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ABSTRACT

Martial Arts-based Research

In the context of visual arts education, arts-based research is usually described as an approach in which different art practices have a specific role in the process of constructing knowledge and understanding. The multi-sensory, experiential art methods and strategies open access to phenomena that could be difficult or even impossible to catch through traditional academic methods and to describe with conventional forms of representation. Visual products or representations are involved in the process of meaning-making, but they can serve very different purposes and functions in the research design. The methodology emphasizes reflecting the tacit knowledge and embodied experiences, which can be turned into shared knowledge not just in linguistic, but in performative and visual forms.

In the presentation the group of five researchers-teachers in the field of visual arts education are searching for new perspectives on arts-based research by focusing on their experiences as martial arts practitioners. By 'martial arts' they are referring to a wide range of Eastern combat practices, based on the ancient cultural traditions in which disciplined physical performance is inseparable from spiritual, mental and aesthetic education. Each member of the group has a personal relationship with different martial arts traditions (judo, kendo, taido, jujutsu, taijiquan). Each of them also has gone through a learning process that can be described as a path of becoming part of respective martial arts tradition and community.

When the members of the group started to reflect and share their personal experiences on practising martial arts, they found themselves, as western art educators, in the middle of multi-layered cultural dialogue between Eastern and Western thinking traditions. In the presentation they ask, how their experiences can challenge or deconstruct some of their fundamental commitments as art educators - like conceptions of art, learning and knowledge, human in relation to self, to others and to his/her community and society. What kind of new understandings the embodied experience of martial arts can offer in the context of visual arts education and arts based research?

In the presentation, the group is focusing on the following themes and questions:

- 1) The shared meanings of embodied knowledge in art education and martial arts. The beginner's experience in the context of embodied knowledge: sudden experience of encountering a different kind of being-in-the-world
- 2) The methods of education and significance of exercising skills in visual and martial arts: What kind of resonance there is between these different skill realms and pedagogical traditions?
- 3) How does gender matter when confronting violence, aggression, pain, control and authority in martial arts and in the ethics of art pedagogy
- 4) "Growing out of ego"; mediating tradition, individual in relation to his/her community
- 5) Playfulness, games and rituals in martial arts combat, art and education