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Defining Pedagogy

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Introduction

Pedagogy is a term widely used in educational writing but all too often its meaning is assumed to be self-evident. An examination of how the term is used and the implicit assumptions about teaching and education that underlie its use is a valuable way of understanding how the education process is perceived. Many of the strategies that have been developed to redress inequity in schooling have targeted classroom practice and teaching as an important site of change. For this reason, attention has been paid to pedagogy, its meaning and relationship to curriculum. Feminist research has revealed how particular relations are reflected and reproduced in schooling at a number of levels. At the ideological level, ideologies of 'race', 'ethnicism' and 'gender' act to socialize students for their future roles. At the structural and organizational level of institutions, both in their overt and covert practices, messages are relayed to students about the relative power positions of different groups and individuals; and about the subjects and aspects of those subjects which are deemed appropriate for them to study. These subject divisions typically reflect the occupational structures in societies and the sources and selection of knowledge represented in curriculum subjects.

In different cultures at different points of time in history, the meaning and status of pedagogy have shifted. Simon (1981) describes the situation in Britain where the 'dominant educational institutions … have had no concern with theory, its relation to practice, with pedagogy' (p. 11). The absence of critical accounts of pedagogy in Britain contrasts with other western and eastern European countries where pedagogy has a tradition of study. However, in spite of this tradition or because of it, the study of pedagogy is one of confusion, ambiguity and change (Best, 1988). In Best's view, the status and meaning of pedagogy have changed in recent times and have been 'devalued, deflected from its original meaning or even discredited'.

The failure to examine pedagogy limits the potential for effecting change through education. Simon quotes Fletcher's (1889) view that 'without something like scientific discussion on educational subjects, without pedagogy, we shall never obtain a body of organised opinion on education.' This viewpoint is echoed by Shulman (1987). He argues that to advance teacher reform it is essential to develop 'codified representations of the practical pedagogical wisdom of able teachers'. For Shulman, one of the major problems

for understanding teaching is that 'the best creations of its practitioners are lost to both contemporary and future peers … teaching is conducted without an audience of peers. It is devoid of a history of practice' (1987, p. 12). For Shulman, accounts of practice must include the management of students in classrooms and the management of *ideas* within classroom discourse.

There has been recognition in recent years of the unique, interactive nature of pedagogy. This interactiveness makes it difficult to capture and represent professional expertise as practised in classrooms. Interventions that have been developed to enhance female participation in aspects of the education process or to challenge sexist ideology in schools and society provide detailed accounts of practice. They are, therefore, invaluable sources of illumination of a pedagogy that is seen more as an art than a science.

In this chapter, we consider some of the historical accounts of pedagogy and identify some of the key elements in its conception. We then turn to more current debates that extend this conception and draw upon developments in understanding about the nature of human learning and knowledge. Finally, we consider feminist research and review the characteristic of feminist pedagogy and how these relate to the general debates about pedagogy. […]

Changing perceptions of pedagogy

Simon, in his critique of pedagogy in the British context, highlights the important link between views of ability and learning and education. He describes how early attempts to integrate theoretical knowledge with the practice of education during the late nineteenth century in Britain were based on associationist psychological theories of learning. In these theories, learners are viewed as passive responders to external stimuli. The pedagogy emerging from elementary schools in the 1890s and secondary schools in the early 1900s reflected this. Walkerdine (1984) described the purpose behind the introduction of compulsory schooling in Britain as social and disciplinary, to inculcate in the populace good habits to redress the perceived consequences of bad habits, i.e., crime and poverty.

The next significant change in the form of pedagogy, Walkerdine associates with the emergence of the term 'class' in the discourse that developed when population statistics became available. This led to a shift in the organization of educational apparatuses from school rooms to classrooms, from mixed age groupings to same age 'class' groupings. Education for regulation and citizenship was now to be achieved not through coercion as previously believed, but through the development of rational powers of the mind, hence the content of what children were to study also changed. As Walkerdine points out, these changes in pedagogy emerged as a result of conflicts and struggle and were 'simultaneously discursive transformation and a transformation of apparatuses and practices'. The next development in approaches to pedagogy was influenced by the new emphasis on psychometrics in education.

Psychometric constructs such as mental age are premised on the concept of the norm, i.e., normal behaviour, normal achievement, the normal child. These constructs were appropriated by psychologists who believed that humans were possessed of a general innate ability that was distributed in the population normally (Spearman, 1927). Individuals' innate ability sets the ceiling on their achievements: it follows from this that teaching cannot alter children's *potential* to learn. Such a perspective fits well with those educators who hold a hereditarian view of intelligence (see Gould, 1981). As Walkerdine

(1984) put it, 'the development of the "child" as an object both of science in its own right and of the apparatuses of normalisation … provided the possibility for a science and a pedagogy based on a model of naturally occurring development which could be observed, normalised and regulated.'

The emergence of new theories of learning which challenged the notion of innate ability independent of environmental, social and educational influences reasserted in the education community the belief in the human capacity to learn. Child-centred theories of learning led to what is commonly and often misleadingly referred to as discovery approaches to pedagogy or non-directive pedagogy. In these theories of learning, the child is believed to possess certain qualities and potentials which can be realized, given the appropriate environment. The focus on individual potential in these theories introduced the notion and possibility of an individualized rather than a class-based pedagogy. The teacher's role was also recast. She was no longer the inculcator of rational powers of the mind, but the 'guide' who enabled individual growth. This theory of pedagogy drew heavily on interpretations of aspects of Piagetian theories including notions of stages of development and 'readiness' for learning. Central to the pedagogy was the belief that a child's development towards scientific rationality emerges spontaneously as she explores and 'plays' with the environment. However, a child can only learn from certain experiences if 'ready', i.e., at the appropriate stage of development.

Walkerdine (1984) has described the circumstances that led to Piagetian theories being taken up in the particular ways they have been in classrooms. She details inherent conflicts between Piaget's theories that aim to normalize children's behaviours and a pedagogy that is premised on the aim of liberating the individuality of the child. Of particular value is Walkerdine's analysis of the web of related practices and apparatuses (such as record cards, classroom layout, work-cards, teacher training) which together 'produce the possibility and effectivity of the child-centred pedagogy'. The continuing and important message from Walkerdine is that the apparatuses of the pedagogy are not merely applications, but a site of production in their own right. Feminist research has paid particular attention to the apparatuses of pedagogy and how they are implicated in producing and maintaining differentiation in schools. For example, assessment practices or forms of questioning may only enable certain students to reveal what they know and may act as barriers to others (Murphy, 1995). Less obvious are those practices and customs […] which make assumptions about gender differences, in particular, the way the physical school constructs a different 'place' for girls and boys by unduly restricting the use of space for girls. Gordon (1996) describes how this, in turn, becomes one of the influences that affects teachers' judgments and expectations of girls.

Developments in views about learning and teaching

Whilst Piagetian theories continue to be reinterpreted and applied to aspects of education, other influential theories have emerged in recent years, in particular other forms of constructivism and socio-cultural theories of learning. Common to all of these theories, however, including Piaget's, is the notion of the student as agent, the active constructor of meaning and knowledge. Although views vary about the nature of this agency, it is generally agreed that

in order to teach one must first establish what students know, how they know it and how they feel about that aspect of their experience. The concept of agency has other implications for teaching and learning. If it is the student who constructs meaning out of the opportunities school offers, then, to progress, students need to gain an explicit understanding of what they know and how they come to know it, i.e., to develop *operative* knowledge that allows them to select from their knowledge appropriately in order to solve the problems and dilemmas they face in making sense. This operative knowledge (von Glasersfeld, 1989) has to be *taught* and requires teachers to develop strategies to make students' thinking explicit to them. The development of such metacognitive awareness relies crucially on language.

This focus on the role of language in learning coupled with a quite different perception of human ability distinguished social constructivist and socio-cultural theories of learning from certain Piagetian based and behaviourist perspectives. For example, on the conception of students' ability, Bruner (1986) considers that children develop an understanding of others' minds from a very early age. He considers the shared use of language to be the key which unlocks others' minds to us. Learning how to use language involves 'both learning the culture and learning how to express intention in congruence with the culture.' For Bruner, culture is the 'implicit semi-connected knowledge of the world, from which, through negotiation, people arrive at satisfactory ways of acting in a given context.' If we consider differential power relations in schools and the differing cultural experiences and values of teachers and students, we can begin to anticipate how such negotiation could, in certain contexts, break down or operate to the disadvantage of individuals and groups.

Bruner's thinking was influenced by the Russian psychologist Vygotsky (1978). Vygotskian perspectives have been increasingly applied to the process of education in recent years. Vygotsky similarly saw language as intimately involved in the process of learning and development. Through the use of language, children mediate their actions. As such, egocentric speech represents the transition between external and internal speech. Faced with difficulties, a child communicates with another adult or peer, and this socialized speech is subsequently internalized by the child. Seen in this way, language comes to form higher mental processes. It structures and directs thinking and concept formation, and is the product of social experience.

Vygotsky's view of development, and his concern with language and communication as central to learning, have major implications for teaching. In his view, students' potential for learning depends both on their existing knowledge and their capacity to learn. The potential for achievement can be realized through the help of a more informed adult or peer — a quite different conception to that of age-related staged development. Learning triggers developmental processes that only operate when the learner interacts and cooperates with people and the environment. In Bruner's words, the teacher 'serves the learner as a vicarious form of consciousness until such time as the learner is able to master his own actions' (Bruner, 1985, p. 24). The teacher's role is now much more demanding than that of a 'guide'. From this notion of the teacher's role, the term 'scaffolding' was coined (Wood, 1988). Scaffolding describes how teachers act to focus students' attention on 'relevant and timely aspects of the task and highlight things they need to take account of' (Wood, 1988, pp. 80–1). The teacher actively structures the support students need until they attain 'stand alone' competence. The ability to scaffold tasks suggests that teachers are aware of individual students' different needs. Indeed it is one of the reasons for the current focus on formative assessment practice. However, it is documented in research that many boys and girls approach learning activities in different ways. The 'scaffolds' that teachers provide

for students would need to take into account the influence of students' different cognitive styles if they are to serve as supports for them.

Bruner talks of students establishing joint reference between each other on the basis of shared contexts and assumptions. However, meaning produced through this process of reference is always 'undetermined and ambiguous'. Von Glasersfeld applies this to teaching and argues that teachers construct models of students' notions and operations. The teacher's goal is to gain understanding of the students' understanding. The 'best' that can be achieved in this process is a model that remains 'viable within the range of available experience'. These notions of modelling and referencing place both teachers and students in a *dialectical relationship*. The theory of learning once again redefines the teacher's role and relationship to the student. Paulo Freire similarly viewed the process of learning as a dialectical movement (Freire, 1971). 'The act of knowing involves a dialectical movement that goes from action of reflection and from reflection upon action to a new action' (Freire, 1985). For Freire, the learning process implies the existence of two interrelated contexts. These he labels as 'authentic dialogue' between students and teachers, and the second the 'social reality' in which people exist. The teacher's role in Freire's perspective is to pose problems about 'codified existential situations in order to help learners arrive at a more critical view of their reality'. Whilst it is not possible to go into theories of learning and knowledge in any great depth here, it is important to raise a few other central ideas that have come to the fore in thinking about the learning process. These ideas have particular relevance to the equity debate and, to an extent, extend the notions already discussed.

One significant issue is the context dependency of learners' knowledge. Context in this debate is seen as the common knowledge of the speakers invoked by the discourse (Edwards and Mercer, 1987). Context is therefore an integral aspect of making sense along with learners' prior knowledge and understanding. Many of the differences in girls' and boys' responses to teaching and assessment activities indicate that the common knowledge invoked by the activities is not shared (Murphy, 1996). […] In similar circumstances, girls and boys perceive different problems because their view of what is relevant differs (Harding, 1996). These differences mean that the opportunities that students have to develop particular understandings will vary in spite of the apparent commonality in teaching provision. The teachers' selections and those reflected in textbooks can therefore support the learning of some students to the disadvantage of others. Traditionally, it has been the meanings that girls more than boys value that are marginalized in curriculum activities — English being an exception. For many teachers and students, these context effects are invisible and their impact on learning unanticipated. […]

Traditionally, knowledge has been viewed as an 'integral, self-sufficient substance, theoretically independent of the *situations* [my emphasis] in which it is learned and used' (Brown, Collins and Duguid, 1989). Situated cognition theorists challenge fundamentally the separation of what is learned from how it is learned and used. Knowledge in their view is not separable from the activity and situation in which it is produced. Rather, knowledge is like language: 'its constituent parts index the world and so are inextricably a product of the activity and situations in which they are produced' (Brown, Collins and Duguid, 1989). Conceptual tools are seen to reflect the cumulative wisdom of the culture and are a product of *negotiation*. According to Brown *et al.* 'activity, concept and culture are interdependent'.

For those educators concerned with equity in the classroom, the force of situated cognition is in the implications it raises for school knowledge systems. The social construction of

knowledge is a product of negotiation. In order to understand key ideas in subjects, students need to understand, and have access to, this process of negotiation. This suggests a need to examine critically the status of subject knowledge claims and whose cumulative wisdom is reflected in teachers' practice and in the curriculum guidelines within which they work. This examination needs to include gender, ethnicity, race and socio-economic class to determine which individuals and groups the knowledge is accessible to, and/or valuable for. In this perspective of learning, the teacher has the task of making cultural practices available to students for consideration. The implication of this is that reflection on the selection and sources of school knowledge should happen as part of the dialogue *between* teachers and students. Introducing examples of assessment practice for critical examination can help support this process by providing explicit examples of what is 'valued'. A further strategy involves teachers introducing controversial knowledge claims, e.g., hypothesized causal links between diet and cancer, as part of the subject curriculum. This provides opportunities for students to 'learn' about the nature of evidence while they examine the validity of such claims.

Kruse (1996) refers to a strategy where everybody in a teaching group is given the opportunity to express their opinion about a subject matter. […] Burton (1996) argues similarly for a shift from 'knowledge control by authorities external to the student, to the development of a community of voices with whom authority and indeed authorship rest'. […] From these theories of learning and of knowledge, there has emerged a different perception of the teacher–student relationship. This reflects both a different understanding of the significance of students' knowledge and ways of knowing and of the purpose of education, the latter now being seen as providing entry into different cultural practices and knowledges. In current theories, the teacher's role is much more complex: the teacher has to find ways of helping students 'find, create and negotiate their meanings' (Lerman, 1993). This involves providing activities which are meaningful and purposeful from the students' perspective and which allow them to apply and develop their understandings in explicit relation to others. The focus on meaning and purpose in learning and assessment is a central feature of many interventions advocated to support girls' learning. Authenticity in tasks ensures that the links between school learning and out-of-school practices are explicit. That this is a need perceived by girls more than boys is a matter for concern. The literature on situated cognition shows that the activities from which students' knowledge is derived are intimately linked to that knowledge. Hence, if learning is focused on abstracted school tasks and rituals, what students will acquire is ritualistic knowledge applicable only to those situations in which it is learned. Consequently, authenticity in tasks is a prerequisite for developing knowledge that can be applied in the culture. It is therefore essential for *all* students' learning.

In current theories of learning, the responsibility for learning rests with students and teachers. Students are expected to engage in dialogue with each other, and with teachers, and to validate their own understandings rather than merely accept transmitted views. Students need particular study skills to participate in this type of learning. Interventions to enhance girls' learning typically involve collaborative ways of working. Girls more than boys prefer to cooperate and engage in dialogue with peers about their learning. Consequently, girls more than boys have the study skills that are needed for the type of pedagogy advocated. It is to be expected that many boys will need support to acquire these skills. A first step will be in establishing with them the significance of skills that hitherto have been devalued. […] As Kenway (1996) points out, the resistance of students to pedagogic intervention needs to be reflected on when evaluating their effectiveness and future direction.

We turn next to consider how debates about pedagogy are being considered in the wider education arena and what key elements in the conceptualization of pedagogy are emerging from this debate.

Redefining pedagogy

Didactics was a term introduced to bring coherence to the debate about pedagogy: it describes the study of the relationship between learners, teachers and educational subject knowledge. Didactics placed an emphasis on the uniqueness of school subjects and accorded them equal status with the *process* of presentation. Didactics is concerned with the processes of the person learning and the particular content to be learned (the knowledge and the know-how). However, the practical element of pedagogy, the putting into practice, was seen to be absent from such a description. Tochon and Munby (1993), in developing a wider definition of pedagogy, distinguish didactics from pedagogy in the following way:

> Pedagogy is concerned with our immediate image of the teaching situation. It is live processing developed in a practical and idiosyncratic situation. Didactic goals can be written down, but pedagogical experience cannot be easily theorised, owing to its unique interactive aspects. Though action research and reflection reveals the existence of basic principles underlying practical classroom experience, no matter what rules might be inferred, pedagogy still remains an adventure. (p. 207)

This move away from conceptions of pedagogy as the *science* of teaching, reflects a new epistemology of practice — an epistemology in which the notion of praxis is central. Praxis is a term used to describe the dialectical relationship between theory and practice in teaching — a form of reasoning informed by action. Schon (1987) describes this new epistemology of practice in the following way:

> … one that would stand the question of professional knowledge on its head by taking as its point of departure the competence and artistry already embedded in skilful practice — especially the reflection-in-action … that practitioners sometimes bring to situations of uncertainty, uniqueness and conflict.

The reconceptualizing of pedagogy as art is not a small matter. The way professional knowledge is perceived as ambiguous and incomplete, a 'tacit knowledge that is hard to put into words, at the core of the practice of every highly regarded professional' (Schon, 1987), has led to a crisis of confidence in the profession of education.

It is for these reasons that reformists such as Shulman are currently attempting to articulate the knowledge base of teachers. He defines *pedagogical content knowledge* as 'that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of professional understanding' (1987, p. 8). He argues, as others do, that it is the *wisdom of practice* that is the 'least codified source of teacher knowledge'. What is challenged by those educationists examining Shulman's concept of pedagogical content knowledge is that it presumes subject knowledge

is absolute, uncontestable, unidimensional and static (Meredith, 1995). Others argue the need to see the transposition of content knowledge to school knowledge as a didactic rather than pedagogic process. The didactic process involves change, alteration and restructuring if the knowledge is to be teachable (Chevellard, 1991, quoted in Banks, Bourdillon, Leach, Manning, Moon and Swarbrick, 1995). Hence, a split between school knowledge and peda-gogical school knowledge is envisioned to 'create a dynamic which leaves open to question curriculum constructs [such as subjects]' (Banks *et al.*, 1995, p. 8).

To reflect on this new epistemology of practice requires a discourse that Alexander refers to as 'dilemma-language' (Alexander, 1992). Dilemma-language is the articulation of 'doubts, qualification, dilemma, consciousness of nuance, alertness to the affective dimension … [which] can indicate true insight … [and] inner strength rather than mere professional machismo.' Such a discourse, according to Alexander, has not yet been legit-imized because of the imbalance in power between practitioners and others in the educa-tional hierarchy. The dilemmas teachers face also need to be examined in the political, social and cultural contexts in which teachers practise. Osborn and Broadfoot (1992) observed in their study of French and English primary teachers that:

> … for English teachers the critical issue … [is] how to resolve the practical problems inherent in delivering an individualised pedagogy in the context of a range of external pressures and large class sizes. For French teachers the dilemma is providing equal justice under law with the assumption of a common cultural base. … given growing differentiation in the social context and individual values. (p. 12)

The redefinition of pedagogy as an art follows from the view that pedagogy is about the *interactions between teachers, students and the learning environment and learning tasks* — our working definition given in the introduction. However, we have argued that pedagogy cannot be disembedded from the wider educational system. So, in order to address what is an effective pedagogy, we must be agreed on the goals of education. In the context of the equity debate, it is Freire's view that has been influential. In his liberatory pedagogy, Freire (1971) argues that education must help students develop an increasingly critical view of their reality. […] It is appropriate now to examine the feminist contribution to the debate about pedagogy. It was feminist research which first drew attention to inadequacies in ped-agogy in relation to groups and individuals. Through feminist interventions and evalua-tions of these, we now have a much richer understanding of the nature of pedagogy.

Perspectives on feminist pedagogy

Feminist pedagogy grew out of concern about the absence of any discourses concerned with transformative and critical pedagogy in the debate about teaching and learning. Its aim is to create awareness of 'difference' and of the process by which social divisions such as race, sex and socio-economic class structure individual experiences and opportunities. Feminist pedagogy is based on an 'analysis of females' and males' multiple and different material realities and illuminates females' and males' multiple and different experiences' (Weiner, 1994, p. 130). To reveal the varying positions of students and teachers, pedagogy has to become a site of discourse.

A feminist pedagogy provides students with access to alternative discourses to help them understand how identities are shaped and meanings and truths constructed. […] Davies (1989) describes the way children acquire the discursive practices of their society and learn to position themselves as male or female. As in all human actions, people are not passively shaped: each is active in taking up discourses through which he or she is shaped. For feminists, it is essential to reveal to students how meanings related to gender are produced and how these in turn influence the construction of femininity and masculinity. Gemma Moss (1992) describes her approach to reading which stresses the role that diverse social and cultural practices play in shaping how texts get read. For example, when looking at popular magazines, she suggests issues that can be considered with students, such as the appeal of technical language in boys' magazines and the common requirement for 'expertise' on the part of the male reader. The application of different discourses offers students opportunities to see how individuals can be reconstructed in discourse, as different discourses offer different subject (i.e., individual) positions and points of view. Introducing students to concepts of discourse provides them with the means to deconstruct and reconstruct 'texts' both representational and 'lived', whatever the topic of study.

Feminist pedagogy advocates making students theorists by encouraging them to interrogate and analyse their own experiences in order to gain a critical understanding of them. In a similar way, students can become theorists about subject knowledge as it is presented. This theorizing starts with students conceptualizing their own experiences and then, through action and dialogue on aspects of subjects, students gain new awareness and understanding, which, with the support of the teacher and peers, are analysed, organized and evaluated in relation to others' understandings. In this way, students and teachers can deconstruct the 'cultural wisdom' that shapes the curriculum and thus understand it.

Taking a critical stance to the curriculum and its processes not only empowers students, it provides them with a far more robust sense of the nature of knowledge and the status of subject knowledge claims. The knowledge they acquire is useful knowledge that can be applied outside of school. National surveys in the UK found that as students progressed through school, they acquired more and more fragments of knowledge but *not* the ability to apply them to make sense of new situations and to solve problems (DES, 1988a, 1988b). Teachers have to help make explicit to students theirs' and others' ways of making sense to enable them to achieve a critical stance. As we have already noted, there will be constraints on teachers' abilities to do this because of their own subjectivity and the various subjectivities of their students. Furthermore, such a pedagogy disrupts normative values that are deeply embedded in both teachers and students, hence resistance to examining alternatives is to be expected. […] If movement towards such a pedagogy can be achieved, it opens up the potential for choice both in students' use of knowledge and in their desires to access alternative discourses and the 'truths' they produce in order to gain real insight into cultural knowledge.

A feminist pedagogy, as described here, reflects current theories about the nature of learning, of learners and of knowledge. This is evident in the practices it advocates and the relationships between teachers and students it aims to foster. Feminist research has provided a rich source of evidence about practice as interventions have been developed and revised as a result of experience. A major contribution to the general debate has been the exposition of the concepts of discourses. There is an emerging consensus about the socially constructed nature of knowledge and the need for students to understand this and to adopt a critical stance toward the curriculum. However, how this is to be achieved is less well articulated. Another major contribution of feminist practice has been the revelation

and treatment of difference in classrooms. This has highlighted the necessity for continual reflection on practice by teachers. A further contribution has been the attention paid to the ramifications of such a pedagogy beyond the classroom door. It is essential to remember that the apparatuses of pedagogy are a site of production in their own right. We cannot therefore advocate a particular teacher–student relationship that ends abruptly at the classroom door. The relationships have to be seen to exist at all levels in a school. Students need to feel a sense of community in a school, a sense of a safe place — place not just in physical terms but in ideological terms as well. Furthermore, if we encourage students to adopt a critical stance to the curriculum, then the same approach would have to hold for their engagement in the derivation of school policies and rules. […]

To put this into practice requires change in the organizations and apparatuses of schools. For example, if strong ongoing relationships between teachers and students are necessary for effective pedagogy, does the typical secondary school practice of many short timetabled sessions with different teachers allow for this? Research suggests that heterogeneous groupings where teaching takes careful account of individual knowledge and experience are the most appropriate for learning. How does this approach 'fit' in schools committed to tracking or streaming, working in the context of time-pressured lessons? Learning areas also need to be seen to support the ways of working advocated, in the arrangements and accessibility of furniture and resources, etc. These few questions only touch on the issues that need to be considered in schools to enable an effective pedagogy to develop. They do, however, indicate the direction that needs to be taken if we treat seriously the demands of such a pedagogy.

Summary

In this chapter, attention has been paid to the relationship between understandings about pedagogy and views about learning and the purpose of education. Current theorizing has radically altered the way the teacher–student relationship is perceived and *gives* status to personal experiences as a source of knowledge. Feminist pedagogy similarly reflects these characteristics and has extended them to recognize overtly the issue of difference. In developing practice that is based on, and illuminative of, difference, feminist pedagogy has extended understanding of what constitutes effective pedagogy. […]

Whilst significant steps have been taken in identifying and articulating effective pedagogic strategies, we remain with an unresolved question and debate. We need to ask 'what is an educated person?' in a world that recognizes difference and how answers to this question help define a curriculum and pedagogy for equity. We need to continue to apply the principles of critical pedagogy enunciated here to reflect on subject knowledge in school in order to better understand what alternative forms exist and whose purposes they might serve. However, as has been pointed out, there is still a long way to go (Longino and Hammonds, 1990). Nor can we afford to develop pedagogic strategies that empower only some individuals within a group. We need to understand what is meaningful and relevant to working-class boys and girls, to ethnic minorities, for all groups who share an identity.

Any developments in pedagogic practice must rely on teacher involvement. A first step in ensuring involvement is for teachers in their training to be helped to understand the problem and how it impacts on students' learning and teachers' expectations, behaviours

and attitudes. The pedagogy advocated within schools should be mirrored in the pedagogy of teacher education. Unfortunately, higher education institutions lag behind many schools in their commitment to, and understanding of, equity issues. Sue Lewis's description of the 'chilly learning environment' and the resistance to, and marginalization of, curriculum reform intervention programmes in higher education institutions testifies to this. This is a situation which needs to change if pedagogy in school is to become more effective for more students.

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