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What Will My Teacher Be Like?: Picture

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Storybooks about Starting School

Australasian Journal of Early Childhood
Volume 35 Issue 3 (Sep 2010)

Dockett, Sue; Perry, Bob; Whitton, Diana

Abstract: Children learn a great deal about school, what happens at school, and the people they will meet at school as they engage with popular culture, such as television, games and books. One of the issues raised by many children as they

contemplate starting school concerns what their teacher will be like. Children's expectations about teachers are important contributors to the relationships that develop between teachers and children. Such relationships are themselves a critical factor in children's school engagement. Examining some of the information that contributes to children's expectations about teachers supports a focus on children's experiences as they start school. This article reports a study of the images of teachers within children's picture storybooks - an accessible form of popular culture about school. A collection of 164 English language picture storybooks spanning 1967 - 2007 was analysed to explore the representations of teachers in schools. Three areas of analysis were undertaken: how teachers are represented; the dominant images of teachers; and the images that are omitted. The analysis demonstrates the generally benign images of teachers and questions the understandings the books promote about teachers and the roles of teachers in schools.



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