

Towards Appreciating Knowing Body In The Future Schools: Developing Methods For School Teachers To Understand The Role Of The Body In Teaching And Learning

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Abstract—The body as the medium for human experience and sense-making has received growing attention in studies of physical education and sport science. Despite the gradual paradigmatic shift towards an embodied perspective on knowledge in theoretical discussions, dualistic notions of disconnected mind and body persist in the practices of education. A rationalist view that considers the body mainly as an object to be controlled, measured and disciplined, has long dominated educational perspectives. There remains a continuing distrust of the body in teacher education, and as a result, the body's role in teaching and learning is often met with skepticism, indifference or ignorance.

This paper presents a development project aimed at enhancing student-teachers' awareness of the role of the body in teaching and learning. In this project theory and practice are brought into dialogue through workshops of body work that utilize art-based and somatic methods such as dance techniques, improvisation, meditation and relaxation techniques. They are carried out in a special course for educating elementary teachers in a Finnish university. Experiences of participating teacher students are documented throughout the project and analyzed in collaboration with the participants. Data sources include interviews, group feedback sessions and diaries.

Theoretical framework for the project centres around the notion of bodily knowledge, "knowing in and through the body". An interdisciplinary approach combines ideas from a variety of fields such as anthropology, sport science, phenomenology, dance research, as well as applied and arts practices to inform the embodied processes of knowing and learning. The moving, feeling and sensing body is conceptualized not only as a route to knowledge, but as the foundation of (intercorporeal) experience and understanding of self and other.

Expected results from the project include the following: 1) the participants become aware of the multiple roles that the body has in educational encounters, and with it, develop a more holistic approach to teaching and learning, 2) the participants gain access to and learn to form bodily knowledge and skills in practice, 3) a working model on enhancing student-teachers' awareness of the role of bodily knowledge in teacher's work is developed.

Innovative methods as well as a radical rethinking of the nature of teaching and learning are needed if we are to appreciate knowing body in the future schools.

Keywords—bodily knowledge, the body, somatic methods, teacher education

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