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Conceptualizing the Process of Education Reform From An International Perspective

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Abstract :

This analysis stems from a research study conducted by the author. The purpose of the study was to compare educational policies in four industrialized English-language countries (England, Canada, United States and New Zealand), from policy emergence to the effects a few years later.

After pointing out that all policies are part of a particular historical and cultural context and that policy process, unavoidably repetitious, is the product of particular circumstances, the author develops a framework for analysing the political process in four stages:

- 1) Origins. Policies emerge from the interaction of three factors: an event (for instance, a change of government, emergence of a more influential player or a crisis), recognition of a problem, and the resulting policy proposals;
- 2) Adoption. At the end of a bureaucratic accommodation process, or an internal or public debate, adoption transforms proposals into policies more or less similar to initial intention, depending on who the most influential actors are;
- 3) Implementation. This depends on several factors, such as the clarity of the expected change and the degree of difficulty arising from it, the extent of players' understanding and support, the resources allocated to support the change and, lastly, pressures that either support or inhibit implementation;
- 4) Expected effects on students, schools and society in general. These effects serve as justification for educational reforms.

The author has also published a book on the results of this research study.

Links :

<http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/>

Key Words :

Policy Origins, Emergence, Adoption, Implementation, Effects, International Comparison, Historical Context, Cultural Context

Monitored Countries :

England, Canada, United States, New Zeland

