

Introduction

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In the changing global context of education, policymakers and the public have rising expectations of education and its role in societal development. Continuing waves of reform have placed school leaders at the center of implementation efforts directed at school improvement. By all accounts this began in the early 1980's when a confluence of research findings and policy pressures refocused attention on the *leadership role* of school principals.

Early findings from studies of effective schools found that the instructional leadership role of the principal seemed to help explain differences in the effectiveness of schools serving the urban poor, especially at the primary school level. Simultaneously, research on school improvement was generating consistent findings concerning the importance of principals in the successful implementation of innovations. These findings found a friendly reception among policymakers eager for solutions to the problem of school reform. The waves of reform that started in the US in 1982 have since continued unabated and spread throughout the world.

This section of the *International Handbook of Research on Educational Leadership and Administration* includes chapters that focus specifically on *Leadership and School Improvement*. Although the papers come at the issue of leading school improvement in this new era from different perspectives, they address the same set of questions:

- What are the forces bringing change to the needs and requirements for school leadership in this era of rapid change in schools and their environments?
- How are change forces of globalization, technology, multi-culturalism, politics, and recognition of indigenous cultures changing the way we conceptualize leadership for schools in the new millennium?
- What are the emerging capacities needed by schools and their leaders in this changing context?
- What are key conceptual and empirical issues concerning leadership and school improvement that emerge from this new context?

Philip Hallinger (Thailand) and Ronald Heck (University of Hawaii) maintain the focus on leadership and change with a more specific look at leadership within the

school improvement process. Hallinger and Heck contributed a chapter to this same section of the first Handbook that reviewed the literature on principal leadership and school effectiveness. In that chapter they noted several avenues of indirect impact through which school leaders influenced school effectiveness. After reviewing studies conducted over numerous national and cultural contexts, they concluded that the most important of these avenues of impact were vision, school mission and goals.

At the same time, however, the authors noted that limitations in this empirical knowledge base clouded their ability to clearly distinguish among these related constructs. In their contribution to this edition of *The Handbook, What Do You Call People with Visions? Vision, Mission and Goals in School Leadership and Improvement*, the authors seek to provide conceptual clarity and methodological direction to this topic. They review literature on vision, mission and goals from education, public and private sectors in an attempt to clarify the theoretical relationship between goals as a general construct and school improvement

The authors conclude that the constructs of vision, mission and goals indeed have different theoretical lineages. The different lineages reflect alternate assumptions about how people function in organizations and have different implications for leading schools. Further extending this discussion, the authors provide an illustrative analysis that seeks to show a promising direction for the future study of these constructs. The chapter concludes by reaffirming the theoretical and practical potential of this set of variables, but also for more systematic distinction among them in future empirical studies.

Louise Stoll, Raymond Bolam and Pat Collarbone (United Kingdom) have contributed *Leading for Change: Building Capacity for Learning*. The chapter is grounded primarily in the experience of school leaders in the United Kingdom where the context for school leadership has changed as radically and as quickly as anywhere in the world in the past decade. The changing structure of and expectations for schools has led to new challenges and dilemmas for those who would lead schools in the UK. Although the focus is on the UK context, the challenges and dilemmas will resonate with others throughout the world.

In particular Stoll and her colleagues describe and assess the impact of a dominant trend world-wide, the imposition of changes on schools from the external environment. This trend, which shows no signs of abating anytime soon, presents the challenge of creating coherence and meaning for leaders themselves as well as for the school's other relevant stakeholders.

The authors focus specifically upon change in two major respects. They examine how changes are affecting the role of school leaders as well as how they must lead change in their schools. The most significant changes they describe are political changes in the environment of schools. Here they argue that existing approaches to change do not sufficiently address the development of sustainable and ongoing learning. They suggest that it is the role of the leader as a "capacity builder" that is fundamental to developing learning in a complex, changing world. Capacity-oriented leadership entails several functions:

- ensuring learning at all levels;
- using evidence to promote inquiry-mindedness;
- building extended community;
- bridging community – dealing with the school-system interface.

Peter Slegers, Femke Geijssel, and Rudolf van den Berg (Netherlands) continue this theme of leadership and change in their chapter, entitled *Conditions Fostering Educational Change*. In the previous edition of *The Handbook*, a chapter by van den Berg and Slegers ended by stressing the importance of transformational leadership, incremental policy development, and teachers' personal concerns in the context of educational innovation and change. These implications were in line with an ongoing discussion within school improvement and educational change literature during the 1990s about the relevance of cultural-organizational aspects in schools and individual teacher issues for realizing innovation and change. In this discussion, the authors challenged a number of assumptions that were taken for granted during the 1980s and early 1990s. These included the schools as the unit for change and the emphasis on planned change.

The current contribution builds on this theme by examining school organization, school leadership and teacher conditions for what is known and unknown about the way they foster educational innovation and change. First, the authors explore the changing context of education. They then uncover some important issues that challenge future research into conditions fostering educational change. In order to understand the change conditions, they outline opposing perspectives on innovation reflected in the research literature on school improvement and educational change: the structural-functional perspective and the cultural-individual perspective. They then review the key conditions fostering educational change. This is followed by a discussion of multilevel modeling, the issue of interdependency, and the assumption of effectiveness regarding the study of change conditions.

Yin Cheong Cheng (Hong Kong Institute of Education) follows with a chapter on *The Changing Context of School Leadership: Implications for Paradigm Shift*. Y.C. Cheng's chapter was written in Hong Kong, which sits at the crossroads of Eastern and Western societies. This is an excellent vantage point from which to view the changing trends that are reshaping the role of school leaders.

Since the late 1980s there has been an explosion of school reforms, not only in North America and Europe, but also in Austral-Asia. Cheng thus notes many of the same change forces described in the first two chapters in this section:

- diverse and rising expectations for school education;
- need for human initiative and creativity in processes of teaching and managing;
- advances in information technology particularly;
- a trend towards decentralization of management in organizations (e.g., school-based management (SBM), collaborative management, school self-governance);
- privatization, localization, and globalization.

Even in Asia, once the bastion of centralized schooling, these changes now seem inevitable and are quickly becoming the mainstream. Cheng discusses these contextual changes and concludes that there is a need for a paradigm shift in school leadership.

The expected nature, function, scope, process, and context of leadership and even the target school constituencies to be influenced in such a new era become much broader and are substantially different from the past. This chapter reviews the features and trends of this changing context and seeks to re-conceptualize the nature of the paradigm shift in school leadership.

Maenette K.P. Ah Nee-Benham (University of Hawaii) and L.A. Napier take the notion of a paradigm shift one step further. In *An Alternative Perspective of Educational Leadership for Change: Reflections on Native/Indigenous Ways of Knowing*, Benham seeks to understand educational leadership through Native/Indigenous perspectives. The purpose of this chapter is not only to demonstrate a different paradigm for school leadership, but also to press for the inclusion of alternative frames in educational leadership discourse.

The chapter discusses leadership thought and praxis as conceptualized and practiced in diverse native/indigenous communities. Benham compares contemporary leadership constructs to traditional, native ways of knowing and thought. She builds on this by beginning a conversation on the implications of native knowing and thought on school organizations.

The result of this initial conversation is markedly different from the language of the other contributions. Benham asserts that a native/indigenous way of leading includes:

- Compassion and spiritual knowing that embraces the cultural and historical contexts of knowledge, leading, and learning;
- Goodness of spirit and mind, which locates action in relationships between self through the other;
- Belief and vision that expands ideas of usefulness, and collectivity and connectivity;
- Good words that links causality of language, thought, and action, and inspires self-determination and sovereignty;
- Place and time that honors land, place and knowing that is grounded on thousands of years of knowing.

Among the intellectual leaders in the recent emergence of cross-cultural research in education are Allan Walker and Clive Dimmock. Their chapter, *Moving School Leadership Beyond Its Normal Boundaries: Developing a Cross-Cultural Approach*, provides further support for the perspective illustrated in the Benham chapter. Walker and Dimmock build a case for reinventing the field of comparative educational administration and leadership through considering the influence of societal culture on its conception and practice. Their argument is predicated on the need to expand understandings of educational administration and leadership beyond their narrowly conceived Western base and their over-reliance on decontextualized theory.

Although the reciprocal influence of organization culture on school leadership and other processes has now become an accepted and vital constituent of educational understanding and investigation, the influence of societal or national culture has largely been ignored. Equally, researchers have long acknowledged the influence on schools of political ideology, economic development, history and social phenomena, such as race, gender and class, but have generally failed to take cognizance of how culture shapes beliefs and actions in schools.

Drawing on literature from comparative and international management, cross-cultural psychology, comparative education and comparative educational psychology, Walker and Dimmock demonstrate the influence of culture on educational leadership and its related functions and processes. Their purpose is to establish a cross-cultural comparative approach on the emerging agenda of research and scholarship in the wider field of educational leadership and administration.

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