

ABSTRACT

Giving Voice to Parents Who Are Students While Their Children Are Simultaneously Enrolled in School

Herbert Egbert Arthur Redway

This dissertation examines the learning experiences, challenges, and family life experiences of three student-parents who manage the multiple responsibilities of parenting, employment and school as they transition to, and re-engage educational pursuits while their children are also in school. This is done through a qualitative case study with phenomenological underpinnings, and is guided primarily by McClusky's (1963) Power-Load-Margin Theory.

Results reveal that when the participants started having families they realised that they had to make up for missed educational opportunities earlier in their lives, and that their transition to adult education had become dependent on the readiness of their family members and themselves for their re-engagement. Participants experienced the phenomenon of "all work and no play" as each had an "all consuming job" and a "demanding adult school." There was therefore not enough time for them to assume the multiple responsibilities of work, family and adult school. It was particularly challenging for the mothers in each household, and this highlighted gender inequalities in the home. Participants encountered strained relationships and transportation woes,

despite supportive family members and the development of creative re-engagement coping skills. They thanked God specifically for the weekend and health.

Key recommendations are that the government must display a genuine understanding of, and promote and sustain adult and parent training through a “comprehensive adult and parent education marketing and sustenance programme.” This programme would train specialists to guide adults; attract persons who missed earlier opportunities, and workers in the public and private sectors who need further education; encourage parents to enrol in appropriate and available institutions by providing facilities, transport and financial solutions for them; ensure basic computer training for new students; present a parent-friendly learning environment; and deliberately motivate the society to understand, appreciate, embrace and own adult education as a means of social and economic transformation.

Keywords: Herbert Egbert Arthur Redway; adult education; transition; re-engagement; student-parent; multiple responsibilities; McClusky’s (1963) Power-Load-Margin Theory.