Abstract

Globally, teachers are trained to educate and assess children through matrices based on comparative competition, a practice that thrives on ranking. In an era of glocalization, how might educational systems cultivate classroom connections embracing diverse student gifts? This arts-based narrative inquiry explores fatherly life lessons of 17 undergraduate and six graduate students enrolled in an introductory qualitative research course at a large urban Chinese university. Building on the course instructor's model, students engaged in arts-based narrative inquiry to develop children's books on treasured fatherly life lessons that they then shared with second grade students at a local Chinese school. Drawing upon the Confucian Analects and Laozi’s Tao Te Ching, this study evidences empathy as rooted across cultures and ecologies, and that many fatherly life lessons take place in natural settings. This study encourages teacher education practice and research to engage arts-based autobiographical inquiry, and to explore empathy conceptualizations and expressions across cultures and ecologies. As glocalization brings together diverse groups, this work is important to create shared spaces for international connection and meaningful inter-institutional explorations.
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