Conference Proceedings

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Leadership Experiences and Awards

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Parent Roles in Mediating Behaviour Problems of School-Aged Students: A Case Study Set in a Small BC Coastal Community

ABSTRACT

What happens in the process of parents’ involvement to resolve behaviour problems that is likely to create positive outcomes for children in school? Research establishes that parent participation, whether for behaviour or academic reasons, is directed by invisible parameters that are subtly defined and recognized by virtue of the school institution. This study was guided by Bourdieu’s social reproduction theory which relates to the influence of cultural, social, and symbolic capital acting as currency in social behaviour. The study examined parents’ perspectives of their experiences of participation that study participants described in their attempts to resolve their children’s behaviour problems at school. The guiding research question was: How does social reproduction theory help us understand parents’ interactions with the school system regarding student behaviour? A qualitative research approach employing a case study design was used to seek an in-depth understanding of parents’ experiences when they participate to support their children’s behaviour problems at school. Twelve parents and three administrators were interviewed to elicit descriptions of their experiences of their participation. Study findings revealed the depth of caring and persistence that parents experience in their interactions and administrators’ deep commitment to working with families to resolve behaviour problems. Despite these positive findings, study results suggested a lack of alignment between parents’ experiences and the study’s reported outcomes by school administrators’ regarding their work with parents. Key themes that became apparent included the influence of social networks, strengthening relationships, communication practices, and social reciprocity. Study findings suggest that parents believe their children’s schools can create meaningful approaches to mutually resolving their children’s behaviour problems.

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