Participatory Engagement and Outreach as a Safe Communication Space for School Students

Handbook on Promoting Social Justice in Education pp 1-14 | Cite as

- Jennifer Wanjiku Khamasi (1) Email author (wanjiku.khamasi1@gmail.com)
- Rachel Lanoi Karei (2)
- Hoseah Kandie Kiplagat (3)

1. Faculty of Education, Dedan Kimathi University of Technology, , Nyeri, Kenya
2. University of Eldoret, , Eldoret, Kenya
3. University of Eldoret, Department of Technology Education, , Eldoret, Kenya

Abstract

This paper discusses ways of dealing with narratives containing sensitive information shared by primary and secondary school students through a research process. The study was informed by participatory action research traditions and was part of a Gender Equity Project that took place in two phases from 2007 to 2016. Guided by Nell Nodding's care theory, narratives shared by the students were analyzed using the collaborative content analysis process (CCAP). Most of the stories spoke of domestic violence, incest, neglect by parents, child labor, and abuse of orphans by guardians. Reading and analyzing the essays was a painful experience because most of those expected to care and love the children were reportedly abusive. After reflecting on the narratives, participatory engagement and outreach were used as the method for communicating to stakeholders the children's concerns, hence as a method for breaking the silence.

Keywords

Action research   Responsive pedagogy   Participatory engagement   Outreach
Collaborative content analysis process   Social justice   Care theory
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Section editors and affiliations

- Khalid Arar (1)
- Kadir Beycioglu (2)

1. Faculty of Education, Al-Qasemi Academic College of Education, , Baqa Elgarbia, Israel
2. Faculty of Education at Buca, Department of Division of Educational Administration, Dokuz Eylul
University, , Izmir, Turkey

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