

Supplementary Education Meetings

Date: October 5, 2007

Time: 3-4:30pm

I spoke with Betina at the meeting. I asked her if she had been present for my talk, since she had left for a while. She said she had returned after getting something to eat (*which I did not believe, or believe was the whole story, since there was plenty of food*), and that she could imagine the characters I met. I told her that the community gardens were everything she told me.

38p

I then angled for her to complain about the meeting, saying that Ezekiel and I, who were sitting on the opposite end of the table from her, had been saying that the meetings put the bulk of the responsibility on participants to figure out how our discussion was useful. [*I did not tell her that I replied to Ezekiel by saying that when the discussion is framed in deficit terms, you expend a lot of energy fighting that, especially when it's the other "applied" people doing it.*] She complied, saying that she doesn't know what she is going to "take back" to HCZ. I asked her if she has to report back, and she agreed. I said something about this being a process of hashing out what the group thinks.

*Betina, along with the other black females at the table, did not contribute much to discussion (Veronica Holly, Fabiola). As we have noticed, she usually does not say much, so her lack of talk is not unusual. Also not unusual is that we have seen her twice now "outnumbered" by "academics," with whom she does not identify. "I've got half a toe in [academia], at most," she told the group. Interesting to me: 1) in a group that is meant to develop a concept, she is looking to "take away" something that the group is apparently supposed to give to her; and 2) she does not seem to feel she can add to discussion, for whatever reason. This makes perfect sense as she is the representative of an organization that wants to be "community-based," but she is also a PhD hired to conduct research.*

After the meetings were over, I spoke with Jessica Wolff. We were waiting for the train from Princeton back to New York. She expressed unhappiness with Harlem Children's Zone and how they castigated local schools as being no good.

*Why does Jessica Wolff care so much what HCZ says? And do local schools feel this way too? Contrast to Betina saying that HCZ leaves partner school in better shape after installing air conditioners, etc.*