PARENTS‘ AND TEACHERS‘ COOPERATION: MUTUAL
EXPECTATIONS AND ATTRIBUTIONS FROM A
PARENTS’ POINT OF VIEW

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It is well known in scientific literature that parents have a significant influence on children’s development and educational careers. There are a lot of possible ways for parents to interact through activities with the school. Direct interaction between parents and teachers is regarded as a central requirement for successful cooperation between them.

In spite of this importance, there is little research on parents as additional members of the “pedagogical working bond” (Oevermann) between pupil and teacher in German literature. Following Oevermann (1996), there is a “working bond” between teacher and pupil which builds the basis for all the learning and educational processes at school. In this paper, we focus on the working bond between teachers and parents from parents’ perspectives. Oevermann suggests viewing parents as “third members” in the teacher-pupil-working bond. Parents take part in the mutual process of constituting, modelling and shaping the working bond.

In Germany, there is a lot of research about the working bond between pupils and teachers. Studies describe the working bond’s antinomies and paradoxes (eg Helsper et al 2008). In contrast, little is known about the working bond between teachers and parents. In this grounded theory study (Corbin/Strauss 2008) we analyze parents’ perspectives on this working bond.

Therefore, 27 mothers and fathers have been interviewed. With the help of theories of professionalization (Oevermann 1996, Schütze et al 1996) we reconstruct on the one hand the pedagogical professionalism of teachers and contrast them with the perspective of parents’ beliefs about pedagogical professionalism. On the other hand, we reconstruct how parents view the pedagogical working bonds and what they think teachers should contribute.

In our data the relationship between parents and teachers is characterized by contradictions and expectations due to mutual attributions. In German teacher trainings parents and especially the working bond between teachers and parents are often neglected. Our analyses show the significant importance to integrate the focal point “working bond with parents” in teacher trainings. Furthermore, the analyses provide possibilities for the development of teacher education programs. They help to outline possible foci for teachers’ professionalization.
Keywords:
Parent-teacher-cooperation, Professionalization, Teacher trainings

References:


