

Portals of Promise

Transforming Beliefs and Practices through a Curriculum of Parents

Debbie Pushor and the Parent Engagement Collaborative

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Working with parents is a significant aspect of educators' roles, yet it is rare to find curriculum in teacher education programs designed to prepare individuals to consider, in philosophical, theoretical, and pedagogical ways, who they will be in relationship with parents and why. Schools, therefore, remain hierarchical structures in which parents are marginalized in relation to decisions affecting teaching and learning.

This book begins with Pushor's conceptualization of a "curriculum of parents," a curriculum which explores beliefs and assumptions about parents, a vision for education in which educators work alongside parents and family members in the learning and care of children, and a desire for reform. She describes a curriculum of parents, in the form of three graduate teacher education courses, which she lived out in relationship with students.

Graduate students then capture their experiences immersed in this curriculum – what they each took up, how it shaped their knowledge, attitudes, and practices, and how they lived it out as they returned to their classrooms, schools, and early learning centres. This book is a storied account of their intense immersion in a curriculum of parents and the resulting impact living that curriculum has had on who they are in relation to parents and families. It is an honest and vulnerable account of their shared and individual journeys. They puzzle over the complexities and the successes of their work and the resulting impact. This is not a book of best practice, but an invitation to other educators to consider, as they did, what they do and how it could be different.

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Debbie Pushor & the Parent Engagement Collaborative

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