



A praxis of creativity in outdoor learning: Pedagogies of making, growing, anger & kindness

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ABSTRACT

This empirical enquiry is focused on the Queen Margaret University (QMU) Outdoor Learning Hub and analyses the significance of creativity within pedagogies of outdoor learning, and the activism of leaders engaged in place-making and practising outdoor learning. Building on previous enquiry, this paper focuses on questioning leaders and practitioners' conceptions of creativity, how they enact creative pedagogies within and for outdoor places, and how this is intrinsically linked to social and ecological activism.

The methodology used is Constructivist Grounded Theory to synthesise theory, policy, and empirical enquiry. A theoretical framework of creativity and outdoor learning is presented, data from interviews with leaders and practitioners of outdoor learning are analysed, and from this a praxis of creativity in outdoor learning is developed. The argument presented in this paper is that creativity is an essential aspect of the practice of outdoor learning and the process of place-making. The outcome is an analysis of creativity that foregrounds the voices of participants to begin to co-construct an eco-pedagogy of creativity within outdoor learning.

This paper concludes that Pedagogies of Making, Pedagogies of Growing and Pedagogies of Anger and Kindness are convincing ways to conceptualise creativity in outdoor learning. The paper also concludes that the enactment of creative pedagogy in education is inextricably linked to a deep commitment to other human beings and the natural world, and that these pedagogies invite a reconceptualisation of our position as humans within nature. This invites further exploration of how creative pedagogy outdoors could be theorised through a post-human lens.

Keywords: creativity, pedagogy, outdoor learning, making, growing, kindness

Introduction

Creativity as a theme in Scottish Education has a contradictory place. The Curriculum for Excellence was initiated in Scotland from 2004 in a 'vision paper' (Executive, 2004), and developed in the Building the Curriculum series (Scottish Government 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010) and is arguably based on a broadly social constructivist philosophy with the emphasis on the 'Learner at the Centre' who develop the 'Four Capacities of Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Responsible Citizens and Effective Contributors' (Ibid. 2006) and apparent 'progressive' language (Biesta & Priestley, 2013). Perhaps based on the idea that 'creativity' is important in progressive traditions, this could lead to an assumption that individual creativity had a significant place in the curriculum. However, despite any such interpretations, the word creativity scarcely appears in the original Building the Curriculum documentation that was presented by the Scottish Government to layout the framework for the new curriculum. It is only from 2012 that there has been a more explicit focus on creativity as an aspect of education as presented in publications from the Scottish

Government, for example the Creative Learning Plan (Government, 2012) and the 3-18 Report into Creative Learning (*Creativity Across Learning 3-18*, 2013). In the period after these publications there was significant activity across Scotland through the Creative Learning Network, supported by Education Scotland. In 2024 Education Scotland returned to the theme as part of a curriculum review and is running a series of engagement events for educators. At the time of writing this article the review has yet to report back, but it will be worthy of critical attention particularly considering the attention that creativity is getting from the OECD (OECD, 2019; OECD & 2024) which focuses on ways of assessing creativity in young people. The emphasis on performance in the OECD documentation can be criticised as part of a market driven approach to education (Ball, 2008, 2013; Paterson, 2014; Loveless & Williamson, 2013). The extent to which this criticism is relevant to the forthcoming advice from Education Scotland will be a theme in future enquiry.

Outdoor learning

This study began as an exploration of what creativity means in the context of outdoor learning. However, through empirical enquiry with practitioners and leaders (Boxall, 2024) it became clear that outdoor leaders start describing creative practice then very quickly start talking about saving the world. Perhaps this is unsurprising, as creativity and outdoor learning are so often talked about with the assumption that they are 'good things' in education. We educators like to do good things, and good things are good for the world. We want to make the world better. However, though this may be true, these statements are full of assumptions; if creativity and outdoor learning do matter, they should be analysed and problematised so we can more fully understand how and why they may, or may not, be 'good things'. And if they are 'good' - then it matters how we go about enacting them.

Analysis of how leaders move from discussions of concepts of creativity towards deeper reflection of values, motivations and practice is illuminating, and challenges the assumptions of what creativity means in the practice of learning outdoors and its significance within wider themes in education. In analysis of this discourse, this study found that people talk remarkably about personal experience, about who and what they care for, their political, environmental, social, and emotional values - and how these lead to many choices as practitioners and leaders. The focus on practice in this enquiry leads to its main outcome - a praxis of creativity in outdoor learning presented in terms of: Pedagogies of Making, Pedagogies of Growing, and Pedagogies of Anger and Kindness. The pedagogies as presented are a synthesis of values grounded in social justice, and theory about outdoor learning and creativity with a focus on enactment with people in education.

The development of the Outdoor Learning Hub (hereafter the Hub) at Queen Margaret University provides a rich source of data to consider and these themes. The Hub was opened in 2024, after an extended process of collaboration with national and local partners including Architecture & Design Scotland, Nature Scot, national and local charities, outdoor learning practitioners, educational organisations and the local community. The Hub was created on campus with Discovery Trail, Howff, woodland and 'Wee Forest', to enrich students' experience, connect to communities, and contribute to national and global concerns in education, sustainability, health and wellbeing. The outdoor spaces have become a place for curriculum activity on Education courses, and for disciplines across the University. The campus welcomes individuals and groups from the local community on a daily basis and hosts events and meetings for national groups and networks. The extended nature of the Hub, through the connections between curriculum, place and

people gives an unusual and complex situation for enquiry. It offers a place where national and institutional policy, research, theory, and practice are applied. The Hub therefore offers a fertile source of data for research enquiry that will extend across time and changing research questions.

In Scotland, outdoor learning is presented as an aspect of the curriculum through the policy document 'Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning' (Learning Teaching Scotland, 2010) which makes the connection to creativity from the opening mission statement:

Our vision for outdoor learning in Scotland is that: all children and young people are participating in a range of progressive and creative outdoor learning experiences which are clearly part of the curriculum (p. 7)

Outdoor learning has also been emphasised in recent years as a core aspect of the growing discourse of Learning for Sustainability (2023). The actual level at which outdoor learning is becoming embedded in school curriculum and pedagogy is currently difficult to evaluate as there is mixed evidence. The survey from Stirling University, supported by Nature Scot, (Mannion et al., 2023) suggests a decline in outdoor provision, however this was completed just after the pandemic and anecdotally the picture seems to be both more complex and positive. There is growth in outdoor provision for early years, with local forest school groups reporting a growth in activity, while the Forest and Outdoor Learning Awards (2018) have grown in the numbers of approved centres offering the qualification. There is a gap in clear data as to the extent of outdoor learning activity across the education system in Scotland, yet it clearly exists in the current discourse and receives support from the Scottish Government, as evidenced by recent public comments from the Cabinet Secretary for Education about the new online Nature Discovery Map (2024).

Outdoor Learning is therefore significant in the context of higher education for the curriculum, research, the wider life of a university and its role in supporting national concerns in Scotland. Outdoor spaces are becoming a focus for creative practice, scholarship and community life. Queen Margaret University offers undergraduate courses in Primary Education and Education Studies, plus postgraduate diplomas and professional postgraduate short courses, into which outdoor learning is integrated. The University has a growing number of researchers active in this area, both established academics, and at postgraduate level. In addition, outdoor spaces are accessed in other curriculum areas and by students and staff to support their well-being. The outdoor learning spaces also welcome people from the community on a daily basis for leisure, and host organised events for local groups leading in youth work, play and environmental activism. The Outdoor Learning Hub is becoming a nexus for collaboration in Scotland and has hosted conferences for the National Network of Outdoor Learning, the Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Learning and Learning through Landscapes. In 2024 the Hub was recognised by the Scottish Government and won the national Award for Inspiring Learning Places. This was in particular recognition of how it can support and influence the development of other outdoor places. The hope is that the findings from this enquiry contributes to research and finds application in terms of curriculum, community and the wider discourse of Education in Scotland.

Focus of the study

This study is one in a series of steps to explore creativity in outdoor learning. Building on previous research 'A Good Stick: An enquiry into creativity in Forest School' (Boxall, 2024), this new enquiry focuses on

leaders' conceptions of creativity, how they enact creative pedagogies within and for outdoor places, and how this is intrinsically linked to social and ecological activism. It is a step on the way towards a Situational Analysis (Clarke, 2005; Clarke & Charmaz, 2019) of creativity within the Hub. This phase of the research is made using the tools of Constructivist Grounded Theory. This methodology supports insight into the specific setting of the Hub and develops wider insights as to how this situation can extend our understanding of pedagogy, place-making, leadership, and policy. The data gathered in this enquiry will contribute to the planned Situational Analysis. This study effectively works on two levels - the specific and the general. The enquiry is into the people, place, practice and policies that connect to the Queen Margaret University Outdoor Learning Hub. Yet through developing insights into this place at this time, with these connections to other people and places and policies, it is hoped that theoretical implications are derived that can be applied to other places at other times with other people. It is this link between the specific and the general that led to the choice of methodologies. The ambition is to go beyond a case study bound in time and place to explore a much more interconnected and complex world of how people, policies and practices influence and are influenced by a place.

In 'A Good Stick' conceptions of creativity and outdoor learning were interrogated. The argument was put forward that conceptions of outdoor learning have developed in recent years, that go beyond traditions of hyper-masculine, Euro-centric and racialised narratives of the outdoors (Beames & Brown, 2016; Dymont & Potter, 2014; Potter & Dymont, 2016; Warren et al., 2014) and that a rationale for progressive outdoor learning is growing based on concepts of social justice and person-centred pedagogies (Beames, 2023; Ross et al., 2014; Warren & Breunig, 2019). Creativity as a term is also shown to be problematic: definitions are either simplistic and serve political narratives, (Scottish Government, 2012; Robinson, 2001), or are so complex and multi-faceted (Banaji & Burn, 2007; Pope, 2005) that they can become impractical to work with in education. The most convincing definitions of creativity in learning are ones that are inclusive and accessible for all people (Craft, 2013; Hallam & Ingold, 2007). From this theoretical review a framework for creativity in outdoor learning was presented as 'A Description of Creativity' (DoC). This is summarised here as background to the findings of the data analysis of this enquiry. This framework was used to give initial thematic coding in the analysis of data to build towards the praxis of creativity presented in this paper.

A Description of Creativity:

1. All conceptions of creativity describe a process of 'making' meaning or product.
2. Agency: In all creative processes agency is exerted by a 'maker' to use imagination to make meaning or product.
3. Creativity is 'situational' and 'relational'.
4. The process of creativity is about 'problem posing' and 'possibility thinking'.

(Boxall, 2024)

'A Description of Creativity' (DoC) is grounded in a synthesis of theoretical sources: critical pedagogy (Darder, 2003; Freire, 1970, 1998; Misiasek, 2020), social justice (Hempel-Jorgensen, 2015; Smith, 2012; Thrift & Sugarman, 2019), creativity (Arnott & Ozga, 2010; Banaji & Burn, 2010; Beghetto & Kaufman,

2010; Craft, 2005, 2013; Craft, 2010; Gardner, 2008; Robinson, 2001), agency (Mercer, 2011) and outdoor learning (Beames, 2023; Beames & Brown, 2016).

Through empirical research and analysis, DoC was found to be a valid way of understanding creative practice in outdoor learning. However, 'A Good Stick', also showed the great significance of leadership in the process of creative practice, and that the leaders were consistently motivated to act to improve society and environment. The enquiry showed the importance of framing discussion of both creativity and outdoor learning within a rationale of social justice as the discourse became a discussion of how to act within education based on values and beliefs. The findings of 'A Good Stick' therefore invited further enquiry with a wider range of leaders to explore their motivations, values and how these led to the enactment of education. This led to the research questions that are explored in this paper.

1. How do leaders and practitioners understand creativity in outdoor learning?
2. What pedagogies support creativity within outdoor learning?
3. How are outdoor educators co-constructing and re-imagining creative learning with people and communities?
4. Why do conceptions of social justice inform this practice?

These research questions informed semi-structured interview questions:

1. How do you understand the term 'creativity' in your practice?
2. How do you enable/enact creative practice in outdoor learning?
3. What is your motivation to enable/enact creative practice in the outdoors?

Methodology

This study examined how creative pedagogies are enacted in the context of one place. Whilst the Hub is influenced by a range of strategies and policies and also sits within local and national communities that influence and are influenced by the University, discussion of this wider situation has been consciously left aside at this point. This stage in the enquiry is focused on interviewing practitioners and leaders enacting the development of the Hub. (A later stage in the research will focus on the position of the practice within the strategic plan of the University and consider how that sits in a policy landscape, and within the University communities). The *place*, therefore informed the criteria for selection of research participants.

In this stage of the inquiry data was gathered from three leaders and seven practitioners. All participants were directly connected to the Hub: three were project leaders involved in the design and construction of the spaces, seven were outdoor learning practitioners leading in delivery to students. The outdoor learning leaders came with a range of experience including Forest School, early childhood, community, school, further and higher education. There was a range of gender and age, but the unifying factor was direct involvement with the Hub. Due to the partnership approach taken by the University all participants were part of other organisations. Participants were selected for their direct participation in the planning and enactment of the Hub project. The selection was pragmatic and relational, which offered advantages in terms of trust and authenticity, however, leads to a need to account within the methodology for reflexivity on the part of the researcher. Interviews were semi-structured based on questions above and took between

1-1.5 hours. The nature of these partnerships meant that none of the participants were currently working as a schoolteacher, and this gap invites further enquiry into these themes in a school-based context.

The connection to the Hub gives a common language and a shared focus, whilst allowing the possibility of contrasting ideas as there are common experiences for all participants within a relatively short timescale. Yet this led to challenges that need to be accounted for in the choice of methodology: the position of the researcher as key influencer in the development of the place, the shared experiences of several of the participants, the need to integrate theory and empirical data, the influence of the institution of the University and the relatively small scale of the study. The limited focus on this study guided the choice of methodology to be Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) (Charmaz, 2014, 2016b) building towards a Situational Analysis (Clarke, 2005; Clarke & Charmaz, 2019) in the planned enquiry that will extend to more fully consider the wider policy context in Scotland.

The concepts of outdoor learning and creativity have been shown to be philosophically complex and open to interpretation. This is heightened by the varied and unpredictable nature of the education process, as individuals' actions are influenced by their personal beliefs and choices. This leads to adopting an interpretative position and therefore qualitative approaches to research (Silverman, 2010). CGT represents a research paradigm that develops a relationship between the complete subjectivity of experience and the process of developing valid theory. Arguably, the tension between objective theory and subjective experience is lived out by educational practitioners, who attempt to enact policies that are present as 'true', whilst in reality are in complex situations with many subjective voices. The recognition of this tension, and development of tools to navigate it, became a key reason to adopt CGT as a methodology. CGT supports an abductive approach where there is a relationship between theory being used to develop coding for field research, then coding is used to inform theory, which is then tested in the field. Charmaz's use of the term 'abduction' attempts to define this ongoing relationship between theory and data:

We move back and forth between stories and analysis and thus create a delicate balance between the evanescence of experience and the permanence of the published word.

(2016, p.8)

The process of integration of grounded theory, critical theory and the reflexive position of the researcher shift the "epistemological foundations" (Charmaz, 2014 p.342) of CGT to being a research paradigm that treads a fine path between theory and data grounded in experience.

Clarke (Clarke & Charmaz, 2019) , builds on Charmaz's work to develop 'Situational Analysis' as an approach within the methodology of CGT. Clarke essentially takes on board the approaches of CGT and further explores the instability of describing an objective 'truth' from the subjective experiences of people within a complex political and social situation. This is useful when considering the relationship of outdoor leaders to a concept as unstable as creativity, within the complex political and social context of Scotland. The approach of 'Situational Analysis' recognises the complexity of a situation and articulates how a 'situation' may not be directly linked in time and place. This has enhanced this study as subjects of the research are related by their shared values and practices, rather than defined by time and place as in a case study (Silverman, 2016). The tools of Situational Analysis (Clarke, 2005; Clarke & Charmaz, 2019; Clarke, 2017) will be utilised in further enquiry to synthesise theory, policy, and empirical data.

Reflexivity

Accounting for the reflexive position of the researcher was essential in this study. This was achieved through the process of memo writing, coding and analysis developing “methodological self-consciousness” (Charmaz, 2014 p.3). Abductive reasoning is used to analyse experience in the light of theory, and to develop theory in the light of experience. This process is the basis of developing researcher insights to contribute to the findings. Interpretations were recorded and reflected upon so that analysis of data towards the development of theory became a reflexive process.

The CGT position on the fundamental importance of reflexivity is supported by Alvesson and Skolberg (Alvesson, 2009) who provide a convincing account of the characteristics of reflexive research as consisting of *interpretation* and *reflection*. All data are the results of interpretation and so there is no consistent, unproblematic, view of the empirical world. Reflection is the process that turns the process inwards and develops critical self-awareness of one’s assumptions and interpretations; it can be defined as “interpretation of interpretation” (Alvesson, 2009 p.9). The argument is made for a position of *reflexive interpretation*, where the researcher is explicit about assumptions, beliefs, attitudes and reactions to the data as they are analysed. These assumptions become part of the coding and theoretical sampling process. The reflexive process therefore becomes integral to the reliability of this research.

Analysis

The approach of CGT is fundamentally pragmatic. It offers a workable way to develop a paradigm of knowledge that accounts for theory, is focused on the subjective experience of people, and provides a means to synthesise the reflexive experience of the researcher. The CGT approach is consistent with pragmatic approaches (Boyatzis, 1998; Charmaz, 2016a; Silverman, 2010; Thomas, 2007).

In order to make the process valid *comparative analysis* and *theoretical sampling* was applied to seek a point of *saturation*. Data was compared to other data to analyse differences and similarities. Theoretical sampling develops the process of comparative analysis: data was taken from one source and compared to theory and to other samples from the enquiry data. The approach of theoretical sampling within the analytic process of CGT is a key element in establishing ‘reliability’ in the research. In this study, this process of comparative analysis and theoretical sampling was central to testing the emerging framework of ‘praxis of creativity’ with the participant educators.

As data were generated, memos and categories were developed to organise data and theory began to be formed. Initially in this stage of the inquiry the categories used to organise data were those of A Description of Creativity (DoC) summarised above. The categories of the DoC were found to be initially useful for organising the data. The analysis continued to explore the motivations and reasons for the descriptions of practice. When new data was found that did not fit within existing categories, it was scrutinised and theories modified. Throughout the process emerging theories were compared iteratively to the data sample. When theory did not stand up to the data, or data did not fit the theory, the theory was modified or further data required - it is from this process that the ‘Pedagogies’, presented in the results below, were articulated as a way of understanding creativity in terms of a praxis of outdoor learning. This on-going process of comparison went on until data became saturated to make the theory stand up to analysis (Charmaz, 2014; Silverman, 2010). This process was applied consistently through the analysis and

will continue to be applied to the data in further enquiry. Where data in the findings presented are outliers this is indicated. Outlying data came from participants speaking about personal experience, motivations and specific situations. Perhaps due to the subjects under discussion, some data was presented in the form of narrative, anecdote or imagery that did not 'fit' within a category. Examples of these data are included in the results below.

Ethics

This study was conducted following the guidelines for ethical research published by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011) and gained approval from the Queen Margaret University Ethics committee.

Results

The findings of this study are presented here as 'A Praxis for Creativity in Outdoor Learning' as the concepts presented are indivisible from their enactment. The pedagogies below seek to describe a thought-action. This praxis re-sequences and subsumes the DoC into a praxis consisting of three pedagogies:

1. Pedagogies of Making
2. Pedagogies of Growing
3. Pedagogies of Anger and Kindness

Pedagogies of Making

Fundamental to a praxis of creativity in outdoor learning are Pedagogies of Making. This praxis shows how concepts of problem posing, and possibility thinking are enacted through processes of making, by makers, who have agency over these processes through action, dialogue and interaction with people and place. The findings from analysis of the data from this enquiry convincingly builds on the first two descriptors of the DoC and largely subsumes the last.

Throughout the data acts of making were described consistently. This took different forms such as: making with natural materials, design of space, making stories, dens, drama, games, ... examples are varied and limited only by the imagination of the people and possibilities of place. Key concepts were repeated: process, play, imagination, curiosity, freedom. Variations on the verb 'to make' recurred throughout the data and appeared in other related terms such as improvise, invent, tell, do, play. The examples varied from structured activities that may have curriculum outcomes, to making up 'challenges', to open-ended 'free' activities. Consistently through the data activities in the context of outdoor learning were acts of making: making things from natural materials, making games, making stories, making ideas, making places. The language leaders chose to describe the process of creativity sometimes using metaphor such as "magic wand vision", or language that suggested actions or states: "It's a construct. It's a story. It's a description. It's a feeling."

The concept of 'possibility thinking' (Craft, 2013) resonates through the data and there are repeated descriptions of participant learners being given open-ended activities, challenges and spaces, where they

had freedom to control the possible actions, activities and outcomes in the session. The messiness of creativity outdoors was mentioned; the idea of improvisation recurred in different forms such as responding to a changing situation such as weather, natural materials or actions from other people or the changes to the environment.

The leaders described explicitly the importance of giving agency to the participant to engage in the making process. The position of the leader was described as hands off, facilitating, enabling, giving minimum instructions, questioning. Several leaders described an extended learning process for themselves of letting go, giving minimum instruction, being 'looser' and deliberately controlling less; allowing more of the activity to be led by the participant. Indeed, as will be discussed later, several leaders expressed frustration when constraints were placed on this agency or freedom. Constraints that may come from curriculum, organisational expectations or rules, or other leaders that did not share the same perspective on practice.

The agency of humans is integral here, with the idea of personal freedom and choice repeated consistently. This was described as being inclusive, empowering and validating for the participants. The leader stands besides, not above the participant. It has strong resonances in the work of such critical pedagogues as Freire. The concept of problem-posing education describes the participant having choice, control and power (Freire, 1970)

The concepts of problem-posing or possibility thinking, as enacted by makers through making, is a powerful core conception of creative pedagogy. In a sense the simplicity of this idea is its power - if educators invite people they work with to 'make' and give them a sense of autonomy to enact this, then agency is enabled and this has multiple positive outcomes for learners. The synthesis of the concepts of 'problem-posing education' and 'possibility thinking', as seen in the data, is a strong example of how the process of CGT is an effective methodology in this enquiry.

Up to this point in the argument, this conception of creative pedagogy could apply to the practice of education in many, if not all situations. In this enquiry the focus is on learning outdoors - which means that the human agency as enacted through the making process is always embodied in place - and the act of making was from the human, from and within the place in which it was enacted. The human agency was always in response to the natural world, that can be described as 'the more than human' (Bainbridge, 2020) This opened a philosophical question about where agency comes from, the extent that a place exerts agency. This data showed strongly how this making process is about the relational and critical aspects of the human interactions with place, which led to the second theme in this praxis of pedagogies of creativity in outdoor learning.

Pedagogies of Growing

Pedagogies of Growing is the praxis of how a maker enacts the process of making by interaction and integration with the natural world. The making process is one of growth: that which is made comes from the place as much as from the human. The data suggests this is the case whether the making is physical, abstract, transient, part of a natural life cycle or relatively 'permanent'. This re-conceptualises the discussion in the DoC of the relational and situational aspects of creativity in outdoor learning. The praxis of Pedagogies of Growing invite consideration of a philosophical shift away from a human centred paradigm

towards a centre balanced towards the natural world, what is increasingly described in recent scholarship as the 'more than human' (Bainbridge, 2020; Beames, 2023). This conception of a realignment of what human agency means in reciprocity with the natural world finds antecedents in indigenous cultures and philosophies (Kimmerer, 2013). It is important to note the deep cultural precedents for this ontological shift is not always made transparent in Eurocentric scholarship, yet is perhaps being addressed in recent criticism as one aspect of the process of addressing our colonial past (Rosiek et al., 2020).

Participants spoke of working with the affordances of place as integral to how they worked with people. Most participants spoke of a deep connection with place. One talked about literally being part of a place and that other people became part of the place too through the process of making using natural materials. The same leader attempted to convey this connection by recounting an experience with participants.

Do you hear the bees? Could you? Where's the bees? I can hear the bees because there's a thrum- because the lime trees are in bloom and the bees are loving this. And there's just thousands in the trees, and *they're* sitting under the tree. Bees. Where's the bees? People don't look up. Until you tell them "look up... you can...you can see through the gaps". And you kind of, you *know* these sorts of things and... it builds the picture for them. I suppose of... actually....I'm trying to paint the picture I suppose.

This poetic description shows the connection between people and place, and the role of the leader, who is the facilitator who helps the participants "hear the bees". Interestingly this leader also used the idea of 'building a picture' to describe their creative role in this process.

The data of the description of the 'bees' to convey the sense of being part of a place was an outlier, in the way it offered profound experiential evidence of a re-centring of perception from the human, towards the 'more than human'. Though a singular data point, the metaphorical connotations of the experience, exemplifies an essential connection to place that was consistent across the practitioners who worked outdoors and project leaders who are literally further away in day-to-day work from the physical environment of natural habitats. All emphasised the way the place should influence the choices and actions of practitioners and participant learners. The integration with place may not be so visceral for those who do not work in the woods, but the power of place is just as significant.

This insight centres the data firmly within Hallam and Ingold's (Hallam, 2014) notion of creativity as being much to do with growth in the place and with the place, as about the human agency of making. This also invites further examination of how post humanist philosophy could be fundamental to understanding practitioners' creative practice. If the creative practice of practitioner and participant is embodied by connection to a natural place and becomes an enactment of the more than human, then we are seeing a philosophical shift from a human centred view of the world. This shift moves away from the idea of exultation of the human being as maker and moves towards the idea that the making process is interconnected with the process of growth. The making comes from the 'more than human' as much as from the human. Places may not hold consciousness, but as they exert power, this changes where agency resides. The discussion of outdoor pedagogy in terms of post humanist thinking is a key area of development from the empirical data in this enquiry. The post human line of thought has been developed in different areas relating to creativity such as theatre (Alexandrowicz & Fancy, 2021) and is and could be usefully explored in further enquiry in relation to creative pedagogies of outdoor learning.

Pedagogies of Anger and Kindness

The Pedagogies of Anger and Kindness is the praxis of leaders enacting deep personal and ethical motivations towards planetary and human flourishing through the processes of making and growing. These pedagogies draw on theoretical, political, emotional and identity level motivations that become manifest through interactions with people within places in the natural world. The data suggest that the process of leading making and growing is integrated with the leaders' beliefs, values and drivers. The argument put forward here is that the creative practice of leaders is so bound up with their values that it becomes a manifestation of anger and kindness in the world. In terms of the leadership of outdoor learning this is enacted through many acts of human kindness that become integrated with other processes of the leadership of making and growing within learning. Whilst the concept of a pedagogy of kindness is supported by other research, (Denial, 2024; Gilmour, 2021; Gorny-Wegrzyn & Perry, 2021), these concepts merit further exploration in the relation to outdoor learning, the climate crisis and creative pedagogies.

In the initial enquiry 'A Good Stick', a key finding was that creative practice was connected to activism. The leaders spoke of deep personal drivers to make the world better. Again, in the current enquiry it was remarkable how quickly the leaders interviewed started to talk about creativity as an idea and a practice, then shifted to speaking openly about emotional, political, ethical motivations about how to make the world a better place. More than one leader spoke of creativity as a value, or as so fundamental as to be part of their being, another leader used the strongest of terms: "Not creative is where my mind goes to die". Throughout the process of discussion of creative practice, the data suggested strongly that effective and positive learning experiences were intricately connected to the relationships between the people, leaders and place. Practitioners described individuals becoming more confident outdoors in moving from language of "I can't do that" or "I'm not creative" towards making and engaging in processes that were fundamentally generative. Leaders repeatedly emphasised that their practice consciously focused on the person first.

One outdoor practitioner said, "And in my head, I think it's probably a start with the person first and then base everything else around that". A different practitioner articulated the same idea, "More than anything, so in my head the connection is made by always tending to look at the people first and then everything else is second, because if you don't know the people, you don't know how to support them". Another practitioner articulated what they were trying to do for the person in their practice: "It's about honouring that part of what's been missing for them and working kind of using my creativity to create opportunities for them".

One particularly powerful example was a practitioner's detailed description of how one learner became symbolic of this process. They said, "everyone has a Darren" (name changed), and then started to use 'Darren' both as a personification of what they were trying to do and as a verb as in 'to Darren'. This became extended to a concept of 'Darrening'. 'Darren' was at the centre of a story of a child who refused to participate in basic classroom literacy activities, but outside gradually grew in confidence to play and participate in making activities to the point that they could do the 'work' outdoors of the kind expected in the classroom - such as storytelling or group activity. The use of the verb 'to Darren' in this leader's language came to mean the act of building confidence through making processes in natural spaces. The concept of 'Darrening' had become how a person could respond to the natural place, be allowed freedom

and agency, gradually build confidence in how they engaged in learning and then became open to engage in learning that could embody a sense of achievement, even giving a sense of potential capacity to learning in possible futures. 'Darren' came to embody and symbolise human flourishing through Making and Growing.

This idea of 'Darren', though it came from one practitioner, recurred throughout the data in different forms and stories. Examples were linked to building confidence through personal freedom as a child, to supporting their own children in developing autonomy, or in anecdotes about individual learners who have flourished in outdoor spaces. When examining the data that recurred in this theme a central code was 'caring' as shown through actions that can be seen as acts of 'kindness'. The kindness of the leader that motivated the action had become integral to the action. This took many forms in the data such as the descriptive positive feedback as differentiated from simple general praise, support to make something with natural materials, confidence to tell a story, courage to do a physical activity, or a playful engagement in a participant game. The ways this could manifest itself in the practice of leaders becomes only limited by the imagination of people and the confines of time and space - so is effectively infinite.

'Darren' was one powerful example, yet all leaders either spoke about emotions, or were emotional, or described emotive relationships with and between people, and with the natural world. Many practitioners drew deeply on personal experiences of kindness, even love, that motivated them to act in human and eco-centred ways. It was remarkable and moving to hear practitioners speak of their own family and memories of early life. In a significant number of situations these had been positive experiences of the natural world that were rooted in childhood memory. The experiences were very varied, from experiences of freedom and escapism, to 'being' in terms of family or social relationships. Several practitioners spoke about parents, about family, about growing up in an environment where they had space to be free to make and do things on their terms.

Practitioners also talked about individuals or groups of people who they really cared for. These included ex-offenders, children with special needs, individual children or adults who had experiences of trauma, and individuals who had significant challenges of confidence. These experiences motivated the leaders and practitioners. Consistently these leaders wanted to affect people in positive ways, as they related or empathised with the experience of a person. Care for a particular individual or group became a driver to care for others. The motivation to lead pedagogies rooted in making and growing, to encourage a creative environment in learning became intricately connected with the person's sense of identity and values even to the extent that they felt loved or could enact love in the world.

So far, the story that emerges is one of creativity as a gentle, generative force in education. Yet the analysis of the data shows that Pedagogies of Kindness are intrinsically linked to drivers that are more challenging and disruptive. The kindness as evidenced in the leaders' practice comes from deep values about the world, about society, about the state of the planet, and about the problems with an education system. This was expressed throughout the data as frustration, professional constructive criticism, well-articulated outrage, criticism of the education system, criticism of traditional practices of schooling and the exam system. More than one leader expressed their feelings of outrage with full use of the rich Scottish vernacular in a colourful range of expletives. The range of emotions expressed articulated individual anger at the system and pedagogies that let down participant learners. One leader repeatedly described school management as

“insane” for putting the needs of school maintenance before the needs of the pupils: “they had this beautiful space that could solve some of the problems, and that just came down to permissions”.

Participants expressed frustration that education in Scotland had not changed and was not fit for purpose. One practitioner articulated it as the “current education system was created by the Victorians to create units of workers to go into the factories”. The idea that the system could be more progressive and person-centred recurred throughout the discussion. Several participants expressed direct anger at the political system as stifling people. One practitioner articulated a direct connection between the failures of the social and political system.

The top of the tree, isn't it? The people of power. The greed because that, that's what's in everybody's face. And that. Then when you get down to the ilk. We've just been talking about the unfortunate people whose lives are at the fucking end of the housing estate world, you know involved in... three or four decades now, drug addiction in the family. No support network around... at the bottom. But the way that the money has been held at the top of the tree and not filtered. Everybody getting a few pennies here and there, more in *their* pocket. I'm talking about putting in an infrastructure, a societal infrastructure which could be easily achieved using the money and ... You can't tell me, that they don't know what they are doing...you can't tell me that because...how long has this been going on? They've been manipulating the people for millennia, right down to, you know, the houses of power.

Recurring throughout the data was a human, environmental, political and moral drive that motivated leaders to critique educational systems and practices in order to make the world a better place. Crucially in this data there is a connection between this criticality and motivation to act kindly. The Pedagogies of Kindness are intricately entwined with Pedagogies of Anger. The same leader who raged against ‘the people of power’ went on to describe working with young ex-offenders outdoors and the importance of the relationships to enable people to ‘continue to flourish’.

To me, it's a flow of ‘yes’, everything is only getting better.... I think some people have real difficulty with the fact that they are doing a lot better. But how how they keep it? How could they harness it? And if it's not somebody there to continually monitor and point and direct and help support. Then people lose that and then they sink back. Because the infrastructure is not inclined to continue to flourish, so they flourish within the environment because we're there to support them to do it. But as soon as that environment is taking away. They may not be able to sustain it. People get sucked into where they've been ... Because you can't see a way out.... Unless something there, unless there's somebody you know.”

To this leader it was the combination of the natural environment and human relations that enabled the flourishing of people. This synthesis of situation and relationships enabled the flourishing, but it was the anger of the leader that was a key motivator for the leader to act. The pedagogy that enabled humans to flourish was a synthesis of the processes of making, growing anger and kindness.

A recurring theme in the analysis was how leaders articulated that they believed they could bring about change more effectively if they were inside the educational system. This position involved tensions- some leaders were highly aware of contradictions between professional responsibility, the need to meet external objectives and their own values and motivations. The data suggested that these values and motivations to be change makers actually made them more effective practitioners. They could be described as 'rebels inside a cause' rather than rebelling externally against a system. This required highly nuanced skills in political navigation, communication, and clarity over professional and personal values.

Conclusion

The findings show strongly that creativity is a significant aspect of outdoor learning leadership and a central theme in pedagogy. To fully explore and enact this within education would have implications for practice, leadership, policy and further academic enquiry research. The Queen Margaret Outdoor Learning Hub is a rich source of data to explore these themes and will be the subject of further enquiry using the tools of Situational Analysis.

The analysis shows that Pedagogies of Making is a convincing way to conceptualise leaders' descriptions of the practice and leadership of creativity in outdoor learning as a praxis. The Pedagogy of Growing leads to a changing philosophical position, the blurring of human and 'more than human' demands that we think of natural places differently and our position within the natural world. There is evidence that through the processes of Making and Growing that human agency is becoming relational and dynamic to other humans, and to the more than human. This invites a conceptualisation of creativity that shifts from a position centred on the human individual to one that is relative to community and the natural world. This invites further exploration of how creative pedagogy outdoors could be theorised through a post-human lens. This will be a focus of a future paper.

The Pedagogy of Anger and Kindness further extends this praxis to show how the drive towards positive action with people in place are inextricably linked to a deep commitment to other human beings and the natural world. This commitment comes from strongly held beliefs and emotions about the things that are wrong in the world, and that should be changed for the better. Pedagogies of creativity in outdoor learning are therefore interconnected with critical pedagogical positions, especially relating to the climate emergency, de-colonisation, and conceptions of community. The significance of this criticality within the praxis of creativity in outdoor learning takes the discussion towards articulating an eco-pedagogy of outdoor learning. Powerfully the many *negative* emotions that have been described as *Anger*, lead to many *positive* choices within practice that become manifestations of *Kindness*. The practice is so embedded in the emotional motivation that directly affects the leaders' choices of action that it becomes a pedagogy that deepens our understanding of Making and Growing.

The limitations of this study are the comparatively small sample size, the reflexivity position of the researcher and the variety of roles of participants. These limitations are addressed through the selection of CGT as a methodology. The analysis also has not yet considered fully the extended situation of the University policies or strategic plan, or the wider policy context of Scotland. This will be the subject of further enquiry, building on and analysing the findings presented in relation to future collection and policy discourse.

A reflection...

I sometimes playfully describe the many leaders and practitioners who work within and for the natural world, as the 'The Eco-Jedi' - peaceful warrior leaders scattered across the planet who act to enable people and the natural world to flourish. These leaders are powerful and change the world through an infinite number of creative actions.

The Eco-Jedi Make and Grow; they are Angry; they are Kind.

Biography

Patrick Boxall is a lecturer at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh. He is engaged in research towards a PhD by publication that focuses on the importance of creative pedagogy in outdoor learning as enacted by leaders and practitioners. He has worked in secondary and adult education.

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