

Book Reviews

Sexuality, Gender and Schooling: shifting agendas in social learning

MARY JANE KEHILY

Routledge Falmer, London (2002)

244 pp., ISBN 0-415-28047-8 (pbk)

This book is a work of academic excellence. It explores issues of teenage sexuality, gender and schooling in a comprehensive and in-depth way. It is the work of a scholar who integrates a sound theoretical foundation of the subject with field experience and a clear knowledge of the methodology of qualitative research. It offers, I believe, true insight into the collective mind of the adolescent in today's world.

In the first chapter the author gives an auto/biographical account of her years as a teacher. She describes how more than a decade of teaching experience shapes her interest and theoretical orientation. In becoming a participant observer she notices how the dynamics of stereotyping and the struggle for power between young people and teachers influence the system. She becomes involved in sexual education and perceives that there is a sub-culture of gender and sexuality that exists apart from the official curriculum. This informal school-based culture makes itself known through language. '...– through humour, innuendo, double-entendre and explicit commentary -...'

Chapter 2 gives a literary overview of the key debates and issues in the field of sexuality, gender and education. It serves to underpin the paradigm on which the study is based and is a continuation of the theoretical contextualization that is given by the author in the introduction.

The author's expansive literature knowledge not only forms a frame of reference for the study, but also shapes her analytical reasoning as she reports the data and structures the facts obtained during fieldwork.

The ethnographic fieldwork for this study was done over a period of 2 years in two secondary schools in the Midlands area of the UK and is described in the chapters that follow. As participant observer the author collected the data by way of group discussions, one-to-one interviews and by forming closely binding relationships with pupils.

Based on the analyses of data, the author advocates the implementing of culturally specific sexual education, working from the premise that pupils are either sexually aware or sexually active and regarding popular culture (TV and magazines) as resources for sexual learning. Education should be student-centred, differences should be respected and educators should be aware of power relations.

Qualitative research always raises the concern of reliability, validity and control. I am of the opinion that the author's field experience; insightful attempts at triangulation and awareness of how context and contingency influence observation functioned well enough as a checking procedure during the research.

Knowing that the social sciences and human service professions do not function from the assumption of empirical exactness it was interesting to note that the results of a Cochran Library review of quantitative research on teenage sexual beha-

viour found that small group discussions by peer educators were the most effective interventions for changing sexual lifestyle.

This result is in line with Mary Jane Kehily's emphasis on recognizing student cultures and thereby '... 'giving voice' to school students who receive the curriculum but play no part. ... in the planning of the curriculum and the teaching of lessons'.

For me the strength of the book lies in a renewed sense of the importance of language as a tool in the social sciences. This connects to the ideation in the autobiographic novel *The Words to Say It* by Marie Cardinal. In this literary guide to psycho analyses, she gives an English translation of a quote by Boileau: 'What one truly understands clearly articulates itself, and the words to say it come easily.'

As is the case with all works of such abstract ideation, *Sexuality, gender and schooling* is not an easy read, but rather a book for the discerned scholar.

The book presents an up-close-and-personal look into the collective mind of the teenager. This makes it irreplaceable as an addition to the cumulative body of knowledge of the social sciences.

MARIANE C. VILJOEN, D.Phil.
*Senior Lecturer - School of Nursing
Faculty of Health Sciences
University of the Free State
Bloemfontein,
Republic of South Africa*

Teaching Aspects of Health Care

VALERIE EHLERS (EDITOR)

Juta, Landsdowne (2002)

144 pp., ISBN 0702157007

This is a very useful practical book. The book focuses on methods to be used in specific areas of health care.

The following training methods are addressed:

- The formal lesson.
- The demonstration.
- The group discussion.
- Role play.
- Learning games.
- Simulation games.
- Case history.
- Case study.
- The learning package.
- Experiential learning.
- Projects.
- Narratives.

- Values clarification.
- Evaluation and assessment.

The book is written in an easy conversational manner with many practical examples relating to the African context. Typical traditional religions and customs of the black culture are addressed, where applicable. For example with the role play as training method, the following are mentioned.

It might be:

- 'disgraceful to act out the role of a community leader;
- harmful to act out certain roles (such as those of HIV/AIDS sufferers; or a mother who gave birth to a baby with a birth defect, such as a cleft palate) because this might evoke ancestors to strike the players, with the specific problem acted out during role play;
- unacceptable for women to speak loud enough to be heard by those not taking part in the conversation (onlookers); or
- forbidden to play out actual occurrences (such as male and/or female circumcision ceremonies)' p. 53.

The following aspects are addressed in all the chapters: General introduction to specific training method (from the familiar to the unfamiliar), definition, advantages and disadvantages, aspects to take into consideration, practical application of specific method illustrated by practical examples and self testing. Five icons are continuously used to make the book more user friendly.

The book is printed in big format. This is a great help and together with the typographical layout, the book is both user friendly and very easy readable.

MAGDA MULDER, D.Soc.Sc
*Professor: School of Nursing
Faculty of Health Sciences
University of the Free State
Bloemfontein,
Republic of South Africa*