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6. PRACTICE-BASED EDUCATION PEDAGOGY

Situated, Capability-Development, Relationship Practice(s)

This chapter examines practice-based education (PBE) in relation to the ideas and practices of education, curriculum, practice and pedagogy. The work presented here was realised through a teaching fellowship funded by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (Higgs, 2011a). The fellowship program identified and addressed a need for enhanced understanding and practice of PBE pedagogy to (a) clarify good practice, (b) collate and showcase good practice exemplars, (c) make good practices widespread, and (d) better prepare students for practice in 21st century universities and complex workplaces. The goals of this fellowship program were to explore and enhance PBE pedagogy by:

- clarifying good practices in PBE,
- distributing good practices through publications and debate, and
- promoting the adoption of good practices in professional education curricula.

KEY CONCEPTS

PBE was explored under four key concepts: pedagogy, practice, education and curriculum. Each of these terms reflects many constructs, meanings, definitions and usages in the literature. This section provides an exploration of these terms. To realise an interpretation of the four key concepts a distinction is made in relation to the contextualisation and usage of the concepts as follows:

- a. When capitalised or written with an initial capital and used as a *proper* noun the term is taken to represent a *DOMAIN*, a *particular field of study*, a discipline, or a knowledge base. Within the field various traditions or schools of thought exist. In this context the principal interest lies in the nature of the phenomenon represented in the field and how it is/can be interpreted, conceptualised and planned. The field deals with the big picture of *why* and *what* the phenomenon is about, and this understanding is needed for evaluation of *how well* and *against which* frame of reference the phenomenon is realised.
- b. In lower case the term (singular/plural) is used as a common noun to represent *one of/a group of* strategies or approaches in that field. In this context, the principal interest lies in the *realisation* of the phenomenon and *how* (*where, with whom, when*) it is or can be implemented.
- c. The terms can be generic or personally owned. Generic, field-owned or field-appraised terms are owned by the field, as in “recognised good practices in

HIGGS

school teaching.” Personally owned and utilised terms belong to individual practitioners, as in “different educators’ pedagogies or pedagogical approaches.”
d. In the framing and interpretations below it is evident that judgment (and whose judgment) is active in deciding what constitutes good practice(s), pedagogies, curricula and education. For instance, judgments may differ if taken from the perspective of a discipline, such as in relation to *generally accepted* standards and practices in a field, or if taken from the perspective of the individual educator or scholar.

EDUCATION

The Domain

In the words of Wenger (1998, p. 263):

Education, in its deepest sense and at whatever age it takes place, concerns the opening of identities – exploring new ways of being that lie beyond our current state. Whereas training aims to create an inbound trajectory targeted at competence in a specific practice, education must strive to open new dimensions for the negotiation of the self. It places students on an outbound trajectory toward a broad field of possible identities. Education is not merely formative – it is transformative.

Other representations of Education include: “the passing on of cultural heritage, ... the fostering of individual growth” and the initiation of the young/novices into worthwhile ways of thinking and doing (Bullock & Trombley, 1988, p. 254). Similarly, in Chapter 7 Kemmis presents Education as a means of initiating people into forms of understanding, ways of relating to one another and the world, and modes of action that foster the self-expression, self-development and self-determination of individuals and collectives, thus promoting individual good and the good of humankind.

Education for professional or occupational practice extends beyond the time, place and intention of university curricula and includes initial preparation for the occupation and ongoing development across the working life.

CURRICULUM

The Domain

The term (university) *Curriculum* refers to the sum of the experiences students engage in and acquire as a result of learning at university and the factors that create these experiences. It includes explicit, implicit and hidden aspects of the learning program, and also experiences that occur incidentally alongside the formal curriculum. The curriculum is intentional teaching, content and assessment, as well as unintentional messages to learners created through role modelling by teachers and fieldwork educators, through assessment schedules, learning climate, infrastructure (resourcing, facilities, staffing, administrative and support systems),

university communities and additional experiences (e.g. sporting, social) that are part of university life (Higgs, 2011b). Billett (2011) distinguished between:

- a. the intended curriculum – what is intended to occur by sponsors or developers in terms of educational goals (i.e. what should be learned) and learning outcomes as a result of curriculum implementation.
- b. the enacted curriculum – what is enacted by teachers and students as shaped by available resources and situational factors, together with the values, experiences, expertise and interpretations of what was intended by teachers and others.
- c. the experienced curriculum – what students experience when they engage with the intended, enacted and unintended aspects of the curriculum and how the students learn through that experiencing.

Models and Approaches – Curriculum

Approaches to curriculum design and enactment vary considerably. Curriculum models include traditional curricula (typically face-to-face and on-campus), problem-based curricula (where the teaching and learning context, content and process are based around problems or cases), and distance education courses (where most of the teaching and learning occurs off campus in students' preferred/convenient locations).

PEDAGOGY

The Domain

The domain of Pedagogy overlaps the fields of practice, curriculum and education. Billett (2010, personal communication) argues that pedagogy builds on an understanding of the pedagogical relationship which in practice – like all relationships – is dynamic, and evolving. In comparison, Daniels (2001, p. 1) contended that “The term Pedagogy should be construed as referring to forms of social practice which shape and form the cognitive, affective and moral development of individuals.” Stephen Kemmis (in Chapter 7) portrays pedagogy as a complex technical, practical, moral and political phenomenon encompassing the normative and technical aspects of education and upbringing. A contrary view is that Pedagogy can encapsulate the entirety of the teaching and learning environment, *how* and *what* is taught, and *how*, and through which learning strategies, students learn. Here Pedagogy and Curriculum become blurred.

Billett (2010, personal communication) relates, “the distinction I have been making between curriculum and pedagogy in recent projects is that curriculum is about the existence and organisation of students' experiences, including their duration and rotation across settings (e.g. different work settings, or between academy and practice settings), and pedagogy is about the enrichment of those experiences by teachers, others, the settings or students themselves.”

Peter Goodyear (1999) used the term Pedagogical Framework. Such frameworks comprise philosophy, high-level pedagogy which refers to the concrete

HIGGS

instantiation of philosophical positions within an educational context, a broad pedagogy strategy and particular pedagogical tactics. The framework is used in conjunction with understanding of the organisational context (and its influences) and the setting to plan and review the concrete activities, processes, people and artefacts involved in learning activities. The use of pedagogical frameworks enables *robust reasoning* about what we are doing and achieving as educators.

In this chapter I take *Pedagogy* to refer to a form of social practice that shapes the educational development of individuals, framed around a perspective, model or theory of education that encompasses complex interdependencies between philosophical, political, moral, technical and practical dimensions. Examples are critical, liberal and vocational pedagogical perspectives.

The Realisation of Pedagogy – Strategies and Approaches

Billett (2011) defined pedagogy as the kind of guidance provided by teachers to assist students' learning and promote learner agency, that occurs in the form of teacherly engagements, information resources, learning support and interactions. The practice of pedagogy goes beyond what teachers enact; it also includes what those in workplaces do and the guidance they directly and indirectly provide, as well as what students do and the experiences and interactions that are accessible in practice settings (Billett, 2010, personal communication).

I take *pedagogy* to refer to the ways educators frame and enact their teaching and curricular practices and their teaching relationships, to enrich their students' learning experiences; such pedagogy is informed by the teachers' practice interests, personal frames of reference, practice knowledge, theoretical frameworks, reflexive inquiries, and capabilities, in consideration of contextual parameters, educational theory and research. The capabilities of teachers are of particular interest: the use of particular pedagogies (such as e-learning, clinical education) requires teachers to have skills, knowledge and creative potential in these areas as well as an interest in using them. This interpretation of pedagogy reflects the complex influences on and dimensions of this phenomenon and the challenges faces by researchers and educators in their endeavours to realise it.

The term *pedagogies* can be used to refer to learning and teaching approaches, including modes of interpersonal engagement in these approaches as well as the teaching and learning strategies involved in educational programs. These pedagogies may be shared (e.g. within a discipline) or personal/personally owned (by an individual educator or learner). Learners' pedagogies incorporate their learning goals, preferences, strategies and capabilities (e.g. mobile learning).

PRACTICE

The Domain

The term Practice can refer broadly to social practice, and more precisely, it frequently denotes professional practice. The term *professional practice* can refer

particularly to “the enactment of the role of a profession or occupational group in serving or contributing to society” (Higgs, McAllister, & Whiteford, 2009, p. 108). Professional practice encompasses the doing, knowing, being and becoming of professional practitioners’ roles and activities (Higgs & Titchen, 2001); these activities occur within the social relationships of the practice context, the discourse of the practice and practice system, and the setting (local and wider) that comprise the practice world. Practice is inherently situated and temporally located in contexts such as different eras, generations, local settings, lifeworlds and systems; it is embodied, agential, socially-historically constructed, and it is grounded and released and understood through various language, imagery and literary means including metaphors, interpretations, images and narratives.

According to Schatzki (2011), a key argument in *practice theory* is the idea that a practice is an organised constellation of diverse people’s activities. Activity, a key feature of practice theory, encompasses the idea that important features of human life must be understood as forms of human activity; these forms are the organised activities of multiple people rather than the activity of individuals (ibid.). A practice can be thought of as a social phenomenon in the sense that it involves multiple people; their interests, activities and consequences.

In action, *practice*, can be collective (e.g. a profession’s practice) and individual (such as an individual practitioner’s practice model and actions). A (collective) practice comprises ritual, social interactions, language, discourse, thinking and decision making, technical skills, identity, knowledge, and practice wisdom. Collective practice is framed and contested by interests, practice philosophy, regulations, practice cultures, ethical standards, codes of conduct and societal expectations. An individual’s practice model and enacted practice are framed by the views of the practice community as well as the practitioner’s interests, preferences, experiences, perspectives, meaning making, presuppositions and practice philosophy (i.e. practice epistemology and ontology).

Strategies and Approaches

The term *practices* refers to customary activities associated with a profession, and to the chosen ways individual practitioners implement their practice/profession. Examples of practices are ethical conduct, professional decision making, client-practitioner communication, consultation and referral, and interdisciplinary teamwork. For individual practitioners and professional groups, practice can be interpreted and implemented through practice models. Practice models are theoretical and philosophical constructs. They come in many shapes, forms and realisations: technical-rational, empirico-analytical, evidence-based, interpretive, and critical emancipatory models, for example.

One particular way of interpreting practice is through the term *praxis*. The term *praxis* refers to “acting for the good,” “right conduct” (adopting a neo-Aristotelian view) and to “socially responsible action” (using a post-Marxian view) in the professions. *Praxis* is inherently active and reflexive. It is informed by historically-generated practice traditions that give it substance and provide a frame of reference

for setting standards and expectations that shape the collective practice of professions as well as individual practitioners' practice.

The term practice (and the verb to practise) can be seen to transcend the other terms. For example, we can refer to a variety of pedagogical *practices*, to university pedagogy as higher education *practice*, to one's educational *practices*, and to how a different teachers *practise* their pedagogies.

FROM CONCEPTS TO AN INTERPRETATION OF PRACTICE-BASED EDUCATION

Building on the ideas above I identified an interpretation of PBE to move beyond the broad picture of PBE as an approach to higher education that is grounded in the preparation of graduates for occupational practice. In this interpretation, PBE is presented as:

- *a pedagogical perspective*. In Table 6.1, eight key dimensions of a PBE Pedagogy identified through this Fellowship are outlined.
- *a curriculum framework*
- *a set of pedagogical practices* or teaching and learning strategies. In Table 6.2, eight key pedagogical practices are outlined.

Table 6.1. PBE as a pedagogy – 8 key social practice dimensions

Pedagogical frame	Pedagogy refers to a form of social practice that seeks to shape the educational development of learners. PBE is a pedagogy that prepares students for a practice and occupation.
Practice and higher goals	PBE aims to realise the goals of developing students' occupationally-relevant social, technical and professional capabilities, forming their occupational identities, and supporting their development as positively contributing global citizens.
Education in context	PBE inevitably occurs within contexts shaped by the interests and practices of students, teachers, practitioner role models, university and workplace settings, and society. Both planned processes (e.g. curricula, pedagogies) and unplanned factors (e.g. changes in workplace access, student numbers) need review and enhancement to address these goals.
Understanding (the) practice	Students' prospective practice needs to be continually appraised and evaluated to provide a relevant frame of reference to situate their curriculum and pedagogical experiences.
Socialisation	Through pedagogical practices students are socialised into the practices of their occupation and into the multiple communities and circumstances of practice of their working worlds.

Table 6.1. (continued)

Engaging in relationships	Practice and pedagogy are essentially about relationships. These are realised through learners/academics, workplace educators/practitioners/academics, peer learning, inter-university and industry/practice, university/regulatory authority and professional group/society partnerships.
Authenticity and relevance	Authenticity and relevance are themes embedded in the goals, venues, activities, student assessment and program evaluation of PBE programs. That is, the curriculum and the key pedagogical perspective are focused on relevance to graduates' future practice. The education approach, including educators' role-modelled behaviours, should reflect the expectations, norms, knowledge and practices of the profession.
Reflecting standards, values and ethics	A dimension that needs to permeate all aspects of curricula and pedagogies is the concept and practice of standards; standards as reflective of practice expectations and professionalism and professional codes of conduct or industry standards that are part of practice/professional socialisation; standards as accepted pedagogies across the discipline and standards of higher education – good educational practice.

Table 6.2. Eight key PBE pedagogies

Supervised workplace learning	This pedagogy involves students learning through engaging in practice in real workplace “placements” with formal or informal supervision by workplace educators and/or more experienced practitioners. Examples include nursing practicums and pre-service teachers' professional experience. The educators or practitioners act as mentors and role models.
Independent workplace learning and experience	In some courses there is no tradition of, or capacity for, supervision of workplace learning. In such cases students might participate in unsupervised work experience or organise their own independent learning programs/projects. Some curricula encourage and give credit for students' paid work as a means of gaining work experience and learning.
Simulated workplaces	Universities can establish actual or simulated workplaces where students provide services to clients. Actual workplaces include health clinics (e.g. physiotherapy), farms and veterinary clinics. Universities can also simulate workplaces (e.g. radio stations) which provide community and on-campus services that simulate real practice experiences.

Table 6.2. (continued)

Simulated practice-based learning	Practice can be simulated by creating practice environments (e.g. a simulated police training village), e-learning programs and tools to simulate practice tasks (e.g. online learning of professional decision making), problem-based learning (by focusing on cases and problem solving to promote practice-based learning), practical classes (e.g. learning resuscitation), role plays, peer-learning projects for clients (e.g. videos), moot courts with avatars to learn about client services.
Distance and flexible practice-based learning	Much PBE is conducted through distance, distributed and flexible pedagogies, recognising students' need or preference for learning at times, places and paces of their choosing. This trend is particularly common for graduate entry, international, interstate, regional/isolated and mature-age students.
Peer learning	Peer learning facilitates exploration of emerging occupational identities, capabilities and knowledge with other students and with a diminished authority of teachers. Such learning can occur in person, at a distance and via flexible and e-learning, e.g. peer projects, Skype, chat room. Peer assessment is a useful means of developing/critiquing shared perspectives.
Independent learning	Professional practitioners and workers in many occupations must rely on their own judgments, critique, standards and self-development. Practice-based learning can include encouragement of self-directed learning, self-appraisal, reflection and self-development.
Blended learning	No single pedagogy is sufficient to meet all the needs of all students in relation to all the learning tasks and goals of the curriculum. Blended learning addresses this challenge and bridges traditional and innovative pedagogies, on- and off-campus learning, individual and group learning, real, theoretical and simulated learning situations.

USING THIS PRACTICE-BASED EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

A first step in using this framework is to examine PBE as a social practice (or Pedagogy) for the educational development of individuals to enter a particular occupation or profession. Here are some key questions to consider: What is the practice of this occupation? What capabilities does the student need for this practice community? What is the course context and the resources and opportunities available? Who will be the key role models and educators to reflect the standards and expectations of the profession? How can authentic, relevant learning activities and relationships facilitate students' learning and socialisation?

Building on this foundation, educators then face the challenge of choosing and developing pedagogies or teaching and learning strategies to implement the curriculum framework that has emerged above. Educators designing a PBE program could ask: How can we design learning experiences that prepare students well for their occupational roles? How will the students help shape the learning activities? What pedagogies best suit our resources and workplace options?

In [Figure 6.1](#), various elements of the framework are represented. The central place of relationships in PBE is highlighted, immersed in experiences and learning opportunities created by the chosen pedagogies. The outer circle emphasises that learning is situated and occurs within practice communities. Course designers should build learning and teaching activities within the outer ring context and ensure that the teaching-learning relationships and activities contribute to these contexts, working in partnership with students and members of the practice community (including employers, workplace educators, professional leaders and associations). Learners have a role in guiding the learning process and pursuing outcomes that best match their future roles in practice and also in society.

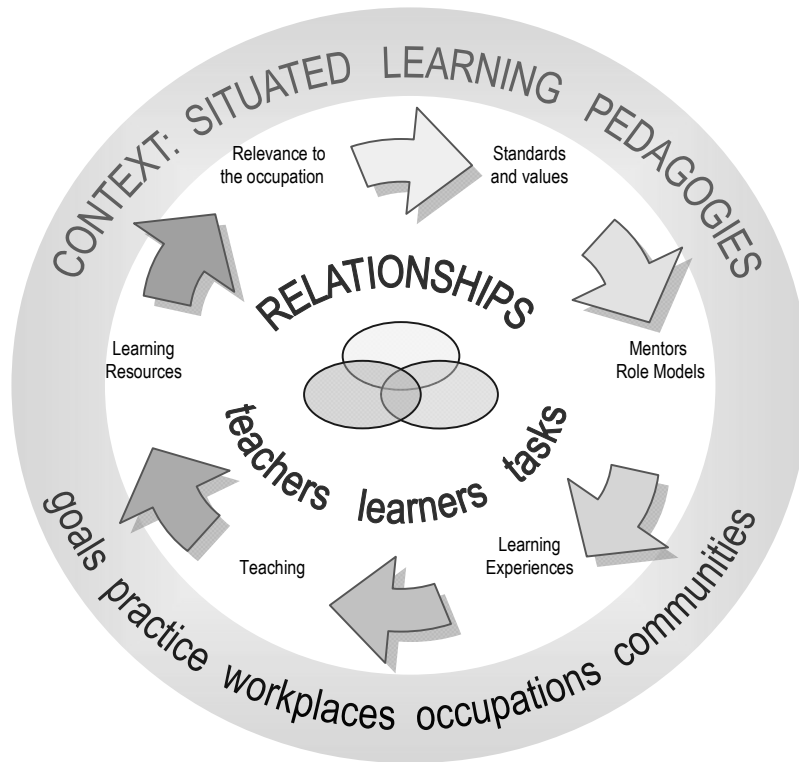


Figure 6.1. Practice-based education in action

HIGGS

CONCLUSION

In keeping with the ideas of Domain and Realisation presented in this chapter, PBE has been framed as a reflection on the domains of Education, Curriculum, Pedagogy and Practice, and considerations of how these key concepts can be realised in PBE. In this interpretation PBE is a pedagogical perspective, a curriculum framework and a set of pedagogical practices selected for the particular course and setting.

The goal of PBE is the development of relevant capabilities, both professional and social, that are for the good of the individual and society. The pursuit of these practice outcomes can be thought of as occurring through the practice of higher education, in particular, practice-based education, and could readily be labelled the use and development of situated, capability-development, relationship practice(s).

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