



# Active Learning: Social Justice Education and Participatory Action Research (Teaching/Learning Social Justice)

*Dana E. Wright*

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While many educators acknowledge the challenges of a curriculum shaped by test preparation, implementing meaningful new teaching strategies can be difficult. *Active Learning* presents an examination of innovative, interactive teaching strategies that were successful in engaging urban students who struggled with classroom learning. Drawing on rich ethnographic data, the book proposes participatory action research as a viable approach to teaching and learning that supports the development of multiple literacies in writing, reading, research and oral communication. As Wright argues, in connecting learning to authentic purposes and real world consequences, participatory action research can serve as a model for meaningful urban school reform.

After an introduction to the history and demographics of the working-class West Coast neighborhood in which the described PAR project took place, the book discusses the "pedagogy of praxis" method and the project's successful development of student voice, sociopolitical analysis capacities, leadership skills, empowerment and agency. Topics addressed include an analysis and discussion of the youth-driven PAR process, the reactions of student researchers, and the challenges for adults in maintaining youth and adult partnerships. A thought-provoking response to current educational challenges, *Active Learning* offers both timely implications for educational reform and recommendations to improve school policies and practices.

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