



# Thinking About Schools: New Theories and Innovative Practice

*Aimee Howley, Craig Howley*

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As its title implies, this book has a deceptively simple mission: to prepare would-be school leaders to draw upon a variety of theoretical perspectives when thinking about schools and schooling. It shows how theories can function as cognitive tools to be mastered, carefully stored in one's intellectual toolbox and used to interpret and resolve real world problems. Beneath this goal lies the belief that the most effective leaders are those who are able to construct their own well-grounded interpretations of events and their own responses to those events. Key features of this exciting new text include the following.

**Focus on Alternative Theories** - The functionalist theoretical views that have dominated administrator preparation programs for the last half-century are reviewed early in the book and are shown to be inadequate to the task of understanding and coping with the complex realities of modern day schooling. The remainder of the book presents alternative views of schooling that, taken together, can be thought of as a theoretical repertoire from which to construct interpretations and solutions to everyday, real-world problems.

**Focus on Diversity** - Diversity is examined from a variety of viewpoints. Chapter 6 looks at the cultural bases of leadership, Chapter 7 at comparative and international contexts, and Chapter 8 at gender and sexual orientation.

**Illustrative Cases** - Each chapter contains a case with an embedded dilemma similar to those that real-world administrators confront. While illustrating the particular theoretical view presented in the chapter, these cases are sufficiently complex that they lend themselves to interpretation by any of the other theories considered in the book.

This book is appropriate for graduate-level courses with titles such as Organizational Theory, Theory of School Leadership, or Introduction to Educational Administration. It might also be used as one of several texts in advanced courses on leadership theory.

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