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Methodological considerations in practice-based research

Lessons learned from research with a music school in Sweden

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Methodological considerations in practice-based research: lessons learned from research with a music school in Sweden

This is a presentation of a practice-based research project that has been carried out in collaboration between two course leaders from a music school in Sweden and one researcher between 2022 and 2023. The aim of the research project is to contribute to knowledge about pupil participation in Sweden's Art and Music Schools and the further aim is to contribute to the development of methods for practice-based research. The further aim of the project will be the starting point of this presentation.

The researcher will present the collaborative research process, focusing on how the researcher and the two course leaders have applied and developed the methodology for this specific case. Inspired by action research, we have developed the methodology by applying methods that would stimulate participation, collaboration, critical thinking, and reflection in democratic processes. We have applied the method of Photo Voice, which is inspired by Freire's critical theory and feminist theories and represents a shift of power since the pupils can make their voices heard through photos. Another method has been weekly meetings with the course leaders, which contributed to cycles of action and reflection. The data consist of: (1) reflective conversations with pupils and involved adults, (2) reflective logbook notes from the course leaders and the researcher, (3) photos from pupils, (4) group conversations with pupils, and (5) weekly meetings with course leaders. Research ethics will be discussed focusing on specific aspects that can be challenged in collaborative research, such as accountability and confidentiality.

Practice-based research can have the potential to contribute to developing sustainable collaboration between researchers and practitioners, which may contribute to the development of both research and practice fields. Sharing both opportunities and challenges from a methodological standpoint is an attempt to contribute to such development.