

Sexuality educators: taking a stand by participating in research

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Life Orientation teachers play a critical role in the teaching and learning of sexuality education in South African schools. Using an experiential participatory approach with 125 teachers in the Motheo district, Free State, I explored three questions: What messages did the teachers learn about sex and sexuality? How do these messages inform the teachers' values? How do the teachers teach sexuality education? Despite its own problems and limitations, the participatory approach exploits and reinforces the life-space model proposed by Kurt Lewin. I will argue that past and future events have an impact on teachers' present behaviour and how they teach. I conclude with a framework for the teaching of sexuality education using participatory methods, which can help support teachers interested in working with such an approach.

Keywords: Life Orientation teachers, life-space model, participatory approach, sexuality education

Introduction

Although it is a general misconception that sexuality education contributes to promiscuous sexual behaviour (Di Mauro & Joffe, 2007), the benefits of sexuality education by far outweigh the negative consequences resulting from learners' ignorance, or from adults' conveying of distorted messages about sex. One of the benefits of sexuality education is that learners can, by making informed decisions, avoid the pitfalls of risky sexual behaviour such as unwanted pregnancy, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2009; Kirby, Laris & Roller, 2006; Kirby, Laris & Roller, 2005). In fact, teaching about sex and sexuality empowers learners to not only prevent negative outcomes, but to also establish healthy attitudes towards sexuality (Francis, 2011).

As academic subjects are overemphasised in schools (Wood & Olivier, 2007), this article focuses on Life Orientation teachers, whose duty it is to develop learners as healthy individuals. However, the teaching of sexuality still elicits an emotional response. It appears that teaching sexuality in South African schools is a tall order, considering the rich diversity of teachers (and learners), all of whom have their own conception of what healthy sexuality education is and should be.

Masinga (2009), in her self-reflective study on teaching sexuality education to her Grade 6 learners, argues that teachers must know themselves and acknowledge their own prejudices and opinions in order to become better teachers. She purports that her self-study journey required her to first acknowledge that, as teacher, woman and

researcher, she had her own ‘demons’ that prevented her from talking openly about sexual matters to younger children (11 to 15 years of age). She realised that these ‘demons’ contributed to how she selected and delivered sexuality-related content.

This is in line with the concern that teachers teach sexuality education from what they themselves have learnt (Francis, 2010). The attitudes and knowledge they value are usually prescriptive in order to keep learners safe from sexually transmissible infections and unplanned pregnancies (Allen, 2005). According to literature, ignoring issues of sexuality and simply telling learners to abstain from sex is rarely effective (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001). Furthermore, little support exists for teachers’ grappling with these issues. Uncertainty and a lack of training often result in a disjunction between policy and practice (Francis, 2012). A major focus of critique is that teachers’ assumptions are not challenged; rather, their beliefs are reinforced (Applebaum, 2004).

The teaching of sexuality focuses, in essence, on the knowledge to be taught – in other words, a future perspective, with little attention being paid to how teachers conceptualised sexuality during their orientation. As a result, teachers make decisions on what and how to teach from their own conceptualisation of sexuality. As far as sexuality education is concerned, it is important that teachers rotate, as they are confronted with increasingly difficult questions and decisions they need to take with regard to what to teach. In addition, the fact that sexual information can now be easily accessed electronically (television, the internet or magazines) may contribute to learners’ feeling alienated from the teachers’ messages concerning sexuality.

The question should be asked whether we want to expose youth to this information. The time has come for widespread recognition of a different approach needed to teach sexuality. The ideal, according to Shön (1983), is for all teachers to be reflective practitioners, implying that they should reflect on their own teaching as well as analyse and engage in a process of continuous learning. Evans and Policella (2000:62) add that “reflection requires teachers to be introspective, open-minded, and willing to be responsible for decisions and actions”. It may be time for teachers to take to heart what Francis and Ingram-Starrs (2005:551) express: “those [voices] we ignore have more to teach us”.

By employing a participatory approach, I am interested in how teachers come to define and view themselves and others (learners) as sexual beings, and how they perceive and understand sexuality. What do they regard as appropriate behaviour? Teachers’ past influences can significantly affect how they interpret and respond to current situations. In this regard, teachers who teach sexuality education must be viewed as individuals who are part of a society which, in turn, is also influenced by the individuals within it. Sexuality is rational; it consists of active social relationships. One can, therefore, deduce that teachers’ relationships also create and condition (and limit) the possibilities of sexual information because they teach their own ‘realities’ to learners. Human beings create the sexual realities and roles within which they act and define themselves. Because of the altered relationships in a given society, views on

healthy sexuality are meaningful only in terms of the social expectations of that specific society at that particular time (Seidman, 2003). One must acknowledge that sexuality educators will teach what they find acceptable.

Healthy sexuality cannot and should not be viewed as a universal fundamental truth that is homogeneous in all societies. This view minimises sexuality to biological reproduction and health risks, which could easily be put forth as a society's norms and values. Should individuals deviate from this notion, it is viewed as 'deviant' or 'unhealthy' and abnormal behaviour.

The aim of sexuality education as well as most HIV and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)-related programmes is to effect social change. This article reports on how participatory methodology can be used to capitalise on these differences, resulting in social change. In my discussion, I employ the life-space model of Kurt Lewin (1942) because his work emphasises the relationship between the existing world of individuals and their behaviour towards others. When the conceptualisation of the world of Life Orientation teachers can be modified, it could contribute to their own development to become agents of social change (and health) concerning the teaching of sexuality.

Re-organising the cognitive structure, values and behaviour of Life Orientation teachers According to Kurt Lewin (1942), the life space is the physical environment in which a person lives and the people with whom she/he interacts. Problems could arise when our life space restricts us. Lewin (in Burnes, 2004) asserts that the following three steps are essential in order to understand and bring about change in a group:

- **Unfreezing:** Individuals tend to seek conditions in which they feel relatively safe and in control. They then identify with these conditions, which create a state of comfort and physical well-being. Any alternative conditions, even those options that may offer meaningful benefits, may cause unease. Since future changes usually do not suffice to move them from this 'frozen' state, a significant intervention is required to 'unfreeze' and move them towards a change in behaviour.
- **Moving/Changing:** The first step that causes an imbalance in the life space of an individual should be viewed as creating the willingness to learn and change behaviour. However, one cannot predict what the change will entail. Moving is the first step towards taking action with regard to social change. Events such as workshops to encourage reflection on individuals' beliefs and making those beliefs explicit will be more likely to encourage change (Lockyer, Gondocz & Thivierge, 2004). Members of the groups can thus offer support and reflect on new ways to establish desirable outcomes.
- **Refreezing:** When people move through the second stage, their final objective is to find a new place of comfort and safety. Burnes (2004) clarifies that, in order for freezing to take place, the new behaviour must correspond, to some degree, to the person's behaviour, personality and environment. This will also prevent the indi-

vidual from having to address a new imbalance. Lewin (in Blumenfeld, 1997) states that the behaviour of a group may be changed more easily than that of individuals, because changes to individual behaviour often require changes to cultures, policies and practices.

A teacher's desire to teach and make a difference in the lives of learners with regard to healthy sexuality is closely linked to what Jones (1985:84) referred to as "Lewin's grand truism". He argues that personal and environmental factors influence how people act (in this study, why teachers teach sexuality the way they do). Boler (1999) agrees by stating that education should not be viewed as mere instruction, but also as shaping our values, beliefs, who we are and who we become. She further asserts that teachers' emotions shape and influence the way they teach and, therefore, could have an impact on learners by denying them possibilities of enthusiastic communication about social issues such as sexuality should they challenge the *status quo*.

This investigation centres on the changing of behaviour to move teachers to act in ways that are beneficial to both teachers and learners which will, ultimately, influence society. When applying Lewin's life-space model, sexuality educators need to go through the three-phase process, namely unfreezing, moving/changing and refreezing, in order to change their own conceptualisation of sexuality.

Before unfreezing, teachers are considered to have their own perception on what is appropriate to teach with regard to sexuality education in the Life Orientation classes, and have no desire to change their behaviour. Teachers conceptualise their own understanding of issues such as sexuality due to a continuous interaction between existing memories, desires, goals and their environment (Burnes, 2004). These personal experiences often create tension within their professional environment as a result of internalising and enacting roles that society has assigned to them. In addition, their attitudes and actions are rooted in the ways in which they perceive the world and life in general (Zembylas, 2003). For unfreezing to occur, teachers need to be introduced to new information or points of view, and be allowed to reflect on their own life space and contextualisation of sexuality within a safe and non-judgemental environment.

Changing/moving is the second phase through which teachers need to go in order to effect re-education and re-socialisation. During this phase, teachers find a new equilibrium for themselves by experimenting with new behaviours within a supportive group environment. The last phase involves refreezing where the teacher absorbs and assimilates new ideas which could assist in keeping up with what learners need from sexuality education. It is, however, important to note that teachers should view the new knowledge as crucial and meaningful.

As researcher, I decided to draw on participatory methods in order to raise awareness and explore the beliefs that teachers foster with regard to sexuality. My assumption was that, if they are confronted with their own conceptualisation of sexuality, it may provide the opportunity for self-awareness through reflection and critical engagement as starting point for adaptation at a later stage. Baily (1992) asserts that

awareness of why they teach the way they do, precedes changes in teachers' practices. Hampton (1994) agrees, stating that teachers' personal 'constructs' determine how they approach their teaching. For teachers to change, they do not necessarily have to change their teaching methods. However, in the field of sexuality, it should involve changing their attitudes and awareness (Francis, 2012). A participatory approach could lead teachers to a 'moment' where they become aware of why they have the 'we don't talk about sex' approach. In this study, this 'moment' seemed to be the outcome of the interaction between the teachers and the circumstances in which they were participating.

The research process

This experiential participatory study seeks to understand the messages that teachers learnt about sex and sexuality, how these messages inform their values, and how they, therefore, teach sexuality education. By making use of a participatory approach, the teachers could take control of the research process and assign priority to issues that the facilitators might overlook. Participatory research should be viewed as a "collaborative approach to research that equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each brings" (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003:4). Ebersöhn, Ferreira and Mbongwe (in Theron, Mitchell, Smith & Stuart, 2011) further enunciate that participants are presented as researchers themselves in order to address issues with which they struggle daily. Mitchell (2008:265) adds that, with the participatory approach, "data collection can in, and of, itself serve as an intervention", which is crucial in that it can be transformative for the participants. This is in contrast to conventional methods of research where the researcher is usually viewed as the expert. With a participatory approach, the participants define the problem and share knowledge (in this study, life experiences) which enables them to seek solutions to problems identified by themselves. By following this route, participants' own knowledge is validated; as agents, rather than objects, they are capable of analysing their specific situations and contemplating their own solutions (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995).

The intended users of this project will be Life Orientation teachers who are expected to apply the research findings in order to improve the sexual health of learners. This research method exceeds the goals of conventional methods – a process of creating knowledge – by developing consciousness and preparing participants for action.

My paper reports on a workshop facilitated by researchers from the University of the Free State with the attendees being teachers from the Free State Department of Education. The sample was purposive in that all the educators registered for the sexuality education workshop were teaching Life Orientation at senior level (Grades 7–10). The teachers were diverse in terms of race, gender, class, ethnicities, and age. My reference to race draws on the nomenclature of South Africa's apartheid past and should not, as stated by Francis and DePalma (2013:12), "lend credibility to popular stereotypes that accompany these descriptors". It is important to note that the teachers

taught in a range of schools, from urban to rural, with differing socio-economic contexts. The role of facilitator was adopted with the premise that the researcher does not have all the answers to addressing the topics of sex, sexuality and sexual health, which is in contrast to the view so often held by researchers and policymakers that they can supply teachers with resources, suggestions and strategies in order to address sexuality issues. The idea was not to impart knowledge to the participating teachers, but to foster critical thinking, problem-solving and communication skills that could lead to informed, voluntary and responsible decisions when teaching sexuality. The intention was to interact with a diverse group of teachers, opening ways to understand and share experiences and fears, and make meaning of hopes and values in the participants. Teachers participated by completing a River of Life, which elicited messages that teachers received about sex in the past. By sharing these messages, the aim of participatory methods was addressed: presenting teachers as researchers in pursuit of answers to topics of importance to the community, effecting collaboration between all participants, and recognising the unique strength that each brings from his/her own context (Campbell & MacPhail, 2002). Participants could gain perspective on how they construct healthy sexuality, analyse information and decide on how to use this information.

Burns and Grove (2001) emphasise that, for ethical purposes, the rights of the researcher and the participants should be protected. My paper which describes the workshop intervention served and was approved by the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee at the University of the Free State. All protocols were followed as participants were informed of the intention to use all available data for research purposes. The participants were furthermore given the choice to take part in all activities and to disclose the events that could have influenced their lives. Ground rules ensured confidentiality. Two social workers were included in the team of facilitators in the event of the need for emotional support. This created a safe space for all participants to disclose personal or revealing events.

A qualitative approach is most suitable when the aim of a study such as this is to understand thought processes and feelings (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Methods included the drawing of a River of Life, consisting of experiences that influenced teachers' conceptualisation of sexual behaviour. Participants then chose one experience to share with the group. This was followed by a group discussion during which the following questions were raised:

- Has the experience in your River of Life informed your values about sexuality?
- Do your values affect/inform your teaching on sexuality?
- Do you feel that there is a connection between your River of Life and your learners' River of Life?
- Should this affect the way you teach sexuality education?
- What have you learnt from another participant?

The group discussion was unstructured in order to elicit the participants' true experiences and perceptions.

The trustworthiness of this study was enhanced by rich description of data, literature control and data retention. The limitation of this study was that some teachers were reluctant to share personal experiences, which could hamper the opportunity to become reflective and “become different ... to repair lacks and to take action to create themselves” (Greene, 1988:22).

Discussion

The findings revealed that participatory, reflective practices seem to be an ideal stage to bring issues such as sexuality to the surface and to simultaneously provide opportunities to reflect and decide on alternative courses of action in the classroom situation. This concurs with Babbie’s (in Francis, Muthukrishna & Ramsuran, 2006:142) claim that the participatory approach is “the production of knowledge in an active partnership with the participants who are affected by that knowledge”. It is important to note that this workshop fulfils the requirements for successful participatory research: a process of sharing, dialogue, reflection and action. As the workshop is a ‘once-off’ participatory study, I am of the opinion that, even though one cannot evaluate changes with regard to the teaching of sexuality education in the classroom, awareness has been raised among a diverse group of teachers. The value of diversity in, *inter alia*, culture, race, gender, and socio-economic background should not be underestimated, as the interaction and sharing of diverse ideas should also be viewed as a positive outcome of the participatory approach.

This section presents findings on what teachers learnt about sex and sexuality; how these messages informed their values; and how they teach sexuality education. In addition, I reflect on the impact of the workshop activity and how teachers can be assisted to change their own views on healthy sexuality.

Conceptualisation of sexuality: Unfreezing

To initiate the unfreezing stage, teachers were asked to draw their own River of Life. They had to think of events in their lives that could affect their views on sexuality. This answers what Lewin (1942) called maximum stimulation and involvement, and concurs with Burnes (2004) who states that personal accounts of events encourage individuals to reflect on and analyse the factors that affect their ability to transform new beliefs, attitudes and values with regard to sexuality. This activity was initiated to first answer the question as to what messages teachers learnt about sex and sexuality and, secondly, to create an internal disequilibrium which is the basis of behavioural change.

The majority of the participants reported their first experience with sex and sexuality as very negative. They believed that this contributed to their own conceptualisation of sexuality. This became evident in the way in which they described their first or most influential sexual encounter. A number of participants stated that, at a very early age, they saw other couples having sex. This caused a feeling of unease, although they were curious. One participant elaborated and emphasised that he felt

shame and fear, but that it was an adult ‘thing’ which he had to accept. A few participants stated that their fathers were very strict and forbade any socialisation with boys: “Sex was out, you don’t think about it, you show no leg ... I avoided boys until I was 26. When I got introduced to sex, I thought that you have to do this to become acceptable” and “I thought if you had to have sex with someone that person is not worth it because that is all that person is looking for”. When asked to explain how this could have influenced her as teacher, one participant mentioned that she deals with boys differently at school: “I have nothing good to say about any boy; I just want to squash them. I joke on the grounds – don’t trust, don’t believe him, but it’s not really a joke”. Another teacher with a similar experience agreed: “The way I teach, I’m protective of girls all the time. I want to teach them how to choose the right person. I exclude boys and paint them with the black brush ...”

This participant’s emotional state highlighted the fact that teachers indeed are aware of the deeply embedded values they have ascribed to their sexuality experiences. This corresponds with Zembylas’s (2003) opinion that teachers often find it difficult to ‘escape’ from what they believe to be valid values and attitudes. Although the focus is on the teachers’ conceptualisation of sexuality, some of the participants mentioned that certain events in their lives also affected their personal relationships. A few participants, who had negative sexual experiences such as being beaten for sex, or a very strict father who beat a participant after she was raped and fell pregnant, find it difficult to feel positive about men, to the extent that they believe their marriage to be a burden: “In October a child was born, a girl, I didn’t like that child. Even now, my husband, I don’t want to have intercourse. I don’t know how to kiss ... it is a very negative experience”.

The majority of the teachers reported that they viewed their sexual events as negative, because nobody gave them knowledge and information about sex and relationships. A participant revealed a truth that is well presented in research (Beyers, 2011; Francis, 2010): “Our past is painted negative because of lack of communication”. However, it appears that many teachers are following the same route, defending their action with the fact that learners do get sexuality information somewhere. Some of their comments include:

Our parents didn’t sit down, but the learners have knowledge because the media informs them.

Yes, I’m still not free, but the learners they know most of the things and they share. They can tell you how they grow and how to have sex and how to choose lovers.

I speak less, and I listen to the kids. I’m learning from them. The more I keep quiet the more they learn from one another. I can just guide so that they feel in control.

It became clear during the unfreezing phase that, although teachers understand how they conceptualise sexuality as a result of sharing their experiences, they do not automatically form accurate ideas about teaching of this topic. Teachers will accept the

changes they mention only when the changes in their behaviour are based on these new conceptions. They require this change in order to move to the next phase as described by Lewin (1942), namely, moving.

Challenging change: Moving/Changing

All the participants viewed the River of Life activity as an enjoyable albeit emotional one, and were keen to take part in the discussions. During the unfreezing of personal beliefs, the members of the different groups assisted in creating a non-threatening environment by making it clear that they supported one another emotionally. Throughout the event of moving/changing, the facilitators participated in the discussions to encourage cooperation, understanding and respect for diversity within the groups. Although participatory research expects facilitators to be frank in their own interpretations of sexuality education, all facilitators found that teachers seem to hold their input as more valuable or 'right'. This in itself was a challenge, as facilitators had to reflect on their own questions, difficulties and conceptualisation of sexuality education in their own life spaces. Although facilitators found this to be demanding, there was a genuine feeling that it added to the integration of novel ideas concerning sexuality in participants' personal framework. This concurs with the view of Zembylas (2010) that teachers can utilise their discomfort to construct new ways of addressing difficult issues such as sexuality education. According to Lewin's (1942) life-space model, once new ideas are integrated during the second phase, teachers can begin to apply the knowledge and so become agents of change.

The sharing of events, which displayed a great deal of courage, was followed by a discussion during which teachers challenged one another to confirm or validate differences. It was emphasised that respect for one another's differences was crucial. The collective reflection seemed to motivate the teachers to accept and even voice their intention to transform themselves as teachers. These reflective dialogues took place within a safe space where teachers expressed their personal opinions and practice and, in this way, testing their validity by listening to the input from the other participants. They asked one another questions, and some teachers attempted to give their own answers to problems. According to one participant: "Our experiences are totally different, but we struggle with similar issues ... mine [event] was good, and I expect learners to have the same. I become frustrated. I realise now that people have different experiences".

The majority of the teachers participating in the workshop reported that the discussion of their own experiences helped them face their own conceptualisation of sexuality; thus assisting them in letting go of their old ideas and 'values' and influencing a change in their perception of 'the appropriate way' to teach sexuality.

Reflection: Refreezing

During this third stage, participants reflected on what they had learnt from another participant. The change became apparent as teachers shared the skills they employ in

the classroom, which they found useful and effective. In addition, they displayed a greater tolerance of teachers whose perspectives on the teaching of sexuality differed from their own. They seemed to accommodate those new ideas which they found acceptable by making statements such as: “Knowledge is so important to make informed decisions; children get information from peers; that is not right”. This supports the idea that, if we, as adults, do not talk about sex, we are abdicating the responsibility to peers and technology to which learners have access (Beyers, 2012). Adults need to infiltrate the learners’ options if they want to add to healthy sexuality. As Ruxin, Bina-gwaho and Wilson (2005:32) claim: “Silence on these matters has proved a powerful impediment”.

Teachers seemed to reflect on their own experiences and why they happened: “My parents had me before they were married, and they wanted to prevent me from having the same experience”. This was met with responses by other group members that they should do things differently from their parents: “Now we must listen, then they just beat us”.

The participants reached consensus on what was expected from them as Life Orientation teachers. The majority of the teachers verbalised that they must take into account that learners also go through experiences with sex and sexuality, and that teachers could play a role in teaching them that “it is not wrong to kiss and enjoy”. One teacher claimed that she now realised that, as a parent, she could cause confusion within her own boys. When they asked her why her genitals looked different from theirs, she used to tell them that their father “cut mine”. It was, however, a notable achievement for me, as researcher, when she realised that she was ‘not even free to be open and honest’ about sexual issues with her own children. One of the participants reflected by stating: “Our past is the foundation of who we are today”. Another member of the group answered that now that they know where their ‘issues’ with sexuality education come from, they should always, when deciding how and what to teach, critically think and reflect: “Does this have to do with my own experience or is this true?” Another participant added that the negative events they shared were the past and “you are the one to turn it in the positive”.

After careful consideration, teachers agreed that they should always bear in mind that the learners they teach are different and that sexuality education should be separated from their own conceptualisation of past experiences. As one teacher put it: “Be careful not to create unhealthy relationships because you have been through it”.

It is important to admit that behavioural change in the teaching of sexuality is a complex issue because it is difficult to really understand how and why participants view sexuality education the way they do. However, the positive comments should be an indication that teachers’ attention has been redirected to those very issues that are believed to be central to establishing healthy attitudes towards sexuality.

Conclusion

By making use of an experiential participatory approach, teachers (and facilitators)

were afforded the opportunity to share their experiences, reflect, analyse and come to their own conclusions as to how to teach sexuality in the Life Orientation class. This article argued that, as far as teachers are concerned, change was more likely to occur in a context in which people interacted socially and did not feel subjected to the will of others. In addition, it was found that activities presented in groups yielded positive results, because all participants grappled with similar uncertainties. The teachers attending the workshop became part of one another's life space; this made it easier to accept new perspectives on teaching sexuality education. Accepting membership of the group resulted in teachers' being more tolerant and approving of new facts and values learnt from others. I am of the opinion that the change in how teachers view sexuality education was stimulated by participating in reflective dialogues. This, in turn, paved the way for creating alternative methods of reflecting on and teaching sexuality education. I am confident that the participatory method of the River of Life challenged teachers' own values and beliefs. This correlates with research (Campbell & MacPhail, 2002) suggesting that interaction can move individuals to perceive their lived experience of sexuality through a different lens. There is no doubt that participatory methods have the potential to change sexuality education into a positive experience for all those involved. The need for social innovation is clear, considering that learners may be more susceptible to influences that could help them reflect on attitudes, beliefs and behaviour when they themselves are involved (Winkleby, Feighery, Dunn, Kole, Ahn & Killen, 2004). This concerns the application of new ideas or the re-application of existing ideas in novel ways to add value to, and influence social issues such as sexuality. As a result of attending the workshop, teachers may find the participatory approach useful in a classroom situation. However, if teachers are keen to use the participatory approach, they should offer learners the opportunity to explore and confront sexuality issues on their own terms. Teachers should be informed and aware that, although difficulties may arise, the participatory approach offers significant possibilities as a tool towards enabling openness and communication about sexuality.

It must be added that the activity was not without challenges: new obstacles emerged and questions were raised on which participants could not agree, such as the teaching of sexual desire, homosexuality, sexual abuse and religion. Despite the fact that two social workers were included in the team of facilitators, there was a need in response to some emotional occurrences to reflect carefully on how to best deal with these incidents.

In retrospect, we have to acknowledge that all people are influenced by past events; we contextualise sexuality from our own socio-cultural background. I conclude that this compels all stakeholders to look at themselves critically and take into consideration that, in spite of the potential of participatory methods to effect social change, one has to employ an open attitude (Francis et al., 2006). At best, researchers should be viewed as being able to raise awareness and redirect teachers' thoughts towards self-reflection.

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