



UvA-DARE (Digital Academic Repository)

[Review of: J. Ravet (2007) Are we listening? making sense of classroom behaviour with pupils and parents]

Jellesma, F.C.

Publication date
2008

Published in
Education Book Reviews

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Jellesma, F. C. (2008). [Review of: J. Ravet (2007) Are we listening? making sense of classroom behaviour with pupils and parents]. *Education Book Reviews*, 2008(september). <http://staff.lib.msu.edu/corby/reviews/posted/ravet.htm>

General rights

It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations

If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: <https://uba.uva.nl/en/contact>, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.

education book reviews

Ravet, Jackie (2007). *Are We Listening? Making Sense Of Classroom Behaviour With Pupils And Parents*. Stoke-on-Trent, England: [Trentham Books](#).

Pages: 164 Price: £16.99 / €25.50 ISBN: 9781858563923

In school, children are expected to listen, work, and concentrate. Yet, some children show a preference for playing, talking with others, daydreaming and other activities that clearly do not rhyme with good-learning behaviour. About 20% of the children shows school disengagement (Wilms, 2003), causing negative outcomes for pupils (e.g., poor academic performance), but also challenging situations for teachers (Fredericks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). There are multiple influences on children's engagement, including child, teacher, and family factors and the solution to disengagement therefore seems to imply consideration of these three sources.

In *Are We Listening, Making Sense of Classroom Behaviour with Pupils and Parents*, Ravet discusses a study with which she aimed to gain insights into the perceptions of teachers, parents and children with respect to disengagement. In the study, named "Sommerville Study," ten disengaging children, their parents and five teachers were asked as informants for this purpose. By presenting the results of the Sommerville Study, Ravet successfully tries to replace the classical approach to disengagement (punishment of bad behaviour, rewards for good behaviour), with a more advanced approach that incorporates the multiple perspectives of children, teachers, and parents.

Ravet starts with an introduction to the topic of disengagement in the classroom, followed by a more in-depth description of disengagement described by the perceptions that teachers, parents and children have of disengagement behaviour, the feelings of the child, and the causes of the disengagement. Each of these perceptions (i.e., child, teacher, and parent perspectives) are further analysed and discussed in separate chapters and then integrated to come to an approach that emphasises awareness of all perspectives and collaboration in order to positively change the level of engagement in the child. In the final chapter, Ravet addresses potential obstacles and how they can be overcome in order to adopt the preferred inter-subjective approach.

It is impressive how Ravet convinces the reader of her message that multiple perspectives should be taken into account without giving the feeling that any of these perspectives is the true one or even that one perspective is better than another. Whereas the teacher perspective is the one many readers will be most familiar with, the child perspective and the parent perspective (that incorporates elements that reflect both teacher and child perceptions) are described in a clear and imaginable way. Most interestingly in this respect is the discrepancy between the teacher and the child in their explanations of disengagement. Whereas children often say they wish to find relief from uncomfortable learning experiences and feelings and try to find a way to have fun; teachers seem to think that self-factors, such as deficits in the child, explain the disengagement behaviour. By describing discrepancies such as these, Ravet makes it understandable why the measures taken by teachers do not always have sufficient effects.

The book as such is informative and convincing. By illustrating the text with many examples of real classroom situations, Ravet provides the reader with an "engaging" story. It is impressive how she analyses and discusses the findings from the Sommerville study. We do, however, have to keep in mind that the findings derive from only ten eight to nine year old children and their parents and even fewer teachers. In addition, the Sommerville study took place in a small town in northeast Scotland (thus not to be confused with the 40 year longitudinal study by Snarey & Vaillant published in 1985 that was about the relationship between IQ and life success in 450 boys growing up in Somerville, MA). The reader should, therefore, be aware of the limitations with respect to generalizability of the findings. Children's perspectives, for instance, may be less self-reflective at younger ages and child-disengagement may be even more difficult to handle in larger cities than in small towns, depending on factors such as classroom

size. The book nevertheless is helpful in providing a more advanced approach to child disengagement that could help tackling the problem.

For whom might this book be interesting to read? The book, with all its examples and explanations, is very easy readable. It is suitable for school psychologists, teachers, and even parents who are worried about school disengagement in their child. For scientists studying the topic of school disengagement, the book is interesting as well. Scientists, however, will probably be more reticent in accepting all conclusions presented in the book, as many important descriptions of the methods used in the study are not (clearly) described. For them, the book may be a stimulation for further research into this interesting topic.

References

Fredericks, J.A., Blumenfeld, P.C., & Paris, A.H. (2004). School engagement: Potential of the concept, state of the evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, 74, 59-109.

Snarey, J. R., & Vaillant, G. E. (1985). How lower- and working-class youth become middleclass adults: The association between ego defense mechanisms and upward social mobility. *Child Development*, 56, 899-910.

Willms, J. D. (2003). *Student Engagement at School: A Sense of Belonging and Participation* (Results from PISA 2000). Paris: OECD.

Reviewed by Francine C. Jellesma, Department of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, University of Amsterdam.

-
- [Education Book Reviews Introduction Page](#)
 - [Education Review/brief reviews](#)
 - [Authors Page](#)
 - [Titles Page](#)
 - [Subjects Page](#)
 - [Publishers Page](#)

Michigan State University Libraries

Page editor: [Kate Corby](#)

MSU is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Institution