

The Reason for the Failure of Educational Reforms: Implications for the Research on School Leadership

Byung-kee Huh

Abstract

Educational reforms have been launched repeatedly. But many of them did not get results expected initially. In a word, the reformers have failed to make schools change substantially. One of the underlying reasons lies in the failure to form a 'within-school force' which could enable a school to reach a real change. Educational reform policies were formed and driven by the government or higher-level organizations of the school system while they ignore the 'within-school force', a significant key to the success of educational reform.

School organizations have a particular nature in the sense that they are not easily controlled by forces from outside. Inner forces created within a school, such as good norms and spontaneous intent among teachers, are strongly needed for the authentic school change. The way of educating in schools and the prevailed teachers' culture facilitate these phenomena. Without considering these aspects of the school, educational reform can hardly be carried out successfully.

This kind of view has implications for the research on school leadership. First, it implies that it's crucial to conduct in-depth inquiries into school principal's leadership problems. Both empirical and speculative studies related to various themes of school principal's leadership are needed. Second, we need to pay more attention to principal's cultural leadership. For a school to be changed truly and stably, a desirable school culture is essential. Then, principal's leadership concerning the shaping of a good culture should be one of the major themes of leadership research. Lastly, the aesthetic nature of principal's leadership could be a interesting theme of leadership research. Seeing intuition, creativity, expressiveness, harmony, emotional activities, and wholeness together with individuality and diversity as necessary for successful leadership, the author emphasizes the value of the leadership research from a artistic perspective.