# Designing educational materials: a policy adrift?

## Diseño de materiales educativos: ¿una política a la deriva?

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Resumen

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El obietivo de este estudio es realizar un análisis comparativo

estatal, nacional e internacional sobre las políticas en la

elaboración, diseño y uso del material didáctico. La

metodología es cualitativa, con un análisis documental de la

información que se maneja en diferentes plataformas de los

organismos. Las diferentes políticas internacionales pretenden

beneficiar el desarrollo educativo en los niveles básicos, sus

políticas están dirigidas a la erradicación del analfabetismo y

que todos los niños tengan acceso a la educación, promoviendo

inclusión, equidad y ampliación de la escolaridad obligatoria; se

promueven los derechos humanos y el estado de derecho en sus

esferas de competencia, con ahínco en el derecho a la

educación. Compartiendo experiencias de éxito entre países,

contribuyendo al diseño de modelos educativos que enriquecen

el debate sobre el futuro de la educación. Siendo México un

país diverso necesita focalizar las estrategias educativas por

estado. En lo relacionado a la elaboración, diseño y uso del

material didáctico, encontrándose en los resultados, la presencia

de múltiples documentos, líneas, políticas sobre el uso, diseño y

elaboración del material didáctico, sin embargo, de toda la

información se concluye que, el único responsable de su

selección y toma de decisión en la forma de uso, diseño y

elaboración del material didáctico es de lo único que pueden controlar las instituciones, brindándole libertad en innovación:

#### Abstract

The aim of this study is to carry out a state, national and international comparative analysis on the policies of the elaboration, design and use of didactic material. methodology is qualitative, with a documentary analysis of the information that is handled on different platforms. The different international policies aim to benefit educational development at basic levels, their policies are aimed at eradicating illiteracy and that all children have access to education, promoting inclusion, equity and expansion of compulsory schooling; human rights and the rule of law are promoted in their spheres of competence, with emphasis on the right to education. Sharing successful experiences between countries, contributing to the design of educational models that enrich the debate on the future of education. Since Mexico is a diverse country, it needs to focus educational strategies by state. In relation to the elaboration, design and use of the didactic material, finding in the results, the presence of multiple documents, lines, policies on the use, design and elaboration of the didactic material, however, from all the information it is concluded that, The only person responsible for their selection and decision making in the way of use, design and preparation of the didactic material is the only thing that the institutions can control, giving them freedom in innovation: the teacher.

#### Didactical material, Elaboration, Design

Material didáctico, Elaboración, Diseño

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## Introduction

The different international policies aim to benefit educational development at basic levels, their policies are aimed at eradicating illiteracy and ensuring that all children have access to education, promoting inclusion, equity and the expansion of compulsory schooling; human rights and the rule of law are promoted in their spheres of competence, with emphasis on the right to education. Sharing successful experiences between countries, contributing to the design of educational models that enrich the debate on the future of education. As Mexico is a diverse country, it needs to focus educational strategies by state.

Public policies for developing educational materials.

Soto and Barraza (2016) mention that the birth of public policies in nation-states has to do with the need to improve the provision of public services to national societies; among these services are: tax services; various procedures, such as public safety; transport; health; education; supply; drinking water; infrastructure; communications; among other aspects. This indicates that, at present, governments have difficulties in drawing up efficient public agendas for their respective societies. These difficulties are endogenous and exogenous in nature.

Internal causes include: poor administration; political and regulatory issues; fiscal deficiencies and precarious finances.

External causes include: economic, political and social changes; liberalisation and globalisation of markets for goods and services; the political independence of economic and civil society; and the impact of information and communication technologies (ICT) (Castillo-German, 2012; Soto and Barraza, 2016).

All of this generates a diversity of problems that require a plurality of policies that, interrelated, configure networks that can respond to the problems or situations, applied in a joint or systemic way.

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This series of problems and strategies that seek their solution is what will give rise to public policies. However, public policies do not work by themselves; they require a higher entity that, on the one hand, shapes them, coordinates them and is responsible for implementing them efficiently, transparently and with good results. This seems indisputable, although these results are not always found in social reality (Castillo- Alemán, 2012; Soto and Barraza, 2016).

Thus, they become the vehicle for the behavioural organisation of government, allowing the common problems of citizens to be incorporated into the state's agenda, so that they can be solved jointly. Furthermore, the Nations Development Programme United (UNDP) indicates that public policies are the set of actions and decisions aimed at solving the problems of communities and societies, such as economic, social, infrastructure, education, transport, among others (Castillo-Alemán, 2012; Soto and Barraza, 2016).

Public policies will be the ideal instrument to link private and governmental efforts in favour of collective goals (Vargas, Rivera, 2015, p. 7), affirms that public policies have an intimate relationship with management, since the public sphere is the context that guides the formation, definition, elaboration, implementation and evaluation of the referred public policies. Public policies thus become governmental instruments related to the regulations that restrict, prohibit or authorise the behaviour of social and political actors (Castillo-Alemán, 2012; Soto and Barraza, 2016).

In short, public policies "correspond to the action programme of the authority or the result of the activity of an authority vested with public power and governmental legitimacy". Public policies are strategies of a good government that are applied for certain purposes; responding to public problems thus typified by governments; however, not everything that governments do are public policies (Castillo-Alemán, 2012; Soto and Barraza, 2016).

The characteristics of public policies also have an impact on the private sector: In the design of public policies, society, private organisations and governmental bodies at different levels can intervene jointly; public policies are universal when they are aimed at the entire population and are targeted public policies when they are aimed at solving a specific problem or at a particular social group; public policies are the point of convergence between public interests and private interests. It also the point where government is participation is unavoidable and unavoidable for the good outcome of public policies; public policies prevent the state from being the main protagonist of the economic process; the implementation of public policies should be understood as a set of actors, strategies, procedures, times, processes and actions that are concerned with ensuring the effective management of society, institutionalising conflict and cooperation; public policies allow the institutional scope of markets to be identified. They also provide a glimpse of governance in the behaviour of institutions; they must be selective and sequential. In other words, their application should aim to consolidate fiscal balance and avoid damaging the objectives of equity and competitiveness; they translate into the operation of programmes projects; technological advances or in communication information and have contributed to improving public services and increasing citizen participation (Polanco, 2011; Castillo- Alemán, 2012; Soto and Barraza, 2016; Murillo, 2017).

According to OECD (2010), Mexico and member countries have strategies in place to help education authorities strengthen their education systems. Focusing mainly on optimising public policies in leadership, teaching and school management in schools in order to improve results in basic education students, comparing the key factors in the various public policies of different school systems and adapting them to the reality and contexts. The result is 15 recommendations for a practical agenda to support schools, principals and teachers in implementing these tasks:

Among the recommendations proposed are:

Reinforce the importance of the role of teachers; determine clear standards of teacher practice; ensure high-quality initial teacher education (ITP) programmes; attract better candidates; professionalise teacher selection, recruitment, and evaluation; and link teachers and their professional development more directly to the needs of schools (Ferrari, Cachia and Punie, 2009; Ramirez and Valenzuela, 2017; Sanchez Mendiola and Escammilla de los Santos, 2018).

Redefine and support excellent school leadership and management; consolidate the role of school principals by setting clear standards: providing professional training, selection and recruitment, facilitating school autonomy with support structures, and ensuring social participation (Polanco, 2011; Castillo-Alemán, 2012; Soto and Barraza, 2016; Murillo, 2017).

Schools also need to have a stable source of funding that responds to their specific needs; conditions for successful education reform: countries can make exceptional improvements in educational outcomes in a relatively short period of time, ranging from a few years to a generation (Polanco, 2011; Castillo- Alemán, 2012; Soto and Barraza, 2016).

Delivering meaningful and comprehensive improvements in educational outcomes is a complex task that requires a multi-faceted strategy. At the core are public policies that focus on improving teaching and learning, including curriculum, teaching skills, leadership and assessment. At the same time, the design of public policy must take into account the context and the possibilities of implementation (Polanco, 2011; Castillo-Alemán, 2012; Soto and Barraza, 2016; López and Heredia, 2017; López and Heredia, 2017).

Furthermore, the OECD (2010) notes that: the analysis of public policies in highperforming countries can guide governments with unclear objectives to have not only the support but also the understanding of society, attention to the recruitment, training and retention of individuals, both teachers and leaders with excellent performance, and review institutions and infrastructure that support educational improvement, as well as a professional and objective information system of results and accountability and reports that support the government's objectives; finally, a focus on the work of each school where the learning-teaching process takes place (Ferrari, Cachia and Punie, 2009; Ramírez and Valenzuela, 2017; Sánchez Mendiola and Escammilla de los Santos, 2018).

For this reason, it is up to each country to undertake each of these points; therefore, improvements in an entire education system only occur if there is consistent political support and continuous leadership over a certain period of time, which implies years of effort and work, especially reflection and persistence (UN, 2022).

For this reason, towards educational reform in Mexico, improving the quality of education is a political and social priority in Mexico, especially in recent years, due to high rates of poverty, strong inequality and rising crime. Despite educational improvement and an increasingly significant direction in education policy in recent years, a high proportion of young people still do not complete upper secondary education and student performance is not sufficient to provide the skills Mexico needs: half of 15-year-olds did not reach PISA basic level 2, compared to an OECD average of 19.2% in 2006. The school day is short, with insufficient effective teaching time; and in countless schools, teaching and leadership are of low quality, and support is weak (UN, 2022).

Structural challenges persist: capacity failure, unclear division of responsibilities in the decentralised system, and structural circumstances and processes do not facilitate putting schools at the centre of education policy (Ferrari, Cachia and Punie, 2009; Ramirez and Valenzuela, 2017; Sanchez Mendiola and Escammilla de los Santos, 2018). Schools operate with scarce resources that need to be better distributed among them. This demands greater capacity and the creation of institutionalised structures to ensure dialogue and consensus building, so Mexico needs to develop a long-term education strategy to certify a higher overall level of skills and knowledge, which will provide economic growth and better living conditions for all Mexicans.

One of the first necessary conditions is to establish a small number of clear, measurable and high-priority objectives, adequate to improve student performance, decrease dropout rates at low levels, ensure "relevant graduation" and reduce inequalities within the education system. The first key point of the reform is the need to put Mexican schools and students at the centre of education policy design.Furthermore, the OECD (2010) notes that: the analysis of public policies in high-performing countries can guide governments with unclear objectives to have not only the support but also the understanding of society, attention to the recruitment, training and retention of individuals, both teachers and leaders with excellent performance, and review institutions and infrastructure that support educational improvement, as well as a professional and objective information system of results and accountability and reports that support the government's objectives; finally, a focus on the work of each school where the learningteaching process takes place (Ferrari, Cachia and Punie, 2009; Ramírez and Valenzuela, 2017; Sánchez Mendiola and Escammilla de los Santos, 2018).

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Improving Mexican schools will require reflection on the governance system, as well as the role of school leaders and teachers, to enable a focus on supporting all children and young people to achieve their greatest learning potential. Furthermore, the OECD (2010) indicates that to ensure progress in the design and implementation of public policy, it can be helpful to: provide spaces for dialogue and communication between all actors; ensure that actors and public policies are in order; monitor the structures that will propose reforms; match the following elements:

- The focus on education.
- Training, development and support for the educator workforce.
- Public policy decisions, and resources.

Stimulating the development of national, regional and local capacity building that supports not only better management of schools, but how to continue to build reliable sources of information for evaluation and improvement.

On the other hand, the same OECD (2010) indicates that: it is necessary to take ownership of the recommendations in order to adapt them, in conjunction with all actors, and with the benefit of creating a culture of professionalisation interested in consistent teaching. This is achieved through learning different aspects of building from the recommendations in different states, learning from each other. The recommendations are intertwined with the Sector Programmes and the Alliance for Quality, as well as the goals of the 20-30 agenda, for example, creating unity and partnership in driving and enabling change (Dávila and Luis, 2014).

Mexico, the 14th largest economy in the world (2009), faces significant challenges in education. Despite significant progress in recent decades in terms of access, improvements in completion rates at basic education levels and the development of learning assessments, considerable challenges remain.

Mexico invests a high share of the public budget in education (about 22%, the highest among OECD countries). Optimising the quality of education services, increasing levels of educational attainment and minimising dropout rates are priority issues (Dávila and Luis, 2014). Equally important, Mexico must ensure that all children and youth, including those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and indigenous families, have equal educational opportunities. In order to address these issues, the Mexican government established priorities for education reforms in its Education Sector Programme 2007-2012.

In order to monitor progress towards achieving its objectives, the Ministry of Public Education (SEP) established improvement indicators for student learning as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Achievement in Schools (ENLACE) and the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

Other key indicators relate to teacher professional development, school decisionmaking, equity in educational opportunities, and content and curriculum reforms (Dávila and Luis, 2014).

To promote the education reform process, the Mexican government established the Alliance for Quality Education with the National Union of Education Workers (SNTE) in 2008. In this context, the SEP and the OECD established in 2008 the Agreement to Improve the Quality of Education in Mexican Schools. The purpose of the agreement was to establish not only what policy changes should be considered in Mexico, but also how to design and implement policy reforms effectively, building on ongoing initiatives as well as local conditions. constraints and opportunities (Dávila and Luis, 2014; Dirección General de Materiales Educativos, 2017).

One of the components of this agreement deals with the development of appropriate policies and practices to assess the quality of schools and teachers and to link results with incentives to achieve improvement processes. These work streams were led by the OECD Advisory Council on Teacher Evaluation Policies and Incentives in Mexico, which is composed of international experts. The main results of the co-operation agreement between SEP and the OECD are presented below:

Improving Schools: Strategies for Action in Mexico (OECD, 2010), as part of this effort, material concerning value-added models was also renewed and translated. According to UN Mexico and the plans it contains there is an agenda 2030 on sustainable development which I mention below, and it is nothing more than the generalised plans of the UN to UN Mexico to follow up (Dávila and Luis, 2014; UN, 2022).

## Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The SDGs are appropriate devices that will engage people and their leaders together, to participate in the search for social consensus and to narrow the gaps.

In 2015, more than 150 world leaders attended the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in New York to adopt the Sustainable Development Agenda. This includes the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which aim to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change with no one left behind by 2030.

This new development framework provides an opportunity for the United Nations System, globally and in Mexico, to focus cooperation and programming, to continue to defend and sow the seeds of inclusion and equity in a framework of rights, to build more citizenship for Mexicans in this country.

### Mexico and the 2030 Agenda

Mexico participated actively in the definition of the Agenda. The country was one of the most active in the consultation forums, participating and leading the negotiation process. It not only presented specific proposals to incorporate the principles of equality, social and economic inclusion. and promoted universality. sustainability and human rights as the guiding principles of the 2030 Agenda. It also advocated the adoption of a multidimensional approach to poverty that, in addition to considering people's income, would take into account their effective access to other basic rights such as food, education, health, social security and basic housing services.

Mexico has maintained its participation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, some of the advances are:

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- Mexico was one of the two volunteer countries in the region to present progress on the SDGs at the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.
- Installation of the Specialised Technical Committee on Sustainable Development (Presidency of the Republic-INEGI), with the participation of the Federal Public Administration agencies.
- The Senate of the Republic set up the Working Group on the 2030 Agenda, which will provide follow-up and support from the legislative branch for the fulfilment of the SDGs.
- Development of the SDG implementation plan by the Presidency of the Republic and AMEXCID with UNDP support.
- Installation of the National Council of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



Figure 1 Source: www.un.org

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and their 169 targets, address the structural causes of poverty, combat inequalities and create opportunities to improve people's quality of life within a sustainable development framework. It serves as a launching pad for by the international community, action governments, as well as civil society organisations, academia and the private sector, to address the three interconnected elements of sustainable development: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental sustainability.

In Mexico, the public education policy on the design, use and development of teaching that learning materials argues and the educational model for free education is based on the development of education for freedom and creativity, by improving educational quality and equity. The materials policy has the global vision that learning is a process where students will build disciplinary, interdisciplinary and practical knowledge, cognitive, metacognitive, physical and practical skills, attitudes of curiosity, proactivity and global mindset, and the development of values that enable them to mobilise knowledge as knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in themselves and in their relationship with those around them, creating conducive learning environments (IDEO, 2012; Dirección General de Materiales Educativos, 2017).

Therefore, although the free textbook has been important as a material that has guaranteed, for six decades, frequent national teaching for basic education students, it has not been the only material; SEP has developed different programmes to provide schools and students with different and varied didactic materials such as: reading and corner books, audiovisual material, digital educational material, as well as computer devices and virtual platforms. These are designed to supplement the free textbook.

## Methodology to be developed

The methodology is qualitative, with a documentary analysis of the information that is handled in the different digital platforms on the Internet. The website of the Ministry of Public Education, federal and state control, as well as the websites of the UN, UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO, OECD, IMF and WB, among others, were analysed.

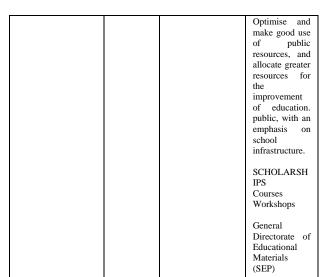
### Results

It was found that the public policies of international organisations have an impact on the country's educational public policies. The main characteristics detected in the Ministries of Education of the States and the federal control and international organisations are shown below.

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The results are by agency and State.

WORLD ORGANIZATION		STATE OF THE REPUBLIC AND SEP FEDERAL CONTPOL	
ONU	Young	CONTROL	Contribute
UNICEF	people are		with the
UNESCO	the future		activities and
BM	of the world.		powers conferred so
	Education		that citizens
OCDE	for all.		have access to
BID	Equality.		information related to
	Equity. Free		related to issues related
FMI	materials.		to the Right to
	education		Education
	is a human right for		enshrined in Article 3 of the
	all.		Political
	It		Constitution of
	strengthen s		the United Mexican States
	education		and its
	systems		regulations.
	worldwide		0
	and responds		Organically link all
	to global		programmes
	challenges		oriented to the
	through		attention of the
	education, with		population in conditions of
	gender		vulnerability.
	equality as		
	an underlying		Optimise and make good use
	principle.		of public
	Right to		resources, and
	education Digital		allocate greater resources for
	learning.		resources for the
	Free		improvement
	material		of public
	Virtual material		education, with emphasis on
	Videos		school
	eLibrary		infrastructure.
	Ilbrary		SCHOLADSH
			SCHOLARSH IPS
			Courses
			Workshops
			General
			Directorate of
			Educational
			Materials
			(SEP)
			Contribute
			with the
			activities and powers
			conferred so
			that citizens
			have access to
			information related to
			issues related
			to the Right to
			Education
			enshrined in Article 3 of the
			Political
			Constitution of
			the United Mexican States
			and its
			regulations.
			_
			Organically
			link all programmes
			oriented to the
			attention of the
			population in
			conditions of vulnerability.
			summeruomity.
	1		
			1



#### Table 1

The United Nations (UN) Cyberschoolbus, established in 1996, is the online educational mechanism of the Global Teaching and Learning Project, whose function is to provide educational materials on global issues and the UN to an international educational community. It develops high quality educational activities and materials designed for use in primary, intermediate and secondary education and teacher training.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is a New York-based agency of the United Nations that provides humanitarian and development assistance to children and mothers in developing countries. UNICEF Mexico tends to implement projects and support public policies to stimulate the access of children and adolescents to inclusive and quality education, and to eliminate and/or minimize school dropout.

UNESCO is created under the elements of equality of educational opportunities, nonrestriction in the pursuit of truth and the free exchange of ideas and knowledge. While its central purpose is to contribute to peace and security by initiating collaboration among nations through education, science and culture.

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This makes it possible to assert that UNESCO is one of the most important international organisations, which has managed to sustain in the current context of economic globalisation, a social and humanistic perspective of education, being different from other international agencies that manifest fundamentally an economic perspective; it is also in charge of the execution of prospective studies; as advances, transfers and exchange of knowledge; develops criteria and scenarios of action; technical and expert cooperation, and expert exchange of information. Exclusively, it issues recommendations to member countries, without granting financial resources, unless they are from specific projects created in the same institution, as is the case of the UNESCO Chairs.

Supplementary materials include books, newspapers, information booklets and other printed materials in the mother tongue and in languages of instruction that reflect local customs and concerns. They enhance teaching, engage learners in multidimensional learning, deploy learners' abilities to apply their knowledge (Elliott and Corrie, 2015) and are therefore essential for literacy outcomes (Read, 2015).

The WB (World Bank) symbolises one of the main international funding agencies for education.

The origins of what is now known as the World Bank date back to a conference held in July 1944, convened by the leaders of England and the United States (Churchill and Roosevelt). Some of the main axes of the WB lie in the areas of primary, secondary, technical, higher, women's and minority ethnic education: access, equity, internal efficiency, quality, financing, administration, results and internationalisation, as well as the concern for education in a context of globalisation and economic competitiveness.

Danger and Promise (PP), UNESCO and the World Bank seek to answer the following questions: What is the role of higher education (HE) in supporting and fostering economic and social development; what are the key obstacles facing HE in developing countries; and how best to overcome these obstacles? And how can these obstacles best be overcome?

The OECD sets out its core activities to which the organisation is committed, through the study and enunciation of policies in a wide range of economic and social spheres. According to the OECD for Mexico and Latin America, some of the organisation's points of interest in relation to higher education focus on: a) The transition between higher education and employment, proposing two fundamental aspects: the social and productive integration of individuals, as well as the flexibility of the higher education package to better adapt it to productive needs. b) The resolution of the difficulties related to upper secondary education, establishing it in the real, effective and qualitative knowledge, considering that the solution of this problem will allow the success of the programmes in higher education. c) The reduction of the economic resources used in higher education, proposing at that time the variation of the sources of financing at the tertiary level (Georgina Sánchez, 1998).

The Washington-based Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) was created in 1959 with the aim of accelerating the process of economic and social development of its member countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (IDB, 1994). Thus the aims towards higher education are to assist in the development of human resources, to provide universal access to education, and to strengthen planning, organisation, administration and teaching methods, as well as to support reforms of national education systems.

Finally, the International Monetary is a multilateral Fund (IMF) lending organisation, where its role is focused on financing and promoting market reforms with a presence in Latin America and the Caribbean, guaranteeing and stabilising the political and economic conditions of rent extraction for a sector of US banking finance capital, thus inequality in ensuring greater income distribution, channelling the opening of new financial capital markets through reforms, suffering in the public sector in education, health, income distribution and the general conditions of society.

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# Conclusions

In relation to the elaboration, design and use of didactic material, the results show the presence of multiple documents, lines, policies on the use, design and elaboration of didactic material, however, from all the information it is concluded that the only person responsible for the selection and decision making in the form of use, design and elaboration of didactic material is the only one that the institutions can control, giving him/her freedom in innovation: the teacher.

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