this may be effective in assessing students' ability to memorise and retell knowledge-based components of a task. While this form of assessment may be frequently used, Ghosh et al. state that they are poor bases to determine demonstrated skills, deep understanding or overall outcomes from learning unless they are integrated with authentic assessments. To most effectively use traditional assessment in an authentic way, the authors suggest the presence of tasks, processes, and outcomes. Based on their research, Ghosh et al., found that tasks should be set in real-world context and include forward looking questions. Furthermore, processes should provide criteria beforehand, evidence of competence should be collected by the student, and outcomes should result in higher student engagement, ability to transfer skills to different contexts, and contextual and multiple evidence of competence (Ghosh et al., 2017).

Next, in addition to authentic assessment, Ghosh et al. (2017) refer to the necessity for valid assessment. Valid assessment is defined by Hobson et al. (2008) as a match between what is intended to be measured and what is actually measured, e.g. does it contain a representative sample of content covered in relation to desired learning outcomes? Brown (2005) claims that in order for assessment to be valid, the assessment needs to focus as well on what is intended to be learned. Brown provides an example where the learning objective is for students to demonstrate employability when they graduate. With this learning objective in mind, a valid assessment needs to be designed to be practice-orientated. Brown explains that rather than assessing a learner's ability to write about good practice, a valid assessment strategy would seek to measure how the student can put into practice the learning achieved. According to Ghosh et al. it should be composed of content, criterion, and construct validity and therefor program leaders must ensure that the assessment is entirely representative of what it aims to measure, that the results correspond to a different assessment of the same material, and that the assessment measures the concept it is intended to measure.

Last, to be most effective, assessment must be reliable. Reliable assessment is defined as the degree of the consistency of assessment scores obtained every time the same competencies are assessed irrespective of the scorer, time period between the assessments and the context under which the assessments occurred (Moskal & Leydens, 2000). Ghosh et al., (2017) suggest two significant different types of reliability for assessment: test-retest and split-half. Test-retest reliability includes administering the same test after a specific period of time (Ghosh et al., 2017). With this form of assessment, administrators are to be conscientious of the timing of the test as Ghosh et al. warn that if the duration between the tests is too short, the students may recall information from their first attempt and if the duration is too long, there may be a 'learning effect' due to variables that may not be easily identified. On the other hand, split-half reliability includes administering two separate tests or

splitting an individual test to create two measures (Ghosh et al., 2017). With this form of assessment, Ghosh et al. caution administrators to ensure that all questions measure the same construct.

Improving the authenticity, validity and reliability of learner assessment will contribute to the achievement of the assessment outcomes. Hence, Ghosh et al. (2017) suggest there is a need for a framework that has a holistic approach to the authenticity, validity and reliability of assessment before, during, and after the implementation of the program's assessments.

### ***International Recognition***

Together with an international curriculum, teaching and learning, and assessment, international recognition is critical so that students may be confident that their qualifications will be understood and valued throughout their education and career, in their home country and abroad. Furthermore, Hobson et al. (2008) assert that the mutual recognition will lead to the sharing of information and the evaluation of quality, benchmarks, standards and assessment processes which can result in greater international acceptance of qualifications and the movement of skilled professionals. To accommodate the traditional requirements of international organizations, O'Brien and Martin (2011) advise program leaders to sacrifice or modify their existing programs. In order to do so, the authors assert that the program leaders must thoroughly review and investigate the organizations they wish to be recognized by. Through this process, O'Brien and Martin have found new programs are able to form meaningful and successful partnerships with organizations that best serve its needs and lead to international accreditation and recognition. In addition, Hobson et al., advise program leaders to ensure that the common quality assurance and educational framework allow for diversity between the institution and that of which it is being recognized by.

### ***Global Community***

The final foundational learning concept to be centered at the heart of a new International Education Program according to Cambridge International is global community. To ensure that the program is of quality, relevant and world class, program leaders should listen to and involve the global community (Coyer et al., 2019). Not only do these discussions provide feedback for the program, but it may also provide the opportunity to exchange ideas and share knowledge among parents, students, staff, and local and global community members.

An article by Wolsey and Lapp (2014), which proposes a pedagogical framework for planning school gardens, serves as an excellent example of how a school may involve the global community in their learning. In their article, the authors explore how school gardens are a technological catalyst for developing values and understandings that improve how students learn about and contribute to sustainable practices (Wolsey & Lapp, 2014). Through the development and maintenance process of a school garden, students learn to become global citizens and to consider impacts and consequences on a larger scale than the individual scale. By communicating with others in their local and global communities, students begin to learn how to take care of something small in order to in the future take care of something larger (Wolsey & Lapp, 2014).

### **Strategic Planning**

As the world continues to change and advance at a high speed, it is vital that educational organizations adapt and transform as well. Although there are a variety of ways these organizations are remaining, one component remains consistent among them: strategic planning. Authors Tsiakkios and Pashiardis (2002) indicate that educational institutions, communities, parents, and legislators are all becoming increasingly interested in the management of schools and as a result, program leaders must become more responsive to the

demands and wishes of the society which supports them. In their article, Tsiakkiros and Pashiardis explain how strategic planning can be effectively transferred to the educational institutions that are undergoing change, for instance, those who are in the process of implementing a new program.

Strategic planning, defined as the steps taken by an organization in achieving its objective and mission, will allow organizations to effectively cope with challenges our world presents (Tsiakkiros & Pashiardis, 2002). After undertaking a meta-analysis of 87 correlations from 31 empirical studies, George et al. (2019) discovered that strategic planning has a positive, moderate, and significant impact on organizational performance. In order to obtain the most benefits, Chang (2006) suggests breaking down the strategic planning process into three steps: sector analysis, policy design, and action planning.

### ***Sector Analysis***

Chang (2006) defines sector analysis as the administration of data collection and critical analysis of aspects relating to the education sector. To consider how program leaders are able to thoroughly examine internal and external aspects of the program implementation, Chang indicates that they first review the internal dynamics of how the education system is functioning to meet people's needs and economic demands. He then suggests that they examine different compelling forces behind the education system and the external conditions of the educational environment (e.g. macro-economic and socio-demographic situations and developments). According to Chang, these aspects are to be considered from a perspective of the system's strengths, weaknesses, lessons and opportunities to better examine the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the new program implementation.

### ***Policy Design***

A policy, a set of the goals and purposes of the educational organization, is described by Chang (2006) along the dimensions of access (access and participation), quality (quality,

internal efficiency, relevance and external effectiveness), and management (governance, decentralization, and resource management). While program leaders may not be able to design a new policy at the national level, they are encouraged to seek alignment in existing government policies in the education sector. In addition to cooperating with the existing policies, program leaders may collaborate with their educational organizations' administration to accommodate and design further policies that may benefit the program at a school level. When designing one's own policy, they may consult primary components of the checklist provided by Chang as a guide. This includes access and participation in education, equity and reduction of gender, social and geographic disparities, quality and relevance of education at different levels, and institutional aspects such as management and planning, decentralized and centralized balance and partnership and communication between different levels and forms of participants (Chang, 2006).

### ***Action Planning***

Action planning is a tool for clarifying the goals and strategies in relation to the educational policies and programming of activities involved in the new program (Chang, 2006). This final step of the strategic planning process serves as preparation for the program's implementation and as stated by Chang, will establish the timing, indicate the necessary resources, distribute institutional and administrative responsibilities, prepare budgets etc.

### **Summary**

This chapter has reviewed some of the pertinent literature and research used in the examination of two Mexican private schools as they continue to implement a new International Education Program. The following chapter will apply these concepts regarding the requirements necessary for the effective implementation of a new International Education

Program through the administration of an organizational analysis of the two differing educational organizations.

### **Chapter Three: Application**

The application chapter will examine the level of effectiveness of a new International Education Program implemented in two differing Mexican private schools. Prior to analyzing the implementation process and program of the institutions, the chapter will provide a context of the schools. Following the context, the chapter will provide a SWOT analysis of the school and explore the presence or absence of the prerequisites needed before effectively implementing a new educational program. Finally, the chapter will include a summary of the SWOT analysis findings and underline the importance of conducting an initial organizational analysis to assess and ensure the presence of organizational readiness, foundational learning concepts, and strategic planning. The examination of these schools may determine the significance and reliance on an organizational analysis to effectively implement a new International Education Program.

#### **Case #1**

Once having completed my undergraduate studies and teaching degree in Toronto, I was eager to continue my international education abroad and gain experience and a teacher's perspective on an International Education program rather than a student perspective as I had acquired to date. My first teaching position abroad took place at a new Mexican private school located in Guadalajara, Mexico. With only four years of being open and with only one year of a bicultural international program, the school was still in the process of developing and implementing their new program.

When I began teaching at this school, it consisted of a staff of 50 people and a student population of approximately 250 students ranging from preschool to grade 5. Of these 50 staff members, four were foreign hires and the remaining were Mexican nationals. The staff worked under direct supervision of a team of 8 Mexican administrators. The community in



which this school was located was rural and located on the outskirts of the city. Families of students were primarily middle class and the majority of families were actively interested and involved in their child's learning.

The school opened and began their educational program by completely adhering to the national curriculum requirements. In accordance with the SEP (Secretary of Public Education) program, the curriculum was taught in Spanish, by Mexican teachers, and mainly consisted of following the textbooks provided by the state. In the following years, the school decided to implement a new International Education Program in the hopes of recruiting new students and expanding their institution. Without sufficient collaboration and prior organizational analysis with international resources and staff, the school initiated the implementation process.

### ***Ineffective International Education Program Implementation***

In the second year of the new program's implementation, I settled into my position as a grade 3 and grade 4 ESL teacher and immediately began to experience and become aware of the challenges that the school, staff, students, and families were experiencing during this transition. It became apparent to myself and others that an organizational analysis was not adequately conducted prior to the implementation of the new program as the organization's level of readiness was low, foundational learning concepts were absent, and there was a shortage of strategic planning. Without an initial organizational analysis and thus without the necessary prerequisites, the implementation of the new program was likely to be ineffective.

Organizational readiness for program change suggests that organizational members have a shared resolve to implement a change and a shared belief in their collective capability to do so effectively (Weiner, 2009). When organizational readiness for change is high, organizational members are more inclined to introduce change, apply greater effort and persistence, and present a more unified and supportive behaviour (Weiner, 2009). Through

this, an effective implementation is more likely to occur and decision making, workflow, communication and reward systems can be observed and experienced positively. In the case of this school context, it was evident that the organizational level of readiness was low. For example, a growing resistance could be identified upon observation of teachers involved in the program implementation. The external program intervention and increasingly complicated workloads in combination with lack of teaching training served as a significant source of teacher dissatisfaction and antagonism against change.

In addition, for a new International Education Program to be effectively implemented, the foundational learning concepts must be significantly considered and integrated into each of the core subjects in a flexible and co-curricular manner. To align the school's new curriculum with their teaching, learning, and assessment, there must be a strong focus on international curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment, international recognition, and global community. In the case of this school's deliberation of the program's foundational concepts, there was a deficiency which further hindered the program implementation's success.

For example, the lack of focus on the design of the assessments and of the questions used to test for understanding became apparent to students, parents, and teachers and resulted in feelings of frustration in the new learning environment. Due to insufficient prior consideration of this foundational learning concept, assessment was frequently inauthentic, invalid, or unreliable. Although the use of traditional assessments that focus on written examination of knowledge may be effective in evaluating students' ability to memorise and recite information, it should not serve as the only method of assessment as it was in the case of this school (Ghosh et al., 2017). As a result, students felt demotivated and unconfident in their learning, teachers felt that student assessment was inadequate and unhelpful, and parents felt that their children were not succeeding in this new learning program.

Ranked among the five most popular managerial approaches worldwide, strategic planning can be expected to positively contribute to organizational performance (George et al., 2019). When strategic planning occurs prior to the implementation of a new program, decisions made in the context of establishing purposes, goals, and strategies incorporate an analysis of the internal and external organizational environment and results in effective implementation. In the case of this school, we may note how the absence of adequate sector analysis, policy design, and action planning led to disorganization, and unclear shared values, missions, visions, definitions of how success is to be measured, and direction for the future.

### ***SWOT Analysis***

In order to have prevented some of the obstacles experienced through the implementation of the new International Education program, the institution must have first conducted an organizational analysis. The degree to which an organization successfully achieves their goals (in this case, effectively implementing a new International Education Program), relies on internal and external analyses and the formulation of objectives, strategies and plans (George et al., 2019). It is from conducting a SWOT analysis that we may examine and identify the school's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. While the SWOT analysis will not eliminate any challenges faced to date, it will assist the school in building on their strengths, address what is unaccounted for, decrease risks, and take advantage of possible opportunities for success going forward.

In the SWOT model below, we may best analyze the organizations current status regarding the implementation of the International Education Program. Key internal factors can be noted that may positively affect the program (for instance, its growing diverse population) and those that may negatively affect the program (for instance, a lack of funding for new resources). Furthermore, key external factors can be noted that may positively affect

the program (for instance, the city's global connection growth) and those that may negatively affect the program (for instance, competition with more other schools in the area).

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p><b>Population:</b> Staff and students from various ethnic backgrounds.</p> <p><b>Management:</b> Staff with experience working with this form of curriculum from other countries in the world.</p>	<p><b>Funding:</b> Lack of funds for new resources (ex. Textbooks with broader global perspectives).</p> <p><b>Time:</b> Only one professional development day a month for training of faculty.</p> <p><b>PISA Scores:</b></p> <p>Mexico, in general, has a low PISA score.</p>	<p><b>City Employment:</b> As globalization increases in the city, large companies with global connections are establishing themselves.</p> <p><b>Collaboration:</b> To promote collaboration within the local and global community.</p>	<p><b>Competition:</b> As a private school, competition with other schools in the area remains a threat as some have already effectively implemented this program.</p> <p><b>Expectation:</b> Due to competition there are increased parental and student expectations.</p>

*Figure 1. SWOT Analysis #1.* This figure demonstrates a SWOT analysis conducted after the implementation of an ineffective International Education Program.

It is through this SWOT analysis that I am able to identify the school's low level of readiness, moderate consideration of foundational learning concepts, and lack of resources for strategic planning. If these factors had been thoroughly contemplated prior to the implementation of the new educational program, the school would have been better prepared to face challenges and take advantage of opportunities. Instead, since the required initial organizational analysis was absent, the program implementation proved to be ineffective and resulted in complications.

For example, with only one professional development day a month, staff felt that there was insufficient training and were skeptical and apprehensive in this change, resulting

in a low level of organizational readiness. Since major change requires people to give up feelings of comfort, long-held values or beliefs, and established routines, the school ought to have prevented or resolved this anticipated resistance by listening to the concerns and thoughts of participating staff members (Starr, 2011). Had this resistance been identified prior to the program's implementation, efficient preventative approaches may have been taken and therefore averted a lack of agreement of policy or direction, increased stress and burnout, and extensive disengagement. Thus, this examination revealed the need for an organizational analysis prior to the implementation of a new International Education Program.

## **Case #2**

Although my first teaching experience abroad allowed me to gain valuable skills, memories, and opportunities, I accepted a position at another school within Guadalajara the following year. While I was sorry to go, I was eager to acquire further perspective on the integration of a new International Education Program from the lens of a teacher. The next school I taught at had been established for 10 years by the time I was hired. Not only was the school more experienced than the previous in which I taught, but its population of students and staff was larger and more diverse. Of approximately 500 students, 50 were foreigners and of the approximately 80 staff members, 20 were foreigners. All staff members worked collaboratively under the supervision of the administration, composed of a Mexican principal, Canadian vice-principal, and Canadian school director. The community in which this school was located was urban and located at the center of the city. Families of students were primarily middle to upper class and the majority of families were sincerely involved in their child's learning.

An additional prominent difference between this Mexican private school and the first one at which I taught was the curriculum being realized. Rather than completely following the SEP curriculum, this school only adhered to SEP for its Spanish language and history

courses. The remaining core subjects (English, Math, Science, Social Studies, Health, P.E., Music, and Art) were in accordance with the Alberta curriculum program. To ensure that the International Education Program's curriculum expectations from abroad were being met, the school was in frequent contact with the Albertan Ministry of Education through reports, evaluations, observations and visits. While the SEP curriculum was taught by Mexican staff, the Alberta curriculum was taught primarily by Canadian staff.

### ***Effective International Education Program Implementation***

An effective International Education Program is implemented in a manner that provides students with the opportunity to connect with others around the world, and know and believe that they have the ability to positively impact their local and global community (Coyer et al., 2019). In order for this form of education to be successful, educational organizations must ensure that the global community is at the center of student learning. While teaching at this specific private school, it became evident that this learning environment was fostering valuable knowledge and skills, changing attitudes, relational connections, community engagement and a global perspective. This school demonstrated a great focus and connection with their global community as it relates to student learning, teacher learning, and community learning. It is through the incorporation of local community-based experiential learning that the school continued to facilitate the development of an effective International Education Program. For example, through a partnership with the school and city museum, students spent time working on a project in relation to the history curriculum in a practical context. Experiential learning may be a possible channel through which global learning occurs at a local level through service-learning experiences (Coyer et al., 2019). By ensuring that the global community is a focus in the school community and learning context, the school serves as an excellent example of an effective implementation of

a new International Education Program. as it fostered student engagement and achievement through relevant, applied and innovative learning experiences.

In addition to this foundational learning concept, the school took previous and continuous measures to ensure that they were providing their students with international recognition. To accommodate the traditional requirements of international organizations , organizations are encouraged to modify their existing program (O'Brien & Martin, 2011). In this case, the school thoroughly reviewed and investigated the organizations they wished to be recognized by and decided to have students complete all core subjects in English with the exception of Spanish and history courses. Through this, the organization allowed for the Alberta curriculum to be incorporated into core subjects in accordance with the curriculum's expectations while maintaining their recognition from SEP.

### ***SWOT Analysis***

It is through the examination of a SWOT analysis of the second school that I can identify key differences that allowed the integration of the International Education Program to be effective. In the SWOT model below, I may best examine the organizations current status regarding the implementation of their program. Significant internal factors may be identified that may positively affect the program (for example, adequate funding for exceptional resources) and those that may negatively affect the program (for example, an insufficient allocation of time for professional development). Significant external factors may be identified that may positively affect the program (for example, the city's growing Expat population) and those that may negatively affect the program (for example, competition with nearby schools with similar programs).

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p><b>Population:</b> Students from various ethnic backgrounds. Staff from Canadian background to teach Canadian curriculum. Staff from Mexican background to teach Mexican curriculum.</p> <p><b>Management:</b> Staff with leadership experience and with experience working with this form of curriculum from Canada.</p> <p><b>Funding:</b> Sufficient funding for new resources (ex. new technology in the classroom, textbooks with broader global perspectives, community events).</p>	<p><b>Time:</b> Only one professional development day a month for training of faculty.</p> <p><b>PISA Scores:</b> Mexico, in general, has a low PISA score.</p>	<p><b>City Employment:</b> As globalization increases in the city, large companies with global connections are establishing themselves.</p> <p><b>Expat Community:</b> As the population of Expat families increases in the city, as do the numbers of potential foreign students.</p> <p><b>Collaboration:</b> To promote collaboration within the local and global community.</p>	<p><b>Competition:</b> As a private school, competition with other schools in the area remains a threat as some have already effectively implemented this program.</p> <p><b>Expectation:</b> Due to competition there are increased parental and student expectations.</p>

*Figure 2. SWOT Analysis #2.* This figure demonstrates a SWOT analysis conducted after the implementation of an effective International Education Program.

It is through this SWOT analysis and current evidence of the program implementation process that we are able to determine the school's high level of readiness, thorough consideration of foundational learning concepts, and presence of resources for strategic planning. In observing an inclusive and equitable learning environment that fosters quality learning, promotes lifelong learning and relevant and practical learning experiences, it is evident that the organization conducted their own productive organizational analysis prior to



the implementation of their new program. As a result, the program implementation continues to be effective and advance successfully.

For example, since the school began the implementation with a prior knowledge and analysis of their funding, the organization was able to best take advantage of opportunities for student and teacher learning and success. With extensive deliberation of their current funding and future predictions, the school was able to effectively allocate their funding to prudently contemplate resources. A prominent reason as to why the International Education Program was as effective as it was, was due to the technological resources provided to teachers and students. By virtue of classrooms equipped with Ipads, SMART boards, and e-readers, students and teachers are able to connect with peers around the world and engage in collaborative global projects to draw connections and learn from their life and that of peers in other communities. Implementation capability depends on knowing what courses of action are required, what kinds of resources are required, how much time is required, and how activities should be realized (Weiner, 2009). It is through this example that the need for an organizational analysis prior to the new program's implementation becomes apparent as it allows organizations to best anticipate their implementation capabilities.

## **Summary**

The Harvard policy model asserts that organizational success is dependent on the extent to which there is a fit between the organization and its environment which can be determined using tools such as a SWOT analysis (George, 2019). It is through the use of this tool that this chapter has examined the effectiveness of the implementation of two differing International Education Programs at two differing Mexican private schools. This examination has proven the paper's argument by determining that the level of effectiveness of a new program's implementation is significantly dependent on the presence of an initial and thorough organizational analysis. The SWOT analysis concluded that due to the absence of

an organizational analysis prior to the implementation process of the new program, the first school was deficient in organizational readiness, foundational learning concepts and strategic planning which rendered its implementation ineffective. On the other hand, the SWOT analysis deduced that due to the presence of a profound initial organizational analysis, the second school demonstrated a high degree of organizational readiness, substantial foundational learning concepts, and complete strategic planning. It is through the examination of these two educational organizations, that it is evident that implementing a new and effective International Education Program requires a prior organizational analysis to ensure the presence of organizational readiness, foundational learning concepts, and strategic planning.

## **Chapter Four: Conclusion**

The conclusion chapter will explain the success of the paper by restating the argument, providing a summary of the three preceding chapters, explaining how the chapters are connected, and explaining the paper's significance. To conclude, this chapter will explain the significance of the paper by presenting the implications of the paper for Mexican private educational institutions, and for other organizations outside the education sector.

### **Summary**

It is through effective International Education Programs that cultural and linguistic disconnects that are present within our local and global communities will be able to be united. These forms of programs will foster a learning environment where our students will learn to appreciate and gain new perspectives on other cultures, other languages, histories, difficulties, and contributions of other countries. The effective implementation of these programs will incorporate awareness of international cultures and strategies through the core curriculum and exhibit inspiring educational innovation that will promote the learning foundational learning concepts. Subsequently, there will be a notable increase in the future population of effective global leaders and a decrease in future misunderstandings, miscommunications, disputes and obstacles.

While there is hope for a greater future by virtue of a growing popularity of International Education Programs, it is essential that these programs be implemented in an effective manner to achieve the most optimal effects. This paper argues that without an organizational analysis prior to the implementation of a new International Education Program, the program will be ineffective due to the uncertainty of organizational readiness, foundational learning concepts, and strategic planning. This may lead to negative feelings of staff, students, and school community members, disorganization, unclear shared values,

missions, visions, direction for the future and low cooperation and motivation. Therefore, in order to best avoid these challenges, the prerequisites must be first thoroughly assessed.

In the introduction chapter, the paper underlined the importance of effectively implementing International Education Programs as students may gain a global perspective and learn about different cultures, perspectives, ethnic groups, religions, and languages. Through my courses and experiences in the TRU M.Ed program, I learned that if these programs are implemented without the essential prior considerations, there is greater risk of decreasing levels of students' learning and success, teachers' and leaders' cooperation, motivation and leadership, and school community and community members collaboration and understanding. For this reason, the chapter presents the argument that implementing a new and effective International Education Program requires a prior organizational analysis to ensure the presence of essential prerequisites.

In the literature review chapter, the literature supports the paper's claim of a need for organizational analysis by explaining the significance and requirements of organizational analysis and by providing an explanation of the SWOT model. In addition, the chapter supports the paper's assertion of a need for foundational learning concepts by identifying them, providing their definitions, and explaining how they may best be thoroughly considered by management. Finally, the literature review supports the argument by defining and highlighting the significance of strategic planning and describing the three steps involved in the process: sector analysis, policy design, and action planning.

The application chapter interconnects the literature presented in the previous chapter with an examination and comparison of two Mexican private school cases. After providing the readers with contextual details of the two cases (i.e., experience, population, location, administration, curriculum), the chapter draws from the literature to demonstrate how each

school proved to be ineffective or effective in their unique approach to their program implementation process.

This paper has incorporated the literature with a comparison of two case studies to show the opportunities for program success when it has been implemented effectively and to show on the contrary the hindrances to program success when it has been implemented ineffectively. The presented literature first reinforced the significance and need for organizational analysis, foundational learning concepts, and strategic planning prior to a new International Education Program while the case studies subsequently revealed and provided readers with authentic examples of opportunities and challenges at the student level, staff level, program level, and organization level. It is through the support of a reflection and SWOT analysis of two case studies, that the findings connected to these experiences validate the paper's argument.

### **Implications for Mexican Private Educational Institutions**

Although our world has been in the process of transition and has been experiencing the New Globalization for decades, education remains in the early stages of globalization (Sample, 2013). International education represents large opportunities for countries, both social and economic, and as a result, this topic is becoming increasingly popular among big conversations. This paper contributes to the big conversation that there is a growing need for effective International Education Programs and supports the notion that these programs have the ability to contribute to a global commitment of diversity, inclusion, equity, multiculturalism, understanding, and cooperation. While there is great opportunity, and therefore an increase in the popularity of these programs, they are frequently implemented with little prior-knowledge and experience and with inadvertent flexibility and adaptations in Mexican private schools. This paper provides these educational organizations with a brief framework that educational organizations may consider prior to and throughout the

implementation process of their unique International Education Program to better set adequate objectives and achieve them.

### **Implications for Organizations Outside the Education Sector**

Organizational analysis, the process of evaluating the growth, personnel, operations, and work environment of an entity, is beneficial to all organizations, including those outside the education sector (Weiner, 2009). Undertaking an organizational analysis is beneficial to all organizations as it allows management to identify their areas of weakness and then discover strategies for solving the problem.

In the manner that an organizational analysis includes the assessment of external and internal factors that can affect the efficiency of a new International Education Program, this tool may aid management to best assess the external and internal elements that can influence the efficiency of any organization. By deliberately evaluating the organization's potential, resource base, weaknesses, strengths, threats and opportunities through the use of the SWOT model, the organization is capable of establishing goals, assessing their performance, and determining their success. Regardless of what sector the organization is a part of, it may evidently benefit from a more profound understanding of how their organization functions to find optimal changes for hindrances and opportunities and to provoke motivation and productivity within their employees.

Organizations outside of the education sector that seek a competitive advantage are encouraged to undertake an organizational analysis prior to any changes and new implementations. The valuable information produced from an organizational analysis will assist an entity in discovering what is required in order to become more inspired, successful, and profitable. If an organization is beginning or advanced in their process of implementing change, it must take advantage of this tool to help management achieve a comprehensive knowledge of their business.

With a growing development of tools and strategies for organizational analysis, businesses within and outside the education sector are to a greater extent equipped with the opportunity and ability to better achieve meeting their program's objectives. In the case of educational organizations who are more frequently beginning to consider and implement new International Education Programs, there is much to be gained from their effective implementation. Beyond the personal and professional skills students may attain, beyond personal and professional skills teachers may attain, and beyond economic profit for these organizations, is the opportunity for a more prosperous future at a global level. Although our world is becoming smaller and presenting many benefits, it is also raising consequences. Effective International Education Programs may serve as a means for solutions to emergent consequences by providing our future generations with the knowledge and skills to improve global issues. It is my hope that by adequately implementing this kind of program, future students will increasingly acquire an appreciation and growing perspective of other cultures and languages, resulting in global citizens who are passionate, able, and willing to become effective global leaders.

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