Conference Presentations:


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**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

**ORAL EXAMINATION**

**PATRICIA HIBBITTS**

**FOR THE DEGREE OF**

**DOCTOR OF EDUCATION**

EdD

**Wednesday, March 25, 2009**

SFU Surrey (Room 15-645) at 9:30 AM

**EXAMINING COMMITTEE**

Chair: Dr. Jean Warburton

Senior Supervisor: Dr. Michèle Schmidt

Member: Dr. Cathie Dunlop

Member: Dr. Geoff Madoc-Jones

Internal/External: Dr. Stephen Smith

External Examiner: Dr. Carl Leggo

Professor, Department of Language and Literacy Education, University of British Columbia
WE DO THIS FOR THE NEXT CHILD: A MOTHER’S PHENOMENOLOGICAL AUTO NARRATIVE INQUIRY INTO EXPERIENCING HER CHILDREN’S SCHOOLS

ABSTRACT

This auto narrative study examined the phenomenon of a mother’s experience with the Kindergarten to Grade 12 school system. The narrative consisted of forty-eight vignettes in which the author recalled when she interacted with educators in her three children’s schools between 1985 and 2004. It took place in four Canadian provincial jurisdictions (Ontario, Quebec, Newfoundland and British Columbia) and in six elementary schools, two junior secondary schools, and five secondary schools. Some of the schools were public schools and some were Catholic or Separate schools. One of the children was diagnosed as having Attention Deficit Disorder. Two of the children were assigned Individualized Education Plans.

The narrative was analyzed utilizing hermeneutic phenomenology as outlined by Max van Manen in his book entitled Researching Lived Experience (1990). The analysis yielded seven themes revolving around: communications, cultural dissonance, expectations, otherness, professionalism, rage, and silencing.

The study revealed that communications between school and the mother tended to be centred on actions, events, and behaviours that were problematic for the school. Cultural dissonance arose because of the differences between the family and the regional cultures in which they lived. In addition, the family adjusted its own culture because of the presence of an Attention Deficit Disorder child. This adjustment, resulting in a unique family culture, was not recognized or understood by some teachers and some school administrators. The mother’s expectation of her experience of her children’s schools was based on hope at the beginning which was replaced increasingly by despair. The mother began to see herself as ‘other’ and to a certain extent ‘otherness’ was also present in the children. Teachers defined themselves as professionals and were unwilling to accept or value the information that could have been provided by the mother. Because of the actions of the schools in excluding him and in extending his sense of otherness, one of the children developed a deeply held sense of rage. The mother was actively silenced by schools but also passively silenced herself.

The central focus for this study was to identify the experience that one mother had of her children’s schooling. The significance of the study lies in the richness of the findings and their thematic interpretations. These not only provide reflective opportunities and perhaps solace for other parents facing similar challenges, but also a chance for teachers and school administrators to engage in the life of a mother.

Academic Record:

1978 – M.B.A. York University
1973 – B.A. University of Toronto

Professional Experience:

2001 – Present Vice President, Finance and Administration, Simon Fraser University
1997 – 2001 Vice President, Business and Finance, University of Northern British Columbia
1991 – 1997 Director, Administration and Finance, Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, Memorial University

Boards:

2003- Present Canadian Association of University Business Officers
2005- Present Centre for Higher Education Research and Development
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2001- Present Simon Fraser University Community Trust
2002-2008 Great Northern Way Trust
2003-2007 Chief Dan George Centre for Advanced Education
1999-2002 John Prince Research Forest

Awards:

2005 Vancouver YWCA Woman of Distinction, Business and the Professions