Ethical Challenges of Symmetry in Participatory Science Education Research – Proposing a Heuristic for Ethical Reflection

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# Abstract

The advancement of participatory methodologies and educational action research has raised challenges of research ethics that concern the relations between different actors. Different forms of participatory research rest on cooperation between teachers, researchers, and students in different forms of relations. The ways in which these relations are enacted are often related to research objectives, epistemology, research participants , and the context in which the study is carried out. In this chapter we seek to disentangle some ethical challenges emerging from three different teacher-researcher collaborations in science education research. What values are at stake and what are the potential tensions in attempting to secure different values? This includes the ethical implications of requiring shared responsibility between teachers and researchers in development of educational practices and knowledge generation. We discuss how different forms of teacher-researcher collaboration transform ethics and epistemology and how the ethics and epistemology become intertwined. In addition to standard ethical reflection, an ethics of participatory research in science education has to include considerations of the ontological, epistemological, and methodological values at stake.

# Outcome

"These cases of teacher-researcher collaboration illustrate how participatory methodologies involve a transformation of ethics and epistemology and how the ethics and epistemology become intertwined. In the different forms of research, the start and the end of research, as well as the aims and roles of teachers and researchers are blurred in different ways. The scrutiny of these three examples of research collaboration reveals the limitation of traditional ethical considerations that focus on the integrity and consent of the individual – like those provided in guidelines from national authorities (such as Swedish Research Council 2017). In addition to the standard ethical reflection on informed consent and confidentiality, an ethics of participatory research in science education has to include considerations of the ontological, epistemological, and methodological values at stake." (Authors, 136)