BOOK REVIEW

EDMUNDS AND MACMILLAN'S LEADERSHIP FOR INCLUSION: A PRACTICAL GUIDE

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The debate about inclusive education is long standing and has attracted interest throughout the world. However, supra-national and governmental bodies establish the idea of inclusion as an imperative and the literature is gradually focusing on the pursuit and formulation of the 'pillars of support for inclusive education' (Loreman, 2007). The book, Leadership for inclusion: a practical guide, as the title suggests, explores in depth one of the factors that bear on the development of inclusive schools, namely educational leadership. It amalgamates perspectives from the fields of both educational leadership and inclusion and it brings forward their intersection, adding a thorough investigation of this topic to the very limited number of books that deal with it.

Alan L. Edmunds with a background in special education and inclusion and Robert B. Macmillan with a background in school leadership bring together thirteen chapters, whose various authors seek to present to a greater or lesser extent a particular aspect of leadership for inclusion. Theoretical perspectives are combined with empirical research and successfully underpin the practical implications, which in many chapters are clearly formulated as enumerated recommendations. Overall, the insights of the topics under investigation issue from a North American perspective, which becomes evident by the terminology used and the examples provided. However, both the theory and the practical suggestions with some cautiousness could be applicable, at least to some extent, to similar contexts at an international level.

The first chapter, which is written by the editors, sets the tone of the book. They justify the importance of looking at leadership for inclusion and present a framework for operationalising inclusive leadership, which is in accordance with the ideas presented at the various chapters. The second chapter follows up focusing on the deficit discourses around disability and discusses the school leaders' role in challenging them in order inclusion to be favoured. On the other hand, chapter three looks at a more practical dimension of leadership, suggesting behaviour management techniques particularly for principals and administrators.

Leithwood's chapter shifts the focus to theory with a review of successful leadership practices, as they are suggested in literature. Through comparing and merging different models his chapter culminates in a categorisation of the core practices of successful leadership. The next three chapters discuss also the ways in which administrators could promote inclusion, but the way that each of them approaches the issue varies. Specifically, Young emphasizes the administrator's role in respect with developing inclusive school policies, whereas Specht and Young focus on practices for building inclusive communities. Macmillan then looks at relationships between staff and the importance of nurturing an environment of trust.

Chapter eight centres on students' attitudes towards students with exceptionalities and discusses the administrators' roles in changing them and ensuring that they are positive. On the other hand, chapter nine and ten divert the discussion to issues related to students' assessment. Specifically, Edmunds provides recommendations for principals in order to effectively facilitate the evaluation of the special needs of students with exceptionalities, whereas Renihan and Noonan focus more on the leaders' role to the effective evaluation of students' progress in inclusive schools. In chapter eleven, the discussion centres on professional development for inclusion. Apart from arguing for its merits and significance, it presents alternatives through which it can be achieved and it also analyses the administrators' role in fostering and facilitating both their staff's and their own professional development.

The final two chapters present the findings and implications that derive from two different empirical studies, which both examine the administrators' reflections on the implementation of inclusive practices in their schools. However, while the first one presents schools' staff recommended good practices for fostering inclusion through leadership that emphasizes a whole school approach, the second one focuses

mainly on principals' evaluations of their own practices and reports the challenges they face and the opportunities that arise for them.

All chapters are succinct and readable, and each of them investigates inclusion for leadership from a different perspective and with different foci. The only exception is Leithwood's chapter which discusses successful leadership in general without clearly referring to inclusion. Although the book is well based on research and despite presenting theoretical and critical perspectives, it is also a successful practical guide. Readers can tap a great variety of ideas from the authors' suggestions about ways in which leaders could facilitate inclusion. They are very clearly presented and explained, and although some of them may not be appropriate for all contexts, they indicate the logic behind the suggested practices and trigger creativity.

However, there is no satisfying arc to the book. Although all chapters are well structured and stand well independently, it is hard to understand the links between them and the logic behind their sequence. Moreover, it would be useful for the readers if the terminology used was more clearly defined. Concepts such as inclusive education, exceptionalities and leadership are ambiguous and need to be precisely delineated in order misunderstandings to be avoided (Norwich, 2013). Although the authors of some chapters specify the way they interpret the terms some others omit it and confusion is created given that there is no overarching approach for the whole book. Therefore it is not always straightforward if inclusion refers only to students with Special Needs or to all students in general and similarly it is not easy to understand if leadership refers to the role of 'positional' leaders (e.g. principals, middle managers, etc.) or to the 'functional' leaders' role, which may be exercised by each and every members of a schools' staff according to the distributed theory of leadership (Kugelmass & Ainscow, 2004).

Finally, an index would be valuable, as it could bring together the parts of the book that discuss the same themes across different chapters, considering that there is some overlapping between them in some cases. Nevertheless, this is a recommended reading for educational leaders as well as for their trainers. This collection of writings provides a wealth of information on the topic of leadership for inclusion contributing substantially to the scarce literature in the field and offers ideas and techniques that could make educational practice more inclusive for the benefit of all students.

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