



# Design-Based School Improvement: A Practical Guide for Education Leaders

*Rick Mintrop*

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At the heart of the effort to enact and scale up successful school reforms is the need for more robust links between research and practice. One promising approach is design development, a methodology widely used in other fields and only recently adapted to education, which offers a disciplined process for identifying practical problems, assessing evidence of outcomes, accounting for variability in implementation and results, and establishing a foundation for broader understanding of the problem and proposed solutions.

This exciting new book provides a practical guide for education leaders who are seeking to address issues of equity in their schools and want to pursue this approach. The book provides a step-by-step description of the process, augmented by case studies of four education leaders:

- Christine, a middle school principal who is concerned with the volume of disciplinary referrals in her school;
- Michelle, an elementary school principal who wants to address achievement gaps;
- Eric, an assistant superintendent who wants to improve the quality of principals' instructional feedback to teachers; and
- Nora, a high school principal who is concerned about the use of racial and homophobic slurs in the hallways.

The book follows each of these leaders as they formulate and refine interventions to address these problems.

*Design-Based School Improvement* also includes a series of “excursions into theory” that discuss the research basis for design-based improvement.

The author—a leading thinker about policy implementation and school reform—shows a profound appreciation for the complexity of work in schools and the deep and sustained thinking entailed in undertaking productive change. By bringing theory to life and putting it in the hands of skilled practitioners, this book promises to become an invaluable resource for education leaders seeking to solve problems of equity and social justice in schools.

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