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A Generation of Radical Educational Change

Stories from the field

Edited by **Richard Pring, Martin Roberts**

A Generation of Radical Change will make uncomfortable reading at the Department for Education. A dozen distinguished practitioners explain and reflect on how they worked to do their best for their schools, teachers and pupils in these years of great change. They understand the reasons, explained by Lord Baker in his early chapter, for a National Curriculum in 1988, and also the reasons for a more effective national inspection system. Yet their stories accumulate to become a powerful critique of the top-down policies of the last two decades. These policies have been too numerous, short-term, incoherent and partisan; governments have been indifferent to professional opinion and serious research, and have relied excessively on measurable outcomes and simplistic Ofsted judgments. Our current system is narrower and less democratic than it was, but evidence is hard to find that English pupils are doing any better in international comparisons. Fortunately the contributors have many constructive and immediately practicable suggestions for reform which the next generation of policy-makers in education will find helpful.

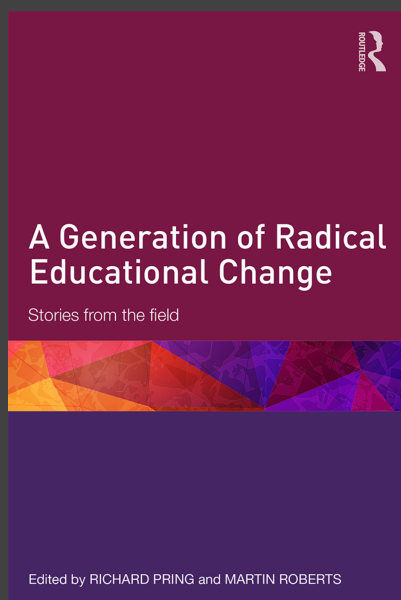
Three Reasons Why School Leaders, Teachers and Policy Makers Should Read This Book:

This generation lived through a remarkable change in education policy-making between 1976 and today; from an extensively decentralised educational system to one of the most centralised in the western world. This centralised system has become dysfunctional to the detriment of England's pupils and their teachers. The analyses and recommendations of the thirteen contributors are therefore timely and pertinent.

The powers of the Secretary of State of Education have increased, are increasing and ought to be diminished. Successive Secretaries of State have mistaken frenetic activity for effective leadership.

The chief weakness of the present system stems from its excessive distrust of teachers who are crucial in making schools and colleges work, and excessive confidence in politicians' capacity, which is usually a combination of whim and disregard for serious educational research, to decide what is best for pupils.

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