

13.11.2016

Workshop during the Symposium:
Knowledge politics, transgressive pedagogies, and
political imagination in contemporary art and
education at District Berlin

During the afternoon workshop at District we aimed to look at the internalized idea of knowledge that we acquire in the traditional teaching machine and to think of alternatives that involve more aspects of our being - our bodies, emotions, social relations...

On the bases of feminist scientific critique, especially the book "Wissenschaft als Erfahrungswissen" (Science as experience-based knowledge) by Dagmar Reichert, Patricia Fry, Claudia Heid, Ursina Steinemann (2000), we asked how we internalize that our bodies, our experience, our feelings are separate from our knowledge, that the only acceptable knowledge is white, objective, rational and neutral (to be continued ...). We introduced methods from the book that aim at including our experiences, bodily, emotionally, socially, group-dynamics etc into the knowledge we acquire and the research we do.

some methods from science as experience-based knowledge

Considering the group as a microcosm: Are there similarities between the structure of society in which the topic of research is a topic and the structure of the group? Are there connections between taboos, difficulties, conflicts when working together in the group and taboos, difficult and conflicting issues in the area of society that is being researched?

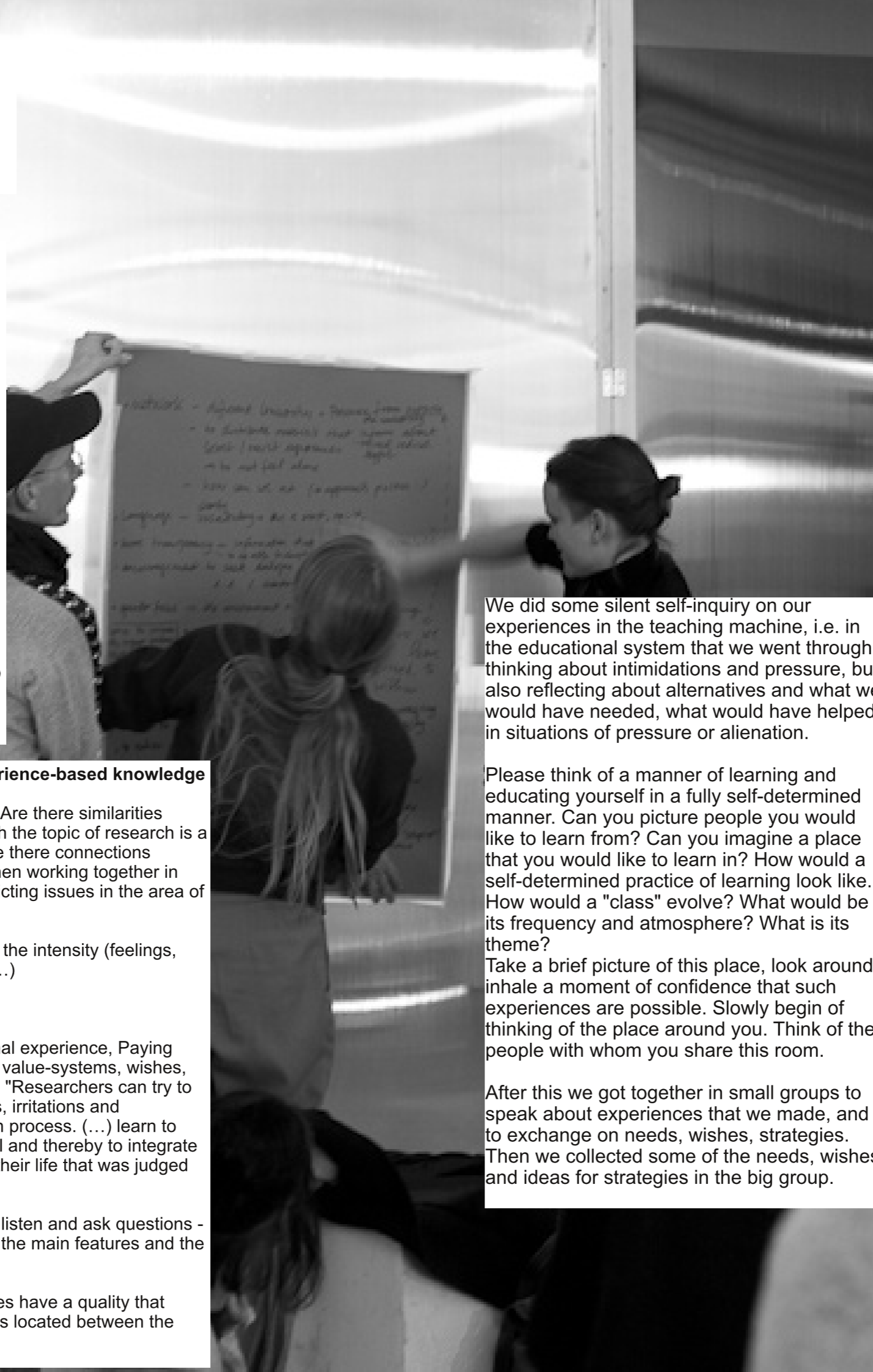
Paying attention to resonance: where is the intensity (feelings, bodily reactions, fascination, confusion...)

Writing diary / writing letters

Connecting inside and outside. Personal experience, Paying attention to emotions, thinking patterns, value-systems, wishes, sensations, preferences, contradictions: "Researchers can try to consciously use their personal reactions, irritations and sensitivities as signposts in the research process. (...) learn to address, value and respect the personal and thereby to integrate into their own scientific work a piece of their life that was judged inadequate and excluded."

Encouragement and critique - mainly to listen and ask questions - with the aim of making even more clear the main features and the beauty of the subject in regard

Telling stories / looking for stories. Stories have a quality that information doesn't have. A quality that is located between the lines and valid for a longer time.



We did some silent self-inquiry on our experiences in the teaching machine, i.e. in the educational system that we went through, thinking about intimidations and pressure, but also reflecting about alternatives and what we would have needed, what would have helped in situations of pressure or alienation.

Please think of a manner of learning and educating yourself in a fully self-determined manner. Can you picture people you would like to learn from? Can you imagine a place that you would like to learn in? How would a self-determined practice of learning look like. How would a "class" evolve? What would be its frequency and atmosphere? What is its theme?

Take a brief picture of this place, look around, inhale a moment of confidence that such experiences are possible. Slowly begin of thinking of the place around you. Think of the people with whom you share this room.

After this we got together in small groups to speak about experiences that we made, and to exchange on needs, wishes, strategies. Then we collected some of the needs, wishes and ideas for strategies in the big group.

Outcomes

- the university is still in place after we leave
- Due to our experiences we are authorized to speak about politics within the university
- we could pressure from outside the university
- network - between different universities
- to distribute materials that inform about sexist / racist experiences - in order not to feel alone
- individual radical support
- how can we act? (approach politics...)
- language - clarify vocabulary: this is sexist / racist...
- more transparency, spread information that support is available
- to be able to decipher what is going on
- encouragement to seek dialogue and support e.g. mentoring
- greater focus in the environment on emotions / wellbeing
- space to consider the bigger picture that we are all part of and to encourage this
- share time together
- listen to each other
- stop trying to cope by yourself
- a surrounding that welcomes us personally as who we are
- room to share when you don't fit / are irritated or confused
- room to ask "stupid questions"
- that people get to know each other
- to acknowledge that things can change

