



Devolution And Choice In Education

Geoff Whitty, Sally Power

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* What is the background to and significance of policies of devolution and choice in education that are currently fashionable in many parts of the world?

* What has been the actual impact of these policies on school managers, teachers, students and local communities?

* How might equity be preserved in systems of education where increased responsibility is delegated to the level of the school?

This book examines recent school reforms in England and Wales, the USA, Australia, New Zealand and Sweden. It suggests that, at the same time as appearing to devolve power to individual schools and parents, governments have actually been increasing their own capacity to 'steer' the system at a distance. Focusing particularly on the 'quasi-markets' favoured by the New Right, the authors review the research evidence on the impact of the reforms to date. They conclude that there is no strong evidence to support the educational benefits claimed by the proponents of the reforms and considerable evidence that they are enabling advantaged schools and advantaged parents to maximise their advantages. They suggest that, if these damaging equity effects are to be avoided, there is an urgent need to redress the balance between consumer rights and citizen rights in education.

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Anna Raynor:

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