

## EDU 5571 – Advanced Leadership in Schools

Outline - To account for one's leadership is to evaluate its significance; thus, making value judgments is at the core of leadership. As a result of Race To the Top, principals are both evaluating teachers in a new way and being evaluated in a new way. The state has 2 lists of approved systems: one for teachers and one for principals. Each of these evaluation systems is embedded in one of two competing views of the organizational nature of the school: as a formal organization of employees or as a community of scholars. The basic leadership question is "what types of leadership roles do these competing systems prescribe for principals?" In other words, what is the implicit view of the good school embedded in the evaluation systems: formal organization or community? Is the principal to be an "officer" or a "professional colleague"? We will closely read a set of sources to conduct a study of these competing systems. The sources include the Cremin and Dewey perspective, Smith's ADC, Bryk's study of reform in Chicago, a study of leadership in Toyota, and one of the NY state approved rubrics for evaluating principals. In short, we will conduct research on the perspectives of leadership.

### Our Purpose

As an advanced study of leadership in schools, we need to consider at least 3 major lines of study.

First, we need to study the general social context in which the school exists. The purpose of school leadership is to educate youth to live in that emerging world; thus, it follows that leadership is about changing schooling so that it aligns with the new society. We can note several forces: the use of digital tools, globalization, the rising importance of Latino immigrants, and the shift of work from industrial to intellectual and social.

Second, we need to note contemporary views and/or research on leadership. There are competing views. We will refer to the comparison chart by Pfeffer to capture the general differences in those competing views. Most of the contemporary research emphasizes the collaborative nature of work and of leadership.

Third, we need to note the rising significance of federal educational policy for life in the school; namely, Race to The Top and No Child Left Behind. Richard Elmore of Harvard would say that efforts to reform schooling, regardless of what changes in practices are intended, are most notable as a shift in the authority relations in the school community. As Popkewitz et al noted, the nature of authority relations is one of the 3 central elements of a school's culture, the other two being their sense of what it means to know and what it means to work. Regarding authority relations, the critical factor is the rationale offered by the school for what it actually does. In the more traditional, technical school, when asked why they work as they do, teachers generally answer: because we were told to do so. In the more constructivist and less frequently observed school, the teachers answer: in order to... In other words, in the constructivist school, the work reflects a sense of agency, an intention, a sense of self-governance. When Mary

Haywood Metz studied the emergence of reforms in 3 middle schools, she found that the principal's stance regarding authority was the critical difference between success and failure. Two of the 3 principals correctly said they were undertaking the reform, because the superintendent told them to do so. As a result, those principals had no creditability as leaders. Her heroine was Ms Michael, who was also told to undertake the reform. But, instead of announcing that "they told me to do it," Ms Michaels studied the reform and determined that it was indeed good for the students and she therefore announced, we are doing this, because I think it is good for our kids. Her stance regarding the nature of authority was the critical difference in her success. She invited her teacher to work with her on a change she thought would make the school better. In the other schools, the teachers resisted an imposed change.

Currently, RTT is a major federally initiated reform movement. The state requires principals both to evaluate teachers in a more performance-oriented system and to be evaluated according to a formal rubric. These reforms definitely will somewhat change the authority relationships. The question is whether the new system will support collaborative study of teacher effectiveness or will strengthen traditional inspection. The principal, as did Ms Michael, can determine how the system will function. Will principals facing the new evaluation systems announce "they made me do it" and thereby undermine their own creditability as a leader or will they study the system, find a way to make it more collaborative, and announce a substantive leadership position. Our purpose is to study the nature of the authority relations built into various views of school leadership, including the state approved rubrics for staff evaluation. The general question is what view of school culture, technical or constructivist, is embedded in these rubrics. In what direction is the state's RTT policy pushing the schools?