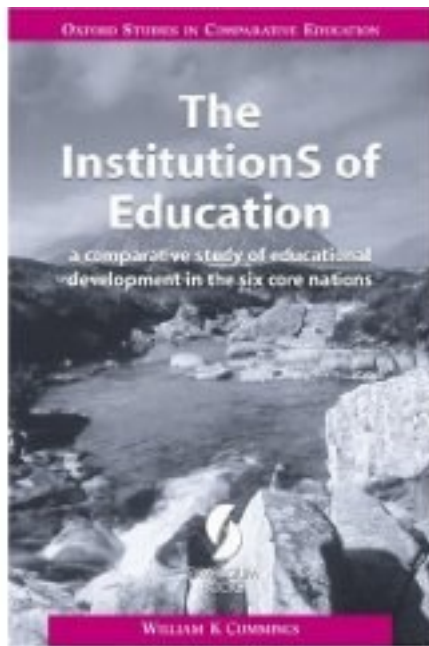


The InstitutionS of Education



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At many times in educational history, including the past decade, there are reports of crisis and cries for reform. The successes of foreign competitors are pointed to, new moneys are sought and laws passed. Occasionally these reform efforts make a difference. Just as often, they end up as mere rhetoric and the educational indicators continue to slide. Education is a dynamic sector with its ups and downs. To understand these ups and downs and to gain a clearer grasp of the essentials of reform, we need to look deeply into the origins and development of successful and failed reforms. This book seeks to answer that need. To do so, it stresses two important themes. First, the essence of educational practice lies in the institutionalised ideals and norms of an educational system, not in how much is spent on education or how many people are involved in education. Second, while many contemporary observers

of education tend to think that sound educational practice is pretty much the same around the world, this book argues that there are at least six distinctive educational InstitutionS currently in place in the modern world, each with its unique strengths and weaknesses. Each also has its own cycle of reform and renewal. So the landscape of educational reform is much broader than most observers acknowledge. The book is unique in highlighting the principle characteristics of Japanese education alongside those of Soviet Russia and the core educational systems of Western Europe and North America. While the account focuses on "national" differences, the analysis actually begins from the ground up, looking at particular schools that emerged early in the six modernising experiences. These early schools are described here as representative schools, for the practices they initiated have had a profound influence on the direction of subsequent reforms in their respective national settings.T

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