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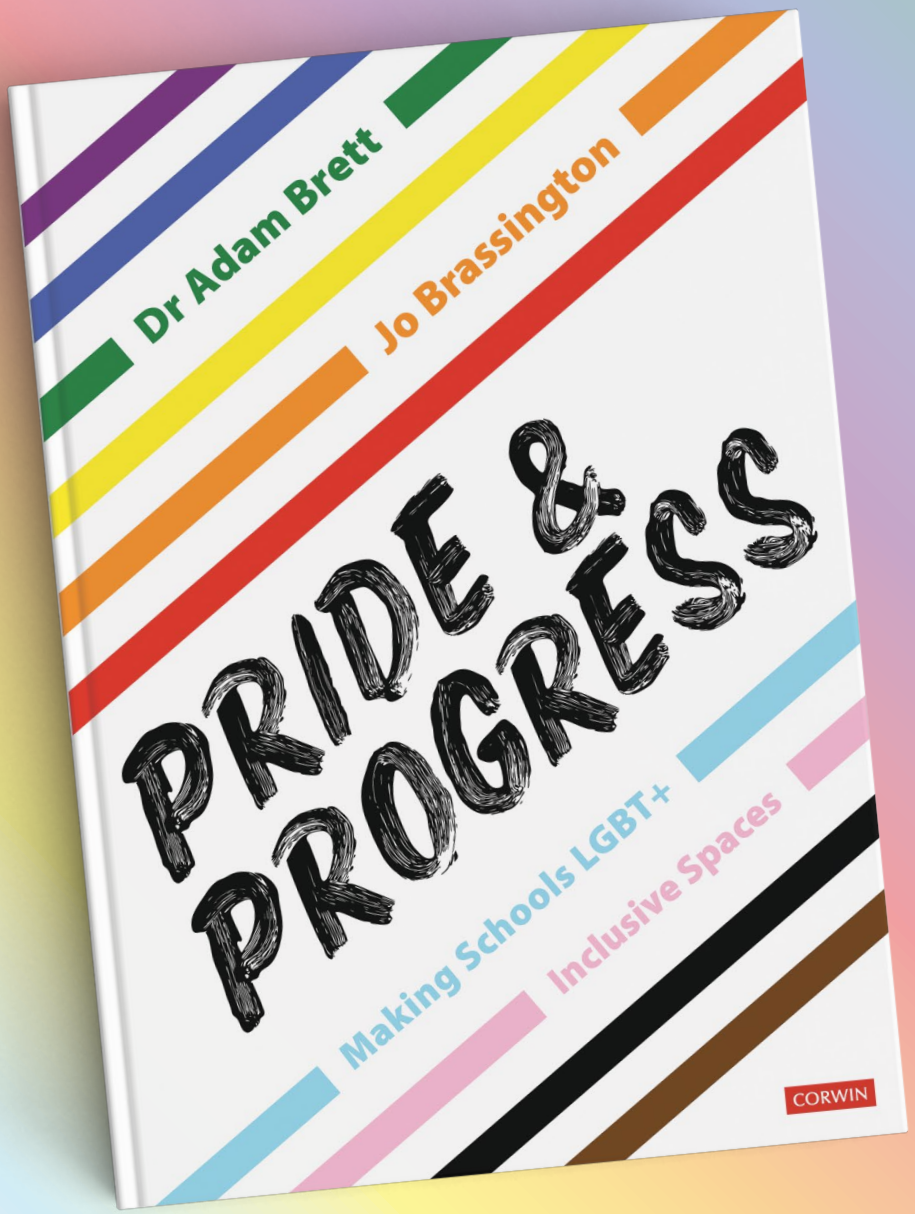
Pride and Progress: Making Schools LGBT+ Inclusive Spaces

Dr Adam Brett, Jo Brassington



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HETERONORMATIVITY

'This is not pretend. This is not make believe. This is reality, and that is fine, and great, and lawful – and there is nothing wrong with that. We should celebrate it like we would celebrate any other family type.'

Allison Zionts

IN THEORY

Heteronormativity is a crucial concept when discussing how to make spaces more LGBT+ inclusive. It is incredibly powerful, yet invisible, which frustratingly means it is simultaneously everywhere and nowhere. And its greatest trick? It allows heterosexual people to discuss their partners or romantic lives without being seen as discussing sexuality. LGBT+ people discussing their partner or lifestyle, on the other hand, can be seen as bringing inappropriate discussions of sex or sexuality into school… now, that is quite a trick.

So, what is this all-powerful heteronormativity? It's a concept that many people may not have heard of before, but it is an important one, possibly the most important one, that we need to get to grips with to create safe and inclusive school environments. Heteronormativity is the default and silent assumption that people are heterosexual. It may sound simple, or not even particularly surprising, but if you're an LGBT+ person, you know how isolating and exclusionary heteronormative spaces can be. Having something assumed of you means you are immediately

burdened with the choice of whether to address the inaccurate assumption, leaving the other person feeling uncomfortable, or let the person believe something untrue about you, leaving you to absorb the discomfort. Having this feeling even once is distressing, but to have it regularly, can lead to negative mental health outcomes and the internalisation of shame.

I've lost count of the times in my career that I've had these questions asked of me. On my very first day as a qualified teacher, I remember sitting in the staff room, excited to start my new career. It was the first day of term, so staff were engaging in small talk and discussing what they had done during the summer holidays with their families and spouses. During the conversation, my head of department turned to me and asked whether I was married. It's important to say that my head of department was lovely and was no doubt just trying to include me in the conversation with this seemingly innocuous question. However, given that gay marriage wasn't legal at the time, what they were really asking me in front of the entire staff room was whether I had a wife. My mind went into overdrive as I created a mental decision tree of all the possible appropriate responses, trying to decide what the best thing would be to say in this setting. Did I just say no? It would be entirely true. Did I say no, but I was gay? Did I say I had a boyfriend? Did I say I would like to get married, but it isn't allowed? Starting a new job is stressful enough without having to think about which parts of your identity it is safe to reveal.

In the end, my blind panic took over and I just laughed and said 'no', and the issue was never raised again. I then felt unable to address my sexuality with the head of department as I didn't want to make them uncomfortable about their assumption, which sadly went on for several years. Using 'friend' when I was really talking about my boyfriend and concealing key parts of my identity all clouded the start of my career due to this heteronormative assumption on the first day. I look back now and wonder if I would have been comfortable enough to be honest if my head of department had simply changed their question from 'are you married?' to 'have you got a partner?' It's tough to answer that now, but it would at least have removed the loaded assumption, and signalled to me that this was a space where being something other than heterosexual might just be okay. This is just one small example, but I hope it highlights what heteronormativity can look and feel like for LGBT+ people. Now let's briefly explore the literature.

> Heteronormativity is defined as a system of valuing heterosexuality as the natural and normative sexual orientation, thereby devaluing all other expressions of sexuality, gender, and ways of family life (Page & Peacock 2013).

Page and Peacock's description of heterosexuality being valued as 'normative' and 'natural' illustrates how it is then possible to position non-heterosexual identities as abnormal, or worse, unnatural. Like much LGBT+ language, contemporary definitions of heteronormativity have evolved significantly from their early uses. Initially considered in the second wave of feminist theory (Rubin 1975) to explain how hierarchies were created to exploit women for the betterment of men, contemporary understandings of heteronormativity have developed with reference to sexuality, civil rights and what it means to be a good sexual citizen (Seidman 2001), which we'll explore shortly. Although uses of heteronormativity continue to evolve, it is possible to follow Rubin's line of reasoning that, from a feminist perspective, where men (and masculinity) were once favoured and economically advantaged by the suppression of women (and femininity), sexual identities or behaviours that did not conform to this rigid hierarchy would also be suppressed.

Jackson (2006) suggests that a contemporary definition of heteronormativity needs to include Rich's (1980) consideration of what she calls 'compulsory heterosexuality'; that institutionalised, normative heterosexuality regulates those kept within its boundaries as well as marginalising and sanctioning those outside of them. Jackson's (2006) consideration of heteronormativity highlights an important point, one that is really quite useful when trying to get schools to understand the significance of this work – that it is not simply LGBT+ people that are affected by heteronormativity – all people are. Not only does heteronormativity marginalise LGBT+ people, but it also constrains heterosexual people within a narrow set of normative expectations of what it is to be a good sexual citizen. Building upon Seidman's (2001) description, the good sexual citizen should therefore be gender conventional (explored in the next chapter), link sex to monogamous love and a marriage-like relationship, and defend family values. We could extend this description further to include Turner's (2008) description of reproductive citizenship, where reproduction is seen at the ultimate form of citizenship. If this all sounds a bit wordy, I can guarantee you will have experienced or seen examples of this – just think about the kinds of things you hear in the staff room, and what is valued. I have heterosexual female friends in their 40s who are single, or married without children, who regularly experience microaggressions (a concept we'll define in Chapter 4) linked to their lack of childbearing: 'were you unable to have children?'; 'there's still time'; 'you'd make a great mum'; 'having children was the best thing that ever happened to me'.

If we think about it, heteronormativity is less about sexuality, and more about privileging a set of normative practices and ideals; a critique that has given rise to

the concept of homonormativity. Homonormativity suggests that LGBT+ people can assimilate into heterosexual society by enacting these privileged ideals. We could also argue that heterosexual people can be excluded in society by not conforming to these ideals, as illustrated in the previous examples. As a gay, white, middle-class, cisgender male in a monogamous relationship, I carry a lot of privilege and tend not to be seen as particularly remarkable in educational settings. It is here that we need to consider intersectionality (discussed in Chapter 7) and employ some nuance when examining who is most greatly marginalised and damaged by heteronormativity. Unpacking the LGBT+ initialism is a useful starting point.

There are times when being seen as a homogenous LGBT+ community can have social and political benefits, but the critique that the gay rights movement focussed too heavily on gay, white men is a fair one. Homonormativity means that some LGBT+ identities are gaining greater acceptance in society, which should be cause for celebration, but in reality, means that other LGBT+ identities become further marginalised. We only need to think about the tropes that continue to be associated with bisexuality to understand that sexual identities that challenge binaries or don't conform to homonormative ideals, continue to be problematic.

Heteronormativity is a destructive force, one that doesn't really seem to benefit anyone: it's remarkable it has caught on in the way that it has! I jest of course, but at the start of the chapter I said that heteronormativity was one of the most important concepts for us to understand to create more inclusive spaces, and in naming it, we're off to a pretty good start. There is great power in naming things. In naming something, we make it real and valid; therefore, opening it up to critique. Through language, we can describe, expose, and change social reality and social constructs. Heteronormativity is a social construct, one that is held in the collective minds of people and requires continuous consent to exist. Like many social norms, heteronormativity remains invisible and is only revealed as a norm when something challenges it. For example, if I walked through the city centre holding my partner's hand, I would almost certainly receive homophobic comments (or at the very least some stares).

The good news about socially constructed ideas is that if we withdraw consent, they begin to lose their power, and it becomes possible to disrupt and challenge their dominance. I like to think of heteronormativity like the film *The Matrix*. In *The Matrix*, citizens are plugged into a program that continuously constructs a world made from code which is believed to be real. It's only once they have become unplugged and The Matrix has been named as an oppressive artificial tool, that they can see the systems that caged them. In the same way, by developing a critical

awareness and language in our schools about the systems and structures that continue to produce heteronormativity, we can begin to disrupt its production.

To continue The Matrix analogy, it is helpful to consider exactly what the 'code' is that constructs schools as heteronormative spaces. We learnt in the last chapter about the silence and fear that Section 28 created, ensuring schools became places of self-policing where only heterosexuality remained visible. But two decades after its repeal, the heteronormative code continues to be produced in myriad ways: through the curriculums we teach; limited understandings of LGBT+ language; the cultures and ethos of schools; the fear of parental backlash; faith schools; the conflation of sex and sexuality; moral panic in the media; the list goes on. The passage of time alone does not undo the terrible damage of Section 28 – active change is required, after all, diversity is a fact, but inclusion is a choice. Schools are stubbornly heteronormative environments and need to be questioned and challenged at all levels to become more inclusive spaces.

If heteronormativity continues to constrain those within it, and marginalise those outside of it, then maybe it's time we got rid of it. We hope the later chapters will empower you with language, examples, strategies and confidence for you to begin challenging heteronormativity in your schools. If the stories from the podcast have taught us one thing, it's that it only takes a few people to make a big difference!

IN PRACTICE

Adam describes heteronormativity as powerful, yet invisible – as everywhere, yet nowhere. It reminds me of the old joke where one fish turns to another fish, and asks 'how's the water?' The other fish replies, 'what the hell is water?'

Okay… so it isn't a great joke, but it is a great metaphor for heteronormativity.

A fish doesn't know it's in water. It is surrounded by it, and always has been. It was raised in that environment and knows nothing else. Of course, as humans, we would know instantly if we found ourselves under water, because we can't breathe in that environment. Similarly, we are all raised in heteronormativity and many people don't realise they are surrounded by it – unless of course, they can't breathe in it.

That is how I felt as a young person in school.

From my earliest memories of being in school I felt different. I couldn't name my difference, but it was there, and it felt like it was growing. People around me began expecting me to be things that I was not, and to want things that I didn't. This subtle, but constant, messaging in my school told me that I was different, and that my

difference was something I should be ashamed of. I didn't fit into my environment; as I got older, I began to feel like I was drowning in it. There were countless moments I felt like I couldn't breathe.

When a person can't breathe underwater, what do they do? Either they leave to find somewhere they can, or they exhaust themselves by constantly having to come up for air. Either way – intentionally or not – we cannot let this happen in our schools. As educators, we don't want any person (be that a student, a parent, or a colleague) to feel as though they can't breathe. Nobody should feel like they are drowning.

To prevent this from happening we need to understand heteronormativity, and to name it when we see it. It is all around us, even in our most basic understanding of the world. Often, we hear arguments about heterosexuality being 'natural', with the suggestion that anything else is therefore 'unnatural'. People use the animal kingdom as justification, so many of us come to believe that the natural world is heterosexual. This is incorrect.

David Lowbridge-Ellis (S2, E11) is a headteacher, writer, and the creator of the brilliant queer knowledge organiser. David created the knowledge organiser to collate lots of the queer knowledge he wishes he had been taught when he was in school. In our conversation with David he explains how important it was to include a section in his knowledge organiser which demonstrates queerness in the animal kingdom. There is a long list of species which scientists have observed displaying homosexual behaviours including examples of mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, amphibians, and insects. His knowledge organiser states clearly: humans aren't the only queer animals.

If heteronormativity lives in our basic understanding of the natural world, it can of course also stretch into our schools. Allison Zionts (S1, E3) is a secondary school teacher and PhD student, who explores heteronormativity within her research. She defines it as 'the concept, or reality, that the world is set up to make everything easier for heterosexual people'. Allison neatly talks us through several examples of how this materialises in our schools. She explains that in many schools, before a family even enters, they're often given a form which asks for the father's name and mother's name. The heterosexual assumption being clear before school life even begins. Allison talks about the books we read with our young people, the families we use in maths word problems, or the visuals around our school. If all we show are heterosexual people, then we risk teaching students these are the only types of relationships which are allowed. Allison encourages us to question our schools, and to consider what our young people will see and experience that might reinforce the

idea that the only family types are men and women together. She gives examples of places to look: forms, policies, displays, book choices, and curriculum.

Often heteronormativity is subtle, and the changes Allison suggests in her episode can impact the subtle messaging our schools send to young people. However, heteronormativity can be more direct. Dominic Arnall (S1, E4) is the CEO of LGBT+ young people's charity 'Just Like Us'. He tells us of LGBT+ teachers he has encountered who have been explicitly told by leadership that they cannot come out in school. Dominic suggests if this happened in other professions, it would result in legal action, yet we see it too often in our schools.

Of course, there are schools where the leadership are directly challenging heteronormativity and creating a space where everybody can be themselves. One of these leaders is the Deputy CEO Kyrstie Stubbs (S1, E8), who was a headteacher at the time we spoke with her. Kyrstie's episode is a masterclass in inclusive leadership, and she gives many examples of how to disrupt heteronormativity. Kyrstie tells us about an occasion when she was interviewing for a new teacher in her school. During the interview, Kyrstie asked one candidate about her home life to try and make her feel more comfortable, and to build up a conversation. The candidate told Kyrstie that she lived with her girlfriend. 'Oh, and where are you living?', Kyrstie replied. The candidate later told Kyrstie that she was so shocked by how Kyrstie had usualised (a word we will explore further in Chapter 5) her relationship. She explained how in previous schools revealing that information had led to her being bullied, and she couldn't believe how accepting Kyrstie had been.

Creating accepting schools like Kyrstie does, benefits us all, and disrupting heteronormativity is part of that process. When we create a space where the permission to be yourself isn't dependent on your sexuality, then we free LGBT+ teachers to put all of their energy into being the best teacher they can be. Dr Shaun Dellenty (S2, E3) is a multi-award-winning teacher, LGBT+ inclusion advocate, trainer, inspirational speaker, and author. Shaun has been named one of the 100 most influential LGBT+ people in the UK and has achieved so much for our community. However, in our conversation Shaun tells us how much he was limited until he came out in his school in 2009. He describes having to waste around a fifth of his energy lying, covering up, changing pronouns, and concealing his identity. Just like Troy and Catherine in Chapter 1, his energy was wasted in concealing his identity. In response to a data set revealing homophobic bullying in his school, Shaun chose to come out in an assembly. He describes the response as joyful, but when he got home that evening, he cried for hours. His tears were tears of relief. Shaun tells us how freeing it was to finally be himself at work, and how powerful it was to now put all of the energy he had wasted concealing his identity into doing a good job.

Shaun shares a brilliant starting point to disrupting heteronormativity within a school. When delivering training, Shaun often asks, 'where, when and how did you first learn about heterosexual people and their lives, relationships and histories at school?' This question helps people to see what has always been invisible to them. This reflection helps us to see the water we have always been immersed in. Through reflecting on this question, people realise how heterosexuality has been promoted to them both subtly and directly.

Reflective conversations can be a great way to begin naming heteronormativity in your school, and this doesn't have to stop in the staff room. Eilidh Vizard (S1, E11) is a secondary science teacher who is passionate about representing both women and LGBT+ people in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and maths) subjects. Our conversation explored the importance of vocabulary, and she told us about how she has introduced heteronormativity to class discussion, breaking down what the word means and unpicking it as a group. In naming it, and discussing it, Eilidh plants a seed of questioning in her classroom which begins to disrupt the production of heteronormativity.

Through sharing these stories of heteronormativity in practice, I hope we have gone some way in making the invisible, visible to you. Having heard these stories, you should now be in a better position to notice, name, and challenge heteronormativity in your own educational settings.

The natural next step after noticing and naming problems in our schools is to begin working to solve these problems. Thus far, we have presented two problems, but have not yet provided the much-needed solutions to them.

Let me reassure you – the solutions are coming. But we must have a full understanding of the problems we face before we begin to navigate the possible solutions. Before we can explore the ways to reimagine our educational spaces and unroot silence and shame from our schools, we have one final problem to introduce you to: cisnormativity.

IN ACTION

Spend some time reflecting on the educational spaces you occupy.

How do you see heteronormativity within those spaces?

Reflect on the language you use, and the language you hear in your educational space.

How might that language promote heteronormativity?

Reflect on where there is room for change in your practice.

What small changes could begin to disrupt heteronormativity in your educational spaces?

PODCAST EPISODES REFERENCED IN THIS CHAPTER

- Season 2, Episode 11 – David Lowbridge-Ellis

David (he/they) is a headteacher, writer and trainer. He joins us to share brilliant tips on how to make educational spaces more inclusive, and how to be an effective and authentic leader.

- Season 1, Episode 3 – Allison Zionts

Allison (she/her) is a secondary school teacher and PhD researcher exploring LGBTQ+ safe spaces. She joins us to discuss her research, and share her experience as a bisexual, Jewish woman.

- Season 1, Episode 4 – Dominic Arnall

Dominic (he/him) is the CEO of LGBT+ young people's charity 'Just Like Us'. He joins us to discuss the great work that Just Like Us does to support LGBT+ young people and schools.

- Season 1, Episode 8 – Kyrstie Stubbs

Kyrstie (she/her) is an inspirational former headteacher, now Deputy CEO, and an LGBT+ ally. She joins us to share how her leadership approaches diversity, equity, and inclusion in a holistic, and meaningful way.

- Season 2, Episode 3 – Dr Shaun Dellenty

Shaun (he/him) is a multi-award-winning educator, LGBT+ inclusion advocate, trainer, inspirational speaker, and author. He joins us to share his experience as a gay primary school teacher, now supporting LGBT+ inclusion through training and consultancy.

- Season 1, Episode 11 – Eilidh Vizard

Eilidh (she/her) is a secondary school science teacher. She joins us to discuss inclusive language, and representation for LGBT+ people, and women in STEM.

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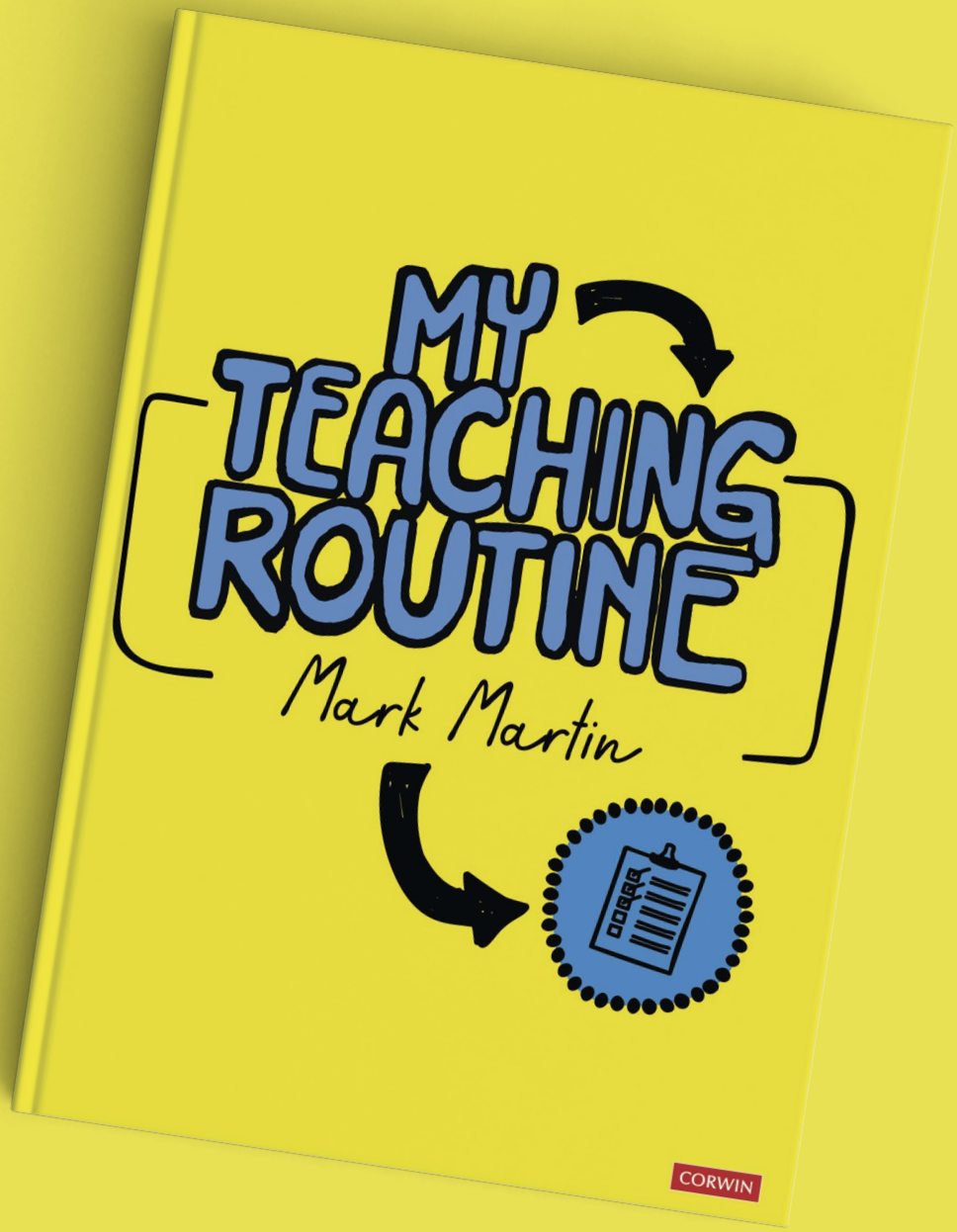
My Teaching Routine

Mark Martin



CHAPTER 2
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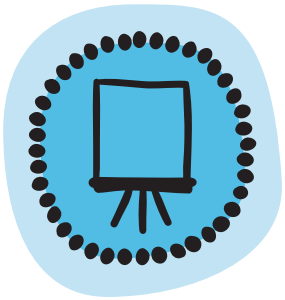


> Don't teach a learner to achieve for a day, show them how to achieve for life. - Mark Martin

OVERVIEW

THIS CHAPTER EXPLORES THE FOLLOWING IDEAS:

* DEMONSTRATING WHAT LEARNERS NEED TO DO THROUGH A LESSON WILL HELP TO INCREASE FOCUS AND MOTIVATION
* VISUALLY SEEING THE END GOAL HELPS TO INSPIRE LEARNERS TO ENVISION THEIR OUTCOMES
* SHOWCASING THE STARTING AND END POINT PROVIDES GREATER STRUCTURE FOR COMPLETION OF THE TASK
* DIFFERENTIATING THE LEVELS OF PROGRESS HELPS THE LEARNER TO UNDERSTAND THEIR JOURNEY

Selecting effective demonstrations, and knowing when and how to use them effectively can be challenge. The power of demonstration helps to keep learners focused, motivated and informed, and that is true whether or not they are making progress in that part of the lesson activity or module. Demonstrations, or what some call modelling or providing clear examples of the stages or the outcome, are crucial. Demonstrations can be done in a variety of ways and by using different methods, but they need to be consistent and normalised for learners.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

A common form of demonstration is lesson objectives because it gives context and meaning to why we do certain things in our classroom. For many teachers across England, displaying the lesson objectives on the projector as soon as the learners enter the classroom is compulsory and part of the school's teaching and learning policy.

The three main domains of a lesson objective are:

- Cognitive domain – Academic capability
- Affective domain – Emotions, social and feelings
- Psychomotor domain – Manual and physical skills

Each domain is classified into levels of complexity and specificity. Benjamin Bloom and a group of educators devised accordingly a taxonomy of educational objectives (Bloom, 1956). This is where the term Bloom's Taxonomy originates and it has become the most widely applied classification. In 2001, Anderson and Krathwohl's (2001) revised Bloom's taxonomy to Remember, Understand, Apply, Analyse, Evaluate and Create. The hierarchy defines each cognitive level from higher to lower order thinking. The aim is to help teachers build schemes of work that challenge learners' thinking and produce effective learning outcomes centred around knowledge, skills or attitude.

Teachers are encouraged to get learners to write the lesson objectives down, which has widely been criticised for wasting teaching time; but I think a positive aspect of writing down lesson objectives gives the class a moment of silence and focus, which helps the teacher to create a calm environment at the start of the lesson. Designing quality learning objectives that 'make sense' to learners requires good planning by the teacher and understanding of the scheme of work by the learners. It should allow learners to see where they are and what they need to do to get to the next level. This should be linked to the subject success criteria and exam framework where possible. This alignment prepares learners for exam success and meeting their academic targets. However to avoid this being a tick box exercise it's recommended that you explore evidence-based practice to make informed decisions when it comes to designing lesson objectives. I don't think it should be enforced through the school's learning policies, which makes the routine a burden. It's important to acknowledge that every learner interprets the lesson objectives differently: some are oblivious, frustrated or careless when objectives are not clear or are confusing; in turn this uncertainty will impact their attitude, behaviour and aspiration when it comes to completing the work. The lesson objectives need to be differentiated, achievable, relevant

and acknowledged when learners have made progress. The All/Most/Some is sometimes not the best format to use, when getting learners engaged and excited about the task they need to complete. Providing specific examples and clear demonstrations are powerful ways to broaden the learning objectives.

TAKING OWNERSHIP

Demonstration can be decentralised to give learners ownership and a sense of responsibility. Reminding learners on a regular basis to monitor their efforts is purposeful, and monitoring can take many forms. These approaches may include co-creating the lesson objectives with the learners by giving them a choice or selection of outcomes they would like to achieve by the end of the lesson. They can either ask their peers or teacher to hold them to account through the process. Another approach could be designing a progress tracker that allows learners to monitor their progress and performance. The tracker can be assessed by their peers, parents or teachers. Their termly grades can be added, or peer-to-peer reviewed. This form of self-monitoring takes time for learners to embrace because many learners are reliant on the teacher to provide an instant response to their progress and performance. You could add in some non-academic objectives in the process, which takes into consideration the learners' mental health and wellbeing. To get learners on board, find some common ground, acknowledge and praise their efforts. This can be a great approach when starting a complex or difficult part of your course. In these situations reach for more demonstrations and examples for learners to understand the landscape. But don't assume they know how to navigate the content based on your lesson objectives or explanation solely.

SHARED GOALS AND CO-CREATION

Another form of demonstration is co-creation which encourages learners and teachers to become partners who each have a voice and stake in the lesson outcomes. This builds a partnership based on respect, reciprocity and shared responsibility (Cook-Sather et al., 2014). Co-creation provides an insight into learners' diverse worlds, where their background, culture and experiences intertwine. When considering 'inclusion' most teachers might use music, art, drama, icons or local stories to illuminate their demonstration. Although these items may be representative of the learners' interests and experiences, they may not reach the depths of who they are as individuals or inform teachers how to connect with them in an inclusive way. Teachers need to make space and room for learners to express their interests and experiences. The practical steps to make this happen could be to create a poll, survey or questionnaire on the VLE (Virtual Learning System) system to capture learners' thoughts and ideas. The teacher then can unpack the feedback and embed these connections into the content, pedagogy and/or marking criteria. By inviting learners to be a part of the lesson design it helps to make the demonstration and examples relevant. Although co-creation can be more work and take more time to execute, it makes the learning experience fun and exciting. The reason why co-creation doesn't happen a lot in schools is probably because of the time it takes to train teachers and learners, and it doesn't show a clear link to exam success; however, I would argue, co-creation creates a stronger bond between teacher and learner during the demonstration process.

CO-TEACHING

Learners can be an integral part of Lesson demonstrations, by simply allowing them to take part;

- How much ownership do learners have in the content delivery?
- Do we give them enough opportunity to express themselves?

I ask myself these questions on a regular basis, and seek ways to get my learners involved at every opportunity available. Getting learners involved presents openings for equal opportunities for all learners, including the more reserved or introverted ones. When learners leave our institutions they need to have a range of soft skills that help them represent themselves in the outside world and become active citizens.

As highlighted in the previous chapter, education is much more than learners sitting and listening to their teachers for knowledge. It's about helping them to understand the world around them and being able to navigate different spaces. Using learners in the classroom (in roles equivalent to co-teachers) can enhance their public speaking skills, confidence and information retention. This speaking and participation framework is another example of ways in which to encourage and support oracy in your subject.

Learners as co-teachers

In order to get your learners trained to be co-teachers you will need to create a script or framework to support learners to explain their own work in a concise format, use the correct terminology and lexis, and use positive body language to present to their peers. Once the learners understand what is expected of them, the demonstrations can take many forms. Learners can use their previous work to showcase to peers and explain what they need to do in order to meet the lesson objectives and outcomes. Another option is to get learners to design a mini presentation on the keywords or technical terms they have learned. You can use a rotation system so all learners get an opportunity to demonstrate and to showcase their work.

Online demonstrations

With the rise of online teaching it can be a very passive experience for learners, however getting learners to be co-teachers will encourage active participation virtually. To do this learners can either do a three- to five-minute demonstration to their peers or they could pre-record their demonstration using a video recording of themselves. Also you could get learners to comment or generate questions on your or co-learners' demonstration using the online chat tool. This keeps them involved and actively listening for keywords and technical terms. Co-teaching spaces like this will require time and patience because some learners may resist or refuse to engage in the process. You could get older groups or higher-ed learners to role model to your younger learners.

INCLUSIVE TEACHING

Demonstrating to the classwork without thinking about inclusion may instantly alienate a range of learners. The relationship between inclusivity and what is being demonstrated is closely linked. Teachers are normally encouraged within their lesson plan to design interventions for special educational needs learners. Catering for different needs can be a challenge, but teachers that design lessons with special educational needs and disabilities at their core enable all learners irrespective of their circumstances to enjoy the fullest possible learning experience.

Different needs

Understanding autism, dyslexia and dyspraxia as well as learners with ADHD, Tourette syndrome and speech, language and communication difficulties helps you to be a mindful and effective educator. These needs illustrate that no learner is the same and we should value learners that have different kinds of minds. This highlights a positive challenge that teachers face when it comes to developing teaching materials and using technology.

Implementation and resources

As already mentioned in the previous section in the chapter, the presentation slides need to be clear, concise and easy to follow. Also, many learners with educational needs often attribute difficulties with learning to not having access to handouts or class notes during or after lessons; this can be alleviated by working with teaching assistants and one-to-one support staff beforehand. Additionally, uploading class materials for the whole school term on the school's VLE and using a scheduled release for learners and their support staff is a way to help such learners. This gives learners the opportunity to access the content before and after the lesson. I noticed that learners would use my class notes on their digital devices as I started to explain and demonstrate the lesson objectives. I think this helped them to manage the pace of the lesson by either going back to slides to process the information or write down keywords. I also made sure for some learners that I printed out the learning materials so they have a physical copy if needed. Another thing that I have found effective is to provide learners at the beginning of the lesson with a list of technical terms, glossaries and further reading materials.

Social emotional needs and mindfulness

Inclusive teaching goes beyond the content and pedagogy, focusing on the very real social, emotional and cognitive demands of learning. When demonstrating class materials it's important teachers are aware that their approach and style can trigger stresses, anxiety or knock learners' confidence. It requires teachers to understand and embrace mindfulness and empathy to those around them. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, mindfulness is 'the practice of maintaining a non-judgmental state of heightened or complete awareness of one's thoughts, emotions, or experiences on a moment-to-moment basis'. Jon Kabat-Zinn, a renowned thought

leader in this space, states that mindfulness is the practice of non-judgemental awareness in the present moment and non-reactive, non-judgemental and open-hearted observation (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). Mindfulness can alleviate learners' stress and anxiety (Viafora et al., 2015).

According to Peerayuth Charoensukmongkol, mindfulness breeds emotional intelligence in three ways:

1. It improves your ability to comprehend your own emotions.
2. It helps you learn how to recognise the emotions of other people around you.
3. It strengthens your ability to govern and control your emotions.

Peerayuth's research suggests that mindfulness can improve your ability to use your emotions effectively, through determining which emotions are beneficial for certain situations (Charoensukmongkol, 2014). Understanding these dynamics will significantly help teachers when demonstrating new content and topics to the class.

Remote learning

Another area of inclusive teaching is remote learning; demonstrating work online is not the same as demonstrating work in person. The pressure to remain focused by looking at a screen can take its toll and asking for help is not as rapid as being in a classroom. According to Kate Lister, Jane Seale and Chris Douce, distance learners disclose mental health issues at a higher rate than in-school learners (Lister et al., 2021). Before demonstrating the content, check in on learners to see how they are coping with their workload and whether they need any additional support. Creating a supportive, empathetic learning environment on and offline is what I predict will be a key feature for remote learning.

ALIGNING TEACHING FOR CONSTRUCTING LEARNING

Over the years there has been much discourse on the building blocks to learning and demonstrating what learners to learn. For example the Structure of the Observed Learning Outcome (solo) taxonomy classifies the learning outcomes in terms of their complexity. In comparison, constructive alignment is about defining the learning outcomes and aligning them with teaching and assessment strategies (Biggs, 1999). There is no perfect formula to constructing learning because there are different contexts and demands from education systems and schools. Showing the grade criteria in my lesson plans and displaying them up on the board before learners entered the classroom seemed to be the norm for every lesson.. When I observed other teachers they seemed to follow the same method of making sure the grade criteria were visible for all learners. But if you asked the learners whether they know if they have completed a task to a satisfactory standard, the majority thought that the completion of the task was the ultimate goal. However, Biggs' Constructing Learning is about getting learners to construct meaning by interpreting the grade criteria in the context of their own experiences and prior knowledge. To help learners to digest or recall new information effectively, the new information needs to be organised and interpreted following a framework or concept, which is normally known as a schema. The constructivism view

is to explore what learners already know, so that new knowledge can be related to the existing schemas. This is where a teacher's culture capital and connection is paramount, because schemas can be cultural. Lev Vygotsky (1978: 57) suggested that,

> 'Every function in the learners' cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level and, later on, on the individual level; first, between people interpsychological and then inside the learner intrapsychological.'

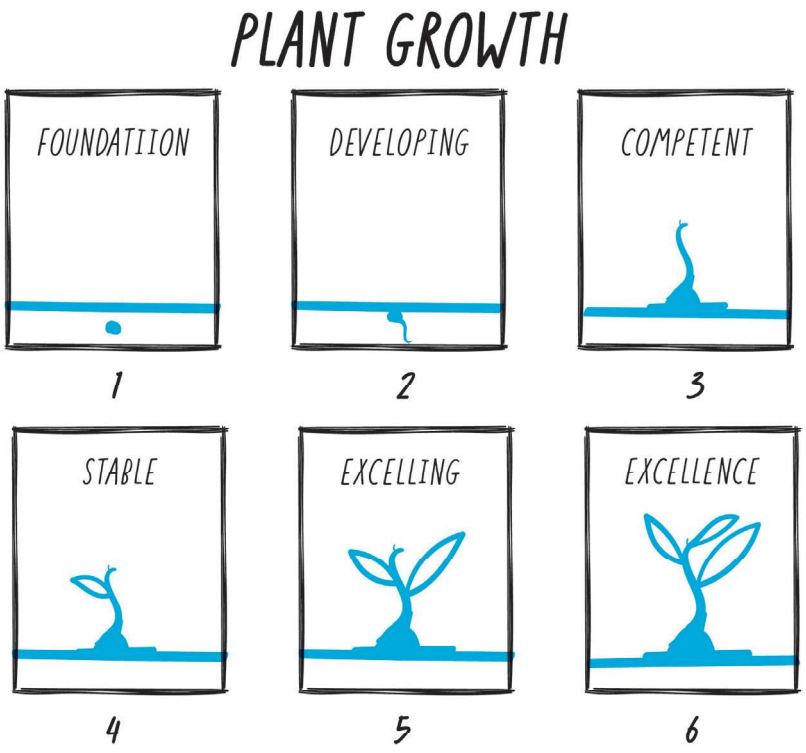
The learners use their social and cultural compass to see whether the teacher has their best interest in mind. Learners will consciously read their teachers by the way they make them feel during the lesson. Based on the teachers' responses, interactions and acknowledgement learners will decide to connect or disconnect. Teachers shouldn't assume they understand their learners until they make an effort to listen and understand their lived experiences. It's better to engage learners by giving them space to express themselves with new ideas and skills without dismissing their efforts. Use these opportunities to incorporate their insights into your lessons and demonstrate how they can enhance their skills against the lesson objectives. This will develop learners' confidence, create memorable moments and opportunities to build on the hidden skill sets they bring to school everyday.

USING VISUAL AIDS

Visual aids can be used in demonstrating what learners need to learn. The idea that making information visual for learners is ideal for engagement and holding their attention. Images can take many forms, from spatial awareness, and include different colours and tones, brightness and contrast and font variations. Visual images help to communicate, exchange ideas and unpack new information. The rise of the internet has made access to images easier for teachers to use in the classroom and teaching materials. Using images as visual learning aids is all about seeing things in order to learn them. It helps to summarise content into smaller chunks, which is more comprehensible than text-based explanations or audios alone. With the rise of presentation tools and software functionality it's easier than ever to animate and present images in new and exciting ways. From fading in images one at a time to showing animated sequences of content. Combining technology and the images provides a new dimension to simplify complex topics into visual images that learners can understand. However teachers can complicate the process by using lots of images, images over text, vibrant colours and distracting animations. This can be very confusing for individuals who are colour blind, dyslexic or autistic so it's imperative inclusive design features (i.e. clear font, text and pale backgrounds) are taken into consideration when using visual learning to demonstrate lesson content and objectives.

Using images to scaffold or model learning can be an effective visual aid to inspire and motivate learners. You can use digital images or freehand images on the board to either showcase what you want your learners to achieve or milestones for them to reach at key stages in the learning. You can also use visual images to model what levels or standards look like so learners understand what they need to do. Modelling good practice helps to encourage the class to

have a clear focus and helps to learner to understand when a milestones has been reached. The images may not lead the learners to the answers but gives them an idea of what is possible and their own journey of discovery. You can be very creative in what images you use to show the development and progress of the lesson activities. The aim is to avoid explaining too much knowledge and instructions, which may lead to learners losing focus and being confused about what they need to learn. Over-talking and/or over-imaging does not support good demonstrations or modelling. I have used images to model learning in a Year 10 computer science lesson, such as the plant diagram shown in Figure 2.1, which breaks down the stages of lesson completion.



The seed represents the foundation level (1), a sprouting plant represents a stable level (3), and a flourishing plant represents the excelling level (6). The example showed clarity, differentiation and workflow, which was important for learners of different abilities. Not all learners will reach the excelling level but they have the opportunity to see the stages of progression. The power of using images to showcase progression helps the learner to track and monitor their efforts. It keeps the process transparent and easy to follow. Instead of using numbers or sentences you can use images across the presentation slides and activity sheets to subtly show learners where they are at with their learning.

USING VIDEO AND AUDIO FOR CLASS DEMONSTRATIONS

There are different forms of demonstrating what learners need to know and what they are supposed to achieve by the end of the lesson. Some teachers may use verbal instructions, handouts, presentation slides or pre-recorded materials to assist with conveying their expectations. Learners will either be passive or active depending on the approach and style the teacher decides to use. Passive learning is when the learner takes in information from the teacher or instructional materials without overtly doing anything else. The teacher may use this method to settle the class, promote active listening and build confidence in the learners before they commence the main activity. The drawbacks are when learners become bored, distracted or confused, which creates an additional challenge for the teacher. Active learning is when the learner participates in the demonstration process in the form of discussion, questioning, writing down notes, or showcasing their prior skills or knowledge. It enforces full engagement from the learner as opposed to just replicating and regurgitating the information given. The things to consider with active learning during a demonstration is time keeping, to keep learners focused and engaged.

Background

Over the years teachers have started to introduce videos and audio into their lessons to demonstrate activities and learning outcomes. The use of interactive multimedia, audio/video tutorials and asynchronous content has taken centre stage in the discourse around educational technology. You can now narrate presentation slides, explain concepts through audio, answer learners' questions with voice notes and demonstrate how to solve subject content through videos. The content can then be uploaded on the VLE platform for learners to access remotely. The pandemic has organically endorsed asynchronous learning allowing learners to learn at their own pace and contribute to discussions by recording their answers via audio or video.

STRUCTURING YOUR PRESENTATION SLIDE FOR BETTER ENGAGEMENT

As an edtech specialist it would be a crime if I didn't mention a few ideas on how you can use presentation slides to increase engagement during the demonstrating part of the lesson. The best presentations are clear and easy to follow because they are not cluttered with unnecessary information.

Heading

Adding an action word as a title for each slide keeps the learners alert, for example calling a slide 'demonstration' gets straight to the point and everyone is clear with the process.

Main body and dual coding

The main body of the slide can have equal weight in text (verbal communication) and image (non-verbal processing), which is known as the dual coding theory. Allan Paivio coined the theory when he identified that our memory has two channels, which focus on visual and verbal stimuli. Whilst our memory stores them separately, the words and images are linked, which makes retrieval easier when prompted. Paivio states, 'Human cognition is unique in that it has become specialised for dealing simultaneously with language and with nonverbal objects and events' (Paivio, 1990 : p53). When the word or image is used it can stimulate the learner to retrieve the necessary information. Using dual coding in your demonstrations will help to reduce the learners' cognitive load, allowing them to focus on the key items. I normally insert an image on the slide of what learners need to achieve and add bullet points of technical or keywords to help them retain the information.

Testing learners

To ensure learners have grasped the demonstration I would display a similar slide during the lesson but leave out some elements and test them on their thought process. On many occasions when I thought learners had understood the demonstration, testing them revealed they got some of the concepts mixed up. Demonstrating is a continual process that can be used throughout the lesson. As mentioned in the previous section, you can get your learners involved by getting them to design their own dual code materials or presentation slides demonstrating their work.

CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE

In the GCSE computer science scheme of work there is a section on ethical, legal and environmental impacts of digital technology. The learners need to understand how technology affects people's daily lives. The topic is very broad but learners need to know how to apply the keywords (ethical, legal, environmental and culture) to any topic discussed. For example, if the topic was on facial recognition they would need to apply the keywords to the matter. I needed to ensure learners had understood the keywords and knew how to apply them to different contexts. Instead of teaching the keywords I provided a glossary and got them to apply their experiences to them. The majority had shouted out their lived experience using their mobiles phones – from being scammed to fake influencers. I was then able to use their examples to demonstrate how the keywords could be applied and what makes a good sentence construction. The engagement for activity significantly improved and learners knew exactly what they needed to do. During this activity learners controlled some areas of choice and partnered with me to make the topic come alive.

REFLECTION

Experience has taught me that in every scheme of work there is an opportunity to give learners a stake in the design and delivery. This is a negotiated space for learning, where learners play a

pivotal role in shaping the teaching and learning. I guess the fear for many teachers is letting go, or not having enough time to prepare; or even a sense of losing their authoritative figure in the classroom. There have been many occasions where learners spend a whole weekend looking at YouTube and come to lessons with advanced knowledge that I wasn't taught in my degree or on my teaching course. Instead of shutting them down, I reflect on where I could add those skills and insights into my lesson activities for a greater variety of demonstrations. This sharing does not only benefit teachers but all participants since there is reciprocity and respect for innovative ideas that benefit both teacher and learner(s) as they learn from each other.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- **When planning work for your learners to complete for skill building or assessment, do you have examples of what a poor, a good or an outstanding outcome, for instance, looks like?**
- **Also do you use help guides or frameworks to help them transition to the next level?**
- **Do we need to show the learner the destination/end goal, or should they just follow instructions as we take them on a journey through the content?**
- **How should those demonstrations be delivered?**
- **When could those demonstrations be used most effectively?**

DEMONSTRATION IN THE REAL WORLD

You could think of a demonstration as a football tactic being used on a flipboard to explain to players what the manager wants them to do against the opposing team. There is no doubt that a football manager has to be clear when explaining match tactics with his or her players. One style would be to stand in front of the players and use body movements to demonstrate what the players should be doing on the field; Manchester City's Pep Gurdiola is known for this. Without visualising what the manager is trying to convey to the players it could be difficult to understand and know what they are really supposed to do. However, by visualising the tactics through using a flipboard with an outline of a pitch and players occupying certain spaces on the field, the manager can use shapes and images on the board to make the tactics easier to follow. The manager could then create a dialogue with the players to check if they understand his demonstrations and provide space for players to give their own suggestions. The overall goal would be to ensure all parties understand their role and they are on the same page.

The football manager analogy is similar to a teacher's objective to get learners to understand what they are expected to achieve during the lesson. You may not be able to use fields and arrows but you can model what learners need to achieve; the modelling examples can be broken down into stages and managed into chunks so that learners can access the information and know when they are making progress.

HINTS & TIPS

- **Avoid using lots of text in your presentations**
- **Use images to show progression**
- **Use demonstrations to show the endless possibilities**
- **Get learners to demonstrate their own understanding**

WHEN CONNECT AND DEMONSTRATE COME TOGETHER

In addition, when it comes to assimilating a technical word such as 'algorithms' into the learner's own cultural schema and using these schemas to make sense of the technical word, I normally provide an everyday example of the technical word and then see if learners have their own example of the word. The majority of the time learners could verbally connect their technical words to their everyday lives. However, when I directed them to write the technical words into their own paragraphs or use them in an exam question, some learners struggled. The teacher's ability to provide rich context to technical words helps the learner to assimilate the information into their relevant schema. If the information is weak or unclear then the learners develop a poor foundation to build on. It's imperative that the subject knowledge, relationships, real world experiences and blind spots are factored in when it comes to constructing a good lesson.

CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE

In my Key Stage 3 ICT classes, I decided to record the lesson objectives, the different targets for the lesson, the different levels of attainment in the unit, and recapped the learning from previous lessons. I wanted to ensure learners who had missed lessons or wanted to revisit the work had to the opportunity to do so in their own time. For learners that were not able to access the content at home, the ICT department organised weekly after-school clubs. When I checked the analytics on the VLE, to my surprise the interaction with the content was good.

The challenge

The challenge I had was consistency, ensuring every week I recorded myself explaining the lesson content. Also having pre-recorded instructions or demonstrations helped save time, and reduced this aspect of my workload. One advantage here is that you avoid having to repeat the same or even similar instructions several times. You may need to train and support learners for several lessons before they get comfortable with these methods of working.

HINTS & TIPS

1. **Use stock photos for human images**
2. **Use icon packs for graphics and illustrations**
3. **Audio record on your digital device**
4. **Prepare 30-second lesson objectives**

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Setting the scene for learners to understand the stages of the lessons' goals can be a challenging experience because you are trying to show them the big picture based on your style and approach. Whether they can interpret or translate your explanation of this is the big question.

INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING

In our teacher training we are taught to generate lesson objectives for each lesson. These are then displayed on a whiteboard or projector at the start of the lesson. The lesson objectives are normally broken down into levels or theoretical and practical application, and that is usually subject dependent. Depending on the topic, the lesson objectives are accompanied by teacher-led tutorials or demonstrations to provide the learner with greater guidance and understanding.

LESSON OBSERVATIONS

When observing other teachers, I noticed lesson demonstrations had taken many forms, from a handout, to teacher led or learner led. The confident teachers would allow their learners to lead from the front, whereas some less confident teachers would lead the demonstration whilst managing the conduct of the class. I have found the real aim of using demonstrations, highlighted tasks or learning outcomes at the start of the lesson is to get learners to think about managing their progress, and then work independently towards their levels by using the lessons objectives, or using any signposted information as a road map through the lesson.

REFLECTION

In the past, once I had demonstrated the lesson objectives, I normally assumed learners knew what they had to do, and what a good standard of work would look like. The lesson demonstrations helped me in particular to plan and give me a direction for my lessons; but at times I found

that particular demonstrations didn't have the same impact for the learners. The majority of times, learners would produce work they thought met the standard but weren't sure on which objective they had completed. On many occasions when testing learners' understanding of the levels through questioning they couldn't identify where they were making progress.

CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE

In my Year 7, ICT lesson learners could tell me the acronym RAM stood for Read Only Memory, and with that they could tell me some technical terms of RAM, i.e. volatile, temporary and dynamic. However, to achieve a higher level my learners needed to be able to explain RAM in greater detail, such as how it is used in the real world; and this was missing from their written answers. In order to stretch my learners' thinking and understanding I devised a framework which helped the learners to define the acronym and write down its benefits.

I then levelled the framework:

Foundation – Define RAM acronym

Stable – Provide a definition of RAM with technical terms

Excelling – List several benefits of RAM using technical terms

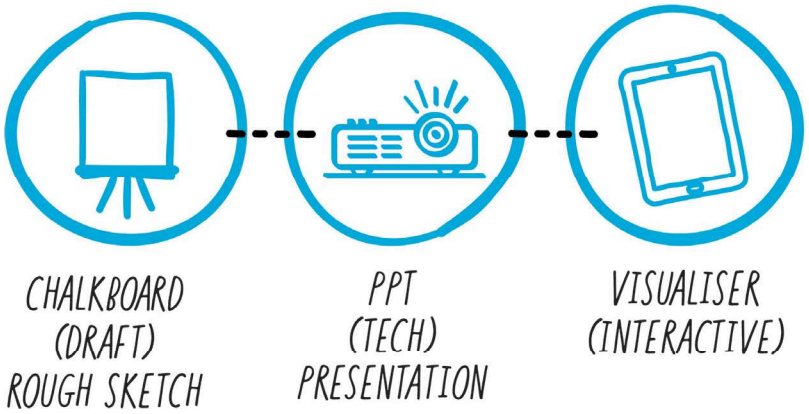
I found greater success in facilitating learning when I started to demonstrate what these levels looked like, especially by using visual examples, and being specific on the amount of words required to complete each statement. The learners soon grasped that if they got stuck or struggled they could use the help guide that I provided. This guide included a range of colours and steps to progress through, and with the colour guide the learner was able to reach the next stage of their learning progression. In my Year 11 year computer science class my learners struggled to write in full sentences when explaining technical concepts. So I used a level descriptor to show what a good explanation looked like. If they wrote two to three lines without any technical terms the level descriptor would indicate that the piece of work was stable; however, if they added a few more lines with technical words that would significantly improve the attainment in their work. The level descriptor was used as a support to get my learners not to rush through the work but take their time and think about the content of their work. I realised the power of demonstration and being specific in what you want the learners to produce or reach during a lesson.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- **Are you conscious of when your learners are in an active or passive state?**
- **How do you include all learners within the demonstration?**
- **Are you conscious of the time you take to lead a demonstration?**
- **How do you know your learners have understood your demonstration?**

ANOTHER TEACHER'S EXPERIENCE: KATHERINE MCLOUGHLIN (HEAD OF ENGLISH – SECONDARY SCHOOL)

One of the first pieces of advice I give to any teacher I'm mentoring or supporting is to try writing out end-point answers themselves before any planning or teaching takes place. For me, as an English teacher, this means writing out descriptive prose paragraphs, short stories, or essays. This was one of the steepest learning curves I went through as an NQT (or more realistically as an RQT). In some ways this becomes a bit of a Blue-Peter-esque 'here's one I made earlier' moment: a clear text to demonstrate as an outcome to the given task. Demonstration isn't simply a way to model to students what you want them to aim towards (though this is an important element of demonstration). I also view accurate demonstration as a key route to building confidence. Demonstration is also a process. It helps me to create personal confidence in my own knowledge and teaching by acting as a route to continuous mastery of knowledge – both at a subject and specification level. Carefully writing my own answers also increased my ability to articulate what I actually wanted students to achieve. For my students, I feel it helps to develop their respect and confidence in me as a practitioner. They become more confident that I am the expert in the room. Demonstration also acts as a guiding route for my ongoing planning. When writing any answer, I force myself to pause and consider the steps that I'm actually taking. It is this reflection on the different steps that allows me to identify what my lessons need to be focused on. These steps range from how to embed evidence into an analytical paragraph, or even how to vary sentence starts in prose writing. The way I use demonstration in class has evolved over my time as a teacher. Initially I aimed to have examples ready to show my classes. These very much acted as polished finished pieces, rather than necessarily allowing students themselves to be involved in the demonstration. In some ways this works well as a route to giving an idealised end point. For more able students (or as a route to revision after initial teaching) this can be an effective way to allow students to break down the steps I've used to create a piece of writing. On further reflection on my practice, I began to realise that focusing merely on the final result had the potential to be both intimidating and make the students themselves quite passive in their learning. Now I've learnt that demonstration requires a mixture of the finished product and the process itself. This has meant that I've increasingly used my time in lessons to actively demonstrate writing in front of my students, pausing between different steps to both explain my thought process and to challenge students to explain what they believe I need to do next. Increasingly, this has relied on different forms of technology in the classroom. My initial teaching on my PGCE was using whiteboards and chalkboards, which presented pretty obvious limitations for demonstration in terms of board space. This evolved into typing and colour coding using PowerPoints. More recently I've been able to use a visualiser (digital version of an OHP) that makes the whole process feel more natural. Students can see me needing to go back and physically cross out the errors or the sentences I've decided I need to change. The use of visualisers in my classroom has enabled me to also update my demonstration of the relevant mark scheme. I've been able to 'live' mark pieces of work in front of classes, with all seeing exactly what I'm highlighting as achievement and what needs to be corrected. As my teaching moves towards greater focus on student reflection and peer assessment, this style of demonstration has proved invaluable as a way to model the processes they should also be following.

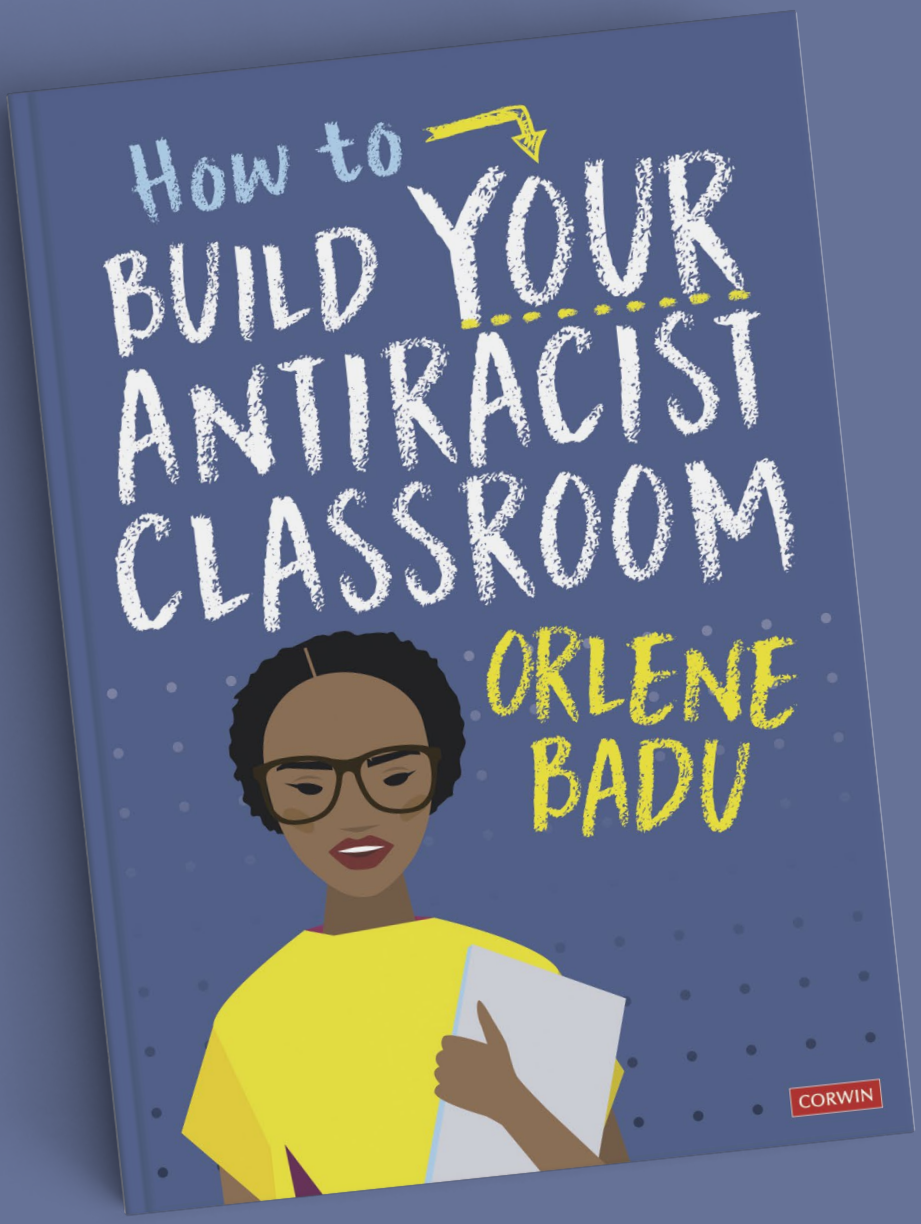


SOCIAL MEDIA

Join the conversation by using the hashtag #myteachingroutine on social media. Share with other educators how you demonstrate what learners need to know in your lessons. You can showcase your example through a photo, video, presentation slide or post.

How to Build Your Antiracist Classroom

Orlene Badu



CHAPTER 2

CHALLENGING YOUR UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

To build community requires vigilant awareness of the work we must continually do to undermine all the socialisation that leads us to behave in ways that perpetuate domination.

– BELL HOOKS, 2003

Figure 2.1 Line-up of men

Have a look at the image in Figure 2.1. You will see five men, all dressed in traditional work attire staring out at you. Take a moment and look at them, what they are wearing, their facial expressions, the way they wear their hair, the stance they take. Now, if one of them were the CEO of a high-performing, FTSE 100 company, who would that be? Yes, that is the question. And yes, I am aware that you will have to make this decision with no other information about them. No idea where they live, their age, where they were educated, if they are educated and to what level.

I know this activity will cause us varying degrees of discomfort. I know that for many of you reading this book, the request to make a decision about the job someone does based solely on what they look like will feel uncomfortable. Having done this activity with several individuals, including teachers, educators, leaders, CEOs too, it is clear that this activity creates a tension in us. We feel uneasy to make those very public or personal decisions based on what someone looks like. When doing this training, I 'push on' nonetheless and ask attendees to discuss in pairs who it could be for the benefit of the learning. There are many that will discuss the line-up, as requested, and tentatively decide. And there are some that point blank refuse, refuse to engage, refuse to make a decision about someone based on how they look.

There are those attendees that challenge me because there are no women in the line-up, and how unreflective of society it is to have a solely male presence in the image. How sexist this is, as surely a woman can be the CEO of any company?

To which I reply yes they can, but as quoted in March 2021, with little evidence to contradict since, only 5% of top jobs in the largest 500 companies are being held by a woman, as highlighted in a *Financial Times* article (Mooney, 6 March 2021). Therefore, sadly, this line-up is very reflective of society.

And yet the line-up is not reflective of society at all, because if we refer to another *Financial Times* article (Strauss, 3 February 2021) we will know that, as reported in February 2021, not only is there no black representation at the top of the FTSE 100 companies, but in 2021 the UK had not yet met the target set in 2016 that at least one director of the highest performing UK companies would come from a minority ethnicity by 2021.

Similarly if I asked a different question of the line-up, like 'Who in this line-up is a headteacher?', again, recent UK data would suggest the black man would not be mentioned as currently only 2% of teachers in the UK are black, 1.9% are Indian, 0.6% are Bangladeshi, 0.2% are Chinese and 91% are white. With regard to headteachers in the UK, 0.9% are black, 0.1% are Bangladeshi, 0.1% are Chinese and an overwhelming 97% are white.

When delivering this exercise to a group there is always one who will proudly say in some variation or other: 'Well I am not choosing because I do not make decisions about someone just by looking at them. That is not right.'

I have no doubt that those of us who 'think' we do not make judgements and assessments all of the time truly believe that this is the case. We whole-heartedly **believe** that any decisions we make about people and situations all of the time are completely unbiased. Or, we whole-heartedly **believe** that we have to make it appear as if we do not make decisions and assessments about people all of the time.

And yet, as I will explain over the rest of this chapter, we have an innate habit within us that means we make split-second assessments and judgements about people and situations *all of the time*.

Ask yourself this key question. When you have a parent you have a difficult relationship with walking quickly across the playground to speak with you at the end of a very long day, what do you 'see', how do you 'feel' and what are you 'expecting' when you look at them coming? As a comparison, when you see a parent you have a good relationship with walking across the playground to speak with you on a Friday, what do you 'see' when you look at them coming?

The limitations of our brain

Our brains are intricate systems, powerful and able to process large amounts of information, with research citing our brains being able to receive up to 11,000,000 bits of information every second (as cited by Wu et al., 2016).

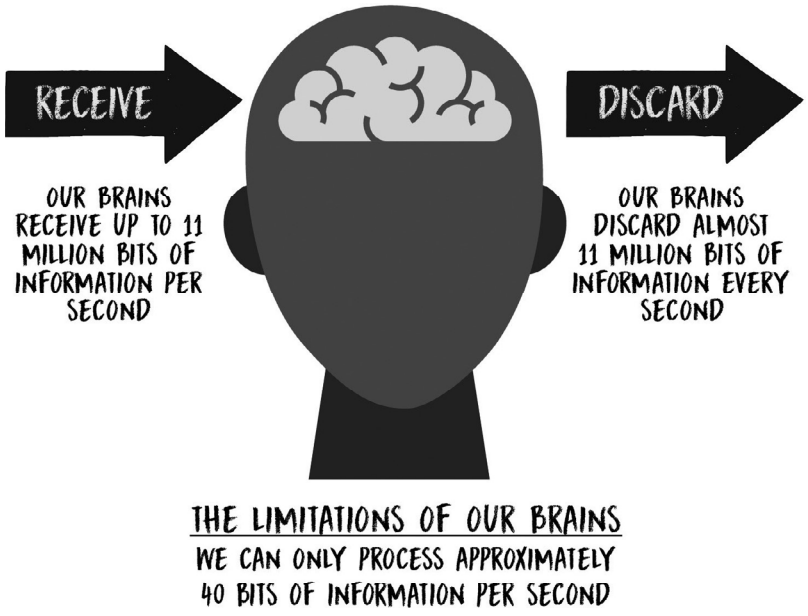


Figure 2.2 The limitations of our brain

Source: As cited by Wu et al., 2016

And yet, our conscious minds can only process up to 40 bits of information per second to ensure understanding (see Figure 2.2). That means we discard almost 11,000,000 bits of information every second. And that process of discarding is important to understanding bias and racism as we try to unpick what are the **key** pieces of information that we discard every second to ensure we can process information as quickly and as efficiently as possible.

What is unconscious bias?

If you refer to a dictionary to locate a meaning for bias it will probably read something like:

1. A particular tendency, trend, inclination, feeling, or opinion, especially one that is preconceived or unreasoned.
2. Unreasonably hostile feelings or opinions about a social group; prejudice.

Unconscious bias is a term that describes the associations we hold outside of our conscious awareness and control. Our unconscious biases are triggered by our brain making very rapid and implicit judgements continually.

This is a clear definition and yet unconscious bias is not easily understood and identified by us. It is not something we are all aware of at the time, all of the time and therefore we can fall prey to the impact of our unconscious biases, often unwittingly. There are many that dispute the term unconscious bias and feel that it gives others the blueprint to be biased or racist. But it really is not that. It is an innate habit that can motivate actions and beliefs long before we have had a chance to reflect and understand. Whilst it is unconscious, our understanding of it will ensure that we are all aware we have it and if left 'unchecked' it can have devastating consequences.

Unconscious biases are the societal stereotypes about certain groups of people that we form outside of our own conscious awareness. They are borne of our personal experiences, the societal stereotypes that surrounded us as we grew up and matured, the cultural context we lived within and our backgrounds – all without us realising. They are ever present in the implicit, rapid judgements and assessments we all make about people and situations **all of the time**. Therefore, when staff tell me that they do not make assessments about people without knowing them I have to correct them and tell them that actually you do; and if unchecked we can and will do it all of the time in our jobs, in the relationships we build and in our daily interactions.

Humans spent much of their evolutionary history in small tribes in competition for scarce resources, hence having a natural tendency to view 'out-group' members with distrust and hostility (Balliet et al., 2014). *We still have* this innate tendency within us to view those in out-groups with distrust and hostility. It also means that we view those within our own groups as familiar, **trusted** and able. So now that we know it is an innate tendency, the 'what' we do to mitigate against its negative impact is vital.

Santos and Rosati (2015) identified that biases operate quickly, effortlessly and outside of our awareness – which can mean that merely recognising that we have a bias does not always make that bias go away. This is absolutely the point. Knowing we have bias alone does not make it go away. The subconscious way it is enacted means that we are not conscious of it at all times and need to build systems and structures both within ourselves and our institutions to limit its impact.

SO TO BE CLEAR, WE ALL HAVE UNCONSCIOUS BIAS? ***YES, WE DO!***

Even we teachers, who came into this role as a vocation to support every child and change lives, we too have biases that can and do have a negative impact. And what is

important is owning and understanding that and having a plan of what we do about it. It is also worth noting that our biases are defined by our personal experiences, so while we all have bias it will vary depending on our experiences.
AND OUR BIASES CAN NEVER BE SWITCHED OFF? *NO, NEVER.*

So, the important question therefore is how do we **manage** our biases? How do we ensure we do not transmit them to the children we serve and the relationships we build with them and their families? How do we make sure they do not affect our expectations, aspirations for others or openness to learn and understand?

The brain has up to 200 biases that can be triggered as we seek to process when we have too much information, when we do not have enough meaning, when we need to act fast and when we are trying to process what we should remember.

When are we most likely to be driven by our biases?

There are key times when humans (which obviously includes teachers) are most likely to be driven by our biases – a process that actually has nothing to do with the children and everything to do with us. Those times are highlighted on the bar chart in Figure 2.3.

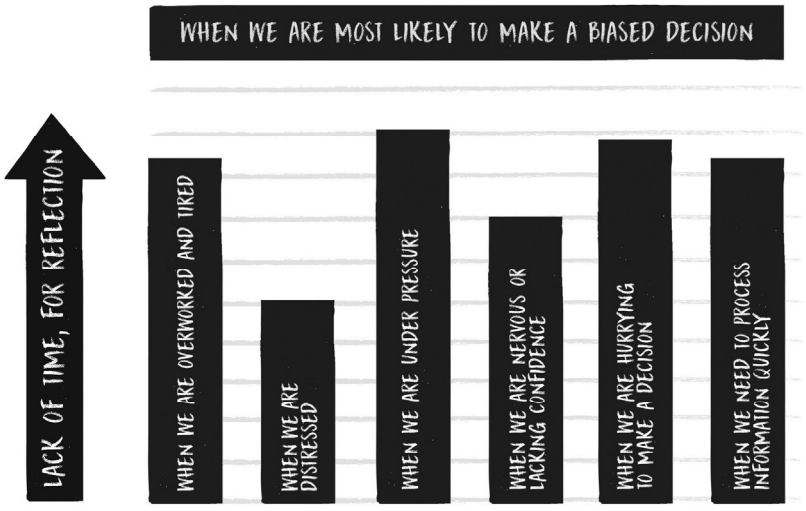


Figure 2.3 When we are most likely to make a biased decision

We all have highly pressurised and accountable roles in schools and settings, and it is important as part of the management of our biases that we recognise when we are most likely to feel driven by them. 'So what?' I hear you ask me. I am often

challenged that knowing this is useful but how do we change that process? How do we have some ownership over mitigating against these times? There are two practices that we should always employ when we are feeling like this. As a possible scenario please consider this:

It is a Friday evening and the children have just left school. A member of your team has just had a very difficult day with a child whom they have deemed as having no respect for them, cataloguing the challenging behaviour that was displayed all day and therefore impacting on the learning of all the other children. They are drained and feel that this cannot continue. If it does continue, they are concerned it will damage their own mental wellbeing and that of others in the class. They come to you and tell you that they want something done, and now. They report both that they cannot have this child in their classroom anymore as they are worried about the detrimental impact it is having, and they want the child to get the right support.

The first response to this scenario is not to agree to anything, not to promise that you will put things in place immediately to ensure the member of your team feels well supported/listened to. You can support your team members in your class, phase or school and listen to them without knee jerk reactions that can have irreversible consequences for that young person and ultimately their lives. This leads me onto the first strategy to mitigate against making a decision that can be driven by biases.

1. At times when you or a member of your team feel most under pressure, nervous, overworked and tired, build in TIME before making a decision. Do not make a decision that could be rushed when emotions are raw and therefore can have irreversible consequences. Ask your team member, or encourage yourself, to go home and discuss it the following day. To overcome making decisions that can be driven by bias we MUST build in time to allow us to go away and calm down before moving on to step two.
2. When we have given ourselves the opportunity to step away from the situation and recover our emotions, allowing ourselves to have a clearer picture, for many of us this means we will begin to reflect on the situation. REFLECTION is essential at step two to challenge our biases. This allows us to consider the whole scenario, gain control of our emotions and think about the situation in another environment, removed from where the emotions were experienced. Therefore, we can have a much clearer focus and make a decision that is less likely to have irreversible and detrimental outcomes for the young person, their family or for ourselves.

It is important to recognise the relationships we build and the impact that our biases can have. When thinking about your most challenging points in a day or a week it is good to ask yourself if you can stop and return at a later point with an answer when you have given yourself time to reflect. This is particularly important in the relationships we have with parents/carers.

Note that the usual times that parents/carers can share any concerns with us are first thing in the morning when we need to get their children into class or at the end of a very long day when we may have staff meetings/afterschool clubs to lead/work to mark. So as not to damage the remarkably important relationships we have with parents/carers, can we arrange a particular time when we feel less pressured? Can we call them when things are calmer, and we are able to reflect? All of these questions and many more will be asked in Chapter 9 when we consider how to build mutually beneficial and supportive relationships with parents/carers.

Micro-behaviours and their place in the classroom and our relationships

Micro-behaviours, sometimes known as micro-aggressions, can be a key indicator as to whether we hold preconceived notions or assumptions about someone – without saying a word. They are a main way that we can convey our biases about people or situations. They have such great importance in the interactions we have every day, and yet we are often completely unaware of them. Of course, some micro-aggressions are consciously done; but there are many that we exhibit all of the time without realising it, or thinking it is acceptable as we are never challenged about it.

So, what are micro-behaviours?

Micro-behaviours are brief and commonplace gestures, facial expressions, words, tone of voice used or assumptions that we are all capable of transmitting **about** people and **to** people all of the time. They openly expose the assumptions we make about others based on our biases. Be AWARE, if you have an assumption about someone, they DO KNOW through your micro behaviours. An example would be if we were talking about a child from a systemically disadvantaged background and we said to another member of staff:

> 'What reason do they have for being absent on Monday, it's not like they have a weekend home in Norfolk, is it?'

This statement immediately displays your biases. It immediately shows that you have lower expectations of their experiences because they face systemic challenges in

society. It screams, they have no valid reason for being away from school because financially they are incapable of enjoying that lifestyle. It is also the assumption that being able to have a second home in Norfolk is a valid reason for being absent and therefore viewed more favourably. It is a small question that can be lost in the plethora of tasks in our busy day and yet it can have so much negative impact as it communicates hostility, low expectations and it is derogatory.

It is not our job as educators to tell someone who has felt the impact of a micro-aggression based on their race, class or gender that it is NOT a micro-aggression. And when we do the work to be an Ally, we understand that by defending the choice of words we use, we often minimise the negative impact felt by the victim to down-play/deny harm.

Furthermore, the perpetrator who has wielded the micro-aggression is in no place to make decisions about whether it was hostile, whether it communicated an insult and whether the victim should or shouldn't feel any negative impact.

Micro-aggressions are often at the root of whether people feel a sense of inclusion or exclusion. So, when trying to identify if we are an inclusive organisation, it is not always about macro-situations which are much more visible, we also have to be mindful of micro-behaviours that can convey hostility and make pupils, parents or staff feel isolated and excluded. Because they are so small, they are difficult to challenge.

We must also be mindful that we are most likely to display our biases through micro-aggressions when we are hurrying to make decisions, when stressed or when we are having to multitask. Importantly, many parents/carers have identified that when feeling excluded by their school it is often due to micro-behaviours that the teacher/member of staff has delivered, sometimes without knowing it. It is the choice of words the member of staff chooses to use with them, the tone of voice they employ. Of course, many of us as educators would deny speaking with disdain to some parents, but the parents/carers have the evidence in that they see the way we engage with other parents/carers and they know what it looks like if you are included in our system and if the school views the parent/carer as supportive/familiar. If a parent says, 'my child's teacher speaks to me very loudly and slowly like I couldn't possibly understand them', I imagine that many of us would deny that. Instinctively we defend our position and deny any such tone of voice or choice of words. And yet we must ask why we do not speak to all parents/carers in the same tone, with the same choice of words. Micro-aggressions are easy to dismiss, and therefore really difficult to challenge.

REFLECT

How often have we told a child that an incident that they felt was racist and reported as such was not? How often have we told them having investigated, it was definitely mean but definitely wasn't because of their race? Are we undermining their experiences? Are we basically saying you may have felt that, but we don't believe it?

If we are providing a model to our children about how to manage micro-aggressions in the classroom, we must plan for this really carefully and be intentional about how we model that for the children and how we use the language to challenge micro-aggressions also. This will help us to prepare for micro-aggressions that we may ourselves administer or receive.

Possible steps	Strategies to reduce micro-aggressions
1. Discuss with children the power of our words and what they can convey.	Begin to think about the impact of our words on others.
2. Show the children Figure 2.1 and ask who is a headteacher and explain your reasons why you think it is that person.	Begin to understand that we all have bias, that we all think we know what/who people are and that it is really important to explore these biases – give young people the language!
3a. Ask children/young people to identify any biased views/ opinions about them that they have experienced – have people expected something of them because of who they are? 3b. Ask the children to identify any sentence stems they think they can use if they think someone is making assumptions about them. They often have the answers having experienced micro-aggressions repeatedly.	Talk about what you should say if someone says something that is biased – give them the language to use if they come up against a micro-aggression: Why would you think that? Who taught you that? Where does that idea come from? It is ok to say sorry… I find that quite hurtful/harmful because… Have you thought about the impact of your words? Is there a better way you could have said that? Why is where I am from important? Thank you for making the effort to engage with me but I would like you to use my name…

Possible steps	Strategies to reduce micro-aggressions
4. Make it clear to your children that if they have experienced a micro-aggression, they can come to you and discuss it in a space where they will be supported and not have their experience questioned/ undermined/challenged.	Offer dedicated time for them to speak to you as it will have overall impact on academic outcomes and their own lived experiences. Listen to the child and understand how the experience felt for them and advise how they could challenge it.

Table 2.1 Strategies to reduce micro-aggressions in my classroom

Table 2.1 identifies clear steps to develop the culture in our classroom where micro-aggressions are challenged, thus allowing us to have open and honest discussions to educate our class about how to understand what they are and learn how not to repeat them due to their devastating effects.

QUESTION

How do we make biases in the classroom visible enough to enable us to challenge and disrupt them?

Questioning the power dynamics in our classroom is important here. Power and its place in the application of systems is integral to being able to make biases visible. For every situation, consider power dynamics; consider who/how the system is using their power in a positive way or to ultimately maintain control. The most inclusive leaders and systems are able to redress power in their interactions. They are able to understand the power they have and recognise how challenging that can be for others. If a leader wants to know about the honest views of others, they have to ensure the environment is a safe space where all members can amplify their voice and not fear negative reprisals or consequences. They must also be confident enough to be able to ask where the biases lie in their classroom and be open to finding a way to address those biases and ensure a much more equitable school than we may have first thought we had. Distributing power in an equitable way also requires us to **reflect** on systems, situations, relationships, expectations and all outcomes in our classroom.

How to Build Your Antiracist Classroom

PLAN

Individual bias	Systemic bias
Why do I accept less work from Child A? Why is it acceptable that I am satisfied that child A is doing the routines of the class only? Why do I disbelieve their Early Years/KS1/KS2 data? Why do I say the previous teacher MUST have inflated their scores? Why am I fearful of that parent and not others? Why do I find that parent/carer much more difficult to maintain a relationship with? Why am I less concerned if I do not build a strong relationship with that child/parent? Which children do I struggle to build a positive relationship with regularly? Is it because they are not familiar or similar to me? Who is **responsible** for that lack of relationship? Did I really turn away from that parent/carer whilst they were speaking to me without realising it? Which children do well in my class? Which children are always in trouble, always need redirecting or I always to have 'watch' them to ensure they are doing the right thing? Who is my helper? Who do I give the most empathy to because we have a strong relationship? Who do I pity because of what I believe to be their tragic circumstances? Do I consider the micro-behaviours I am exhibiting? Are members of my class team doing any of the above? How do I challenge that? How do I support them to be able to ensure all my students thrive in my care?	Why do I speak to the DSL in an accelerated manner about some children and not all? Who gets recommended to be assessed by the EP or the SALT? Who regularly gets rewarded for effort and achievement? Who regularly gets rewarded for routine tasks such as sitting nicely, not talking, tidying up? Why have I placed particular children in that place in my classroom? If they need support, are they at the back? Do I give them the opportunity to have some independence away from the front of the classroom? Do I/my team write children's names on the board if I have labelled them as being naughty? How long are those names publicly displayed? Do the children see themselves reflected in what I teach in the curriculum? Do I ensure all my interventions are run to add value, and not 'to be seen' to improve outcomes whilst believing deeply there will never be any change? Who is repeatedly in trouble and the behaviour chart is not supporting their behaviour adequately? Do I think behaviour is just 'behaviour'? Who do I have most concerns about? Is it largely children that have very different experiences to myself? Do my assessment opportunities reflect all children in my class? Are they able to bring the wealth of their own cultural capital to the assessment opportunity?

Table 2.2 Individual bias versus systemic bias in the classroom

Table 2.2 considers some of the possible entry points for bias in our classroom and asks key questions that support us in making biases in our classroom visible, thus enabling us to challenge and disrupt them.

ACT

Next steps to 'see' biases in the classroom. Review the list in Table 2.2:

- It is a good idea to sit on your own and then repeat sitting with a trusted colleague/team and reflect on these questions.
- Use real examples in your classroom, evaluate your practice and identify if there are any differences in outcomes or experiences for your children and young people.
- Try and reflect why those experiences of young people that are in the same classroom, with the same resources, the same staff and the same environment are vastly different.
- Do not refer to challenges the child faces outside of the classroom, only inside the classroom or school.
- Have a look at the lists that you come up with, what do you notice? Who do you notice?
- Think about the information you were given about that child from their previous teacher, their school records or a home visit that may have been carried out. Have they impacted on your expectations or presumptions?
- Now identify next steps for yourself, identifying how you can consider these findings going forward and how they will impact on your practice.
- Begin to think about how you can have these conversations with staff who you work with in your class and give them the questions perhaps to evaluate themselves.
- You may want to consider doing it as a year group/phase team/subject team when looking at outcomes and experiences across the group.

Case Study – Young black boys aged 15/16 in an inner London school

Yudkin et al. (2016) found that implicit bias is grounded in a basic human tendency to divide the social world into groups. They also

(Continued)

identified that when people made their decisions about people from different groups swiftly, they were biased in their treatment.

The tenacity and ingenuity that teachers employ to meet the outcomes of all of their pupils is a well-established strength of our institution. When a teacher/educator employs an intervention that has impact and improves outcomes, the first thing they will try and do is repeat it and for a wider group of children. When discussing different groups, and the outcomes of their experiences, I know that teachers will take this information and identify how to apply that to as many young people that they serve as possible. Primarily when reading this case study, I want you to think about this context for young black boys who are the most systemically disadvantaged, as highlighted in the previous chapter. You can then also begin to use it to think about other children and young people that you work with when trying to consider solutions to improve their outcomes. It is important that we hear these experiences of those most systemically disadvantaged in the UK and then identify the impact of this learning on all young people we serve.

A group of young black boys who attend an inner-city high school spoke about their experiences of bias in the classroom as well as in and around the school across their time in education. Whilst recounting these scenarios must have been re-traumatising, I was very grateful for the opportunity to know their deeply personal and moving stories. They were very clear that they experienced bias every day in their interactions with staff and that they tended not to talk to staff about bias for fear of reprisal. In circumstances where they had talked to staff about actions that they perceived as biased or racist they would often be given an internal exclusion, forced to apologise for such an offensive suggestion and would then endure a damaged relationship going forward. They had learnt not to speak up or to speak out. They had learnt that bias and racism were topics their teachers would not discuss and would punish them for even considering the presence of bias in their classroom.

When reading this account please reflect on these deeply personal experiences and identify if any of these scenarios that they commonly articulated are recognisable. Also consider how you can challenge them in your own classroom.

Large groups of black boys – THREAT! DANGER! BE ALARMED!

The young men were very clear in the ways that they were surveilled and managed physically around the school and they also articulated very clearly about how this manifested as they got older, taller and had deeper voices. They sensed an anxiety by staff as they moved around the school and building, which led to a very real understanding of the biased perceptions that staff collectively held about them. They were very clear that when they socialised in large groups at break times they sensed an unease by staff that often materialised in a fear to approach them but staring cautiously from numerous vantage points. But they also encountered staff who would insist on breaking them up, schools often employing a rule about how many of them could congregate at any one time. They were very clear that this was a biased response as they could all articulate frequent occasions when other pupils had congregated, one citing a group of white non-disadvantaged girls who would play the ukulele in the playground every day with no interference or requests to move on from anxious or hostile staff members.

REFLECT

Do you ever consider scenarios in your class/lessons and think logistically how to organise groupings due to anxiety about groups being too boisterous, challenging or unmanageable? Where do those anxieties come from? How can you mitigate against them? Are there groups whose movements in their social times you never question as a cause for concern?

Pointless praise – routine tasks

The young boys discussed the types of praise that they experienced in the classroom and more importantly how that compared to other pupils in their class/lessons. Interestingly, I think it is important to highlight that having had hundreds of conversations with staff about the way they praise children, I have never had a discussion in which a teacher has identified any bias in the way they praise children in their classrooms, most often citing that in cases where there was a challenging child in their class,

(Continued)

they would often over-praise. And yet what these young boys were talking about was not that they were NOT getting praise (some citing exaggerated, embarrassing displays of praise, which I will discuss) but that the quality of the praise was translating such low expectations of them. As an example, they were able to articulate that many teachers would praise them for routine tasks, and used examples such as:

'Well done for sitting nicely.'

'Well done for not talking.'

'Well done for staying focused for 10 minutes.'

This was in direct opposition to the types of praise they recalled their peers getting:

'Well done for using an authorial voice.'

'Well done for sustaining a lengthy piece of writing.'

'Excellent use of expanded noun phrases.'

They were able to understand the difference in expectations of them in the classroom as were all the other children and cited that they very quickly learned that many of their teachers had few or no expectations of them to achieve praise or reward for effort, persistence or more importantly achievement, but basically only expected them to stay in the class and not cause disruption. This was a clear sign of assumptions their teachers had about their performance and outcomes which they found embarrassing and undermining. The underlying message being that if they were well controlled in the classroom they could be ignored.

REFLECT

How can you assess the way that you praise children and the quality of praise? Being aware is a very significant first step but can you as a class team review one another's praise given and types of praise over the course of a lesson and reflect afterwards what you learnt? Can you also give yourself a quota that every child should receive praise that day about achievement, effort and persistence?

Black escalation effect – an effect also prevalent in the criminal justice system

Okonofua and Eberhardt (2015) wanted to understand disparities in discipline between black, Latino and white students. They cited implicit bias and the 'escalation effect' as being responsible for these disparities. They found that the escalation effect occurs when a person detects a pattern that corresponds to existing stereotypes, and then responds to that pattern in an escalated way. As an example, if a young black student were to hand in their homework a day later than expected and then later that week make another small mistake in another unrelated encounter, the implicit bias the teacher may already hold about black students will cause the teacher to detect a pattern in these unrelated incidents and subsequently respond in an escalated way – by perhaps severe disciplining, suspending or exclusion of that pupil.

Interestingly this is an effect that came to light in discussions with the young black boys. They were able to describe clear examples of when they would receive a much more rapid and severe consequence which would be escalated much more rapidly. Again, they compared the consequences their peers received from similar behaviours or often worse, enjoying a warning or reminder to redirect. They also articulated that getting such a rapid response, which often meant removal from the class, internal exclusion or referral to the headteacher, was having a huge impact on their learning, leaving them with gaps in knowledge, understanding and a deterioration of their working relationships with peers. They noted that these escalated responses were also affecting the way they were viewed by their peers.

REFLECT

Do we ever think about the communication we have with particular pupils in our class who need support or may be unchallenged? Do we notice all children when they are working hard? Can we look at the ways young people in our class seek support and consider an alternative to disrupt negative behaviours to gain our attention or support? Do your expectations of particular groups mean that we are only alert to their needs when they meet the stereotypes we have?

Stereotypical behaviours get results

The young boys reflected on the way that they received support in the classroom and how bias played a large part in gaining it. They were clear that often, when doing the right thing (routine responses often focused on controlled behaviours) such as sitting quietly and without interruption, they would largely be ignored by the teacher, who often only spoke to them expecting to have to redirect behaviour or manage them in some way. Therefore, if they ever needed support from the teacher/staff in the classroom they knew that they would have to exhibit stereotypical behaviours that were expected of them by staff to get it. Support needed could be for emotional needs, academic support, mental health needs – in fact, it could be for anything and yet they knew stereotypical behaviours such as being sullen, speaking aggressively or making loud interruptions would mean immediate responses from the teacher or staff. They recognised the challenge of this cycle but felt the staff, as professional adults, should be responsible for disrupting it.

No chance to excel when setting in subjects

Setting in subjects was a real concern for the young boys, often feeling like a teacher's bias could keep them in a particular set with no chance to escape or excel. They were clear that if you were to walk around their schools during a core subject you would find an ethnicity divide – almost segregated classes between lower sets and higher sets. They were clear that teacher expectations meant that many lower sets were almost monocultural, with a heavy presence of black boys and other non-white peers. There was also a real sense among the young boys that if you were in a lower ability set, there was absolutely no reason to work hard as you would never be able to achieve well enough to escape this group. According to them, often teachers already had a pre-set bias and would not think they were even capable of excelling or gradually improving over time. Thus often, as a young black man, being in a lower ability set was a long-term scenario with almost zero chance to escape it.

Interestingly one of the young men was in a higher ability group and was always threatened that he would have to move down if he did not keep up with the content. He was able to cite where other peers he shared this class with were never made to feel this way and would often not work hard or push themselves as there was no real threat that they would ever get moved down.

Whilst there was a uniform acceptance that this happened in their high school, many of them could see the beginnings of this system in their primary education also, recalling stories of similar limited movement for them in lower ability groups in which young black boys were over-represented.

REFLECT

How are children grouped in your classroom/lesson? What information have you used to make these groupings? Is any of it based on perceptions you have acquired from other staff members, parental interactions, previous engagement with that young person, poor relationships, assumption of capabilities? How can you review these arrangements in your class and who can you involve in that decision-making process to allow for some objectivity?

When the school staff limit the impact of mentoring

Many of the boys could recount stories of mentoring they had received. A small amount of it being really poor, but much of it having great impact. They were able to identify the positive outcomes from the mentoring, including improved sense of self, deepening their sense of belonging, positive role models, supporting their own aspirations for themselves, a positive approach to life and their future destinations among other things. They mentioned walking out of the room every week after their session feeling on top of the world and ready to fly… only to be stopped by a teacher whose own biased perceptions of them persisted outside of the session – to be shouted at by staff in an aggressive manner or tone, for example, or on returning to class being asked if this 'mentoring thing' was going 'to help you behave

(Continued)

from now on'. They really wanted me (and us) to consider the impact of mentoring if the whole staff team were not going to consider their biased opinions and build on the really positive engagement of the mentoring sessions.

REFLECT

If you have put any interventions/support for young people in your class, how can you make sure they are given a space in their classroom to improve and develop as a result of that work? How do we share with all of our staff team the work of the sessions, the impact we want it to have and that theirs and your own expectations of that young person are vitally important to effect change?

Black adultification – an effect also prevalent in the criminal justice system

Gilmore and Bettis (2021) noted that there is an institutional unwillingness to see black youth as children. Shared discourses on what it means to be a child, who can occupy that positive space, and when a particular stage of a child's development is reached, are all structured against black youth. They are pathologised as deviant, with adult-like problems. The study described how they are denied childhood status but carry adult-like culpability that leads to a lack of autonomy, and they are not granted leniency to learn from their mistakes like their white peers, thus making black children much more susceptible to a wide range of violence from school punishment, the criminal justice system, sexual abuse and exploitation and excessive police force.

The young boys in the inner London school were very vocal in their understanding of how this phenomenon impacts on their daily lives. They had many stories to recount about when they were treated as if they were much older than they were and when they were given much more responsibility for their behaviour, vastly more so than their peers. They were keen to explain that their peers were often treated as children and as such would often be spoken to like a child, given

opportunities for reflection and deliberation and engaged in genuine discussions to identify ways forward. They were supported well.

These young black boys, however, felt that they were treated in a much more adult way than their peers, and if they made any mistakes there was an expectation that they were responsible, they knew what they were doing and should be treated much more harshly because of that. This was directly in opposition to the way they felt their peers were treated. These recollections are difficult to hear, but they cited examples of:

- Staff barging them with their bodies to 'physically move them out of the way'
- Staff screaming at them and humiliating them in public, undermining them in front of all staff and more importantly their peers
- Staff overheard saying, 'they are big enough, they can take it'
- Staff giving them full responsibility for any mistakes made, unlike mitigating factors afforded to other students

Again, they cited that they could not challenge any of these scenarios through fear of being labelled defiant and all the negative effects that come along with that label for a black child.

REFLECT

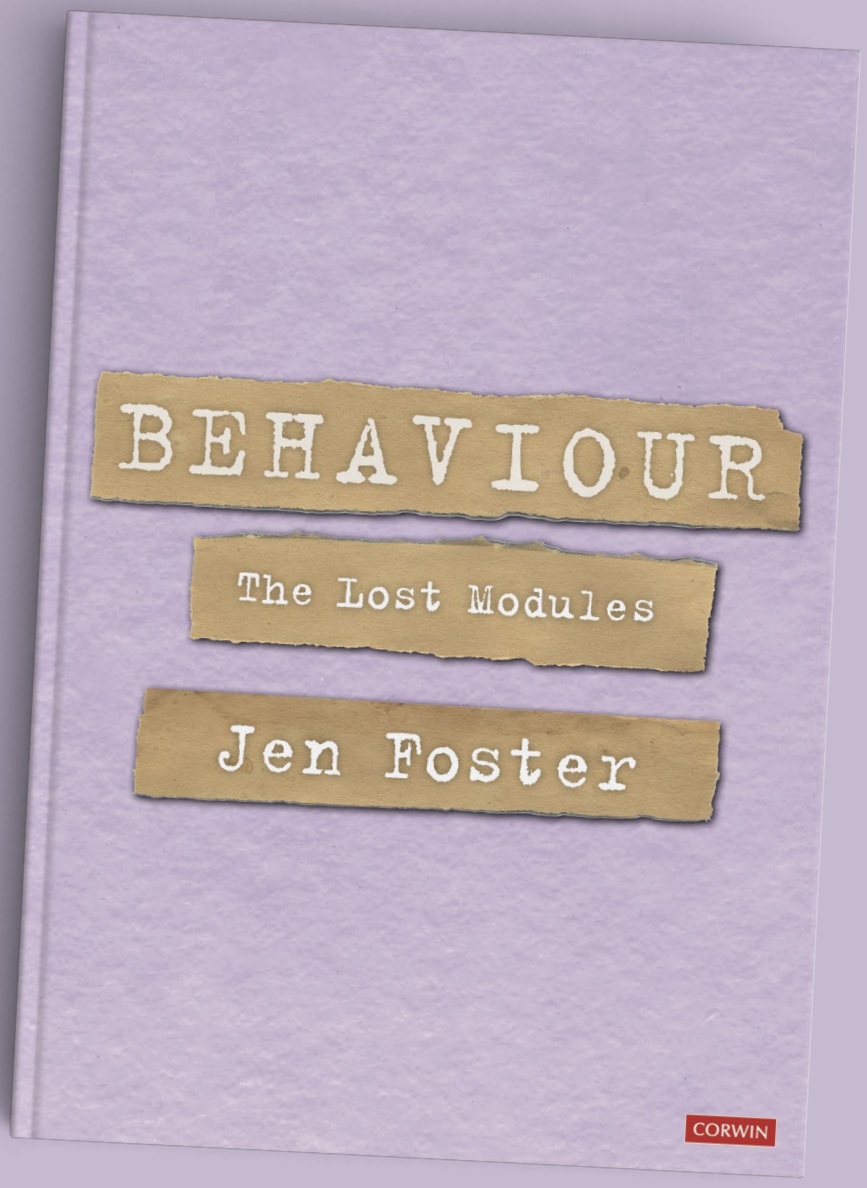
In your class do some children get given more responsibility for their behaviour than others, with less room for considering other factors of being a young child/person? Do we treat some children much more harshly and give the reason that it is because they have been in trouble so many times before, thus escalating our response?

The experiences these young boys recounted are by no means isolated and were an indicator of the hostile environment many of our children experience in the very schools and settings set up to support and value them. The question is, how do we ensure bias in our classrooms is visible and therefore easier to identify and find a solution? Implicit bias can be overcome with rational deliberation, which is a

very achievable and expected behaviour for professional teaching staff. There are differences in our classrooms based on biases held by staff and we must ensure, as professionals, that we identify them and work tirelessly to mitigate against them. Otherwise we are not disrupting cycles of inequality – we are propagating them.

Behaviour: The Lost Modules

Jen Foster



CHAPTER 2

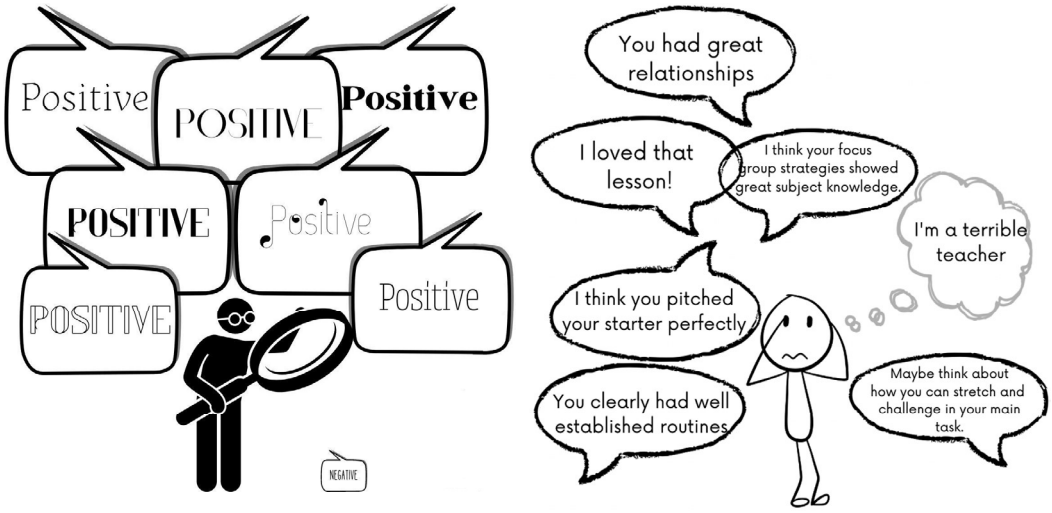
Behaviour and Language

I'm going to ask you to do a few things in the chapter. Ergh, I know, doing things? Unacceptable. You were probably just hoping to have a little chilled read right? SOZ! But, in all fairness, I did warn you. Ok, so now we are all on high alert and ready to be picked on in class, I can begin!

I want you to have a little trip down memory lane. A little scan of your brain. I want you to think about a time a trusted adult said something *to* you or *about* you. In the last chapter we had an instinct reflection on how our behaviour may have been described in school. But, now I want you to think about something that has really **stuck** with you. Something that you really FELT. And maybe, to this day, you still do. It might be something that comes back into your mind every now and again. *Ok, try your best not to skip forward. Play along, you little troublemaker. Have you got it? Write it below:*

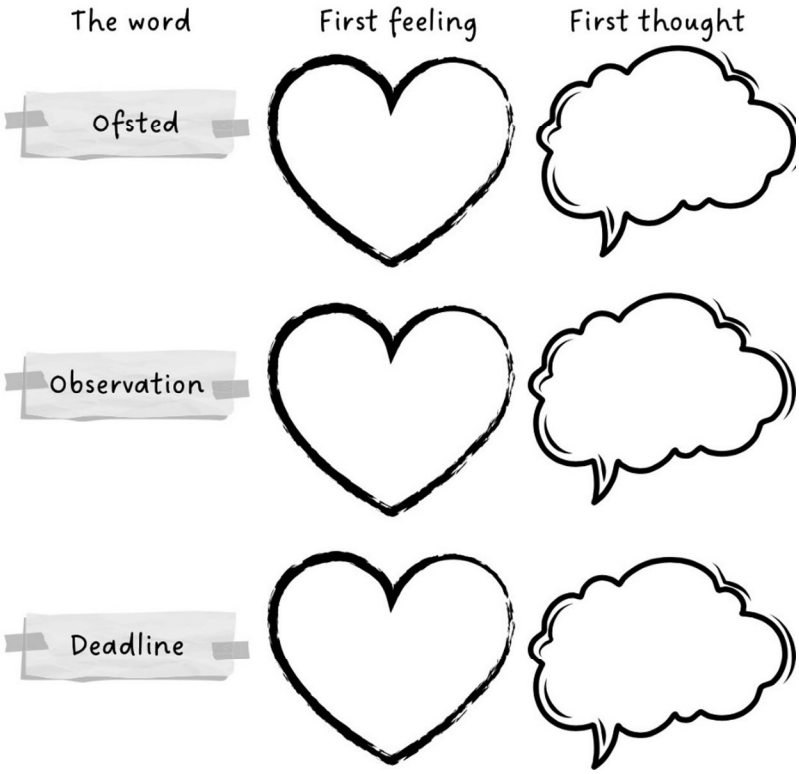
EXERCISE #2.1:

I am going to make a wild guess that it was something negative. Am I right? Read back, did I say the word negative or unhappy? Nope. Footnote, if it was a positive experience. I am genuinely happy for you. What I want to say next is all about encouraging that mindset for our teachers and children. Have you heard of negative bias? It is this really annoying way our brains are wired that just means we remember and focus on the negative things more than the positive (Moore 2019). We hold on to them. We believe them. A teacher once told me it takes twenty good comments to outweigh a bad comment. I don't know if that is an actual statistic Ms Rowan but it kind of makes sense to me.



Since you shared, I'll share too. A teacher once said to me, 'You are one of the failures of the year.' Pause for gasps. I felt that. I still feel that. The thing is, words matter. Language matters. What we say to children, what we say about children, it impacts how we support them and how they feel supported. One comment can be the difference between getting in the race and throwing in the towel. And that is a lot. But the problem is, we have a lot of outdated language in education. Especially, when it comes to behaviour. You might think, Jen, come on. Are you really going to dedicate a chapter to language? Does it really make a difference? And my answer will be HELL YES. Language can have a huge impact on our instinctive thoughts and feelings (Shashkevich 2019). Words build from experiences, fleeting moments, unsaid thoughts and become incredibly powerful. Don't believe me? Buckle up, for round two of our next game. I'm going to give you a few words and I want you to write about what thoughts and feelings come to mine. Ready?

I want to apologise for bringing up thoughts of an observation. That was mean. But you felt something right? You had an immediate thought right? But guess what, let's continue this language ride because we are on a roll, my friend. We can also argue that language also impacts action (Weimer 2015). Language can influence how we respond to a situation. For example, if we are told a child is lazy, we might be a bit more 'alert' to them.



We might check their book first when we are marking. We might pull them up on the carpet more. If we are told a child is rude, we might have our back up a bit. We may be looking to assert our authority quickly and more prominently. You see, when we label children we are often sealing an envelope for their fate. WOW, that sounds uber dramatic right? But think about it. We ALL know children who have had labels that they never seem to shake off. HELL, I was one of them. The 'failure', the 'underperformer', the 'quiet' one. You will be very well versed in my previous labels by the end of this book! Here is some of the language we are currently using in schools (either willingly or unwillingly):

- lazy
- manipulative
- attention seeking
- low-level behaviour
- challenging behaviour.

Wittgenstein famously wrote that:

> The limits of my language stand for the limits of my world.
>
> (Wittgenstein,1933)

Well, I'd like to (humbly) adapt this to:

> The limits of our language stand for the limits of our education.

When we change the way we talk about children, we change the way we think about children. It removes this invisible barrier of supporting a child. It removes that damaging stamp and allows every child to be given a fresh slate to flourish. It allows us to look at a child as a child. Rather than a problem. So what words do we need to change and why? This list is not extensive. The replacements are also not engraved in stone. These are just ideas. Food for thought. I want to insert a little disclaimer here that this is a SAFE SPACE about moving forward. About unlearning and learning together to do the best for our children. I don't want you to go down a road of *Game of Thrones* shame. We have all said or done things we aren't going to write a family newsletter about but this isn't about the past. It is about the future. Y'all ready? Let's do it.

Lazy < Struggling to access or apply

When we reframe this, we are no longer blaming the child. We suddenly have actional next steps. Why are they not actually doing the work? Is there a way we could differentiate it differently? Could we try a different learning partner? Are they struggling with stamina or concentration? Would a checklist be helpful? Suddenly, we have a plan or at least a train of thought that could possibly lead to a plan!

Manipulative < Struggling to trust adults

When we are told a child is manipulative, we might be suspicious or cautious of them. When we are told a child is struggling to trust adults. Immediately we feel a sense of empathy. What has happened to this child which has meant they cannot trust adults? What difficulties are they facing? How can I be their champion? We WANT to support them rather than dread being around them.

Attention seeking < Connection seeking

Attention seeking? How annoying. What a pest. It's you vs the class clown. Connection seeking? Well that just makes everything so much simpler doesn't it. If you know a child is seeking connection, your action and strategy is in the name. Give it to them. Acknowledge them. Meet that need. I am not saying it is a magic wand. But it is a magic mindset. One that activates positive action.

Low-level behaviour < Unsettled behaviour

I don't know about you. But I have taught through this era of 'low-level behaviour' and it drives me mad. I remember a very prominent and unhelpful Ofsted article describing

low-level behaviour as 'idle chatter' or 'disturbing other children'. How does that help us? How does that give us any idea as to what we can do? All it does is blame children, teachers while providing zero insight. Well no thanks babes. NO THANKS. I am not saying these behaviours do not happen. What I am saying is we need to reframe. What is happening? If children are talking or fidgeting, they are displaying unsettled behaviour. This then gives us an ACTUAL indication as to how they might be feeling and what they might need. Are they bored? Can they access the work? Do they feel a bit restless or tired? Each of these questions naturally lead us to possible strategies such as movement breaks or differentiation. Boom, it doesn't feel so downright irritating now. It seems like more of a challenge. More of a mission to solve.

Challenging behaviour < Distressed behaviour

For me, challenging behaviour is a trigger. If I am told I have a defiant or challenging child I feel a bit on edge. The same way I might feel if there was an intoxicated man outside my house. It feels a bit … threatening. WHY are we talking about children like this? When we use this term we are drawing an invisible battle line. Us vs them. We are making them out to be the villain. At the end of the day, a child is a child. We are educators. So what we need is language that helps us understand the behaviour and strategies that actually work. What we don't need is just to have a child in our class we have no idea what to do with. When we say distressed behaviour we are addressing the needs and feelings. Someone who is happy and calm is not likely to shout or swear in your face. Someone who is feeling regulated is unlikely to knock a table over. So when we are looking at the feelings instead of the behaviour we can at least begin to understand it. This shift in language helps us move from butting heads all year to finding a way.

Is < Is presenting

We often fleetingly use the word 'is'. This child is unsettled. This child is distressed. That isn't actually who they are. So even when we make changes to the terms, we also need to make changes to the structural language. I know, super linguistic and techy over here. But when we change 'is' to 'is presenting' we are disassociating the behaviour from the individual. Which is a more helpful way of thinking, i.e. the child is presenting unsettled behaviour.

Language is so often overlooked as an influencing factor in schools. For me, I try and reflect as to whether the language is helping me to support a child or providing a hindrance. If I feel like a conversation about a child's behaviour has hit a dead end, it might be because the language has created an obstacle. Shifting how we talk about behaviour is a key component in shifting our mindset.

And so we come to the end of our journey through language. Hopefully, it has sparked some reflection and insight into the terminology around behaviour. The language I learnt in training is still being circulated today. So let's bring this out of the shadows and into our classrooms.

TAKEAWAY BAG

- Language can influence our thoughts.
- Language can influence our actions.
- The language we use around behaviour may be creating unnecessary obstacles.

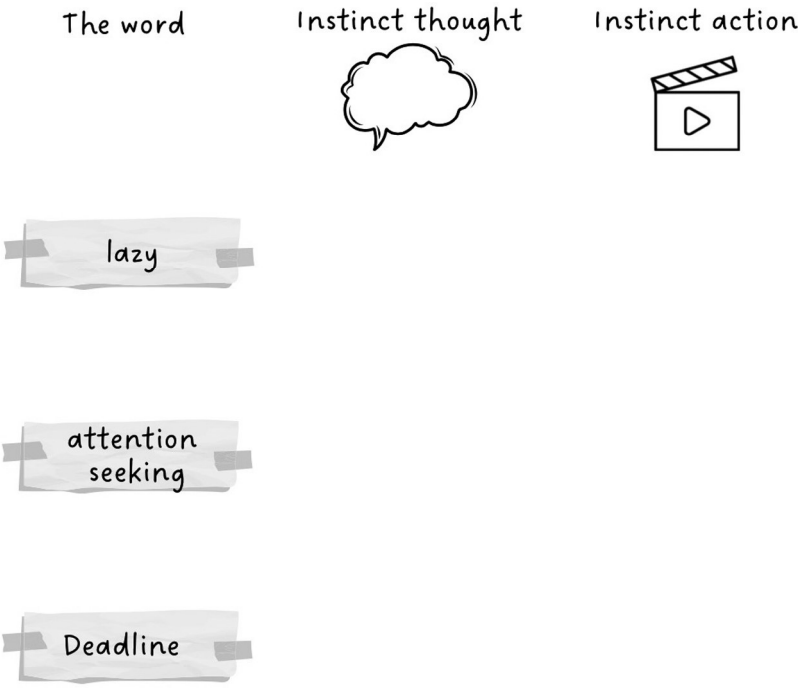
LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION REFLECTION

LIGHTS

What stood out to you in this chapter?

CAMERA

What does this look like for you? What words are you bin'ing?

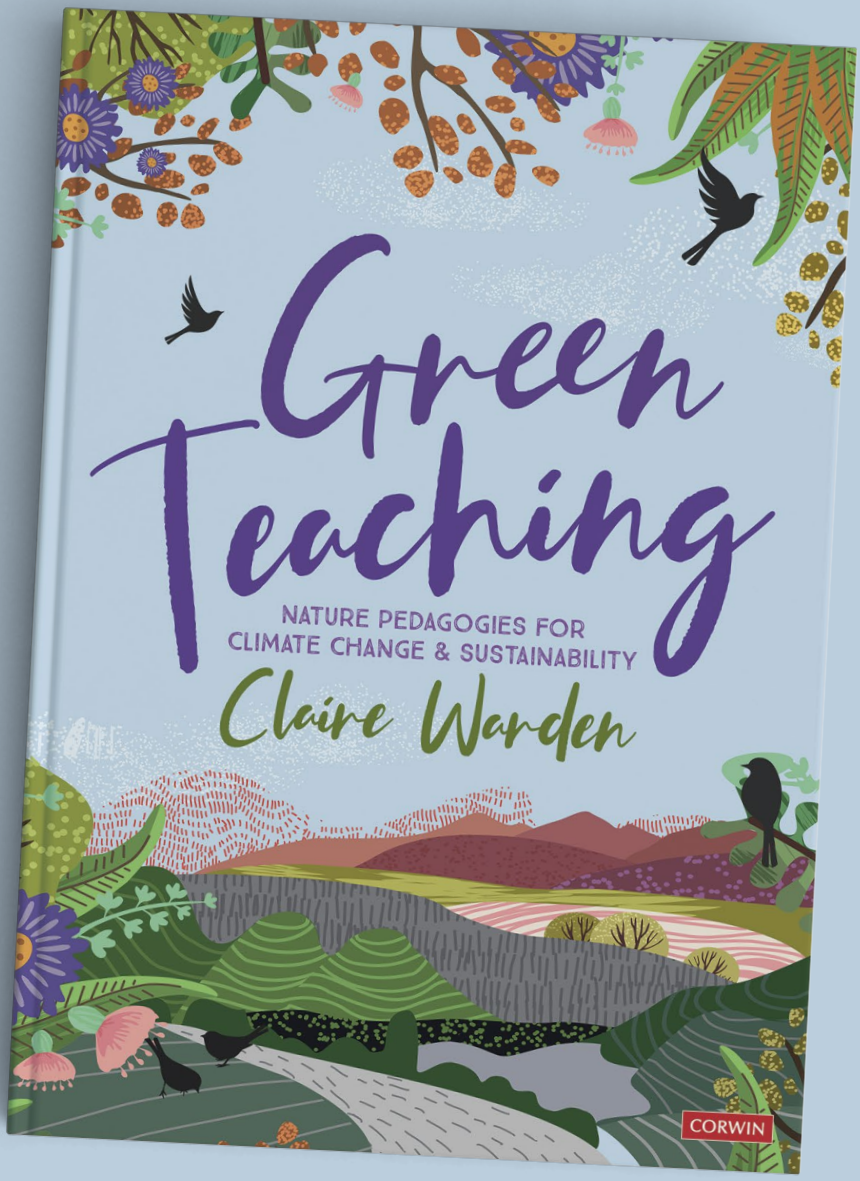


ACTION REFLECTION

Are there any other words you are questioning? What do you think might happen if the education system shifted to this language reframe?

Green Teaching

Claire Warden



Two

Nature pedagogy – a definition

Chapter overview

This chapter shares the journey that defines nature pedagogy as the art of being with nature across the three locations of inside, outside and beyond, but also explores the use of inside, outside and beyond to explore inside ourselves, outside with others in our close community and beyond as a global community of professionals.

The complexity of nature pedagogy cannot be reduced to a single model of education, but rather it is a way of working with children that acknowledges pedagogy as value driven. It is not something to be studied alone, but is a practice that is built on relationships. This chapter details the research that sits beneath this nature pedagogy and places it in the wider context of outdoor play.

The vision of a sustainable nature-based pedagogy

Winston Churchill stated, 'we shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us' (Churchill, 1943). As the buildings have shaped us, we have become progressively removed from the natural world. Our lives are full of moments where we are pushed to reconsider our relationship with each other and the wider world.

The moments that Caputo (1987) describes as 'rifts' allow connections to occur in our lived experiences. It was through these moments that I developed a deeper sense of the interrelated nature of life that embraces the living and the non-living as being in a state of constant flux and movement. It is this sense of spirituality, rather than religion, that is explored through the complexities of understanding educational practice through the unobservable world of quantum science. Caputo, as a postmodernist thinker, embraces the uncertainty of human existence when he states:

> I do not think that anyone ever really succeeds in getting to one side or the other of this undecidable rift, that no-one is or is not religious … If we face the cold truth … we do not know who we are, not if we are honest. (Caputo, 1987: 287–8)

Ellsworth suggests that these 'moments' in our lives are significant:

> What is it, then, to sense one's self in the midst of learning as experience, in the moment of learning, in the presence of a coming knowing, in this interleaving of cognition and sensation/movement? (Ellsworth, 2005: 149)

As outdoor practitioners, we respond to the unexpected and unpredictable in the natural world. Moving our thinking from more adult-generated ideas of things to do outside to explore the skills and possibilities of nature pedagogy inside, outside and beyond is a step towards enhanced sustainability in education.

Existing work on outdoor play and learning

This book is focused on the observable and unobservable relationships that humans have with both the living and non-living elements of the natural world. This aspect of practice sits within a larger body of work on outdoor play and learning, but it seeks to challenge some aspects of what we think that is and offers a framework to aid the understanding of the range of ways that nature-based outdoor play and learning is experienced (Chapter 4). Nature pedagogy

is defined as a value-driven, pedagogical approach that sits beneath all these experiences and models of nature-based education. A continuum is created by considering to what extent nature pedagogy, as defined in this book, is integrated into early years practice. It starts with holistic Indigenous pedagogies of constant contact, moves through short duration, nature-based models such as forest school, to no physical access to being outside in the natural world.

This book expands on what is viewed as the current work around nature-based practice in an effort to be more inclusive. The written materials have grown from a Western, largely Nordic foundation of nature-based practice. The engagement with nature as 'an individual's subjective sense of their relationship with the natural world' (Waite et al., 2016: 52) is a relatively recent focus in Western, environmental discourse. However, it is not a new concept, and as shown later in this chapter, it stretches back to Rousseau (1762/2003) in the West and is a way of being in numerous, First Nation cultures around the world.

Many studies (Chawla, 1998; Wells and Lekies, 2006; Wilson, 1997) support children's engagement with the natural world as developing concern for the environment, but there is new research (Sandell and Öhman, 2013) that suggests that just being in nature is not enough to consolidate environmental positivism. The adult, or nature pedagogue in my work, has a role to play in supporting children in nature-based pedagogies. The adult understanding of the human–nature relationship was viewed as a simplistic understanding by Chawla and Cushing (2007), which in turn affects the quality and depth of awareness. The situation of the child, affected by facets of politics and cultural world view, is indeed complex, and like Taylor (2013) and her concept of 'common worlds', Chawla and Cushing (2007) seek to ask complicated questions of the human–nature relationship. This book aims to support this understanding through challenging the adult awareness of the unobservable world and, through that process, deepen understanding of nature pedagogy.

Within this educational work there is little research that explores unobservable moments of being with nature, as examined in Chapter 4. The most recent research that exists to the best of my knowledge explores the place of the development of spirit and a love of life (Lee-Hammond and Colliver, 2017), and spirit and journey-making (Jannok Nutti, 2017). This book explores the unobservable sense of being with the natural world in a relational pedagogy that embraces a 'totality of relations' (French, 1986: 542) and how it manifests itself in practice.

To date, much of the research around nature immersion models, such as nature kindergartens or outdoor nurseries, looks to Nordic research and not to Indigenous pedagogies (Warden, 2017). On examination of a list of seven significant points from a research review of outdoor learning, not just nature-based practice, there are obvious gaps in this process, as discussed in Chapter 4.

The comprehensive international review was collated by editors Waller et al. (2017) and states that what we can say about outdoor learning is that:

- There is a strong relationship between time spent outside in natural environments, positive wellbeing, increased happiness and better mental health (Bragg, 2013; Capaldi et al., 2014; Gill, 2014; Richardson et al., 2016; Wolsko and Lindberg, 2013).
- There is a strong link between exercise in natural wild places and general wellbeing (Askwith, 2014; Aspinall et al., 2013; Mitchell, 2013).
- The overall positive health effects of increased, risky, outdoor play provide greater benefit than the health effects associated with avoiding outdoor risky play (Brussoni et al., 2015; Little et al., 2012; MacQuarrie et al., 2015; Sandseter, 2012).
- Children and young people experience outdoor environments as places of meaning and significance (Mawson, 2014; Tovey, 2007; Waite and Pratt, 2011; Waters and Maynard, 2010).
- Outdoor play supports social interaction and helps to nurture emotional understanding (Perrin and Benassi, 2009; Waite et al., 2013; Yeh et al., 2015).
- There is a relatively strong relationship between time spent outside in natural environments and environmental awareness, nature relatedness and positive approaches to sustainability (Ärlemalm-Hagsér, 2013; Davis, 2010; Gurholt, 2014; Jóhannesson et al., 2011).
- Regular outdoor experiences include benefits for learning, motivation and achievement at school (Fagerstam, 2012; Hill and Brown, 2014; Szczepanski and Dahlgren, 2011).

The research is collated to give a broad range of perspectives, but this field is challenged by its position as being from academic thinkers who have world views and perspectives that may be biased – not from intent but from the world view they hold.

The examples above demonstrate a growing amount of research, but highlight two things of note. The first is the 'almost total absence of Indigenous researcher voices' (Waller et al., 2017: 8). Only four chapters (Lee-Hammond and Colliver, 2017: 318; Nutti, 2017: 333; Rowan, 2017: 395; Warden, 2017: 279) out of 40 had any direct connection to Indigenous researchers. It is important that we consider whether there is a subjugation of both the natural world and Indigenous peoples through a lack of attention to Indigenous research methodologies by Indigenous researchers in Western academic publications.

The second aspect is the bias in the countries and cultures represented. Research on outdoor play and learning from Asia, Africa and South America was identified by Waller et al. (2017) as being lacking. Finally, Waller et al. state that 'to date, research in outdoor play and learning has not deeply explored the interactions of children and young people in nature at the spiritual level' (2017: 8). The chapter on nature pedagogy (Warden, 2017) in the *SAGE Handbook of*

Outdoor Play and Learning (Waller et al., 2017) was one of only three which did this, and indeed the only one to research the practitioner's connection to the unobservable phenomena that the Auchlone Nature Kindergarten team refer to as 'sustaining the Auchlone spirit' (Warden, 2017: 285). It is therefore in this space that this thinking resides, bringing together the notion of interrelated perspectives and educational practice to explore a sense of being with nature in a way that could be described as more than human, unobservable and spiritual.

Nature's child

This overview demonstrates the need for further work in the field of the unobservable elements of our human relatedness to the natural world. A leading contemporary exponent of children's special relations to nature, Chawla (2002), unashamedly reclaims Romantic traditions to explore these moments of awe and wonder that for her cannot be explained by cognitive theories.

She suggests that their significance exceeds the limits of rational consciousness and that they not only momentarily connect children to something beyond themselves, but that this sense of connection stays with them into adulthood. Further, she maintains that there are mythical and magical dimensions to these childhood experiences, which she describes as taking place in 'ecstatic places and functioning as radioactive jewels buried within us, emitting energy across the years of our life' (Chawla, 1990: 18). Her focus has been to find 'different ways of knowing nature in childhood, as well as different ways of relating childhood to adulthood' (Chawla, 2002: 200).

Within this definition, nature pedagogy seeks to create a pedagogy of relational power balance between humans and the rest of their natural world. We reside on the land, but we influence everything on the planet, so we need to make decisions for the seen and unseen aspects. It was Rousseau (1762) who suggested that children were superior to adults in their connection to nature, suggesting that it was other to and better than the way that adults engage. This reiterates some of Sobel's (2008) work where he suggests that there are windows of sensitivity that exist in childhood. However, the idea that there are windows that close completely as human beings, as participants, is questionable as we cannot be closed from the natural system that allows us to live.

The second aspect noted by Rousseau was the idea of 'negative education' (Rosseau, 2003: 59), which originated with Rousseau's desire to protect and ringfence time for children to learn 'in *their* own time, within nature' (Rosseau, 2003: 58) without the education of adults. This is as true today as it was in the 18th century, as we observe didactic, reductionist strategies being introduced into the early years sector in the form of over-directed nature experiences or unconnected activity-based planning.

Rousseau stated that a child:

> Receives his lessons from Nature … learns the more rapidly . . . his body and his mind are called into exercise at the same time. Acting always in accordance with his own thought, and not according to that of another, he is continually uniting two processes, the stronger and the more robust he becomes. (Rosseau, 2003: 86)

It is reflected in the approach of seeing silence and stillness as a place of complexity, rather than a lack of knowledge or interest. The place of a silent pedagogy was explored in Ollin's (2008) work as being the conscious choice on the part of an adult to abstain from verbal interventions.

There is a greater alignment here with Dewey's (1980) work, in his proposal that, building on Rousseau's ideas, he extends the concept of the child acting on his own will to combine the need to both explore his own thinking, that is situated in experience, and develop the relationship with the role and interaction of the adult.

The third aspect of Rousseau's work that is significant with respect to this writing is his view of nature as an external and material world in which we live, that was other than man. Furthermore, a link can be established from the work of Rousseau, through the work of Johan Pestalozzi (the Swiss pedagogue and educational reformer), to the work of Froebel. Pestalozzi had been fascinated by Rousseau's work and spent considerable time exploring his philosophies and working to extend them. Froebel, although born in Germany, worked for a time in Switzerland with Pestalozzi and was introduced to and influenced by the work of Rousseau.

Rousseau wanted to support the 'education of things' (Rosseau, 2003: 2) that were primarily natural. Froebel extended this into the method of nature, but unlike Rousseau he had a background in mineralogy and scientific study, which led him to suggest that there were infallible natural laws. It is interesting to consider the seminal work of Isaac Newton, who, although widely considered as a scientist and mathematician, was both deeply religious and a philosopher fascinated by the natural world. He believed that rational laws applied to all processes within the universe, but also that the continuance of those processes, and therefore nature itself, was an act of God.

Quantum science is the study of the smallest possible units of anything (for example matter or energy), and we can conceivably extend Newton's philosophical position in the light of modern quantum science by considering the potential for it to demonstrably prove the physical basis for Newton's laws and beliefs (see Chapter 3).

Rousseau and Froebel (their ideas and philosophies) are commonly used as the rationale for the use of hands-on learning equipment, rather than in the

support of nature-based, negative education, which is rooted in spirituality and the drive to be closer to the ultimate deity.

Brosterman states that Froebel's philosophy guides adults to understand that they should be actively:

> . . . embracing the spiritual potential within a person, relations between people in a free society, the place of the individual in relation to the nature that surrounds and includes him, and the [divine and natural] life force that controls growth in all things. (Brosterman, 2002: 3)

However, Taylor suggests that education that was faithful to the method of nature and revealed 'the divine essence of things' (Taylor, 2013: 40) was in fact a way of manifesting Rousseau's philosophy of unity and was intended to lead man towards enlightenment. This diverges from nature pedagogy in its search for unity with a single deity. If there is a principal motive in supporting the growth of nature pedagogy, it is to see balance between living and non-living worlds in a form of being with nature that engages us in mind, body and spirit in a sustainable way (see Chapter 5).

Scientific rationalism (Fuchs, 2004) took hold of Western secular schooling as rational pedgagogical naturalism. With an emphasis on scientific rationalism and a natural pedagogy rooted in the earth sciences, schools adhering to Maria Montessori's thinking flourished (Whitescarver and Cossentino, 2008) and the creative pedagogies inherent in Waldorf Steiner schools spread across Europe (Uhrmacher, 1995). Our challenge is to create appreciation and balance across the models of education, such as Montessori centres, Steiner schools, forest schools, nature pre-schools, bush kinder outdoor nurseries, and so on, to promote collective conversations around nature pedagogy, not their points of difference or supremacy.

Montessori schools have emerged through Maria Montessori's 'fascination with natural phenomena' (Taylor, 2013: 44–5). She embraced the pedagogical cultivation of children's careful observations of the world around them so that they could become competent 'worshippers and interpreters of the spirit of nature' (Montessori, 1912, cited by Fuchs, 2004: 169). This careful observation led to adult-structured tasks and resources around nomenclature, species and geographical features that are still used today. However, Montessori did not support the pedagogy that children should be introduced to make believe and an unobservable world. Nature pedagogy can only really be embraced with an awareness of the unobservable as we develop the language of description and understanding through quantum thinking. The appearance and operation of models of nature-based practice emerge from their unique sense of place (Sobel, 2008) and therefore can embrace diversity of location and connection of interrelation. This understanding may be the

way to develop more connective, supportive conversations between people, rather than an increasing separation between them due to market competition and a human drive to process. This concept is explored more comprehensively in Chapter 3.

An approach to learning *with* nature

The definition of a nature kindergarten is a 'a blend of three spaces' (Warden, 2007: 8): inside a shelter, outside in a natural play area and beyond the fence in wilder spaces. What these three spaces truly represent was explored in more depth in *Learning with Nature – Embedding Outdoor Practice* (Warden, 2015). The book used a process of using graphics called 'Diagrams of practice' to represent the three spaces to notice and feel connections in, about and with nature through the use of time, space, resources and the adult role. The use of diagrams and graphics allowed the presentation of more fluid thinking around the idea of 'learning *about* nature as a thing to study' (Warden, 2015: 29) rather than connect to or as 'learning *in* nature as being a location outside' (Warden, 2015: 30). The argument that is central to this book is that we learn *with* nature. In this way, when nature is presented in many different global models, most of which seek to define and differentiate themselves from the others, from outdoor areas to forest schools, we can connect through values that guide us towards changing pedagogy *for* the benefit of the ecosystem (that includes humans). Moving away from operational facets or observable features of one model takes us to conversations of inclusivity, where myriad ways of being with the natural world are embraced.

Kinship

Given that it is an integral part of the definition of nature pedagogy, as it embraces learning about, in, with and for the natural world, kinship is explained here in the context of this book. Ruth Wilson (2020) suggests that it is about experiencing kinship with nature all around us versus trying to connect with nature out there. A kinship perspective takes us beyond both science (Sideris, 2017) and stewardship (Taylor, 2017). There is detail surrounding this concept of kinship in Chapter 6 where we explore the work of the International Environmental Kinship (EKI).

Figure 2.1 Cultural tradition connected to place

Haraway (2016) describes kinship as *affinity, not identity*. The idea of kinship includes a blurring of the human and non-human, and the interdependence of us all on the planet.

Figure 2.2 Interdependence and connection

Defining pedagogy

The use of the term 'pedagogy' warrants some clarification here. Pedagogy as used in the northern European tradition encompasses the everyday formal and informal practices of the education of children. In Greek, the literal translation is leading children, where *ped* represents child and *agogus* means leading. Andragogy is therefore the practice of leading man (*andr*), which when working with practitioners would appear to be more appropriate. This literal translation

is slightly different from defining pedagogy as 'the method and practice of teaching' (Oxford English Dictionary, 2018), where there is no mention of the age of the student. The common usage of pedagogy in Europe has been one of nurturing learning.

Nature pedagogy could be as simple as a method of leading children in natural environments. However, in working alongside staff *with* nature, they describe pedagogy in a different, more creative and fluid way. A colleague, Gillian McAuliffe, describes it in this way:

> I like to think of it as a dance. It is a dance which engages curriculum, students, teachers, indoor classrooms, outdoor classrooms and the wild and built environments outside the school gate. This dance is characterised by the fluid nature of the choreography, with participants sometimes working together, sometimes separately, sometimes in small groups. The dance happens on the stage of life and engages those elements and the content which best supports the journey of the students and the stories they want to hear and tell. If the notion of the dance is understood, then the learning environments will be without walls and boundaries, and the integration you have identified is the natural and only way to go. (Warden, 2015: 32)

This book shares the idea that although pedagogy is a relationship-based dynamic, which describes the interaction between the learner and the pedagogue, allowing the social context, complete with histories, hierarchies, customs, teleologies and narratives to intertwine (Kamler and Thompson, 2006), it is also a felt, unobservable spirit within humans that we can embrace in our work with the natural world.

The word 'pedagogy' is derived from the Greek language, as noted earlier. In Greek society there were, however, two clear expectations of the role of people in relation to the education of children. Pedagogues were perceived as companions to the development of the whole child (*paidagögus*), whilst subject teachers (*didáskalos*) were focused on knowledge.

Plato talks about pedagogues as 'men who by age and experience are qualified to serve as both leaders (*hëgemonas*) and custodians (*paidagögous*)' of children, which was cited by Longenecker (1982: 53), with no reference to a relational artistry, but rather a science of knowledge to be studied.

The debate around whether pedagogy is the same as the didactic methods to which the Greeks referred can be noted throughout history. Immanuel Kant wrote a book called *On Pedagogy* (*Über Pädagogik*), in which he stated:

> Education includes the nurture of the child and, as it grows, its culture. The latter is firstly negative, consisting of discipline, that is, merely the correcting of faults. Secondly, culture is positive, consisting of instruction

> and guidance (and thus forming part of education). Guidance means directing the pupil in putting into practice what he has been taught. Hence the difference between a private teacher who merely instructs, and a tutor or governor who guides and directs his pupil. The one trains for school only, the other for life. (Kant, 1900: 23–4)

In 1648, Comenius wrote *The Great Didactic*. As Gundem states, it suggested that 'the fundamental aims of education generate the basic principle of Didactica Magna, omnis, omnia, omnino – to teach everything to everybody thoroughly, in the best possible way' (1992: 53).

The separation of the activity of 'teaching' from the activity of defining 'what is taught' was put forward by Hamilton (1999: 139). In continental Europe, this led to a growing discussion of the process of teaching, in contrast to the didactics of guidance and knowledge. Gundem (1992) suggests that Comenius believed that every human being should strive for perfection in all that is fundamental for life and do this as thoroughly as possible. Comenius stated, 'every person must strive to become (1) a rational being, (2) a person who can rule nature and him or herself, and (3) a being mirroring the creator' (Gundem, 1992: 53).

Although in terms of nature pedagogy, one could challenge the outcomes Comenius suggests we strive for, in terms of an emphasis on the rational above a creative/intuitive, the desire to rule nature rather than work as an integral part of it, and the emulation of a single creator, we need to place these within their historical context. His principles, as presented by Gundem, still have a resonance in conversations today when we discuss how to work with children:

> Teaching must be in accordance with the student's stage of development.
>
> All learning happens through the senses.
>
> One should proceed from the specific to the general, from what is easy to the more difficult, from what is known to the unknown.
>
> Teaching should not cover too many subjects or themes at the same time.
>
> Teaching should proceed slowly and systematically – nature makes no jumps.
>
> (Gundem, 1992: 54)

The last of these points has particular relevance to nature pedagogy, as the storied experience of life does move slowly and systematically within the telling when the natural world is the contextual framework for our narratives (Warden, 2017: 283).

Figure 2.3 Nature time – slow and long term

This perspective on the cultural placement of education was brought to the fore by Bruner when he suggested that teachers 'need to pay particular attention to the cultural contexts in which they are working and of the need to look at folk theories and folk pedagogies' (1996: 44–65). In the rise of nature-based experiences, we can see the increased number of children who are connecting to crafts that may have been more traditionally associated with folk craft, such as rope making, basket weaving and so on, which could be further explored in its connection to folk pedagogy as a route to greater clarity around being with nature. In the work of nature pedagogy, there is undoubtedly an influence from the continental traditions of social pedagogy, as presented by Lorenz (1994), Smith (2009) and Cameron (2004, 2011). In Scotland, we went as far as suggesting we should support the growth of a country-specific, culturally specific, Scottish pedagogue (Cohen, 2008) who would connect to the micro-narratives of people and place.

There are three points to consider in terms of didactics and the pedagogy suggested by Smith (2009): the first is the use of the term pedagogy, as it takes us back to the originality of the term to actively consider accompanying as a skill; secondly, that pedagogy 'involves significant helping and caring' (Smith, 2009: 10); and thirdly, that it is engaged in 'bringing learning to life' (Smith, 2009: 10).

All of these have direct relevance to a definition of nature pedagogy, in that to walk alongside someone is complex and skilful as it requires us to give up our dominance and power to be content in our role. 'The human in the pedagogue *allows* us to have spirit, in the passions that animate or move us, in the moral sense of the value, ideals and attitudes that guide us as beings, in the kind of person we want to be in the world' (Doyle and Smith, 1999: 33–4). When we develop this skill to be alongside children and develop nature pedagogy we can start to explore being with nature.

CONSIDER

To what extent is your pedagogy affected by your sense of being with nature?

Emergence of *being* with nature

Thinking takes time, and as practitioners we are constantly learning. The phrases 'There is a connection between the nurturing aspects of nature and human beings' and 'We have an underlying awareness of the need that children have for the fundamental aspects of being on the planet' (Warden, 2007: 6) suggest and share an awareness of engaging in nature-based outdoor learning for a need for being.

There is also a settling down, a calmer sense of being, a stronger connection to being in nature in a more synergistic way, perhaps even as a humble observer through writing in a more prosaic genre with references made to homely objects, such as carpets:

> Imagine a world where the lines were harsh and unyielding, the textures were consistent and variation is unheard of. Does it inspire you? Now imagine a place where the carpet changes every day, the ceiling is a myriad of different colours, light, shadow and movement. The feelings and movement completely surround you, sometimes breezy, sometimes cold, other times warm. Unexpected wonders fly, sometimes full of colour and sometimes full of noise and movement. If we really want children to thrive, we need to let their connection to nature nurture them. (Warden, 2007: back cover)

When children spend all day, every day, in a fully immersive space, they develop a sense of the variety and complexity of the natural world, as we see in this case study.

CASE STUDY

Mapping our place

The mapping process is part of an annual cycle of inquiry into our sense of being with nature and through this process we come to understand which areas of the site have significance to children rather than areas defined by adults. To support the conversations from the kindergarten to home, we share maps made by children but also have a map drawn by a member of the adult team, as shown below. Although parents and

(Continued)

families visit the site and spend time in it, having a map to look at together helps that process in the home but also in the wider community.

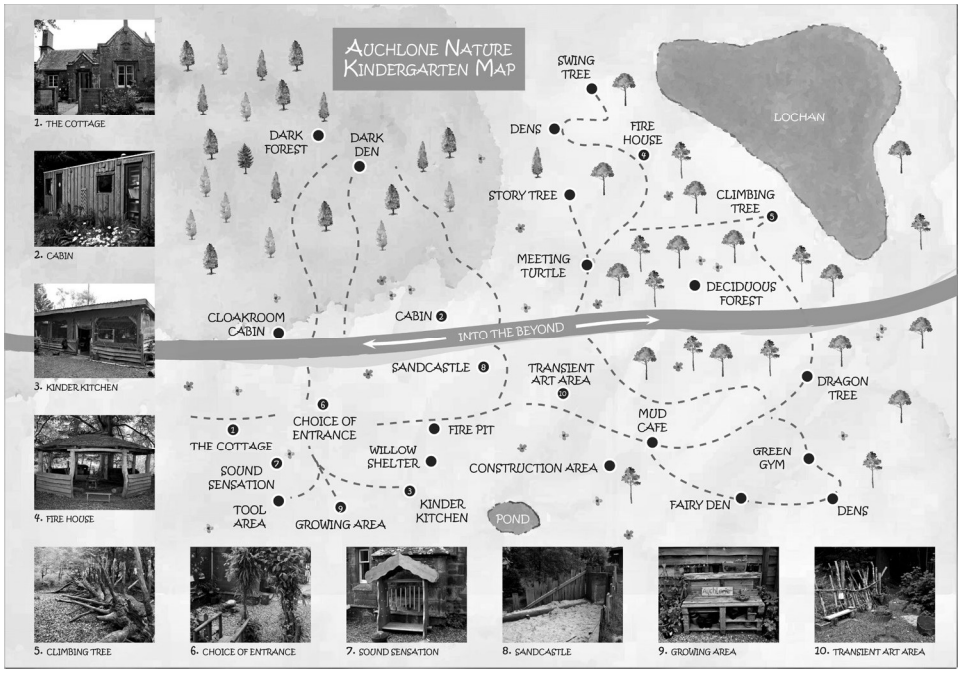


Figure 2.4 Auchlone map to share with children and families

Going beyond the gate, into the Dark Forest, to the Lochan, the Dragon Tree and the Fire House, is done as a whole group and naming has become part of the tradition of the site as children name areas of significance, such as the Meeting Turtle or the Story Tree. These names are passed down through groups of children, and over the past 14 years more and more have been added as the site evolves and more stories of children are woven into it. Children map out their own ideas as we can see in the map from home to here, a map of my place, and maps of the site and the journeys we take together as a community. There is a shift that happens when children go across locations; going beyond the gate is both physical and metaphorical as the group dynamic and the energy level change. On these journeys, the landscape around invites children to hesitate, to pause, to run towards, to climb as they read the invitations that the natural environment affords.

The map shared and their own maps are used to make decisions and plan routes and experiences that balance the needs of the children and the knowledge of the animals and plants that we share the site with. Areas are truly known by children throughout the year because they visit every day all year round: 'We don't go to where the pheasant's nesting because she needs quiet', or jump in the tadpole pools in the spring because 'they are just babies and they will die under my wellies.'

Empowerment of children and the agency to make decisions about where to go on the site is a skill acquired over time and not all children feel empathetic towards animals and plants.

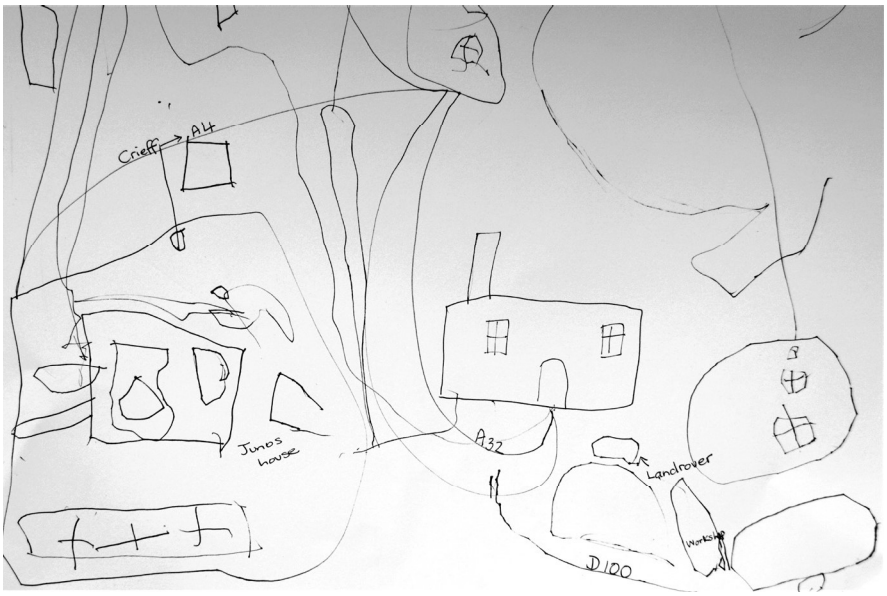


Figure 2.5 'My map from home to here'

The slowing down and awareness of place comes through the case study. It shows how the process of revisiting, through engaging with the environment, is dynamic and process led. It cannot really be achieved until there is a balance of child-led, adult-led and environment-led moments. Through the handling of natural, loose parts to make artefacts, there is a touching, a processing that can be seen from children's desires to explore blending, grinding and smoothing, in an almost anthropological way.

> Nature Pedagogy is a natural way of working *with* children that is all encompassing, from the educational environments we create, the process of assessment and planning, through to the learning journeys that we encourage children and families to take throughout childhood. (Warden, 2015: 14, emphasis added)

However, rather than being purely humancentric, we can explore the idea that 'being with nature' in a two-way, unobservable relationship with the tangible materials and the natural world itself is a more sustainable approach to living.

Indigenous pedagogies

'We're tired of trees', sigh Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in a moment of exasperation, 'They've made us suffer too much' (Deleuze and Guattari,

2004: 17). The genealogical model of human ancestry and its linearity is challenged by the work of Deleuze and Guattari (2004). The dendritic model (often of a tree shown in the picture) suggests that there is an orderliness to our being human, that we are related only to those in the past and that the context and land (nature) on which we live and breathe has less impact on us than the genes we possess. Relational models explored by Deleuze and Guattari suggest we adopt a new paradigm for thinking that is likened to a rhizome.

Figure 2.6 Rhizome, dendritic and mycelium root systems

These analogies allow us to look at a more chaotic model of relationships, which are present within generational blocks of time. If we look to a mesh or a mycelium growth as an alternative to the genealogical model of human ancestry and its linearity, as Ingold (2000) suggests, we can visualise an interconnected mesh, which represents the interrelationships between the context of the land and those people we encounter in our lives. This aspect is explored fully in Chapter 3 prior to the consideration of the definitions of nature and being with nature in a relational way.

CONSIDER

How do you consider the interrelationship of people, place and environment?

Defining nature

When we think about the way we work in, learn about and learn with nature it broadens our understanding to be much more than outdoor play. Caring and educating young children across just three spaces; inside 'educational' buildings, outside in natural play spaces and beyond their boundary fences in wilder spaces, where children may encounter 'nature on nature's terms' (Warden, 2007) has placed outdoor play to become one aspect of a deeper nature-based pedagogy. The journeys, both physically and metaphorically, that children take over locations offer many points of difference that the natural environment affords.

The complex relationship that we encounter is touched upon by French, who builds upon the postmodern concept of nature as an 'almost incomprehensibly complex, open, interconnected totality of interrelationships' (French, 1986: 542–4). Relationships is a major theme in this book and is examined in Chapter 3 in terms of interconnectedness with nature.

Being with nature in a relational way

There is a need to look at alternative methodologies to support the human race beyond an anthropocentric view where the whole world revolves around human need, but in a 'partnership of mutual consideration' (Dodson, 2015). This book looks beyond the physical learning spaces and intellectual stimulation, to the more complex domains, to explore what Keeler (2008) refers to as 'food for the soul'.

Figure 2.7 Is this our legacy of the late 20th century?

There is evidence from artists such as Hanson (cited in Gablik, 1993: 301–309), in their work to photograph the toxic waste materials around nuclear sites, of their belief that the legacy of the late 20th century will be the disease of the planet, rather than positive icons of human achievement, such as the pyramids. Rather than objectifying the damaged and scarred nature of the planet (Kovel, 2002; Oliver, 2005), we need to understand its impact on all facets of our being (Oliver, 2009: 54).

In many countries over the past 40 years, children have spent increasingly limited time outside and may be losing their sensitivity to the natural world (Waller et al., 2017). In the UK, since the 1970s, the physical area that children roam freely over has decreased by almost 90 per cent (Moss, 2012). Moss goes on to support Louv's comment that children are effectively under 'well meaning, protective house arrest' (cited in Moss, 2012: 4). However, the assertion that screen time affects green time is an oversimplification. Studies by Waller and Tovey (2014) suggest that there can be a balance of outdoor and indoor experiences, but that this is culturally situated and, further, 'it is connected to socioeconomic status and other demographic factors, such as age or gender' (Waite et al., 2016: 1).

In the following chapter, we will explore definitions of nature so that we can come to a common understanding of how to use the term in this work on nature pedagogy and have a positive contribution to the long-term sustainability of the planet and us.

SUMMARY

- Pedagogies that work well with the natural world are consultative, co-constructed and focused on child-led inquiry.
- Nature pedagogy is about learning about, in, with and for the natural world.
- Nature pedagogy resonates with First Nation thinking and, as it focuses on the elements of fire, earth, air and water, can be used in our practice in urban and rural spaces.
- Nature pedagogy is the art of being with nature inside, outside and beyond as a physical location and a metaphor.

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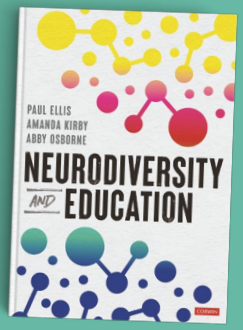

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