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Title/Título: The rise of the parent as advocate: Parent-teacher interaction at parents' meetings
El surgimiento de los padres como apoyo: Interacción padre-profesor en reuniones de padres

Topic: Parents-teachers mutual obligations and different dimensions of partnerships
Obligaciones mutuas entre padres y profesores y educadores, y las distintas dimensiones en que se establecen sus relaciones

Presentation time/Día de presentación: Session in English. Thursday 15, 12:15-1:45 p.m. Room 2, Third Floor

Sesión en Inglés. Jueves 15, 12:15-1:45 p.m. Sala 2, Tercer Piso

Abstract

This paper will provide information on the second phase of a previously reported study. Phase 1 assumed a grounded approach in using diaries and interviews with a sample of the parents and teachers at three primary schools in one local educational authority in Scotland. Phase 2 clarified the validity of the emergent themes through a questionnaire to a larger sample of parents. For the purposes of this paper, I will focus on the expectations that parents and teachers bring to these meetings. This informs the roles that they adopt and the perceived satisfaction of the participants. Thomas et al (1997) argued that parents in the United Kingdom had not wholeheartedly embraced the consumerist principles of educational legislation and policy through the 1980s and 1990s that presented parents with increased powers; they did recognise that parents had welcomed opportunities to gain information on their individual child. This paper will argue that, while the data supports an 'expert model' of partnership whereby the teacher is the expert who transmits information on the child to the parent (Hornby, 2000), some parents also expected to gain specific information on their child and to work towards a consensus agreement with the teacher about the child. This informed key roles of the teacher as information-giver and the parent as listener. Many parents also perceived their roles as questioning the teacher and expressing their views. They appeared to be seeking more proactive roles to act as advocate on behalf of the child. In doing so, they placed their views as equal to those of the professional. Central to the satisfaction of the participants was the interpersonal qualities of the teacher- how these enabled the parent to gain information and to enter into a dialogue with the professional.