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Book Review - Rethinking the Role of Gender in Schools

Tiffany A. Flowers
Georgia State University Perimeter College

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About the Author(s)

Tiffany A. Flowers is an assistant professor of education at Georgia State University Perimeter College. She is an Indiana Minority Faculty Fellow and a Frederick Douglas Teaching Fellow. Her research interests include African American literacy development, literature, diversity issues in education, traditional literacy, emergent literacy, and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Keywords

Gender, Education, Schooling Experiences

PREVENTING YOUTH VIOLENCE: RETHINKING THE ROLE OF GENDER IN SCHOOLS

Vanita Sundaram. 2014, 128 pp., $67.50, University of York, UK. Palgrave McMillan.
Reviewed by:

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Introduction

This book's purpose was to challenge gender norms and approach gender identity from an alternative viewpoint that rejects violence. In this work, violence is defined as intimate partner violence, elder abuse, child maltreatment, violent crimes, trafficking and sexual exploitation, and public disorder that are physical, mental, emotional, and financial. The population of youth in this book is defined as children under the age of 18. This text opens, discussing the normalized culture of violence among youth in the UK. The author includes examples and reactions from youth regarding domestic violence incidents that have high profile celebrity couples. The author posits that instead of victim-blaming in domestic violence incidents, youth must learn that there are healthier ways to interact with one another. The sole focus of this work is to address violence among youth. More specifically, this work will explore how young people's understanding of gender identity accepts or rejects violence.

Overview of Chapters

In the first two chapters, the author focuses on how youth view or conceptualize violence. She points out the problem with most anti-violence interventions and campaigns to end violence among youth. The author posits that understanding masculinity and identity is crucial to comprehending the link between gender identity and violence. In other words, the author seeks to understand how some males can distance themselves from an aggressive masculine identity when it comes to violent acts, and other males cannot resist violent urges and impulses. Additionally, the author also challenges many anti-violence campaigns aimed at youth that do not include gender. The author also asserts that gender violence campaigns should be aimed at not only youth but also teachers. This ensures professionals employed in educational institutions address issues related to gender-based violence and strategies aimed at eliminating violence among youth.

The author describes the research study on violence in secondary schools in England in the third and fourth chapters. Focus groups, statements, and photographs were used to collect the data for this research. The data were analyzed to determine the underlying beliefs by gender of the youth in this study. The findings of this study show that young people, in fact, distinguish between varying forms of violence.

The fifth chapter is one of the most important chapters of this work. This chapter's focus was to showcase how youth distinguish between gender, varying forms of violence, and whether they accept or reject violence.

The final two chapters in this work focus on the role educational institutions play in ending school-based violence. Although the author points to the mixed findings among educational

research regarding violence in schools, there is still evidence showing that school-based interventions are essential to ending violence among youth.

Strengths and Weaknesses

There were many positive aspects to this work. First, this work solidifies the importance of examining violence among youth. Second, this work challenges the idea that violence is an anomaly occurring in more highly publicized cases. Third, this work provides a framework for researchers to follow regarding studying youth by trying innovative research strategies such as looking at violent photographs.

The only weakness in this work was chapter six. This chapter was written to include solutions for helping to prevent violence against youth. However, it only contained several pages of a few suggestions and implications. This chapter could have included more tips to avoid these incidents among youth by equipping teachers and other educational stakeholders with tools to discourage violence in schools and communities among youth.

Overall Thoughts

The proliferation of social media in the 21st century has helped highlight the issue of violence among youth. As the author of this work posits, these issues have provided a window into how youth conceptualize, categorize, and often disregard gender-based violence. The normalized nature in which today's youth view gender-based violence has become so prevalent that this work is timely and essential. You can log on to social media networks worldwide and find videos of celebrities and youth committing violence or commenting on the violence's rationale and complicity. The complicity endorses a culture of gender-based violence among youth that goes unchallenged and becomes a cyclical, normalized, cultural act. If educators, parents, and policymakers are concerned with the prevalent and normalized violence among youth, additional research studies such as this one must be done. The author of this work has created a pertinent and important way to examine the different types of violence youth encounter. This work also plays an essential role in studying anti-violence campaigns' impact on how youth feel and react to violence. The next step in this work area needs to be solutions to how educational institutions can end the normalized violence among youth.

Implications

This book has significant educational implications for youth, adults, teachers, higher education professionals, community members, and other educational stakeholders concerned with youth and violence. It is an excellent primer for both undergraduate and graduate programs that teach developmental courses on adolescents.

Conclusion

This book is highly recommended for adults who work with youth to read this work and apply the research studies findings. Educators working with youth at the secondary level must understand how violence impacts youth. Also, they must understand how violence affects the development and education of youth.