



Journal of Childhoods and Pedagogies
Centre for Childhood Studies
2nd Special Edition 2023
ISSN: 2368-948X



EDITORIAL

Pedagogical Documentation as an Ethical and Creative Practice

A Pedagogist's Perspective

Dr. Bo Sun Kim – Guest Editor

Capilano University, North Vancouver, Canada

E-mail: bosunkim@capilanou.ca

As a pedagogist, I approach education as an ethical and political project that requires careful pedagogical judgment. By pedagogical judgment, I mean authentically and responsively responding to otherness and difference in a world of plurality (Biesta, 2010). We are called to engage in ethical practices because education is a multifaceted place of encounter where humans, ideas, ways of knowing and being meet. As such, it is a site where ethical practices are required because of the complexity and ambiguity inherent in these encounters. For this reason, I see the role of a pedagogist as one who must reflect on “what it means to work with Otherness” (Kim, 2020, para. 5), in other words, acknowledging and respecting differences in materiality and social relations and developing ethical relationships with others.

Therefore, creating conditions and situations where one can engage with others is indispensable for education. In this regard, as a pedagogist, I propose that working with pedagogical documentation provides opportunities for encounters with the otherness of others (Levinas, 1989) and for dialogue that needs our attention. To do so, I approach my work with a commitment to the pedagogy of listening and the ethics of encounters (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Rinaldi, 2006). These approaches invite me to consider pedagogical documentation as resistance against the normalization and totalization of educational practices that have become increasingly reductive and simplified in terms of measurable knowledge and outcomes (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Olsson, 2009).

Pedagogical documentation is inseparable from a pedagogy of listening that is deeply responsive and intersubjective. This particular way of being pedagogically involves a multitude of forms of communication. In dialogue, pedagogists and educators share and work with questions,

concerns, and propositions. The intention is to purposely engage with the complexity of the work, inviting multiple perspectives and ethical/pedagogical judgments. This process makes education creative and responsive, placing plurality and responsibility at the heart of pedagogy (Biesta, 2006; Lenz Taguchi, 2010).

With Pinar (2015) and Biesta (2006) in mind, I tend to think about how the language of education has been preoccupied with the language of business, where knowledge is replaced with measurable information. Pinar (2015) argues that information "without ethical and intellectual judgment" is not knowledge, defining *curriculum* as a "complicated conversation" (p. 15). He underscores the ethical and pedagogical judgment of educators that activate "ethical conviction" and "determination" in processes of mutual engagement and transformation (p. 119). In this sense, pedagogical documentation can play a critical role in making situated decisions among pedagogists and educators, requiring connections, constant communication, and a mutual state of responsibility. It brings about a particular actuality, being ethical and inventive about what is to come (Lenz Taguchi, 2010). By actuality, I refer to the work of Henri Bergson, explained by Deleuze (1988), with the distinction between the virtual and actual. Documentation can be virtual in terms of its potential. The pedagogical reality can be actualized by connecting with people who engage with the documentation. It requires dialogue and negotiation within a situated collective to determine what reality we want to bring into our life through pedagogical documentation. Accordingly, pedagogical documentation complicates our conversation, encompassing ethics and politics in our thinking and acting (Biesta, 2010; Lenz Taguchi, 2010). It invites multiple possibilities into a pedagogical inquiry.

Considering Arendt's understanding of education as "being together in plurality," the educational question always draws in situated judgments about what is educationally desirable, placing education adamantly within the realm of praxis (Biesta, 2013, p. 8). Lenz Taguchi (2010) argues that different approaches to pedagogical practices have different ethical implications and consequences. Therefore, the creation of knowledge is contingent upon our intentions and values, which in turn shape the reality we construct through pedagogical documentation. Education is a complex and value-laden endeavour that demands thoughtful consideration of ethical implications and knowledge formation in interaction with others.

Accordingly, pedagogical documentation is an ethical and creative event composed of ongoing communication and processes of re-living and re-enacting experiences. The re-living and re-enacting indicate how documentation is a practice that is not just interested in creating a record of what happened but a generative process and an active engagement that helps to shape educational realities. It is a practice where educational reality materializes through pedagogical dispositions (Jardine, 2002) and propositions (Land et al., 2022) that give meaning to inventive and potentially transformative pedagogical work in early childhood education.

References

- Deleuze, G. (1988). *Bergsonism*. New York, NY: Zone Books.
- Biesta, G. J.J. (2006). *Beyond learning: Democratic education for a human future*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Biesta, G. J.J. (2010). *Good education in an age of measurement: Ethics, politics, democracy*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Biesta, G. J.J. (2014). *The beautiful risk of education*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Dahlberg, G., & Moss, P. (2005). *Ethics and politics in early childhood education*. New York, NY: Routledge Falmer.
- Jardine, D.W. (2002). On the While of Things. In *Back to the Basics of Teaching and Learning* (pp. 223-242). Routledge.
- Kim, B. (2020). *A postsecondary institution pedagogist's experience of creating an Ecotone in a pedagogical context*. Early Childhood Pedagogy Network. <https://www.ecpn.ca/blog/reflection/postsecondary-institution-pedagogists-experience-creating-ecotone-pedagogical-context>
- Land, N., Vintimilla, C. D., Pacini-Ketchabaw, V., & Angus, L. (2022). Propositions toward educating pedagogists: Decentering the child. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 23(2), 109–121. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1463949120953522>
- Lenz Taguchi, H. (2010). *Going beyond the theory/practice divide in early childhood education: Introducing an intra-activity pedagogy*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Levinas, E. (1989). Ethics as First Philosophy, in S. Hand (Ed.) *The Levinas Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Olsson, L.M. (2009). *Movement and Experimentation in Young Children's Learning: Deleuze and Guattari in Early Childhood Education*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Pinar, W. F. (2015). *Educational experience as lived: Knowledge, history, alterity*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Rinaldi, C. (2006). Documentation and Research. In C. Rinaldi, *In Dialogue with Reggio Emilia: Listening, Researching, and Learning* (pp. 97-101). New York, NY: Routledge.