

PART OF SYMPOSIUM

New Public Management in the Field of Education Linkages between Theory and Praxis in Italian Educational Leadership

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1. New Public Management: a global trend with strong local specificity

New Public Management (NPM) is a term from the 1980s used to gauge a relative international trend with respect to administrative reforms of the public sector (Hood, 1991; Barzelay, 2001; OECD, 1995).

According to the reconstruction of Andersson (2001), there exist two plausible explanations on a national, international, and transnational level for why NPM constitutes a global phenomenon. Numerous authors describe NPM as a national trend, with consideration toward ideological factors, the increase in citizen expectations and needs, and the economic recession resulting from the petroleum crisis of the 1970s (Wright, 1994; Pollitt e Summa 1997; Bevir, Rhodes e Weller, 2003). In particular, the petroleum crisis spurred enormous public budget deficits and thus, the necessity of containing the growth of public spending. According to Osborne and Gaebler (1992), the NPM represented an attractive choice for reducing public deficits thanks to the promise of leaving tax rates, programs, and services unaltered, seeking to “work better at lower costs.” This strategy is suggested by NPM on the basis that one can obtain profits in productivity and greater efficiency by reorganizing in a manner in which the bureaucracies are structured and function.

In a world in which the interdependence among people, cultures, and nations has risen in such an unfathomable manner in just the past two decades, the explanation that the NPM derives from a convergence of isolated behaviours does not seem all too convincing.

NPM has an international dimension in the sense that the reformers communicate, discuss, mutually learn, imitate one another, and share the reforms. Thus, the NPM movement can be considered a global trend in that the fundamental ideas pass from one country to another through either mechanisms of international interdependency tied to cultural, political, and administrative affinities, or through deliberate processes of political, legal, and administrative integration, as seen with the process of Europeanization.

While the considered aspects seem to support the globalization of NPM one must note that when faced with the same problems, there is no guarantee that two different countries will adopt similar solutions. The starting point is not neutral: the history, culture, and existing characteristics – social, economic, political, administrative – are important factors that determine the path of change in terms of which reforms to adopt with respect to the perception of the problems, as well as the feasibility and method of achieving the aims (Pollitt e Bouckaert, 2001).

The NPM is an international movement, yet it is far from being considered a uniform movement due to various elements of managerial reform of the public sector as well as for the starting times and implementation of the reforms.

Within these parameters, literature on NPM has identified those that can be considered, on a general level, the common trajectories of change on an international level (Hood, 1991).

Pollitt (1995), in a work for the Canadian Centre for Management Development, provides a list of managerial systems and the technical development found within new public management:

- Systems of decentralized budgets;
- Performance indicators;
- Wage systems connected to result indicators;

- Systems for quality improvement;
- Contractual logic (contracting in and contracting out).

Pollitt and Bouckaert (2001) further contribute to this list by introducing the distinction between trajectories that relate to the substance of the reform (the “what”) and those that concern the process of the reform, which is to say, the method in which the reforms are achieved.

Osborne and Gaebler (1992) have indicated the tendencies found in the transformation process of the United States public administration. The authors delineate the emergence of an entrepreneurial administration that: favours competition among service providers; gives power to the citizens through the transfer of control from the bureaucracy to the community; measures the performance of institutions with regard to results rather than inputs; is motivated by the objectives and missions instead of the rules and regulations; and redefines the consumers as clients, offering them the possibility to choose their provider. Moreover, the administration decentralizes the authority and embraces the model of participatory management. It also prefers market mechanisms to bureaucratic ones. Lastly, it not only focuses itself on supplying public services but also seeks to catalyze all sectors (public, private, and volunteer) in the process of resolving collective problems.

In literature, there exist other taxonomies that, with minor variants, reproduce the above-mentioned results. Kickert (1997) identifies three principle fields that comprise the reform initiatives put into act within the past two decades and are labelled as New Public Management:

1. The development of networks, techniques, and managerial instruments derived from the business sector;
2. The introduction of institutionalized market or quasi-market structures;
3. The transformation of citizens into clients and clients into public service producers.

In more recent literary works, there is a great importance placed on the tendency to consider NPM not as a uniform movement but rather, one composed of diverse evolutionary stages (Ferlie et al., 1996).

Each phase defies the traditional paradigm of the public school administration as well as contrasts the exaggerations of the previous stages, attempting to remedy the process of hasty changes, often based on ideas borrowed from the private sector.

From our point of view (Matteuzzi Mazzoni, Paletta, 2006), the evolutionary phases do not exclude one another but rather represent pieces that little by little, experience and research have sought to harmonize in the slow and continual process of the transformation of the public sector.

First phase.- The first phase, which is also one of the first NPM models, is defined as “efficiency drive.” It originated from the start of the 1980s, yet it was already brought into critical discussion merely a decade later. The Anglo-Saxon influence is particularly evident in the experience of the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand. This stage represents an attempt to render the public sector closer to the private sector, elevating the principle of value for money, and making the three operative criteria of efficiency, effectiveness, and inexpensiveness, key factors in the change.

The fundamental themes of this evolutionary phase are characterized by the negotiation of the work relationship of public employees with the erosion of national bargaining mechanisms. Growing attention was also given to financial management and need to innovate accounting systems. Theoretical analysis, the initial experiments concerning accounting reform on the basis of economic capacity, and the introduction of directional accounting instruments, all take part in this initial stage as well (Bromwich and Lapsley, 1997).

The criticisms facing this NPM stage target the inappropriateness of the chief private sector models in that they lack respect for cultural peculiarities and for the institutional context of public businesses. In particular, the criticisms are the analyses of the effectiveness of NPM to people within the public service sector, such as health and education. There exist complaints regarding the reduction of self-control and regulation of professionals to

professional managers, with the subsequent claim of authoritative leadership styles such as “command and control.” The new audit, bookkeeping, and professionals, that is required to adhere to protocols, as means for evaluating the performance of professionals is considered particularly invasive (Power, 1997).

Second phase.- The second NPM phase, prevalent in the 1990s, brings forth a model based on the ideas of “downsizing and decentralization”: the reduction of the size of the public sector; the creation of “flat” organizations intended to guarantee a greater flexibility to needs; privatization and the introduction of market mechanisms; and the shift from “management by hierarchy” to management by contract.

These ideas are common within both the public and private sectors, where the principle theme is the progressive loss of strategic effectiveness and operational flexibility of large-scale businesses, at elevated vertical integration. Indeed, at the centre of the discussion lies the traditional Ford model intended as both the standardized productive mass model as well as organizational model based on a long managerial hierarchy, a distinct separation between programming and labour control, and a highly formalized and alienating business climate (Leavitt, 1962).

The new organizational forms predict the disintegration of large public apparatuses (ministries, fields, sectors, etc...) into smaller legally autonomous units with greater control of their work. The specialization does not merely stop at the inside of traditional public boards, but additionally creates new entities, agencies, and independent organizations, in which the prototypes are known as *quangos* of the United Kingdom.¹ Moreover, the specialization yields a reduction in direct state interventions, assuming a clear distinction between the role of financing and regulation – that remains in charge of public businesses – and the role of supplying public services. The principle aim is that of breaking public monopolies, introducing competition, and favouring the entrance of private subjects (contracting out).

In effect, the key word of this second phase is “negotiation.” The relationships between the executive body and the departments as well as between public entities and agencies, are regulated by means of service contracts in which the objectives, the available resources, and the mechanisms used to present financial statements are all specified.

The use of the contractual instrument demonstrates a diverse conception of the public administration: an administration that dedicates itself to politics rather than to the supply of public services, as well as one centred on identifying problems and defining the “rules of the game” instead of directly managing services.

The United States education sector plays part in this new vision of state school contracts and the creation of charter schools.

In simpler terms, the quasi-market of the United Kingdom can fit in this second phase as well. The centrality of a family’s freedom to choose its own school, the evaluation of schools and the publication of learning results, all attempt to introduce competition among the schools (Le Grand, 1991; Braley et al., 2000; West and Penuel, 2002).

Third phase.- The third phase is defined as “In search of Excellence,” taken from the title of a noted 1982 novel by Peters and Waterman. Here, the emphasis is placed on the systems and managerial styles of public businesses, with particular regard to the management of human resources. Neither the authoritative leadership style of the first NPM phase, nor the introduction of market mechanisms, characteristic of the second stage, is considered effective in confronting and adapting to uncertain and turbulent environments.

With respect to a “hard” managerial attitude, a “soft” approach, such as the values and organizational culture, is much preferred (Bolman and Deal, 1991).

Rather than influencing behaviours through the assignment of objectives, rational budget proceedings, and prompt evaluation of presentations and promotions, the leadership emphasizes the use of languages, symbols, and rituals so that the significance of the goals remain consistent with the vision of the leaders.

¹ The agencies, also known as *quasi autonomous non governmental organisations*, represent an entity that the British Cabinet Office defines as: “has a role in the process of national government, but is not a government department or part of one and which accordingly operates to a greater or lesser extent at arms’ length from ministers’.

The elements that the leaders chose to emphasize, their perseverance in achieving those goals, and the manner in which they relate themselves to the others, all contribute to the aim of focusing the attentions of the groups and individuals on the activities and projects that are consistent with the leaders' views. In these terms, one can argue that the leadership is essentially transformational due to the degree in which it relies on emotional and rational aspects (Paletta, Vidoni, 2006).

Forth phase.- Ferlie and others (1996) define the fourth NPM phase as “public service orientation.” The authors assert that a model that is still not fully developed and has yet to reveal its true potential characterizes this stage. The founding principle of this model is that of bringing forth the reorganization of the public administration on the distinctiveness of public businesses, looking to combine aspects that until now, have remained in the background due to the excessive weight of the “efficientist” current of NPM. In particular, the demand to combine economy and democracy has become crucial, placing the concept of public worth at the centre of the inquiries (Moore, 1995).

2. From New Public Management to Public Governance

Ten years after the initial conceptualizations, it is now possible to better specify the significance of active trends. In effect, from the second half of the 1990s, along with an evolutionary phase inside the NPM paradigm, there emerges a competing paradigm known as network governance, characterized by lesser trust in the market as an instrument capable of reducing the costs while increasing the quality of public services.

Scholars of public administration have started to utilize the term “governance” in contrast to “government” due to the fact that the first expression more accurately describes the reality of modern states, in which an elevated level of public roles and services are achieved and provided through the market and civil society (Kennedy, 2006).

Subsequently, the term “public governance,” is starting to be used in literary works juxtaposed not only to the term “government,” but especially to the “New Public Management” paradigm (Meneguzzo, 1995; Kickert, Klijin and Koppenjan, 1997; Matteuzzi Mazzoni, Paletta 2006).

Kickert (1997) applies the term “public governance” to indicate an alternative approach to the managerial attitudes of Anglo-Saxon origins, which better responds to the public administrative reforms in continental European countries.

	Government	New Management	Public Public Governance
<i>Institutional focus</i>	Public bureaucracy	Market	Civil society
<i>Organizational principles</i>	Centralization and hierarchical control of the supply of public services	Decentralization, Specialization Organizational (agencies); Contracting out	Horizontal and vertical subsidiary (interdependence)
<i>Role of the community</i>	Citizen-User	Consumer (client)	Active citizenship
<i>Concept of “economic good” inspiring of the public choices</i>	Distinction between “public good” and “private good”	Separation between financing and supplying of public services	Relational goods
<i>Characterization of relations</i>	Authoritative	Contractual	Cooperative
<i>Role of public managers</i>	Neutral implementation of formulated previous politics	Planning, budgeting, leadership, performance control	Interaction with external interdependent, yet autonomous actors
<i>Criteria for success</i>	Conformity to laws and regulations	Improvement of processes and managerial networks	Promotion of collective actions “community-based”

Fig. 1.1 Government, New Public Management and Public Governance

In Continental Europe, the Anglo-American view of the New Public Management demonstrated minor possibilities in taking root due to differing historical journeys with links both to cultural aspects as well as the specificity of administrative and political systems. Countries such as Italy, France and Germany, have appeared limited in an approach toward reorganization of the public administration strongly influenced by: managerial models taken from businesses (*business-like public management*); obsessive rhetoric directed toward the client; and the introduction of market mechanisms in supplying public services (*contracting out*) (Pollitt e Bouckaert, 2001; Paletta, 2005).

The establishment of a different model of governance is the consequence of the interaction of diverse factors among which are subsidiary, welfare society and the spread of information and communication technologies. Deriving from the combination of these factors is the development of complex territorial networks that cause one to reconsider the roles of public management.

Networking Management

In the approach of “public governance,” the public management problems are primarily directed toward complex, outside networks of interorganizational relations in which various actors are connected, in a horizontal and vertical sense, in the production system of public services: national, regional and local governments, social and political groups, businesses and other public companies (Provan and Milward, 1995).

Public management, operating from within a network, must reconsider the traditional categories of analysis that are based on the presumption of the existence of either a hierarchy or contractual relationships. Such forms can exist within a public network and there can certainly remain an interorganizational, hierarchical relationship. These elements however, are not the only instruments on which the actors base their decisions and coordinate the activities used to achieve common missions. Along with the hierarchical and contractual relationships, the network develops mechanisms of cooperation based on trust (Bruni, La Porta, 2006).

In what way does all this determine the managerial roles within a network? Which managerial roles are the equivalent to those of the traditional hierarchical systems (planning, organization, leadership, control)?

The managerial roles within networks are a widely discussed topic in literary works. These works however, tend to largely focus on the business aspect of this topic, leaving the theoretical analysis regarding community-based networks little explored. Figure 1.2 attempts to synthesize some of the studies performed on the topic (Agranoff and McGuire, 2003; Goldsmith and William, 2004) by presenting the “network management” circuit in which there exist four principle functions.

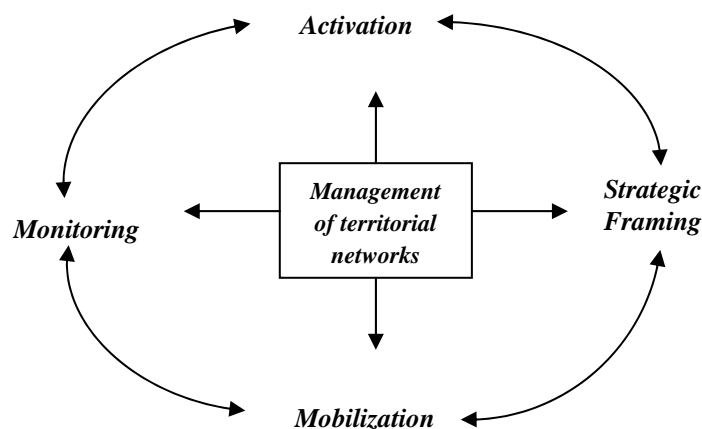


Fig. 1.2 The principle functions of networking management

In the management of a network, one of the fundamental roles is the monitoring of the network in general as well as the individual participants that compose the network.

The role of monitoring is instrumental for successfully achieving the other three managerial functions within a network:

1. To support the planning and redefining of the social structure of the territorial network. This is to say, the activation of the network, which in logical terms, is this initial stage of the cycle in which the mission is specified and the participants in addition to the other network stakeholders are identified. These decisions are based on resources, abilities, and expertise that can be utilized in the attainment of the common mission;
2. To support the definition of the cognitive map of the network in which the public administrators and managers seek to achieve a shared vision with regard to the goals, values, and rules of interaction. Most of all, this function consists of the activity of “framing,” which in the absence of a hierarchical power, looks to influence the perception of the problems, the method in which the problems are viewed, the promotion of training mechanisms among the various types of commitments, and the participation within the network. Such functions however, heavily rely on the knowledge of the general, strategic network maps and the early identification of the specific strategic objectives;
3. To support the mobilization of resources and commitments of network participants in a coordinated manner that complies with the common mission. This role, which is the equivalent to the organizational function, cannot rely on hierarchical instruments. The work of the manager essentially consists in looking to: promote an environment free from obstacles that could hinder cooperation; encourage the processes of communication and information exchange; develop new rules and procedures for interaction; and change the positions, relations, and roles of the participants.

The network management requires the simultaneous involvement of a number of diverse actors that, if working individually, would be incapable of generating an effective “collective action” compared to that of the community.

According to the specific case, this can signify the improvement of community services under the form of either access, utilization, correspondence, integration, maintenance, or reduction of service costs and rates.

Each organization within the network pursues its own objectives, but is aware of the fact that without the collaboration and integration of other organizations, the pursuit of the organizational aims does not necessarily correspond to the wellbeing of the community.

In truth, this awareness cannot be assumed to reveal itself as one of the more critical aspects in the success of a public network (Goldsmith and Eggers, 2004).

The network perspective entails that the actual network, not merely its operational counter parts, are placed at the centre of the analyses and strategies of the companies. This signifies that one must focus attention on the produced outcome and effects of the network; each member should feel part of a greater picture and have a holistic vision of his/her own reality.

Problem solving in the various fields such as, health, education, social care, political life, local public transports, and many others still², requires a point of view in which at the centre, the citizen is viewed collectively as the ultimate destination for these interdependent services.

For example, within the field of education, academic success does not solely depend on what takes place at the actual school or university, but rather on the interdependence of services such as: transportation, cafeterias, housing and cultural services, the awarding of scholarships, the students’ previous schools, the presence of other educational companies, businesses that offer internships, and so forth.

In these cases, focusing on the specific performance of a single member within the network is insufficient. Having the knowledge that certain companies within the network are

² The supporting arguments for the effectiveness of the network were prevalent in the analyses of community-based services directed toward people in the United States with grave mental diseases. The locally based rationale for integration derives from the fact that since the 1960s such patients were no longer cured inside state-managed specialist hospitals. The patients and their families, due in part to their particular situation, encountered large problems with the substitution of the public bureaucracy by numerous non-state providers (Department of Health and Human Services, 1991).

particularly effective and efficient in supplying specific services can be useful for the logic of contractual relationships of new public management. This knowledge, however, can become not optimizing in the logic of network governance³.

In conclusion, the mere existences of companies that either fully or partly share a certain mission (for example, integration of foreigners, the prevention of scholastic dispersion) do not necessarily generate a collective network mission (Keast et al., 2004).

A network can be well integrated and yet ineffective if the individual providers offer low quality services. On the other hand, the providers can offer excellent services operating individually, but the citizen may find it difficult to “move himself/herself” from one service to another due to confronting elevated transaction costs.

A common mission is not the starting point, but rather the final stage for businesses involved in the network. Empirical evidence suggests that only through “community practice” does there tend to collectively emerge values and attitudes that reshape the initial perspectives of the individual members (Provan and Milward, 1995).

Strategic Framing

What is the networks vision of development? What are the strategic objectives on which that vision is constructed and that guide the interorganizational and interinstitutional coordination toward public politics? Through cooperation, in what way are the objectives, initiatives and projects put together by the involved actors and given birth to the harmonious strategic map of the creation of public worth?

These are some of the key questions to which the network manager should attempt to find an answer.

The monitoring of the network performance must be used to evaluate the implementation of network strategy and cannot remain isolated to the leading business or to individual business participants. Monitoring is a social process that presents clear connotations of encoding, diffusion, and sharing of knowledge (*knowledge management*).

The concept of strategic mapping is instrumental in the application of monitoring and operationally favouring the sharing of strategic knowledge within the network (Kaplan and Norton, 2004).

The construction of strategic mapping with the defining of the objectives to pursue and their ties, can be a particularly useful method for helping the involved actors to: clearly express the cognitive mapping of the problem; individualize his/her personal role within the strategic mapping; and comprehend the horizontal and vertical ties between his/her aims and those of his/her partners.

The planners of the territorial network begin with the base arguments of the public politics in order to determine the priorities – the strategic themes – and the integrated territorial system of services and interventions through which the creation of public worth is pursued.

In effect, this job of “*strategic framing*” is not simple. The mapping of a strategic theme presupposes the definition of pertinent and coordinated objectives that can cross both the borders of an operational sector within a public company as well as the borders of the same public company, thus finding ramifications in the numerous subjects, public and private, that act within their territorial capacities.

Through the activity of strategic framing, the network planners seek to align the aims of the participants and share the performance targets on which to monitor the network in order to create organizational and inter-organizational learning conditions.

The participation of both actual and potential network members is fundamental in order to avoid situations in which the leading company defines non-acceptable and non-realistic outcomes from the point of view of the participants. Moreover, the involvement is crucial for encouraging the mobilization of the commitment. It prevents potential conflicts between network participants caused by either personal gain or by individualistic actions that stem from a misunderstanding of the wellbeing of the community.

³ A fundamental criterion for evaluation within the network consists simply in the ability to cooperate and coordinate with the other members.

Mobilization of the resources and expertise

Evolution and participation are processes that cannot be left to chance. They require attentive planning of governance mechanisms of the public entity in order to effectively mobilize the network.

In Italy, the social plans have become the principle instrument of network governance in the social and national health fields in order to programme, achieve, and verify the interventions of hundreds of people, both institutional and non-institutional actors, involved at a territorial level.

Thematic tables, territorial councils, forums, participatory structural and urban plans, laboratories and numerous other methods of participation and cooperation have become fundamental mechanisms of coordination for territorial networks.

Effective networks utilize “social integrators” that systematically cure the channels of communication, coordination activities, and the construction of trustworthy relationships.

An often weak spot for integration is the lack of shared information by partners, not only with regard to network production results, but especially, in operational branches, information concerning resources, active processes, and recipients of public politics.

For example, in the prevention of the scholastic dispersion of students, it is very important to be able to systematically follow the student along the inside journey of his/her studies, from the entrance, to the transfers, up until his/her departure from the educational and instructional system. The provincial and regional registry offices establish such an aim in order to quickly identify, with precision, the cases of dispersion and intervene with recovery actions. On the other hand, such methods can be a hindrance to the effectiveness of a network due to the difficulties of integration between school databases and the municipal registry office (which is used for comparisons and corrections) as well as between provincial and regional registry offices.

Information sharing for operational coordinating and strategic addressing of a complex network, in which numerous actors operate and utilize various information systems and technologies, represents a large challenge for the innovators of the public administration. The developments in information technologies can be of great help, provided that the network planners are already aware of them while still at the planning headquarters.

Within this field, the economic and technical irreversibility of the choices made, presents a very serious problem due to the impediments in the area of successive integration for systems born non integrated.

3. School-based network management. Linkages between theory and praxis in Italian educational leadership

The following section focuses on the methods used for head teachers in the acquisition of general management skills, with particular regard for network strategic management. After examining the spread of similar management systems within Italian schools, the article will look at a tool for education management, known as *NetManagement*, which has been specifically developed to help head teachers describe, expound and implement their school mission and strategy. We have analyzed the case of two elementary schools of the province of Ravenna in the Emilia Romagna region in order to test the potential for educative leadership development according to the categories of suggested analyses from network management. Such an aim is made to refer to a particular strategic theme that the schools have been confronting for various years – the integration of foreign students – which is considered crucial for the maintenance of a consolidated image of quality and for long lasting development.

The Italian context

The Italian experience is, in many ways, similar to other countries of the Euro-

Mediterranean Area. Starting from a hierarchical, centralized and highly bureaucratic system, Italy has experienced a shift towards decentralization that resulted from the giving of more responsibility and authority to the schools, which have become the major unit of change in the education system.

In the specific case of Italy, school management is the most wide-ranging profession comprising management qualifications in the country's public administration sector. In 2006, it has been calculated that the profession includes 10,517 head teachers, who, on average, are over 62 years old, a high average that has led to inherent problems of generational turnover. Their management skills have become a critical issue due to the elevated number of people involved and, above all, the cultural background of head teachers, whose skills are rooted mainly in the teaching profession (Paletta and Vidoni, 2006). Ten years after the introduction of management in schools, the acquisition of managerial skills is still looked upon with suspicion (Romani and Serpieri, 2004), not only due to history and ideology, but also due to the uncertainty surrounding autonomous schools.

From a legal and organizational perspective, schools are formally autonomous. Yet, if a school does not ably manage its chief resources – human, financial and material – its autonomy becomes a blunt weapon and is in fact, often used by head teachers as a justification for a lack of interest in investing in managerial skills (Paletta, 2004).

Head teachers need in-depth knowledge of the cultural organization of their school, and hence, need to have been a part of the teaching profession for a sufficient period of time (Weick, 1976). However, seniority and being a good teacher do not suffice for someone to become head teacher. Head teachers, who bring about change within a school and have a clear vision for development, need to ably combine three diverse types of skills: professional, leadership and managerial (Paletta, 2005).

An action research project carried out in the region of Emilia Romagna (Italy), in collaboration with the Region's Scholastic Office, sought to determine the training requirements of schools for Strategic Management (SM). Following an initial selection process, the projects concentrated on 12 schools (differing in type) to carefully develop a SM model.

The project was based on certain fundamental ideas (Bezzina, Paletta, Vidoni, 2006). In Italy, according to the law in force, the *Piano dell'Offerta Formativa (POF – Training Offer Plan)* should be a strategic plan for a school, in which its mission and objectives are indicated. The plan should be a guideline for the organization of the resources of a school, the area in which it is situated, the definition of projects and the evaluation of results. It should provide an opportunity for the identification of strategic priorities and for the allocation of financial resources by concentrating on the issues that will be significant in the long term.

The action research project, however, brought a very different world to light. The *POF* is deemed a limited type of list of the services offered. It describes the courses offered, the timetable and other aspects related to the organization of the school's services, but does not include the school's objectives and management criteria. When the objectives are included, they are noted in a long list and cover all possible areas of intervention; in some cases, they are copied from the *POF* of the preceding year.

The objectives of the *POF*, where present, do not focus on the critical areas of school management. Because of constant planning, the monitoring of results does not refer to internal plans for improvement. Indeed, a number of schools determine, by means of interviews and questionnaires, the opinion of students, parents, teachers and staff members on various aspects of the school's functioning. Moreover, finding numerous project performance indicators is frequent, yet they usually indicate the input and output of individual projects, such as teaching hours and the number of people involved.

A recent evaluation of the Sivadis Project⁴, carried out by the National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education System (INVALSI, 2005), provided additional empirical information on the development of SM.

In Italy, Law no. 286 (passed in 1999) introduced a new system of evaluation of head teachers. In the future, when the system will come into full use, the evaluation of head teachers will be the basis upon which part of their salary is determined, depending on the results reached. In the current transitory phase, the Sivadis Project is testing an evaluation

⁴ The Sivadis Project (*SI.VA.DI.S – System of Evaluation of Scholastic Management*).

method used for the past three years.

The study focused on 176 “self-evaluation files,” in which school principles outlined an assessment guide comprising context, objectives, actions and indicators. Despite the evaluation showing that there was a general improvement compared with the first year, there still remain certain critical points:

1. The objectives are defined in a vague and/or semantically ambiguous manner. For example, the objectives “Staff Organization” and “Improvement of Training Quality,” that are listed by 65% and 44% of head teachers respectively, are too generic for the creation of a sound strategic plan for the various aspects of a school;

2. The “indicators without an identifiable source” still represent 36% of the total – a rather elevated percentage. It is difficult to ascertain their meaning and how they evaluate the criteria of a specific objective. They can be distinguished from the “simple indicators” (47%) that refer to information present in school documents (the *POF*, meeting minutes, registers, contracts, the budget, etc.) as well as from the “complex indicators” (17%) that refer to information not gathered through traditional channels (questionnaires dealing with satisfaction, tests verifying learning, etc.);

3. Indicating the actions of school principles to reach the school’s objectives was introduced in the self-evaluation file during the second year of experimentation with Sivadis. The study showed that the actions were not aligned with the objectives being pursued, but rather, they represented a more specific facet of the objectives.

In brief, the action research project carried out in the selected schools of Emilia Romagna, along with the evaluation of the Sivadis Project, gave rise to cogent empirical proof. Generally, the weakness of school management in Italy seems to lie in the missing alignment between strategy, organization and performance. The *POF* consists of a detailed description of a long list of projects, yet it cannot be considered the glue holding the initiatives together. For external parties and the collegial bodies within a school (the board and teachers’ association), it is impossible to comprehend the strategy behind the decisions made at times, which certainly does not help in creating a cooperative organization of the various social actors. Without strong leadership, a school can be sidetracked by individual initiatives, resulting in a loss of resources and human energy. Performance evaluation ought to jumpstart the strategic management of a school, but the lack of clearly defined objectives and improved services hinders the creation of an organizational learning process.

How can head teachers alter the current situation and launch an effective process of organizational change? Is change possible without an adequate system of staff commitment and without the support of stakeholders in the community?

The following case on the strategies of integration of foreign students allows us to provide answers about the effectiveness of the management network in the field of education.

The strategic management of scholastic integration of foreign students

The presence of foreign students in Italian schools is a social phenomenon that, by now, is both statistically relevant and in continual expansion. According to data taken from the Ministry of Education, young non-Italian citizens – without counting students with Italian citizenship, but with at least one foreign parent – have gone from 15 thousand in 1989 to 280 thousand in 2004, in other words, 3.5% of the total scholastic population. The Ministry estimates that this figure will increase to 700 thousand youths in 2017.

This signifies an improvised and rapid shift that has led to the registration of 50 thousand new students merely in the past year. The foreshadowed scenario will be crucial to the configuration of Italian society. Looking within the schools can be considered both a mirror of the effective level of the social integration of foreigners – that is to say, the societal capacity to open itself to a new form of social pluralism – as well as a fundamental laboratory of social integration, active and crucial in modifying society’s capacity of welcoming in diversity (Fravega and Queirolo Palmas 2003; Giovannini and Queirolo Palmas 2002; Besozzi 1997).

The presence of students with non-Italian origins constitutes a challenge for Italian schools in that it tends to contribute to the heterogeneousness of the classes both on the characteristic “extra-scholastic” level (i.e. behaviors with ties to religion, dietary habits, clothing, and relations among ethnic peers, etc.) as well as on a strictly scholastic level. The

professors view a weakening in the effectiveness of the traditional teaching methods and are thus, called upon to acquire new skills for cultural intermediation, especially when the non-Italian students come from different countries, speak diverse languages and/or do not share cultural traits even among one another.

On the other hand, the integration of foreigners represents a typical social problem for which the analytical categories of “network governance and management,” described previously, are particularly pertinent. The politics for an effective social integration of foreign citizens requires a plurality of interventions from those more apparent and tangible such as housing, assistance, scholastic and labor integration, to those less evident such as the removal of cultural and symbolic obstacles that can jeopardize all other forms of social integration. The Italian law (Legislative Decree n.112/1998) implemented the principle of vertical subsidiarity according to which: “The universality of tasks and administrative functions is attributed to the municipalities, the provinces and the mountain communities [...], according to their associative, organizational and territorial dimensions, with exclusion of the sole functions that require unitary duties on a regional level.

The regions, in the field of legislative autonomy, utilize instruments and procedures of connection and orchestration, also permanent; this produce various forms of functional and structural cooperation with the scope to permit collaboration and coordinated actions between regions and local entities, in the field of respective competence (art. 3).

The region, Emilia Romagna, has approved a new law aimed at the social integration of foreign citizens⁵ that transversely confronts the fundamental themes that underlie the politics of social inclusion (representation, actions against discrimination, housing, work, vocational training, social assistance and health care) with the explicit aim, on the part of the region and local entity, to promote the development of interventions for intercultural integration and communication.

In this context, we have studied the case of two elementary schools in the municipality of Ravenna in order to analyze the networking strategies placed in the field relative to those of the institutional and non-institutional actors, involved in the politics in question.

The municipality of Ravenna, together with the scholastic institutions of the municipality and the Centre of Administrative Services of Ravenna, has signed a protocol with the aim of improving the reception and schooling of immigrant students enrolled in the local education system and to facilitate the transition of their families as well. The cooperation agreement utilizes four objectives, each of which have specified actors and methods of intervention and integration:

Tab. 1.1 Cooperation agreement promoted by the municipality of Ravenna for the integration of foreign students

Actors	Objective 1: First reception
Scholastic institutions	✓ Creation of the kit “first reception” produced in 8 languages ✓ Coordination with cultural mediators
Local entity	✓ Updated production of the kit and distributed in the schools
House of culture	✓ Coordinate the granting of cultural mediators according to the criteria of priority for the newly arrived students and followed for the already integrated students
Associations “Terra mia” and “Amici”	✓ Manage the front-office service to favor the referred teachers for the gathering of mediation interventions
Cultural mediators	✓ Planning with the referred and/or classroom teacher of a social education path aimed at the integration of newly arrived children in the class
	Objective 2: Monitoring of the experimental paths of the first reception
Scholastic institutions	✓ Creation of commissions of reception in every school, with prepared teachers and workers ✓ Participation in socialization of the practices of reception to favor other interested schools and agencies

⁵ Regional law March 24, n.5 “Norms for the social integration of foreign citizen immigrants. Modified the regional law February 21, 1990, n.14 and March 12, 2003, n.2.

Local entity	✓	Support the cost of the initiative
House of culture	✓	Elaboration of a reception protocol and the socialization of it with the other schools
Objective 3: Intensive Italian languages courses		
Scholastic institutions	✓	Participation in courses
Local entity	✓	Sharing of the ordinary management costs
House of culture	✓	Organization of assistant courses and creation of teachers
Cultural mediators	✓	Participation in courses
Center of administrative services	✓	Financial support
Objective 4: Attainment of common initiatives on education		
Scholastic institutions	✓	Concentrate the education initiatives with the House of Culture
Local entity	✓	Support the intervention through the use of resources allocated to the house of culture, as well as to guarantee the participation of scholastic and social workers interested and involved in multicultural themes
House of Culture	✓	Management of education initiatives aimed at the complete growth of professional capabilities
Center of administrative services	✓	Action of fund raising for the Regional Scholastic Office on territorial funds inherent to education

On a local level, the municipality of Ravenna plays the role of pivot in the inter-institutional and inter-organizational coordination of the politics of the integration of foreign students. The municipality performs this role through the “Casa delle Culture” (House of Culture), which is a center for intercultural information, consulting, and documentation. This center: creates education teaching paths directed at the schools and teachers; offers informational and consulting services on specific teaching projects of intercultural education and of first reception for newly arrived foreign children; offers bibliographic information on the themes of immigration and education from a global framework; offers Italian language courses for foreigners; performs cultural and educational activities concerning the topics of the education of peace, globalization and inter-culturalism.

In addition to the “Casa della Culture,” there has developed a rich fabric of non-profit and volunteer associations, among which there is the “Città Meticcica” (Hybrid City) association and other various immigrant associations that focus on achieving projects and final initiatives encouraging the interactions of diverse cultures in Ravenna.

The network of the municipality of Ravenna for the integration of foreign students presents the same organizational problems generally identified in all networks: difficulties in the creation of a common vision of development among the various actors involved; identification of the strategic objectives and the role of the participants; and the exchange of information and of resources for operational coordinating.

The executives of the two elementary schools felt the need to better understand their roles within the network and to assume a pro-active attitude towards the municipality, the “Casa delle Culture” and the other involved actors.

The two schools have understood that it would not have been sufficient to simply adapt actual routines and organizational practices to seize the network opportunities. The school strategies, the method in which the schools were organized, and the schools’ cultural values, would not have been immune to the change.

From this point, came the need to walk oneself along the road of “transformational learning”(Post, Preston, and Sachs, 2002) with the necessity of bringing, in a long-term perspective, substantial changes to the strategy, structure and organizational culture in order to raise the probability of success within the new environment.

Tools for network strategic management

The managerial training of head teachers, on equal footing with other professions, can benefit from new forms of information technology. However, unlike the case in other sectors, individual schools are not equipped with the financial resources to access new technologies, which can limit the introduction of effective training programs. On the one hand, this situation requires the creation of new training courses at university level. While on the other, it requires more cooperation between school networks, universities, software houses, educational research institutes and regional scholastic offices, aiming at the development of information technology that bolsters school management. It is with this in mind that *NetManagement* was designed: to support the network strategic management of schools.

The theoretical background of *NetManagement* is based on two main fields of research:

- Studies and business research on performance management;
- Research in the field of knowledge management.

-The most widespread model of performance management used today is the balanced scorecard system created by R. Kaplan and D. Norton at the beginning of the 1990s. The scorecard originated as a performance measurement system focusing on the cause-and-effect relations between financial results and intangible assets and clients, the social consensus of stakeholders, the effectiveness and efficiency of internal processes, the skills of the staff, and organisational learning. Over the past few years, the system has, in part, changed its aims: today, it is used, above all, as a model for the strategic management of performance, favouring the communication, implementation and control of adopted strategies (Kaplan and Norton, 1996). The system aims at helping top managers create organisational unity around the vision for development of business, transform strategies into concrete actions, thereby making them the reference point of staff members' daily work (Kaplan and Norton, 2004).

Knowledge management (KM) is part of a multi-disciplinary field that includes information technology, IT, cognitive science and the numerous sectors where these are applied, e.g. managerial sciences (Dalkir, 2005). According to a common definition, knowledge management includes all those methods, techniques and tools that contribute to the promotion of a unitary knowledge process that integrates the creation, sharing and application of knowledge in all sectors and at all organizational levels with the intent to improve business performance (Mertins, Heisig and Vorbeck, 2003). One of the biggest analytical attributes of KM is, on one hand, the distinction between data, information and knowledge, and on the other, the distinction between tacit and explicit knowledge.

Davenport and Prusak (1998) define knowledge as "a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information." "Embracing a wider sphere than information, knowledge includes perception, skills, training, common sense, and experience. It is the sum total of our perceptive processes that helps us to draw meaningful conclusions." (Awad and Ghaziri, 2004).

KM handles knowledge in all its forms, tacit and explicit. While explicit knowledge is that which has been gathered in a tangible form i.e. in the form of words, images and audio recordings, tacit information resides "within the heads of knowers" (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). "Coined by Hungarian medical scientist Michael Polanyi, tacit knowledge includes intuitions, values, and beliefs that stem from years of experiences. It is personal and hard to formalize and communicate. Because the human mind is the storage medium, tacit knowledge is vulnerable to loss. When it is shared, vulnerability is reduced, and it is easier to reuse." (Foster, 1999).

Strategic mapping as a knowledge process

NetManagement is an example of open source software and was developed to support knowledge management activities dealing with the creation of networking strategy.

One of the greatest challenges in the network strategic management of schools is to integrate diverging points of view with the expectations of those involved (teachers, head teachers, administrative staff, students, parents, community, etc.) so as to define a shared vision of success. This means going from a chaotic ensemble of ideas, usually reflecting the diverging opinions, to an agreement as to what the strategic objectives of the school ought to be and how opinions and objectives affect each other (the creation of a strategic map). *NetManagement* allows head teachers to fulfil their role of leader of the process resulting in

an agreement on the strategies of the school, by defining its objectives and performance indicators.

Figure 1.4 illustrates the strategic map with the theme of integration of foreign students in the two elementary schools:

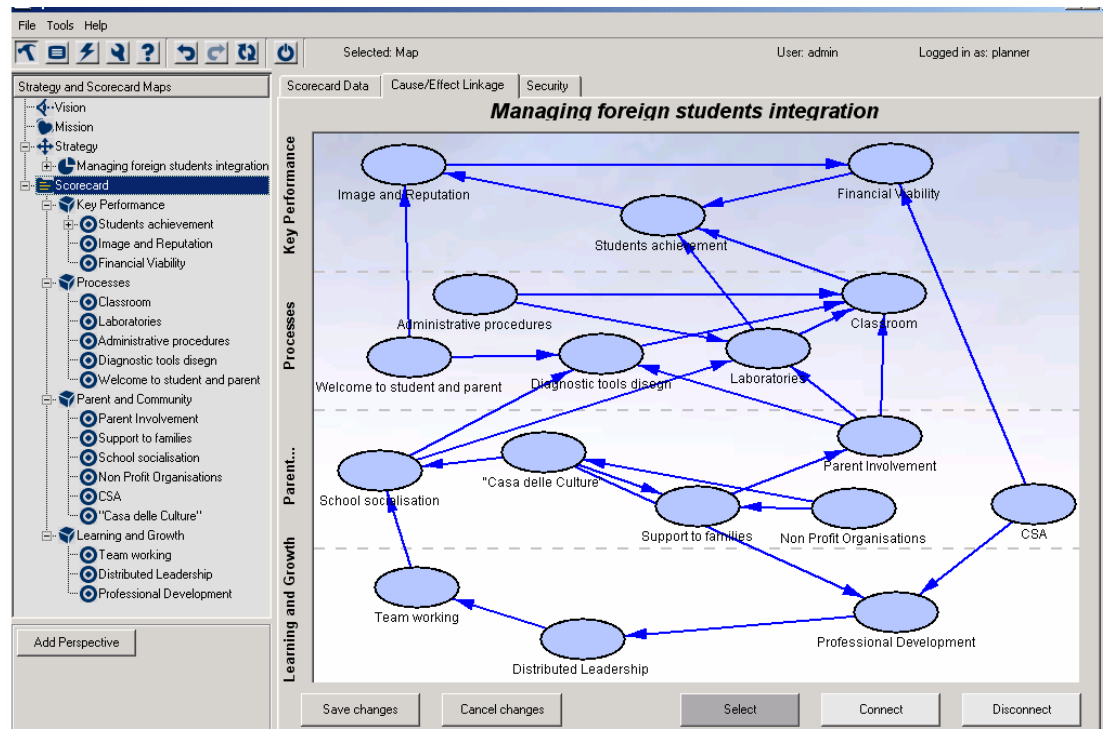


Fig. 1.4 Strategic mapping with the theme of integration of foreign students

The map consists of a diagram of cause-and-effect relations⁶ between the various activities that give rise to diverging points of view (Key Performance, Internal Processes; Parent and Community Involvement; Learning and Growth), and upon which strategic objectives will be based.

The hierarchy of perspectives is not fortuitous; it follows a precise course that goes from key results (Student Achievement, Image and Reputation; Financial Viability) to the factors determining those very results: the way in which teaching and administrative processes are carried out, the involvement of students, families and other stakeholders, the training and development of human resources, the innovation of organisational systems and the cultural sustainability of the vision for development.

The map is based on perspectives from which the schools defined their own objectives for improvement and cooperation within the network. These goals represent a synthesis of the questions that according to the school, are priorities for confronting the challenge of the integration of the foreign students in its reality. In these terms, the map is useful both for creating organizational training within the school as well as sharing the same priorities with the key actors of the network (Casa delle Culture, other schools, associations, etc.).

For each one of the strategic objectives (Fig. 1.5), the strategic management team of the school is called upon to identify the most appropriate measurement system that will capture its meaning and content. This occurs by means of the elaboration of a set of performance indicators and the drawing up of questionnaires dealing with various aspects, including past experiences and the complexity and costs of measurement. The following is an example created with regard to the objective of reducing the number of children at risk:

⁶ In the figure, for practical motives of comprehensibility, only the principle relations are indicated.

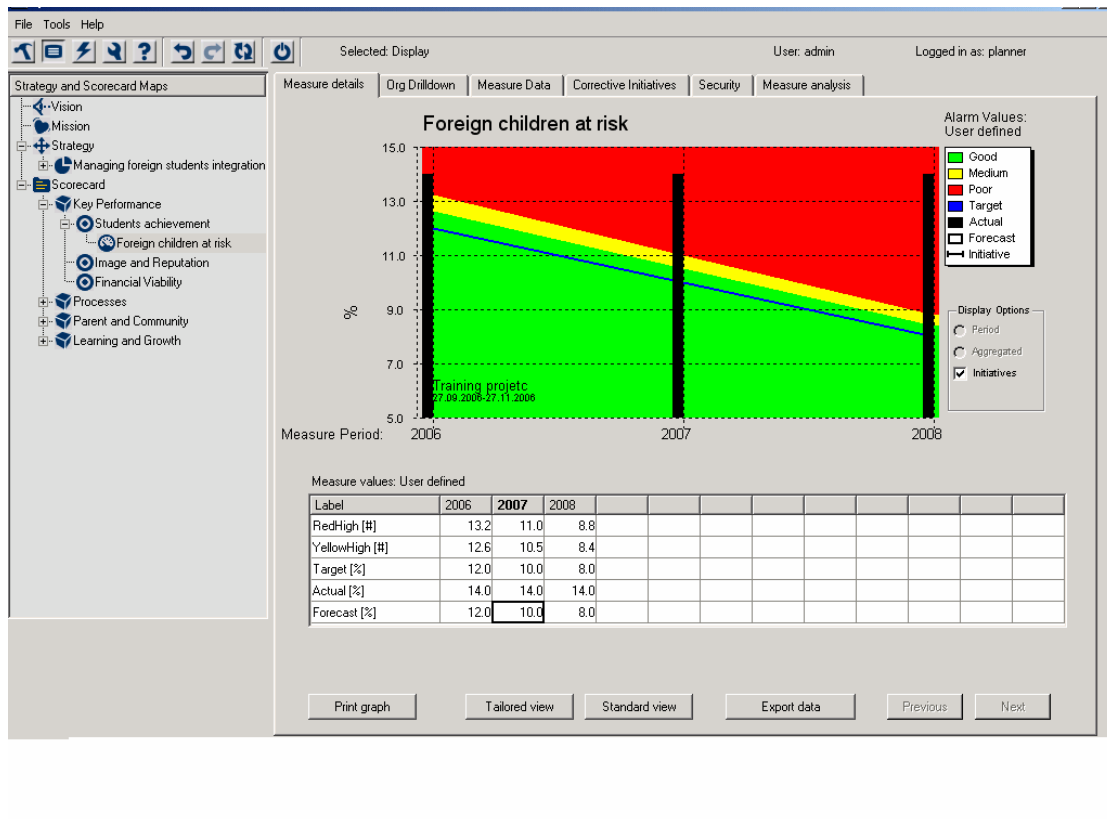


Fig. 1.5 Performance Indicators

A strategic map expressed in terms of measurable objectives is the premise upon which to decide on precise targets. If a strategy has been in use for some time, then referring to past results and tracing future trends becomes possible.

The targets, expressed numerically, indicate the efforts that the organization is willing to make (usually for the following three years) to reach a pre-determined level of performance. The efforts necessary for the improvement of the targets also determine what and when initiatives need to be taken, the resources to be used, and the deciding of the budget.

The use of NetManagement in the network strategic management shows that a school can control the factors determining students' learning within a long, systematic and programmed framework of time. The links between strategy, stakeholder, objectives, budgeting, and the evaluation of results reached, are destined to create a continuous cycle of learning in and improvement of schools. Head teachers can transform tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge, they can promote their vision for development, share their objectives, make their staff more responsible so to participate proactively in the network and learn from their mistakes. In this way, they are showing that a school can "make a difference," enhancing individual abilities, the choices of students' families, and social involvement.

Conclusion

The expression, New Public Management (NPM) is used to describe the managerial reforms of the public sector for the past two decades. NPM established itself as an international trend spreading itself even in continental European countries where

administrative, institutional, and political systems differ from those of the Anglo-Saxon countries, where NPM found its origins.

The paper has discussed the contents of NPM, comparatively analyzing the evolutionary phases both generally and with specific regard to the education sector.

The supported thesis is that in the education sector, NPM cannot be considered a uniform, monolithic block, but is rather characterized by evolutionary stages that come from the conventional emphasis of the transfer of managerial, business-like practices (managerialism), to the introduction of quasi-market assets (marketization), up until the most recent paradigm of “public governance.”

With specific regard to the continental European context, the paper has considered the necessity of confronting the scientific discussion and educational reforms within the new paradigm, largely resulting from the adherence to the nature and organizational culture of the school.

The scholastic leadership must correspond to the network management model in which the collaboration and persuasion take the place of the hierarchy not only in the relationships with the outside stakeholders but also in the management of human resources within the school.

These foundations were then used to analyze a network management case in Emilia Romagna, Italy, in which we were directly involved along with 12 schools of varying institutional typology. The close examination of two of the schools participating in the project allowed for the analysis of the network, relative to the integration of foreign students in the municipality of Ravenna.

The use of new technology has allowed us to evaluate the large potential for the strategic network processes in the education sector. The studied cases have demonstrated a sharp growth of managerial skills not only in the relationships between the management and staff within the schools, but also in the construction of relations to which the management is called daily within the network. Even if the initial experiments allow for a stronger tie between the theory and the practice of leadership in the field of education, the general Italian scenario continues to lack promise in the attainment of new managerial abilities due to historical, cultural, and regulation obstacles that will continue to impact our country for much time to come.

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