

Pedagogical insiderness and outsiderness

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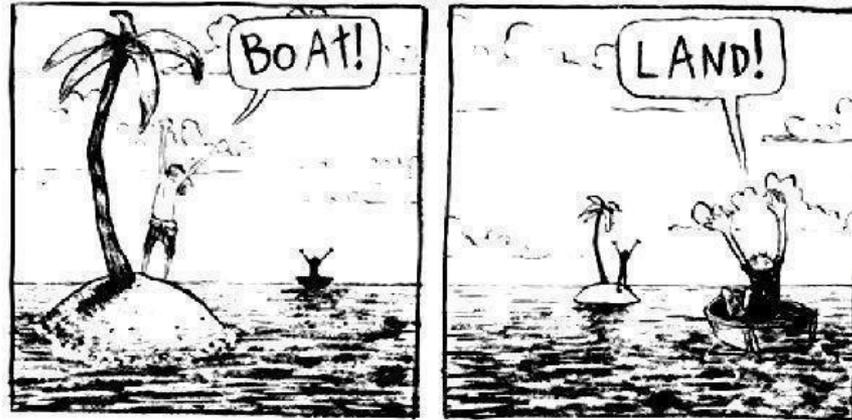
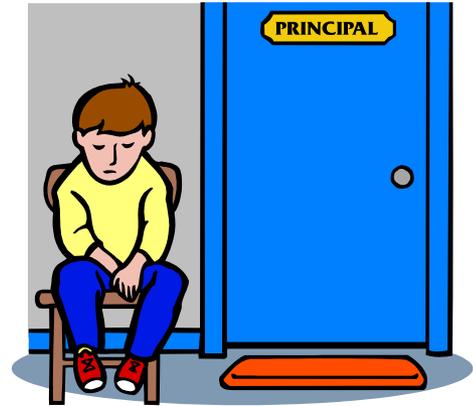
Pedagogy

- To walk alongside someone
- from Greek *paidagōg* as slave who looked after his master's son



'It's a dangerous business, Frodo, going out your door. You step onto the road, and if you don't keep your feet, there's no knowing where you might be swept off to' (Tolkein, 1954).

Outsideness

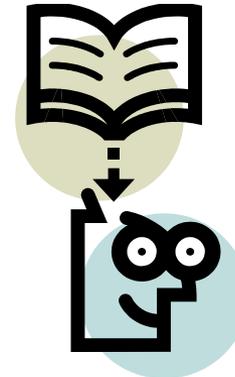


Perspective...

SCHOOL



CURRICULUM GOALS LEARNING OUTCOMES



What does 'insiderness' mean in school?

A tendency in education?

- “... we seem to be more prone to acting our way into implicit thinking than we are able to think our way explicitly into acting,” and that
- “If we are not aware of what and why and how ..., we cultivate a mindlessness that, in the end, reduces our own humanity and fosters cultural division even when it is not intended” Bruner 1996, 79

Outsideness as a resource?

OUTSIDENESS



Different forms of outsidersness

- Bringing what you have already and sharing it with others
– e.g. *living in a different country, learning about cars, how language is used*
- Being prepared to look again at what you already know through someone else's eyes



Example 1

- Today ... we talked about different educational systems in our countries. It was a very interesting activity. Not that I was surprised by how different my experience has been from the rest of the class but because through sharing my stories, I started to realize the absurdity of many things that I had always accepted as the norm. For example, when we were describing the physical appearance of our schools, I started by saying what I had always hated about our schools: barred windows. Then my group mates asked me why the windows were barred and I looked at them and I couldn't find anything to say. I had always hated those bars but had kind of taken it as the norm, that if you don't put bars kids would run away but even to think like that is very absurd. Why had I thought that kids normally have a tendency to run away from school?!!!

Example 2

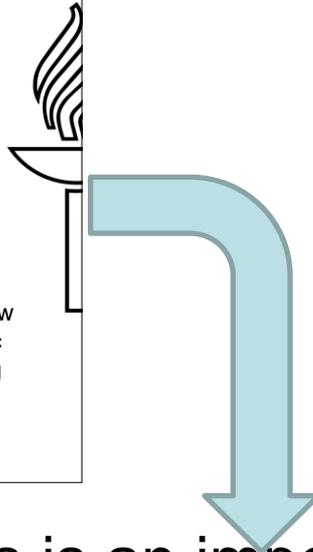
- Concerning the class material ... It is funny and interesting and once again I think that ... in my country there is the general idea that “fun” and “academic” or “learning” are concepts which are fundamentally incompatible. But here I am laughing and feeling so very interested because it is funny. But why is it that in my culture Education always need to be serious and boring ...

Outsideness

- In the realm of culture, outsideness is a most powerful factor in understanding. It is only in the eyes of *another* culture that foreign culture reveals itself fully and profoundly... We raise new questions for a foreign culture, ones that it did not raise itself; we seek answers to our own questions in it; and the new culture responds to us by revealing to us its new aspects and new semantic depths... Such a dialogic encounter of two cultures does not result in merging or mixing. Each retains its own unity and *open* totality, but they are mutually enriched. Bakhtin, 1986: 7

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- Outsideness is an important support for understanding. When someone looks with new eyes, they see new things. When outsiders ask questions, insiders see “old” things in new ways. When insiders hear their answers, they have a chance to think again... Sharing in this way doesn’t mean we all become they same or understand in the same way, but it does suggest that we can a have richer understanding of ourselves and others by sharing what we have.

Incompleteness and the need for community

- "Each of us is incomplete alone, but we should rejoice in that incompleteness. It makes others more necessary to us, and it makes our tolerance of them more attractive." Emerson, 1996:109
- "Community is that place where the person you least want to live with always lives. At the end of my second year, I came up with a corollary. When that person moves away, someone else arises immediately to take his or her place" Palmer, 1987

An extract from a student participant's reflection

- It was merely about eight months ago in one of my courses where we discussed how as a teacher would I face multicultural situations. Even though, I think of myself as conscious person compared to many other teachers, being an English teacher also, I answered in a very naïve way. I said that I wanted to create an atmosphere where all the children would be treated without strong cultural roots thus removing the problem of even having to think of such situations.

- This is what I thought before I read an article about whiteness. The author had an idea of “interviewing” himself about his cultural identity. It was very simple. He had lived a very intercultural life: Playing, living, growing with people of mixed races and nationalities. Though, he came from a very culturally negligent family. He might have had many friends from different cultures, but many of his friends from school and from his family really did not. He started thinking of all the situations where he had faced intercultural encounters and tried to see his perspective in the situations in a new way. What he discovered really shook me. He understood that being in his multicultural group the white male made him experience the situations in a really different way than the others did. He called it the “luxury of whiteness” protecting him from the cultural oppression, he belonged to the supreme race. So here I am being a native Finnish white male in Finland. Never really encountering multicultural situations or living with people from other race or background. Going through school and teaching without really having a glimpse of true multiculturalism, so of course it is easy for me to ignorantly to say that “we can just dismiss people’s background”, but you cannot.

Reflecting on our project so far...

- We are interested in hearing...
- Whether you feel like you are an insider in the project
- How insiderness and outsiderness are being created/developed in the project so far?
- How you would like to progress in relation to the project
- How the project connects with your life (past, present, future)...
- **Your thoughts and experiences 😊**

Allow conflict without competition

- “community is vital and important, but it is also terribly difficult work for which we are not well prepared”
- I came up with my own definition of community after a year at Pendle Hill: Community is that place where the person you least want to live with always lives. At the end of my second year, I came up with a corollary. When that person moves away, someone else arises immediately to take his or her place.
- “A healthy community ... includes conflict at its very heart, checking and correcting and enlarging the knowledge of individuals by drawing on the knowledge of the group” Parker 1987, 25
- “Communal conflict is a public encounter in which the whole group can win by growing” *ibid.* 1987, 24

- *“I don’t understand,” said Frodo. “Neither do I,” answered the wizard. “I have merely begun to wonder...” (Tolkein, [1958/1959] 2006*
- “It all depends on what you want,” put in Merry. “You can trust us to stick to you through thick and thin – to the bitter end. And you can trust us to keep any secret of yours – closer than you keep it yourself. But you cannot trust us to let you face trouble alone, and of off without a word. We are your friends, Frodo.” Tolkein, Lord of the Rings, Ch. 5



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