

School-smart and Mother-wise: Working-Class Women's Identity and Schooling (Perspectives on Gender)

By Wendy Luttrell

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School-smart and Mother-wise illustrates how and why American education disadvantages working-class women when they are children and adults. In it we hear working-class women--black and white, rural and urban, southern and northern--recount their childhood experiences, describing the circumstances that led them to drop out of school. Now enrolled in adult education programs, they seek more than a diploma: respect, recognition, and a public identity. Drawing upon the life stories of these women, Wendy Luttrell sensitively describes and analyzes the politics and psychodynamics that shape working-class life, schooling, and identity. She examines the paradox of women's education, particularly the relationship between schooling and mothering, and offers practical suggestions for school reform.

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Editorial Review

Review
""School-smart and Mother-wise takes the reader on a perceptive journey into the 'storied lives' of older, working-class women who have returned to school. Writing with respect and nuanced insight, Luttrell links the women's conflicted identities and poignant memories of childhood to the shaping forces of gender, race, and class. An important and engaging book."
-Barrie Thorne, author of "Gender Play
"This is a model of passionate yet thoughtful face-to-face research. Wendy Luttrell explores questions of education and social justice with verve and tenacity. Her work illuminates both personal stories and broad issues for American society."
-R.W. Connell, University of Sydney
"Combining a wide knowledge of critical education theory, a fine-tuned ethnographic sensitivity to the meanings that people make of their lives, and an appreciation of feminist psychoanalytic theory, Luttrell offers important new understandings of the gendering traces of schooling....Luttrell adds to the literature significant new insights into gendered ways of knowing....A well written, accessible book, "School-smart and Mother-wise should engage a wide audience, from those interested in frontiers of critical education theory, to those involved in adult literacy classes, to teachers, parents, students; to citizens concerned about the growing social inequality in the United States."
-Dorothy C. Holland, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
"The book is an interesting foray into the lives of two groups of working-class women who inhabit very different racial lifeworlds and the ways they have constructed identities with only marginal ties to eduation."
-"Contemporary Sociology
"Despitethe tough, sometimes painful material in Luttrell's study of working-class women and their experiences in educatinal intsitutions, this is deeply pleasurable reading. It boils knowledge down to a common language that replicates the kind of 'common-sense' knowledge valued by the women it studies....Luttrell deftly allows the women's voices to emerge from her discussion so that they organize and determine her observations."
-Signs

About the Author
at Duke University.

Users Review

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