



Between Caring & Counting: Teachers Take on Education Reform

Lindsay Kerr

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One of the key planks of conservative Ontario premier Mike Harris's 1990s platform was education reform. Amid a sea of official reports, policy documents and 'expert' opinions on education, however, the voices of actual classroom teachers were difficult to find. This omission is redressed in Lindsay Kerr's *Between Caring & Counting*. Through a focus group of present-day secondary school teachers in Toronto, Kerr delivers a passionate account of the unassailably negative changes affecting secondary education and teachers' work.

From a critical feminist perspective and using institutional ethnography, Kerr situates the problem in education squarely as a conflict between an 'accounting logic' and 'an ethic of care at the centre of education practice.' She exposes paradoxes inherent in education reform such as the increase of government control at the same time that government funding for education decreases. She also connects educational restructuring to changes in the power relations of gender, class and race across the public education system. These local changes, she finds, do not reflect sound pedagogy but the imperatives of neoliberal globalization.

Counteracting despair with hope, Kerr explores self-reflexive suggestions for teacher-educators to exercise agency in their lives and to continue to work toward a just and equitable public education system.

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