

Pushout-M. Morris

Reflection & Connection

This book was one of those eye-opening reads. It really made me stop and reflect how I view, approach, speak, interact, and think about my black, female students. The real-life accounts of the girls in juvenile detention centers about their school experience both in and out of the court system was truly saddening. At the heart of the matter, the book really impressed upon me the power of seeking to understand versus assuming, assigning blame, and “knowing”. It made me think about the policies we have in our schools and how they are meant to punish instead of understanding, teaching, and providing support. We, as an educational institution, need to be aware of and respondent to trauma, [think of ACES](#) and their impact on students young and old and their lifelong effects.

Schools are traditionally a system that gives knowledge, sometimes and variably at that, while often putting matters outside of academia on the backburner. We need to start acknowledging our impact and responsibility to provide supports and relationships to our students. Some may not think this is the job of the school but as long as compulsory schooling is law and takes up 14,000 hours (8 hours x 180 days x 10 years) of a person’s life...**it should be.**

The last thought I will leave here is the idea of the quality of schools within detention centers. According to this book they are remedial, highly punitive, and basic. Also, according to the author and testimonies of the girls in the system, the girls in the centers have dreams, aspirations, goals, a value for education, and will. I think school systems who failed, yes they failed or the girls may not be in the system in the first place, to serve the girls in the traditional setting should make more of an attempt to boost the rigor and quality of education within the detention centers. How is this done? I don’t know. It wouldn’t fall on just one school system as multiple systems will “feed” students into the centers, so perhaps it could and should be a joint effort.

Notes

- Throughout history defiance has been seen as a negative concept: slaves were often defiant to fight the oppression they were facing, Harriet Tubman was defiant and highly successful.
- to be “ghetto” is to re-define the norms that are placed upon black females: being loud enables you to be heard, acting out enables you to have control and power.
- Schools are one of the largest influences on the life trajectory of black girls (and arguably most students—me)
- Is your school’s curriculum culturally sensitive? Does a downplay or outright erase the contributions of black females to the development of the world? Except for maybe a few references during Black history month?
- The unemployment rate for black females with less than a high school diploma is 20%, as opposed to black females with a bachelor’s degree or higher at 6%
- black girls must battle being both female and of color (and often gender roles too)
- zero tolerance has squashed student voice. It is built off fear and punishment.
- need for restorative justice techniques

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- schools are supposed to be places for learning of academic, social, and emotional growth
- It would be basically impossible for every employee of the school to know the diverse and unique backgrounds of each student; what should be learned and understood though are the multitude of outside factors: race, gender, poverty, disability status, etc., that play into school community.
- exclusionary discipline opens the door for young females to be roped into sex trafficking by older men
 - Draw of instant money for material goods and services is strong in a community with few economic opportunities elsewhere
- if the juvenile justice system in your area is prioritizing school attendance and performance for those in the system, is your school working with the system and the students in the system to help them succeed?
- Schools should be working to provide relationships and support for students who are not making straight A's and good grades. The students often don't have the support at home in the community that they need to succeed.
- females are constantly harassed sexually often because of how the media portrays female sexuality
- Juvenile facilities education systems are usually very remedial, basic, punitive-all not good for helping the youth sentences there
- need to really support and help students understand what is needed for college
- **Schools in detention centers need to be trauma focused and informed with their interactions with students
- The words and actions of adults towards students can set up a situation in which the student feels like they have to defend themselves or stand up for themselves.
- are your school's rules rooted in oppression?
- should not be overlooking abhorrent behavior but instead looking for alternative responses to these behaviors.
 - Need to teach appropriate behaviors to make learning environment safe
 - Develop strong teacher-student relationships
- bring in outside resources to be involved in the school, building culture, and helping counsel on future and past choices
 - Mentors should be people who have gone through same experiences and overcame