Learning Policy
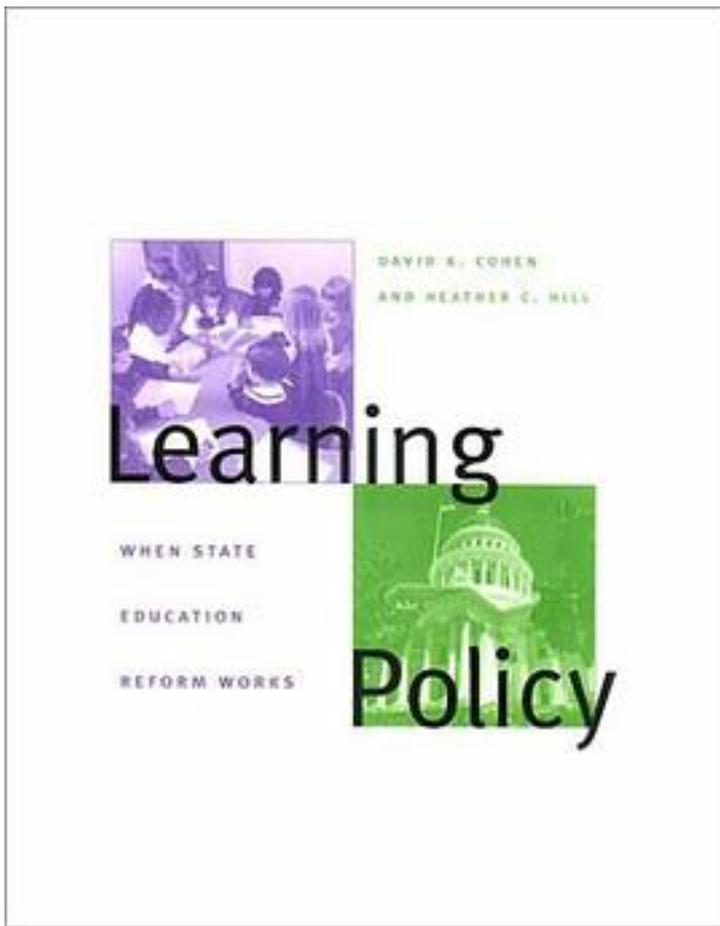

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Education reformers and policymakers argue that improved students' learning requires stronger academic standards, stiffer state tests, and accountability for students' scores. Yet these efforts seem not to be succeeding in many states. The

authors of this important book argue that effective state reform depends on conditions which most reforms ignore: coherence in practice as well as policy and opportunities for professional learning. The book draws on a decade's detailed study of California's ambitious and controversial program to improve mathematics teaching and learning. Researchers David Cohen and Heather Hill report that state policy influenced teaching and learning when there was consistency among the tests and other policy instruments; when there was consistency among the curricula and other instruments of classroom practice; and when teachers had substantial opportunities to learn the practices proposed by the policy. These conditions were met for a minority of elementary school teachers in California. When the conditions were met for teachers, students had higher scores on state math tests. The book also shows that, for most teachers, the reform ended with consistency in state policy. They did not have access to consistent instruments of classroom practice, nor did they have opportunities to learn the new practices which state policymakers proposed. In these cases, neither teachers nor their students benefited from the state reform. This book offers insights into the ways policy and practice can be linked in successful educational reform and shows why such linkage has been difficult to achieve. It offers useful advice for practitioners and policymakers seeking to improve education, and to analysts seeking to understand it.

作者介绍:

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