

Cultivating an environment that contributes teaching and learning in schools: A new leadership development agenda

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Abstract

This paper will describe the context for school leadership, the key areas of need for leadership development, recent actions taken by the government and the professional community, and the research agenda of leadership development in Taiwan.

The result of a recent survey regarding the needs of professional development for elementary school principals in Taiwan indicated that fostering the high quality environment contributing teaching and learning is one of the most needed areas for principals (Hsieh, 2010). Also, the recent curriculum reform in Taiwan requests the principals to become instructional and curriculum leaders. Principals in Taiwan are facing these pressures and responsibilities to provide leadership for teaching and learning both to teachers and students. In addition, some parents and the publics are increasingly asking schools to help students learn from the multi-intelligence perspective. The assumption is that students learn in a variety of ways and schools should provide rich and appropriate curricula and instruction methods for different students. However, some parents ask schools to focus only on students' academic achievement. Opinions with regard to teaching and learning in school from outside of the school are conflicting which complicated the leadership function of the principals.

Past research indicated that "the impact of educational leadership on student achievement is demonstrable. Leadership effects are mostly indirect, and they appear primarily to work through the organizational variable of school mission or goals and through variables related to classroom curriculum and instruction." (Leithwood & Riehl, 2005: 17) Therefore, helping principals learn to cultivate an environment that contributes to the teaching and learning in schools will be a new leadership development agenda in Taiwan.

Reference

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