

Can Research Improve Educational Leadership?

A New Agenda for Research in Educational Leadership. William A. Firestone and Carolyn Riehl (Eds.). New York: Teachers College Press, 2005. 243 pp., \$54.00 (cloth). ISBN 0-8077-4630-4.

Sustainable Leadership. Andy Hargreaves and Dean Fink. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006. 325 pp., \$25.00 (paper). ISBN 0-7879-6838-2.

Distributed Leadership. James P. Spillane. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006. 119 pp., \$22.00 (paper). ISBN 0-7879-6538-3.

Reviewed by
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There is wide consensus that opportunities for student learning depend crucially on educational leadership and teacher quality. These two areas dominate national, state, and local efforts at building capacity to meet new educational standards and are also central to the efforts of universities and philanthropic foundations to improve education. Until recently, educational leadership was generally subsumed under the field of educational administration. The traditional model of education called for policy to be set by states and local school boards and for implementation to be carried out by educational administrators and their staffs. To the degree that the term *educational leadership* was used, it was predominantly associated with the direct management of schools and school districts; educational policy formation was viewed as being separate from educational leadership.

By the 21st century, all of this had changed, so that educational leadership embraced everything from federal and state standard-setting at one end of the spectrum to teacher leadership at the other end. At

the same time, educational leadership began to embrace more organizational content: Leadership meant not just running organizations but molding them for success. And leadership included more than school management. Educational leaders were expected to spearhead the instructional process and guide professional development to build school capacity to meet both internal goals and those imposed from the outside.

All of this has thrown researchers into a quandary in their efforts to study educational leadership and the preparation of educational leaders. Even without getting into methodological or philosophical issues, what themes should research and training in educational leadership focus on? Educational policy formation and implementation? Resource allocation and budgeting? Personnel selection, development, and evaluation? Human resource management and collective negotiations? Instructional strategies and curriculum? Pupil evaluation? Family and community involvement? Organizational decision-making comprising teamwork within the professional community? Mediating disputes and taking action in a highly politicized and contested environment? Data-driven decision making? Each of these is a highly complex and specialized area of study, difficult to master and made even more demanding by the variety of contexts in which the knowledge must be applied. Yet these are only a few of the major research areas that have been posed as necessary for educational leadership. Each is complex and requires conceptual understanding as well as the ability to put knowledge into action in educational settings—"practical intelligence," in the words of psychologist Robert Sternberg (1997).

In many respects, the demands on educational leaders have shifted and accelerated so fast that their associated fields of research, training, and practice cannot keep pace. The three books reviewed here bring

research to bear on major dimensions of this dilemma. Firestone and Riehl address what the research agenda should be. Hargreaves and Fink present what their research suggests is the knowledge base for educational leadership capable of sustaining successful schools. Spillane communicates what research teaches us on a narrower issue: distributed leadership. In this review, I discuss the authors' views on the current status of knowledge about educational leadership, how useful it is, and how it is created.

An Agenda for Future Research

A New Agenda for Research in Educational Leadership, edited by William A. Firestone and Carolyn Riehl, evolved from the work of a task force on research co-sponsored by the American Educational Research Association's Division A and the University Council on Educational Administration over a period of several years starting in 2001. The task force, charged with developing a research agenda on educational leadership, commissioned researchers devoted to various aspects of educational leadership, including administration, policy, practice, teaching, and learning. The researchers submitted papers in 2002, which were reviewed, critiqued, and subjected to further scrutiny through presentations at the annual meetings of the association and the University Council on Educational Administration. The final papers then were brought together in this book. The overall research questions addressed in the book are, *How can educational leaders increase student learning, and how can they foster equity in educational outcomes?* The editors point out that at the heart of the book's "new agenda" is a wish to respond to the noticeable shift in educational policy from expecting educational leaders to be effective fiscal, organizational, and political managers to making them accountable for student, staff, and school performance.

The general knowledge base on educational leadership is summarized in a chapter

by Kenneth Leithwood and Carolyn Riehl. They build their review around four claims: that school leadership improves student learning; that school leadership is exercised primarily by principals and teachers; that a core set of leadership characteristics extends to all contexts; and that successful leaders in schools with diverse populations focus on establishing special conditions that support student achievement, equity, and justice. The authors limit their overall survey of leadership research to quantitative studies with acceptable methodological standards and case studies that are published or publishable. They find at least partial or qualified support for all four claims and conclude, among other findings, that leadership accounts for only about 3–5% of the variation in student learning across schools, or about 10–20% of the learning impact of school factors, although the effects are difficult to measure. Also, most of this impact is indirect, working through school mission or goals and variables related to classroom curriculum and instruction.

The authors' conclusions on the impact of principal and teacher leadership and distributed leadership are more ambiguous; that impact seems to rely heavily in the influence of leaders on the beliefs, values, and actions of others. The authors find that a general set of leadership behaviors is considered to have positive effects in many different educational settings. These include setting a direction by identifying and articulating a vision, fostering acceptance of group goals, and creating high performance expectations. Also included are staff development and organizational redesign. Finally, the authors conclude that in diverse student environments, particular forms of leadership can be effective by promoting more powerful forms of teaching and learning, creating strong communities of students, teachers, and parents, and nurturing educational cultures among families.

This chapter's research results are well organized and balanced but bewildering in their complexity and textual presentation. From the reader's perspective, the chapter would have benefited from conceptual maps showing the connections among the many variables contained in the studies cited, as well as meta-analytic summaries with tables to provide a clearer picture of what is known. The authors offer no comment on the quality of the studies, and

because they provide no methodological details, the reader is unable to assess study quality independently but must rely completely on the implicit judgments of the authors in drawing their conclusions.

Other chapters bring the knowledge-base question into narrower focus; for instance, Mary Kay Stein and James Spillane ask how much research on teaching can contribute to leadership. Not much, they conclude. The research findings to date can have only small effects at the margin, such as increasing instructional time or changing incentives. The authors argue for a much larger transformation in the core functions of schools and a greater melding of the research on teaching and learning with that on educational leadership. They conclude that, without transforming schools along both dimensions, little can be done. In another chapter, Nona Prestine and Barbara Scott Nelson suggest that the research calls for teaching and learning in accordance with constructivist learning principles. Although I, personally, am sympathetic to their plea, I find their arguments to be based more on value orientations than on their survey of research findings. Indeed, throughout this volume, the research studies reviewed tend to be selected narrowly and stretched to support value premises for a future research agenda.

The chapters on how school leaders can incorporate communities as contexts for student learning, by Mary Driscoll and Ellen Goldring; how to improve educational outcomes for diverse populations, by Pedro Reyes and Lonnie Wagstaff; and leadership for social justice and democratic communities, by Gail Furman and Carolyn Shields, generate far more questions than answers. These chapters draw heavily on theoretical possibilities rather than on evidence from extant research. Although the authors seem to recognize the methodological obstacles to rigorous research in this domain, I believe that the obstacles are even more serious than is reflected in their short discussions. Even their conceptual frameworks are based more on speculation than on previous research findings.

William Firestone and Dorothy Shipp attempt to decipher the confusing field of accountability, asking to whom educational leaders and their schools are accountable and for what they are accountable, depending on their constituencies. The authors

differentiate between internal and external demands for accountability and appeal to a "sense of internal accountability for learning" to create greater equity. But accountability is largely an external political phenomenon, creating tensions between internal consensus and external demands. Neither the existing research nor the research methods discussed seem able to reconcile internal and external accountability.

The existing literature on developing school leaders is equally unpromising. Mark Smylie, Albert Bennett, and colleagues conclude that much of the research is devoted to school principals, and that even this body of research is largely descriptive and anecdotal, with relatively few systematic empirical studies. Riehl and Firestone address the need for more research in a short, concluding chapter on research methods for studying educational leadership. Their chapter is well organized, comprehensive, and provocative, but at 14 pages is far too brief to cover this complex subject in any depth.

Firestone and Riehl's edited volume is a valuable source for students planning to conduct research on educational leadership. It sets out issues, controversies, research findings, and potential future directions. It also represents a useful point of departure for researchers who want to explore the topics that are addressed. It is properly provocative in a field where no one should be complacent about the present knowledge base or optimistic that the answers are within easy reach. Many of the chapters can be used as a basis for classroom discussion and debate. At the moment, this book is one of the better resources available for readers who need a current survey of many of the constituent fields of educational leadership.

Nevertheless, I had a number of "wishes" on generic issues that the book did not fully address. Virtually every chapter illustrates how weak the knowledge base is on the most important questions posed by the field. Some of these questions are new ones prodded by new policy issues, but most are not. If we have made so little progress to date on these issues, what leads the authors to think that we will be more productive in the future? And, if we cannot agree on what the research has to say about educational leadership, how can the research be used as a basis for practice? These questions cry out for answers.

My own view is that the underlying complexity of the issues, the lack of consensus on what is important to study and how to study it, and the difficulty of applying rigorous research methods to educational leadership all help to explain the paucity of useful research and research findings. As many of the chapters in this volume point out, educational leadership does not produce a direct effect on student learning, but is a mediating influence on teachers, curriculum, instruction, community, and school organization. And the huge diversity of contexts in which this mediation takes place creates further complexity when we try to distinguish the signal of leadership effectiveness from the noise of the surrounding institutional effects. Although these complexities are recognized by most of the authors, they need to be taken on as a generic challenge to future progress rather than simply acknowledged. The most basic question is whether we can separate leadership behaviors and their determinants in terms of their influence on student learning, given the maze of contextual and intervening variables. That question is not adequately addressed either in this volume or in the more general literature on educational leadership.

A second concern is that, as in most of education, there is disagreement on which educational goals leaders should strive for and use as criteria for judging their effectiveness. Some of the chapters emphasize that educational leaders should be judged by the degree to which they maximize constructivist learning; others emphasize the attainment of standards set out by the states. But most of the test instruments for assessing standards attainment focus on measures that invite associative and repetitive learning, teaching to the test, and "direct instruction" rather than constructive approaches. This means that measures of educational leaders' effectiveness will depend crucially on what researchers believe are the proper functions of schools, a matter on which there is considerable diversity of opinion.

A third concern that is not addressed in the book is that of competencies required to carry out research on educational leadership and the dearth of such competencies among those who produce the research. Much of the problem in developing and using research on educational leadership (indeed, on education in general) is that many so-called researchers are poorly trained and

the research is extremely sloppy in its constructs, measurement, and methods. This issue has often been obscured by the sound and fury of contention among adherents of different methods. Educational researchers have been highly combative in debating the conflicting claims of qualitative and quantitative methods, when the larger issue is the lack of systematic and disciplined inquiry in the application of both methods.

Much of the literature on educational leadership takes the form of student dissertations or publications derived from them. Consider that instead of the convention of full-time study with advanced courses and research internships required in other fields of endeavor, many graduate students in educational administration and leadership study part time, undertake only low-level courses in research methods (quantitative or qualitative), and lack advanced research training and experience. They learn more about replicating the language, imagery, and form of research than about the rigorous and systematic procedures that are necessary to produce defensible research results. Sadly, many do not know the difference between good and poor research, or sloppy and rigorous analysis. The erudite-sounding debates about epistemologies are a smoke-screen that obscures the more important challenge: the poor quality of so many surveys, ethnographies, regression analyses, case studies, and other variants of quantitative and qualitative methods.

Beyond this, the authors follow a time-honored pattern in sticking too closely to the educational literature. Leadership studies and organizational research have been applied to a wide range of institutions other than educational ones. In many respects, both the theories and the empirical studies on other kinds of institutions are more refined and rigorous than the parallel work on education. Sociologists, economists, psychologists, anthropologists, political scientists, and management specialists have devoted considerable effort to addressing many of the same issues in governance, leadership, and organization that dominate the focus of researchers on educational leadership. And, frankly, they have produced more insightful contributions for the field of educational leadership. Prime examples are the works of Karl Weick (1976) and John

Meyer and Brian Rowan (1977, 1978). Weick's analysis of loose coupling in educational organizations is foundational in explaining why it is so difficult to effect systemic reforms. Meyer and Rowan apply "new institutional theory" to demonstrate why schools adhere stubbornly to practices that are influenced by the external organizations on which they depend for resources. Both works are highly cited, according to Google Scholar (about 3,000 cites for the two), but they are not mentioned in this volume as part of the knowledge base or among the potential paths for future research.

A future agenda for research on educational leadership may not overcome the challenges emanating from the complexity of the phenomenon and the many differing views on educational goals. But it could improve the quality of research and the preparation of researchers, as well as drawing more fully on theories, empirical findings, and methods drawn from outside the field of education. We must recognize that no single book, even one drawing on eminent authors, can address every challenge to the field of educational leadership. There is much of value to be found in this volume, and, despite the concerns I have noted, it deserves attention from thoughtful readers in the field.

Applying the Knowledge Base

How does educational research contribute to an understanding of long-term school improvement? In *Sustainable Leadership*, Andy Hargreaves, a noted researcher, and Dean Fink, an accomplished practitioner and writer, have collaborated to produce a guide to creating sustainable improvements in education. According to the authors, the insights and recommendations found in the book derive largely from a research project funded by the Spencer Foundation, co-directed by Hargreaves and Ivor Goodson, to which a full issue of *Educational Administration Quarterly* (2006, vol. 42, no.1) was devoted. Thus, although the research design and evidence for recommendations are not reported in *Sustainable Leadership*, the information is readily available in another source.

Hargreaves and Goodson define the focus of their research as follows:

Sustainable educational leadership and improvement preserves and develops deep learning for all that spreads and lasts, in

ways that do no harm to and indeed create positive benefit for others around us, now and in the future. (2006, p. 17)

Note two problems for carrying out research based on this definition. First, the language is so ambiguous that it could be interpreted as referring to a wide variety of situations (beauty is in the eye of the beholder). Second, it is heavily based on the moral or normative assumptions of the researchers themselves rather than of the larger society and its legitimate constituencies.

The abovementioned research project was a study of eight innovative high schools in the United States and Canada that presumably had shown a sustained record of improvement for as long as three decades. Although the project covered only 5 years, improvement over the longer period was assessed on the basis of interviews and archival materials. The researchers compiled more than two hundred interviews, many school observations, and analyses of considerable archival data. The methods used to separate the distinct influences identified in the findings were vague, especially given the complex mélange of environments, events, reforms, and personnel in each case. Although the authors stress triangulating data from various sources, triangulation does not solve the problem of identifying causation operating in many directions in a morass of intersecting dynamics (Manski, 1995). There is also the danger that the authors' small sample of apparently successful schools is the result of random happenstance (Taleb, 2001) rather than of the purposive actions selected in the case studies.

Using their definition of innovative and sustainable leadership and drawing on a general literature on corporate and sustainable development, as well as on their own research, the authors set out seven key principles that they assert will lead to concrete and effective strategies for sustaining leadership and change in schools and school systems:

1. *Depth*. Sustaining the fundamental moral purpose of deep and broad learning.
2. *Length*. Preserving and advancing the most valuable aspects over time and across leadership succession.
3. *Breadth*. Providing distributed leadership across classrooms, schools, and school systems.

4. *Justice*. Acting in a socially just manner, not causing harm, and actively providing improvement.
5. *Diversity*. Promoting diversity of a cohesive nature through networking among components.
6. *Resourcefulness*. Maintaining prudence and resourcefulness in leadership that wastes neither money nor people.
7. *Conservation*. Preserving and renewing longstanding purposes.

Each chapter develops one of these principles through discussion of its meaning and short case descriptions of schools in which the principle is applied. Actions and strategies are summarized through multiple bulleted lists of findings from the literature and checklists of guidelines for applying the principle. The book is well written, with a style that is revelatory, descriptive, and hortatory in equal parts. Particular emphasis is placed on the lists summarizing cases and research findings. There is almost no discussion of the methods by which the conclusions were reached, in what were obviously complex circumstances.

The book makes for enjoyable and provocative reading and provides a good foundation for discussion of leadership issues. It is clear that the authors are highly experienced and knowledgeable about their subject, although vested in what are often unspoken assumptions about what constitutes good education, school improvement, and productive school operations. This is not to say that values are irrelevant or inappropriate in discussions of leadership. They are highly pertinent, but the reader needs to know which conclusions are based on values and which are based on research that has demonstrated a given strategy to be effective. That information is not stated in the book and is impossible to extricate from the presentation.

Two of the challenges to leadership research raised in the context of the review of the Firestone and Riehl book were the complexity of the leadership phenomenon and the degree to which values and goals of authors, rather than the research evidence itself, dominate findings and recommendations. In the spirit of the first of these challenges, the question is not only what research contributes to good practice, but how it is employed to change practice. More specifically, what is the theory of action that connects the multiple lists of putative findings presented in this book to

sustainable leadership as defined by the authors? Lists are lists, but hardly great levers of change.

I am reminded of the emphasis on establishing school visions in the 1990s, a movement that was heavily influenced by the literature on successful businesses. At that time, checklists were developed of effective schools correlates. One of these was establishment of clear goals in which school leaders were expected to promote a vision incorporating goals that would be embraced by all organizational participants. During that period I devoted considerable time to observing schools in conjunction with the Accelerated Schools Project, and I invariably asked principals, teachers, and students about the school's vision. Typically, I was directed to read the words of the school vision where it was posted on the wall outside the main office or in the school newsletter or on the school website. In all too many cases, the schools had asked their "wordsmiths" to produce an inspiring vision or mission statement. Many schools had paid staff developers substantial sums to write the vision statement or to help staff "write" a set of pious sentiments for public visibility. When I explained to school personnel that I could tell more about their vision for student learning and success by visiting classrooms and interviewing staff members than by reading the vision statement, they were surprised. They thought that they had met their obligations by preparing a vision statement, not by altering their behavior to match the lofty words of the statement. Consonant with the observations of Spillane (2004) and Weick (1995), the focus on vision was understood as a procedural demand in the cultures of these schools, where such demands were typically experienced in terms of compliance with routines rather than commitment to a set of deeper changes.

It seems that Hargreaves and Fink's lists of requisites for establishing the seven principles could easily suffer the same fate. Even if research supports the checklists of guidelines for establishing each principle, the implementation is virtually left to schools, which adopt new language easily, but not new behavior. It is easy to see these principles becoming part of another vision statement rather than changing practices. Breaking through the implementation barrier is probably the most difficult hurdle that educational leadership faces, as opposed to

gaining access to good ideas; as Spillane (2004) points out, good ideas must be presented in a form that makes sense to those who are charged with carrying them out. Hargreaves and Fink do provide brief illustrations from their case studies to give readers a picture of what leaders did in some of their schools under scrutiny. But each of these schools was so idiosyncratic that it is not clear how other schools would apply the principles in different political, historical, and organizational circumstances and when facing different challenges. The nexus between research findings and implementation is highly problematic and requires more than a presentation of lists of findings and a few examples.

The complexity of the proposed change process embodying the seven principles is formidable. Lest a reader think that one can get started by working on one or two of the principles, the authors warn in the final chapter that all of the principles fit together and must be attended to much as one eats a whole meal rather than picking and choosing among the dishes. To encourage leaders to move forward, the authors add five action principles and a range of other lists of guidelines. I find all of this overwhelming and devoid of useful strategies that have been shown to be effective in sizing up and changing a situation. My extensive work in the field makes me dubious that checklists, even ones that are largely sensible, can be used as an inspiration and vehicle for meaningful organizational change.

Hargreaves and Fink draw substantially from their own research and from research outside the field of education, but most of their findings seem to be drawn from their initial value premises rather than from their research. The research project that they draw upon explicitly acknowledges some of the limitations of the underlying research, stating that it "has focused . . . on exceptionally innovative schools whose experiences do not transfer easily to the mainstream, or on the impact of particular change efforts or reform movements in isolation from the other changes that schools experience" (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006, p. 7). One question is to what extent a highly generalized set of recommendations can be based on eight "exceptionally innovative schools" subjected "to multiple change efforts and forces" that the authors themselves do not believe are highly repre-

sentative of all schools. My own view is that the seven principles emerge more fully from the values, the orientations, and the venerable experience of the researchers in defining a good school (what Eliot Eisner, 1976, calls "educational connoisseurship") than from their research findings. As a Deweyan I subscribe to many of the same values, but I find it difficult to defend these normative choices as research findings.

The concerns noted here do not denigrate the value of the book as a provocative read, well worth considering for use in classes and discussions on school improvement and leadership. The book is easy to follow and invites useful discourse through its suggestive rather than doctrinaire tone. I find that 90% of the recommendations are sensible, humane, and insightful, even though they lack the rigorous research support implied by the authors.

Leadership Into Practice

Like many popular terms that are bandied about, "distributed leadership" is rarely given a clear definition. It is often viewed as just another term for a general set of phenomena such as shared leadership, collaborative leadership, or situational leadership. In *Distributed Leadership*, James P. Spillane, the person most closely associated with the development of the concept as used in education, tries to disabuse us of this notion. He defines distributed leadership in terms of three essential principles: (a) "Leadership practice is the central concern"; (b) "[l]eadership practice is generated in the interactions of leaders, followers, and their situation"; and (c) "[t]he situation both defines leadership practice and is defined through leadership practice, a two-way interchange" (p. 4).

Although this slim volume is written for a wide audience, not just for researchers, it is based heavily on research by Spillane and colleagues. Indeed, nine sources in the bibliography are authored or co-authored by Spillane, most of which report research. But the main focus of the book is on translation of what is known about distributed leadership from the study of leadership practice. The book makes liberal use of observations and vignettes from the research to illustrate conclusions.

Distributed Leadership contains only four chapters, the first beginning with the question of what distributed leadership is.

Spillane argues that it is misleading to view leadership as constituted mainly by the roles and actions of heroic individuals. He urges us instead to observe leadership in all of its forms as it emerges in an organization. From this vantage point one learns that "followers" cannot be assumed to be passive or inert, as is usually assumed, because they can have a profound influence on leadership practices. An analysis of distributed leadership must stress seeking the sources of leadership in actual practice rather than in the formal roles that are assigned to individuals. Spillane cautions that the traditional view of individual leadership creates images of roles that are often fictional or exaggerated. Indeed, he warns that, in an organization as complex as a school, a single individual cannot be charged with the responsibility for instructional leadership, despite the common reference to "principal as instructional leader."

A summary of the empirical basis for understanding distributed leadership in schools suggests that the knowledge base is meager but growing. The findings to date on leadership distribution suggest that it

1. Differs according to leadership function, e.g., instruction or building management;
2. Depends on subject matter, with more leaders found in language arts and mathematics than in science;
3. Differs among public, private, charter, Catholic, and magnet schools;
4. Depends on school size;
5. Depends on development stages of school improvement.

The research also shows that distribution of responsibility for leadership can take place through deliberate design; through default, when leadership must be assumed for some routine or function; or through crisis, when a school is confronted with a sudden challenge.

The heart of the book is dedicated to distributed leadership practice. Spillane considers a focus on practice to be more important in understanding leadership than a focus on roles, functions, or structures. The latter focus places inadequate emphasis on the interactions that are crucial to understanding leadership. Normally, leadership connotes the discharge of action, but distributed leadership thrives on interaction. Spillane calls for more research on interactions among formal leaders, informal

leaders, and followers, and the development of valid and reliable methods for documenting leadership practice. Spillane proposes that the concept of distributed leadership opens a new way of seeing and studying the practice of leadership. He concludes by proposing some new ways of transforming research into leadership practice.

Although Spillane draws heavily from his case material to provide illustrations of distributed leadership practices, the concept comes off as remarkably complex and beyond simple explication. The variety of leadership distribution practices and their fluidity are a remarkable contrast to the rigidity and static nature of more traditional leadership concepts. Spillane emphasizes that a focus on distributed leadership opens up a new window for viewing leadership practices, and this seems to be his overriding message. As with the other books reviewed here, the value of *Distributed Leadership* lies in its usefulness for generating discussions and further study for students, researchers, and practitioners rather than in providing practical guidance. It reads well and distills most of what has been learned in the recent research. Spillane acknowledges that less is known about the phenomenon of distributed leadership than the wide use of the term would suggest.

Whither the Future?

If these three books are an accurate reflection of the knowledge base on educational leadership, we face a serious problem. There are many viewpoints in the field and very little solid research supporting them. Much of what parades as research is opinion garbed in the language of research.

I do not blame the authors of these books; the problem is the circumstances surrounding the study of educational leadership. As I emphasized earlier, the conceptual

links among leadership, school functioning, and student learning are complex. They are embedded in demographic, political, and social realities outside school that make the extrication of leadership influences extremely difficult. And leadership circumstances are highly contextualized, operating in completely different ways in different settings. Moreover, the bulk of researchers are not trained to the highest standards of the research fields that might cast light on the leadership phenomenon. They often have strong viewpoints which they imprint on otherwise ambiguous research findings. Although they argue about the merits of quantitative and qualitative methods, as if that were the heart of the dilemma, the quality of both types of research seems to be wanting in the area of educational leadership.

The field might benefit considerably by addressing some fundamental questions:

1. What are the most significant educational leadership issues, and why?
2. What conceptual models and empirical methods are most promising for addressing these issues through research?
3. How do we integrate the fields of educational policy and teaching and learning into research on educational leadership?
4. How do we train competent researchers to apply these methods to educational leadership issues?
5. How can we translate educational research effectively into useful guidelines for educational practice?
6. How can we establish expert panels or other oversight mechanisms to monitor, for quality assurance, research and training in the field of educational leadership?

If we are to move forward, it is time to apply this kind of scrutiny to the entire field of research on educational leadership.

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