



EDITORIAL

Pedagogy in the North: shifting concepts, altered states and common expressions

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Pedagogy in the North: shifting concepts, altered states and common expressions

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Editorial

The articles contained in this special edition of *Education in the North* could be said to have emerged over a concentrated period. The genesis of this collected work was generously funded by the Scottish Government under their Arctic Connections Scheme (Scottish Government, 2019). Submitted by collaborators from the University of Lapland (Professor Tuija Turunen), the Arctic University in Tromsø (Professor Gry Paulgaard), the University of Aberdeen (Drs Helen Martin, Kirsten Darling-McQuistan, Liz Curtis), the University of the Highlands and Islands (Professor Morag Redford), and the University of Strathclyde (Dr Paul Adams), the funds received supported thirty Initial Teacher Education (ITE) tutors from across Scotland to explore the principles of *Arctic Pedagogy* for their work. Four Arctic Pedagogy experts (Professor Gry Paulgaard, Professor Tuija Turunen, Professor Hermína Gunnþórsdóttir, and Associate Professor Kalpana Vijayarathan) provided excellent stimulus for participants to spend time considering the work they undertake to assist soon-to-be teachers to reflect on matters such as: how metrocentric views of children, young people, and pedagogy position all in the education process; the need to re-examine what is meant by living, working, and studying 'from the centre' (indeed, where is the centre?); and the ways and means by which what we say and do is always positioned by our status as 'resident', 'immigrant', etc. Such conversations are prescient in a contemporary world preoccupied by attacks on those already marginalised, challenges to the planet's ecosystem, capitalist exercises in profiteering at the expense of most of the world's population, and ever rightwards shifting political and social narratives that seek not to support people to live with and in communities of care, but rather which extort the objective isolation of those deemed 'different'.

The work was undertaken in close collaboration with the UArctic *Thematic Network on Teacher Education for Social Justice and Diversity in Education* chaired by Professor Turunen. This network has been thriving for at least eight years and works to embed the principles of *Arctic Pedagogy* across what might be loosely termed the *northern region*. Although not geographically an 'Arctic Country', the Scottish Government has been forthright in its support for the Arctic region and the peoples, ecosystems, and necessity of this part of the globe (Scottish Government, 2019). The presentations and examples of ensuing work can be seen at the web pages of the thematic network (<https://www.uarctic.org/activities/thematic-networks/teacher-education-for-social-justice-and->

[diversity-in-education/](#)) and associated YouTube channel. The UArctic's position statement on Arctic Pedagogy depicts this as those,

“policies and educational practices that take place in Arctic and other rural northern areas. Tightly associated with Arctic pedagogy are the concepts of language, cultures, digitalisation, communities and elders, all of which are layered and closely interlinked” (UArctic Thematic Network: 2).

There is much more to this statement, and we would urge readers to visit the website of the Thematic Network, the YouTube channel and, indeed, the UArctic itself.

The Arctic region, its environment and peoples, are often sidelined unless resources or communities can be monetised, commodified, and packed to provide elevated income often for those with little or no regard for the needs of others; a fact acknowledged by many, including Määttä and Uusiautti (2015) who provide further excellent exemplification of the philosophies, principles, and practices of Arctic Pedagogy.

But the articles in this special edition have also been in preparation for thousands of years for pedagogy is not a new term. It has its origins in the pedagogues (*paidagogus*) of ancient Greek society: trusted members of a household, mostly slaves, who would accompany the sons of their 'masters' from home to school and who would 'sit beside them' in class. Distinct from subject teachers (*didaskalos*), such individuals sought to join *with* their wards to bring flourishing and relationships to life (a form of animation) through concern and the actioning of the needs and wellbeing of others (through care) so encouraging reflection, commitment, and change (envisioning education) (Smith, 2012, 2021). This formulation is a far cry from current Anglophonic missives that pedagogy is simply *the methods and practices of teaching*. Even more worryingly, such a simplistic term has led to (mostly) Anglophonic educational practices and policies adopting 'evidence based' approaches which systematically elide individual need, group cohesion, while adopting overtly political approaches to the acquisition of formally accepted knowledge (Adams, 2022). Such simplistic and often ritualistic approaches (Adams, 2011), have their origins in social, political, religious, cultural, and linguistic hegemonies born of colonial and imperialist mindsets that position education (erroneously) as nothing more than a route to economic success.

Herein lies the rub: the Arctic region, despite its majesty and splendour, does not overtly offer a way of life commensurate with meeting solving exigencies. It is a harsh environment where food is scarce, distances between communities are large with travel problematic, and with modern communications technology at the mercy of prevailing weather conditions. Its 'economic' contribution, therefore, is not immediately obvious to those from more 'southerly' climes. The Arctic is resource-rich though with tapped and untapped oil, gas, minerals and so forth. To extract these, however, challenges ways of being, belonging, and becoming that have historically led to the abuse and exploitation of indigenous communities, or their co-option in 'new wave' forms of spirituality. Indeed, although some have historically engaged with indigenous methodologies, as Rasmussen (2002, p.85) notes, Indigenous peoples ask, when the Qallunaat (white, Anglo-Americans) seek to do good, 'I worry about what we will lose'. Appropriately Rasmussen (p.86) states:

“Qallunaat rush around the world proselytizing their alphanumeric fetishism, supposedly rescuing “primitive” civilizations from their richly integrated physical-oral-mental cultures. Meanwhile they pat themselves on the back because they are out in the igloo or under the banyan tree teaching liberatory pedagogy to the suffering locals so that they can hang on to that twenty percent of the world’s resources that the Rescuers’ civilization has not gotten hold of yet.”

The *place, people, and time* emphasis of Arctic Pedagogy explicitly supports Scotland’s Children and Young People Outcomes (Audit Scotland, 2021). The drive to ensure that Scottish communities ‘...are safe places where children are valued, nurtured, and treated with kindness’ where children and young people learn to engage positively with the built and natural environment. Accordingly, the Arctic Connections funded project that inspires this special edition aligned with several of the Scottish Government’s National Outcomes (<https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/national-outcomes>).

Not every author published here was part of the initial three days. To limit inclusion to only those who attended would be problematic, not least as it would close the ever-widening pedagogic door that seeks to push against and rupture the simplicity of Anglophonic interpretations.

In addition to the academic articles, readers can find narratives written by the authors. These detail their writing and collaborative journeys, often set within their personal and professional lives. These are deeply pedagogical and respond to Smith’s (ibid.) claim that an aspect of pedagogy is the animation of flourishing and relationships. They locate the authors ‘in the world’ and highlight the ways in which they act on the world with and for others. We would encourage you to read these with the papers for they offer an insight into matters that connect people, with place, through time.

We offer all this to you, dear reader, so that we all might engage in debate that challenges simplistic formulations and which (re)positions pedagogy as that which binds us to each other and the earth. We hope that contained herein will assist all to challenge the acquisition of pedagogic riches, so that we might all understand that pedagogic wealth comes not from that which we can acquire, but through the realisation that we are wealthy when what we have is sufficient so that we might begin to give away.

Cèilidh of Authors

Louis Waterman-Evans: My article *Arctic Pedagogy* came about after reading the compelling special issue call, which I felt was relevant given my research interest in pedagogy and geographical location living in the Arctic (specifically: Tromsø, Norway). I found the idea of an ‘Arctic Pedagogy’ enticing: Arctic branding sells, after all, and it conjures up all sorts of romantic imagery, such as northern lights and polar explorers. But what exactly did the Arctic have to do with pedagogy? To look for an answer, I started by reading the current literature in this area and quickly saw that ‘Arctic Pedagogy’ was a nascent concept, but interest appeared to be growing. There had in fact already been a few attempts to conceptualise what was meant by ‘Arctic Pedagogy’. However, I thought that these conceptualisations somewhat neglected thorough conceptual discussion of what was understood by the concepts in question, ‘the Arctic’, ‘pedagogy’, as well as their conjunction, ‘Arctic Pedagogy’. So, in my article I try to address this gap to discuss more comprehensively what can be understood by these concepts. As will become apparent to readers, there are no easy answers to what is meant by ‘the Arctic’ or

'pedagogy'. Therefore, 'Arctic Pedagogy' is also not straight-forward to propose in a conceptually coherent way. My article does not feign to do this: I do not present an assured answer to what 'Arctic Pedagogy' is as such, rather pose some questions that it should respond to and hint at the direction to which those answers might lean toward with more of an Arctic hue.

Kirsten, Niclas, Kathy, Eva, Liz and Ylva: As a group we were brought together by our shared interest in the debates surrounding the role of technology and digital tools in teacher education generally, but specifically within remote and rural arctic communities. While not all the authors live and work in the communities we were exploring, we all have a shared interest in expanding possibilities for inclusive and just practices within teacher education, particularly for communities that have been marginalised and silenced by colonial forms of oppression.

Approaching this paper, 'Arctic teacher education and educator training: a postcolonial review of online approaches and practices', was an educational experience in itself as we came together from our different international contexts, interests and experiences. When we began discussing possible avenues to explore, the complexity of the topic became increasingly apparent. We therefore had to develop ways of working across our contexts and time zones that would support our collaborative endeavours and enable us to explore the questions and concerns we had, including concerns about the possible re-colonising impact of digital tools. Over time we began to find ways of navigating the literature in the field. This was a messy, iterative process. However, once we acknowledged and embraced the 'messiness', we managed to identify important themes and differences to explore.

Laura Carsten Conner: For a number of years now, my work has involved designing and studying programs that aim to connect youth to science, in part through experiences that illustrate how science intersects with other disciplines (like art) and everyday life. I have been struck over and over by the ways that engaging with authentic materials seems to be crucial for learners as they develop new ideas about, and dispositions towards, science. In short, materials are powerful. This work allowed the four of us to articulate the ways that materiality plays out in our respective educational contexts in Alaska and Scotland, reasserting their importance in an increasingly digital world.

Jane Essex: From my early days as a teacher of chemistry and science, I was very struck by the way in which young people could be engaged with science when they saw its relevance and could relate it to their wider lives. Time and time again, I observed how engagement with tangible objects helped them to make connections to abstract scientific ideas. I have also noted that creative responses to scientific topics, which many colleagues dismissed as 'time wasting' or 'idle play', often engendered deep and lasting insights. This awareness has informed my educational activities since arriving in Scotland, where culture and local materials are very different to those I encountered when working in England. Drawn together by a shared interest in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and maths), the importance of local materiality in our respective work in Alaska and Scotland became very evident. This paper draws on our experiences conducting varied outreach activities and captures our shared understanding of the educational role of materiality in both our northern environments.

Perrin Teal Sullivan: My background is rooted in art and design, where materials serve as the bedrock of all inquiry. Their properties, histories, and potentials shape not only the ways we think but also how we act with and through them. In both art and STEAM contexts, I've witnessed how opportunities for learners to engage deeply with materials in their surrounding environment can spark explorations of multifaceted concepts that encompass their lived experiences, cultural perspectives, personal interests and preferences. As an interdisciplinary group, we delve into the relationship of these affordances to broader educational aims within our unique social-ecological context of the circumpolar north.

Jane Catlin: My background is as an Art and Design educator and practitioner. I am interested in how learners develop identities and competencies through their experiences of subject disciplines in classrooms. One of my concerns is that notions of who is good at 'art' or 'science', who is creative, or not, are based on overly simplistic ideas about teaching and learning in art and science, as well as where creativity sits in relation to both. Furthermore, a key role for all educators should be to create more equitable and inclusive educational environments. This requires us to challenge the biases, stereotypes, and cultures of elitism in both of these disciplinary specialisms, as well as dismantling unnecessarily rigid subject boundaries. The latter has, in my view, contributed to the idea that art and science are at polar ends of an imaginary spectrum. The creation of all art and design starts with enquiring about material affordances. This best happens through opportunities for playful and experimental processes where the aim is to 'know materials'. In offering this type of experiential STEAM learning learners effortlessly transcend disciplinary boundaries. I am convinced that educators can support learners to be both scientists and artists simultaneously through pedagogical processes that start with the learner's natural and visceral relationship with their material world and their desire to shape it.

Cathy and Jackie: Cathy and Jackie's collaborative work, which gave rise to this article, came about by chance. Cathy was an enthusiastic PhD student helping to produce an online Postgraduate Conference at the University of Aberdeen when she found she needed a friend to help her meet the challenge she had set herself...to present a three-minute presentation of her thesis in Doric! Cathy, originally from deepest Essex in the southeast of England, whose mother tongue was most definitely English, had built an appreciation of the Doric largely from teaching at St Thomas RC Primary School in Keith for nearly twenty years. Cathy, passionate about many things in education, had begun her PhD about children's connection with nature whilst a full-time primary school teacher, but part way through her studies, she became a lecturer in Initial Teacher Education at Aberdeen. One of her ambitions was to promote Doric to student teachers. Cathy met Jackie, whose mother tongue was Doric, through a friend and asked her to create some input about the local language with student teachers at the university. This was because Cathy hoped that once out on their school placements, student teachers might be able to enjoy the region's sociocultural heritage and better understand e bairns just as she had, over the years. Luckily for Cathy and her students, Jackie agreed to speir with her about deen workshops fur e novice teachers. Sin retirin fae teachin Jackie hid devotit her time tae her true passion – e Doric, her mither tongue. She spens her time tellin stories in Doric; leadin Doric Blether sessions fur aulder fowk; deen Doric Rhyme Time wi wee bairns; deen workshops on Scots Language fur

skweels an e Varsity; spikin tae onybody fae'll listen; an maist affa important - publishin beuks fur bairns written in Doric. Because of the braw wirk with students, Jackie was happy to blether about Cathy's thesis with her for e conference. This blethering atween twa freens has now become e topic of an academic article. As a result, the twa chiels are now fair trickit to hae their enthusiasm aboot learnin and teachin, nature an e Doric published as an academic article in English and e Doric!

Sara and Outi: We first met at the Luleå Tekniska Universitet (Luleå University of Technology) where Sara was a student-teacher and Outi worked as a university lecturer in teacher education. During the last semester, Sara wrote her master's thesis on remote education in the Ume Sámi language under Outi's supervision. Our article re-examines the data from Sara's thesis using an Arctic pedagogy lens. We both share a keen interest in issues related to the national minority languages in Sweden, such as the Sámi languages, Meänkieli and Finnish.

I (Sara) did my master's thesis on the subject of remote education in the Ume Sámi language and Outi was my mentor. Both of us have a common interest in questions and issues regarding the national minority languages in Sweden, *the Sámi languages, meänkieli, Finnish, Romani chib and Yiddish*. I am a Sámi from the forest and Ume Sámi area and have a personal interest regarding the Sámi languages and Ume Sámi in particular. One reason for the interest in revitalisation questions regarding the Ume Sámi language is because I am one amongst many other Sámi that have lost our Sámi language as a result of Sweden's assimilation policies (Henrysson and Flodin, 1992). Remote education is a necessary tool in learning the Sámi because Sámi people are spread all around Sweden and the languages with a fewer number of speakers can be spread over a large area which makes it difficult to have near-education in schools. I wanted to investigate how the remote education in Ume Sámi was organised and how Ume Sámi teachers experienced the educational form. Further, I wanted the teachers to voice what they felt was lacking in making the language learning optimal for the young learner of Ume Sámi as well as what they felt needed to make the educational form a working tool for Ume Sámi language revitalisation.

As a primary school teacher, Sara promotes multilingualism and encourages pupils to use their linguistic resources. Outi is bilingual in Swedish and Finnish and has lived in Sápmi for several years since childhood. She has studied the North Sámi language, and her entire working life has been multilingual. Since 2018, she has worked abroad, in Northern Sweden, while living in Northern Finland. Remote education is crucial for teaching the Sámi language because Sámi people are dispersed, making it challenging to provide education in schools, especially for a language with only a few speakers.

Tellervo, Anna, Teija and Marja-Leena: We all are yarn-craft enthusiasts and teach student teachers at university level. We share an intention to offer all of our students an experience of being capable yarn crafter.

Marja-Leena has extensive experience in crafts, both professionally in the educational field and as a hobby. Her research interest is in exploring the meanings and implications of crafts in various contexts. She has previously taught one of the yarn-craft courses we investigated. Tellervo has a long background in developing processes and coaching professionals in private sector companies. Now

working in higher education, her main interest is to develop research-based pedagogical approaches that help her students find their own wings. She was inspired to initiate this particular flipped learning intervention when Marja-Leena told her that previous course attendees had experienced the intermediate-level course too easy (for advanced yarn-crafters), too difficult (for novices) and too similar in comparison with the basic-level yarn-craft course. Tellervo contacted Anna, her colleague from PhD study years, who has taught yarn-craft to teacher students for years. Anna has a background in textile-making and design, and she has focused on research and making of knitted garments. Professionally, she has worked as a practice-based researcher-maker specialized in knitting since earning her PhD; yet, unofficially, she has grown up with fiber arts from an early age and developed her expertise in yarn crafts for years. Anna is currently teaching different yarn-crafts for future craft teachers, classes spanning from basic level entries in knit and crochet to advanced level study courses in machine knitting and special yarn-techniques. In her role as an educator, she has meticulously developed adapted learning tasks and implemented reflective study assessment methods specifically designed for university-level yarn-crafts pedagogy. These initiatives aim to empower students with diverse skills and backgrounds, ensuring that the students could find meaning and benefits for learning starting from their individual points of entry. Teija, a keen sock-knitter, brought to the table her professional expertise in inclusive pedagogies and willingness to participate in the reflection on the Flipped learning idea and its research. She is particularly interested in the question of the diversity of learning in teacher education. She is inspired by research projects where you get to look at teacher training from new perspectives and together with new acquaintances.

This study with its flipped learning implementation provided students with individualized learning pace, allowing more advanced learners to grasp the tasks more quickly and move ahead, and novices to review the tasks with attention and ensuring them to familiarize with the basics of the hands-on practice. For us educators, this study provided an impressive window into our students' diverse learning needs and motivational factors.

Kirk, Niclas, Hannah, Lukas, Gustav, and Nils: Although during the COVID-19 pandemic Sweden did not lockdown, it still encouraged academics and students to stay at home. A few people however continued to come to our university campus. This supported the development of unusual and novel constellations of conversation partners during coffee breaks. During this period of time, Kirk and Niclas began taking their coffee breaks together and walking around their building to see who else might be around. After a few weeks they began conversing with groups of students who were also on campus. Initially, this was partly to check the students were coping with the odd situation of COVID-19 and all their teaching having been moved to emergency online teaching. After a few weeks, we (Niclas and Kirk) began wondering how this unique university experience was being understood by students, and asked one group of students (Hannah, Lukas, Gustav, and Nils) if they would be interested in participating in a research project about their learning during COVID-19. This was the start of a useful conversation that forms the basis of the paper presented in this special issue.

Janne and Satu-Maarit: We have had the pleasure to work together at the Faculty of Education of the University of Lapland for several years. During the past few years we have been interested, among

other things, in finding ways for our faculty and surrounding schools to collaborate and work towards common goals. As researchers we came to the conclusion that university-school collaborations in research offer a unique platform where the theoretical insights and innovative methodologies developed in universities can be applied and tested in the school contexts. To be more specific, we thought that teacher education practice, which already exists as a structure in both university and school organizations, could provide a context for this kind of collaboration. This is definitely not a new idea, however we thought that these situations could be more profoundly planned so that both the university and school personnel have an opportunity to work together and observe the real-world impact of implemented theories, refining and adjusting them based on direct classroom feedback. This way, such collaborations could work as a boon for professional development, as they facilitate a two-way exchange of knowledge and skills. School teachers gain access to cutting-edge educational research, which they can incorporate into their teaching strategies, while university researchers gain a deeper understanding of classroom dynamics and educational challenges. We believe that this synergy not only enhances the quality of teaching and learning but also fosters the development of innovative solutions to educational problems. We really hope that our research can give some ideas for the readers on how to approach this topic and perhaps how to implement the idea of bringing people from different organizations (university-school) to learn and work together.

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