

Developing Pedagogy: The Curious Case of Scotland

Paul Adams (The University of Strathclyde),
Paul McMillan (The University of Edinburgh)
Nicola Carse (The University of Edinburgh)

Symposium at NERA Conference
Session 5 NW 18
4 November 2021

SERA Pedagogy Project

- Grew from the NERA pedagogy conversations: March 2021 onwards;
- SERA pedagogy provocations: June 2021;
- Highlighted a plethora of assumptions and beliefs/values (critical/inclusive/traditional/progressive/subject...);
- Challenging, yet confusing? “Anglophone” Vs “Continental” Vs “Nordic”...

SERA Pedagogy Project

- Scottish educational history/policy largely concerns ‘curriculum’;
- Historical/geographical/cultural/political pressures from outwith and inside Scotland;
- Since 2007, increased referencing to Nordic and Baltic states – Visions of what Scotland ‘might be’;
- SERA-NERA? Further discussions?

Why Pedagogy?

- The term ‘pedagogy’ is starting to surface within the Scottish policy community;
- The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) is the regulatory body for standards of conduct and professional competency of teachers;
- GTCS updated the standards for teachers in Scotland in 2012 and again in 2021
- Prior to 2012 there was *no* mention in the professional standards of the terms ‘pedagogy’, ‘pedagogies’ or ‘pedagogical’

Why Pedagogy?

2 Professional Knowledge and Understanding

2.1 Curriculum and Pedagogy

2.1.1 Have an enhanced and critically informed understanding of Pedagogical and Learning Theories and Professional Practice	
Professional Illustrations	<p>As an accomplished teacher you have an enhanced and critically informed understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ the stages of learners' cognitive, social, emotional, physical and psychological development and know how to use this information to support every learner's wellbeing;■ approaches to pedagogy and practice: assessment, learning and teaching and curriculum where appropriate taking account of Gaelic medium, and Learning for Sustainability;■ the most appropriate contexts and environments for learning, including outdoor learning, and how to apply appropriate pedagogies for these environments;■ innovative and partnership approaches for learners with additional support needs;■ digital technologies to support learning;■ the significance of and practices in leadership of curriculum development and pedagogical practices; and■ how to take critical account of the gender, social, cultural, racial, ethnic, religious and economic context of learners and how to adapt practices accordingly.

- ...*one* section of the 're-freshed' (2021) GTCS Standards.

Why Pedagogy?

- Potential for pedagogy to transform narrow interpretations of teachers' practices;
- Support a move away from teaching as a technical pursuit, devoid of theoretical insights;
- “I believe that the best way to counter attempts at simplifying and controlling the work of the teacher is by making the practice and practising of education itself more *thoughtful*” (Biesta, 2017, p. ix, original emphasis);
- Pedagogy suggests teaching is a highly informed and thoughtfully driven process.

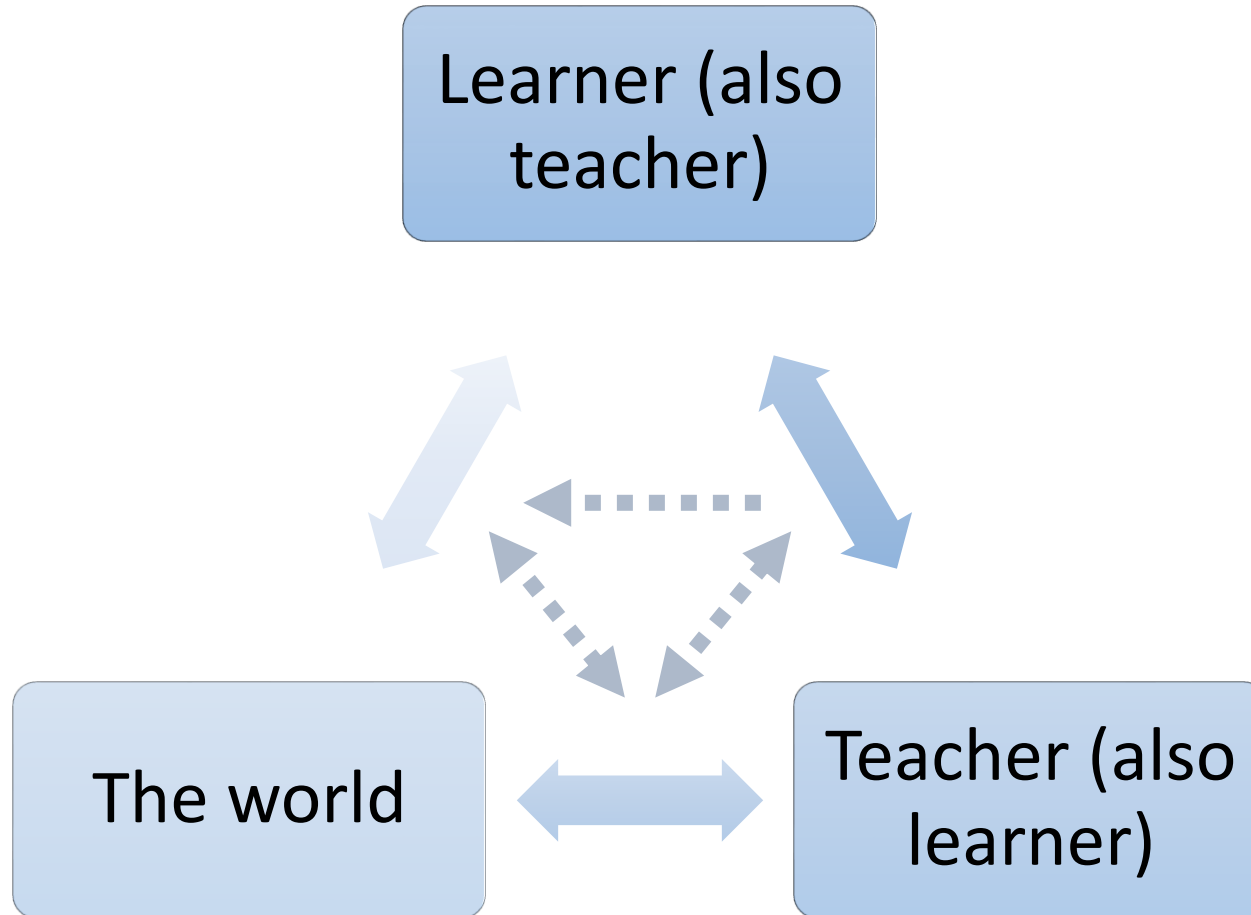
‘Being in, and acting on, the world; with and for others’: Teaching, Learning and a ‘Return to Origins’

Paul Adams
The University of Strathclyde
Paper 1

Contemporary Thoughts

- Pedagogy as *the methods and practices of teaching*:
 - what do we mean by *method*?
 - That which we do (activity)?
 - That which we intend/achieve?
 - what do we mean by *practice*?
 - Ahh – if only I could answer!
- Seemingly, such definitions centre on the role for *activity*, as, perhaps, related to ‘notions’ of theory (often described as ‘best practice’, see Adams, 2008; or evidence-based)
- pedagogy as *ritual* Vs pedagogy as *mindfulness* (Adams, 2011a) – policy perspectives
- pedagogy as *craft* & pedagogy as *performance* (Adams, 2011b) – *policy-based evidence?*

Pedagogy: A Relational Relationship



Why does this matter?

- Pedagogy has been hijacked by *method*;
- Pedagogy is more than just *teaching*;
- Pedagogy requires an understanding of *the world* in all its beauty and horror;
- Requires a shift from *certainty* to *uncertainty* as the defining feature;
- Challenges simplistic notions of accountability; progress; behaviour; standards; attainment...
- Moves from learning (apolitical), through education (party political) to pedagogy (political).

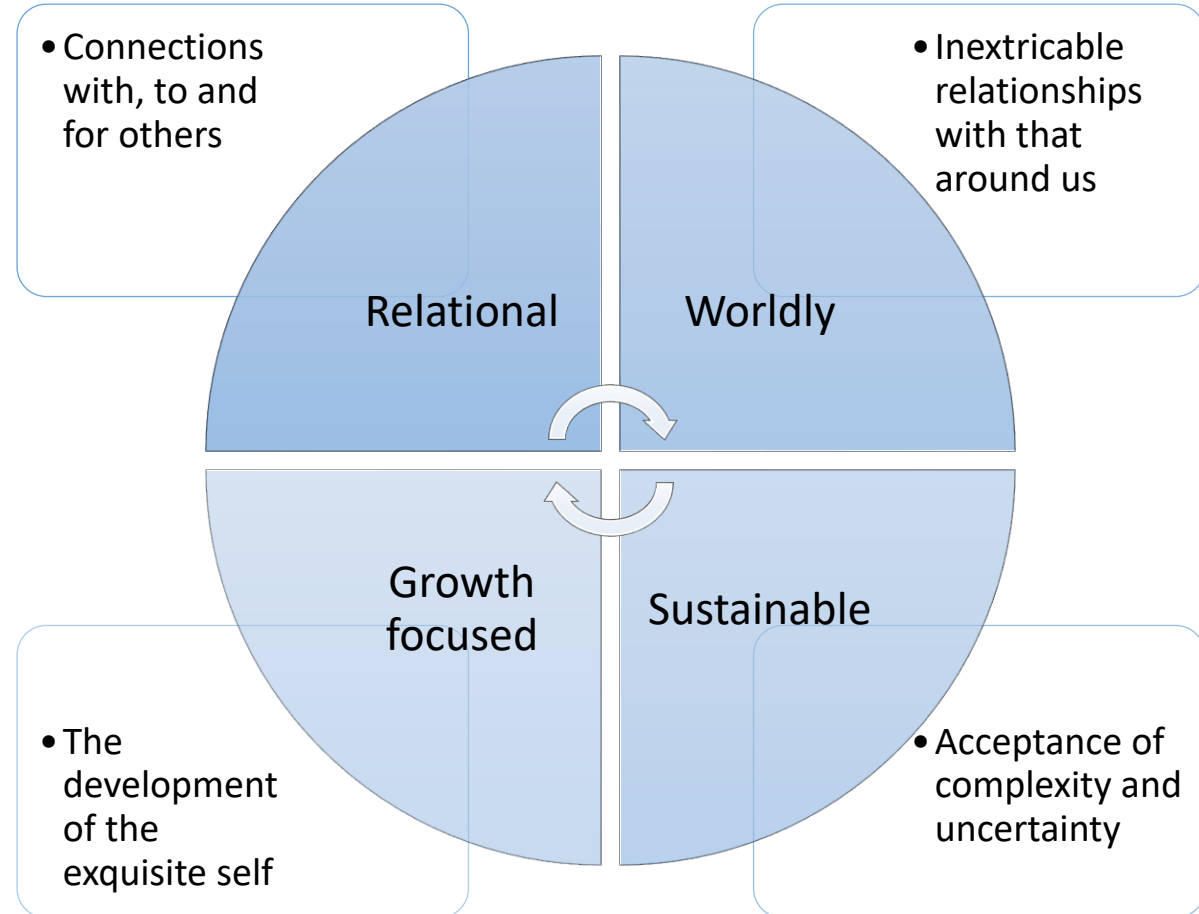
UNCRC

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) incorporated into Scottish law in 2021;
- Liberal tensions paternalism and anti-paternalistic features alongside a lack of academic focus on conceptual foundations – 'standards setting-implementation-monitoring' function;
- Participation avoided: mostly stemming from a developmentalist view of the child as either innocent and in need of safety or unruly and in need of discipline (Lyle, 2014);
- Neoliberal tendencies both reinforce education as a move to employment, while contradictorily extolling matters such as children's agency and self-determination.

Possibilities?

- “Pedagogy and teacher ‘effect’ is not only then about the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of teaching and learning (the quantity and quality as it were). It is fundamentally relational, potentially involving in/equalities in the ‘doing’ of teaching and learning between different groups of children” (Devine & McGillicuddy, 2016, p. 425);
- Any framing of ‘good teaching’ thus needs to be questioned in terms greater than exam credentialization; equality (in/through/for teaching) suggests attendance to opportunity and moral integrity.
- There is a need to talk about how pedagogic acts connect with systems while reflecting both education and pedagogy as manifestations of wider societal, economic, and political policy expectations.

*Pedagogy:
Being in and
acting on the
world, with
and for
others*



Questions, Comments, Thoughts...

Pedagogy: An Academic/Research Journey

Paul McMillan
The University of Edinburgh
Paper 2

My Starting Point

Teaching is *complex*.

(e.g. Biesta, 2017; Davis and Sumara, 2010; LeCompte, 2009; McMillan & Jess, 2021; Shulman, 2004)

Dissatisfactions

- Dissatisfied with the reduction in complexity of teaching;
- When oversimplified, we lose sight of teaching/teachers as an art(ist) (Biesta, 2017);
- Teaching often simplified by different stakeholders, but for different reasons.

Contestations & Contradictions

- I employed ‘pedagogy’ in a large scale empirical research study (McMillan, 2016);
- It was *one* way to preserve and acknowledge the complexity of teaching;
- Some contestation (and confusion) because of “infrequent use and disregard for...pedagogy within...North America and the UK” (Waring and Evans, 2015);
- Additionally, I got caught in a mire of contradiction:
 - The term has emerged at *different* times,
 - In *different* countries,
 - With *differing* interpretations, translations and/or agendas,
 - For *different* sets of people.

Bigger Pictures

- Danger that ‘teaching’ and ‘pedagogy’ are used interchangeably;
- There are fundamental differences between these terms and conflating them *must* be avoided;
- So, what is the difference, then?

(Alexander, 2004, 2008)

Bigger Pictures

“...teaching is an act while pedagogy is both act and discourse. Pedagogy encompasses the performance of teaching together with the theories, beliefs, policies and controversies that inform and shape it”

(Alexander, 2008)

Bigger Pictures

- A bigger picture(s) that underpins and informs teaching is important;
- We may not agree on what the bigger picture should be – these details can be debated another time!!
- But, we may agree that “without a bigger picture” teaching can *appear* to be “...mindless, purposeless, and random”.

(Alexander, 2008)

Pedagogy: An Academic/Research Journey

- My academic/research journey continues to be guided by pedagogy;
- Pedagogy a helpful reminder about the *balancing act* of teachers, which is often overlooked or ignored by various stakeholders;
- A need for researchers and policy makers in particular to recognised both the observable classroom actions of teachers *and* the often unobservable purposes, contextual influences, discourses that shape these practices.

Pedagogy: Supporting Student Teacher Journeys

- Turning to look at student teachers, it has been slow to develop, but my teacher educator work (including other colleagues – i.e. Nicola Carse) has been increasingly guided by pedagogy;
- A major challenge was that the bigger picture can be a daunting place for student teachers;
- There was a need to support students on our four-year undergraduate physical education programme to engage with the demands of the bigger picture as part of their becoming-teacher journey.

Pedagogy: Supporting Student Teacher Journeys

- Some concerns about students and the pedagogy's bigger picture:
 1. Getting lost: "...If you don't know where you are going, any path will do..." (Hammerness, 2008);
 2. Struggling to prioritise: Student teachers and newly qualified teachers can be subjected to "gathering endless strategies, practical tips, and curriculum information" (Kosnik and Beck, 2009);
 3. Preparing for the 'real' world: "...the student teacher...and the neoliberal turn" (Hara and Sherbone, 2018).

Pedagogy: Supporting Student Teacher Journeys

“...beyond knowledge, teacher education may need to embrace personal goals and ways to realize these goals in the context of professional life. Doing so entails two sets of strategies – one that makes visions and personal theories explicit and one that equips teacher candidates to negotiate the demands, discourses, and politics of educational settings...”

Fairbanks et. al., 2010

Being Clear About Teacher Vision

“Vision consists of images of what teachers hope *could be* or *might be* in their classrooms, their schools, their community and, in some cases, even society...vision can provide a sense of ‘reach’ that inspires and motivates them, and invites them to reflect upon their work”

Hammerness, 2001

Pedagogy & Teacher Vision

- Launched the longitudinal ‘Visions and Voices’ project at The University of Edinburgh;
- Initial focus was on final year student teachers studying an undergraduate degree in physical education, but will continue to track these participants into the early career phase;
- We analysed 20 student essays as they sought to describe their personal visions for physical education (see Jess, McMillan, Carse & Munro, 2020; Jess, McMillan, Carse & Munro, 2021).

Pedagogy & Teacher Vision

- The nature student teacher visions in this initial study remained aspirational;
- Each student vision was shaped by different ecological factors: individuals, various environments, and their task of becoming-teacher;
- There were overarching similarities across the visions: lifelong physical activity promotion, holistic learning, inclusion, meaningfulness;
-
- However, the educational subcomponents and theoretical constructs that constituted these visions *differed* across all students.

(Jess, McMillan, Carse & Munro, 2020)

Closing Thoughts

- Supporting student teachers to explore their vision helps to move beyond 'Anglophone' thinking of pedagogy as methods and practices of teaching;
- Vision as a lens to scrutinise the bigger picture: recognise/challenge aspects of it, prioritise key areas for teaching practice, and guide future professional development requirements;
- Vision also offers potential to consider not just the what and how of education but, crucially, the why to enable teachers to speak up for the profession.

Questions, Comments, Thoughts...

SERA (NERA?) Pedagogy Project: Next Steps

Paul Adams (The University of Strathclyde),
Paul McMillan (The University of Edinburgh)
Nicola Carse (The University of Edinburgh)

Towards pedagogy?

From teaching: observable *activity* (triple marking, learning outcomes)



To learning: the *action* of reflection on self



To the *act* of pedagogy: in, for, of and with the world