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# Essence from Within: Unveiling Pedagogical Perspectives from Ancient to Modern Era



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Rajendra Kumar Shah

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# Essence from Within: Unveiling Pedagogical Perspectives from Ancient to Modern Era

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## Preface

The role of education extends beyond the mere transmission of inherited knowledge; it must serve as a catalyst for intellectual innovation and societal progress. The fundamental objective of a school should be the production of knowledge—an endeavor that not only cultivates critical thinking but also prepares learners to navigate the complexities of an ever-evolving world. Historically, educational institutions have placed primary emphasis on the dissemination of knowledge accumulated by previous generations, often considering it the definitive intellectual resource. While this tradition has played a vital role in preserving human understanding, it is no longer sufficient to meet the demands of changing societies. Consequently, it is imperative for schools to actively engage in rigorous research, critical inquiry, and reflective analysis of the pedagogical methodologies employed in classroom instruction.

The necessity of re-evaluating existing pedagogical practices and exploring innovative pedagogical approaches has never been more urgent. This book undertakes a comprehensive examination of the foundational principles of pedagogy through rigorous research and scholarly analysis. The first chapter traces the historical evolution of pedagogical thought, elucidating how pedagogy has been defined and conceptualized from antiquity to the present era. The second chapter presents a critical discourse on the diverse perspectives of scholars from various academic disciplines, offering a comparative analysis of their interpretations of pedagogy. Finally, the third chapter provides a meticulous examination of pedagogical practices within the context of established educational theories, highlighting their implications for contemporary teaching and learning practices.

Pedagogy is not solely the concern of school and university educators; its significance extends to curriculum developers, educational administrators, parents, and all stakeholders invested in the advancement of education. Effective teaching necessitates a deep understanding of pedagogical principles, enabling educators to foster meaningful learning experiences. Likewise, curriculum developers must possess a comprehensive grasp of pedagogy to design curricula that are both impactful and relevant to contemporary educational needs. In the realm of educational administration, pedagogical expertise is indispensable for managing institutional operations, making informed policy decisions, and ensuring the continuous enhancement of academic quality. Furthermore, parents, as primary facilitators of early learning and development, benefit immensely from pedagogical knowledge in guiding their children's educational journeys. Recognizing the multifaceted importance of pedagogy, this book offers a rigorous examination of its principles, applications, and implications across diverse educational contexts. It seeks to provide educators, administrators, policymakers, and

parents with valuable insights into the transformative role of pedagogy in shaping effective teaching and learning practices. It is hoped that this book will be beneficial to all readers and, even in a modest way, will contribute to fulfilling their intellectual and professional needs.

Rajendra Kumar Shah

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Chapter 1

# Introduction to pedagogy

Part 1

## Defining pedagogy

### Context of the Study

From the beginning, education was seen as an art - the art of teaching and helping children learn. This idea dates back to Ancient Greece, where the first educators appeared. Back then, educators were often slaves whose job was to take their master's children to school, make sure they looked neat, and stay with them during their daily activities and play. Socrates, who lived in the 5th century BC, is often called the father of education. By the late 19th century, as sociology and psychology developed, pedagogy started to be viewed as more than just an art - it became an applied science. This means it shifted to focus on guiding the process of teaching and learning, rather than simply describing or explaining it. In simple terms, pedagogy is the science of teaching - helping us understand how to teach effectively. Even so, pedagogy isn't a fully developed field on its own. It continues to leave room for other educational sciences to contribute. Over time, it became clear that pedagogy is not easy to define or limit. Today, there's no longer a debate about whether pedagogy is an art or a science. Like medicine or politics, it is recognized as an applied science that uses knowledge to improve teaching and learning in practical ways.

Pedagogy, the study of teaching methods, including the aims of education and the ways in which such goals may be achieved. The field relies heavily on educational psychology, which encompasses scientific theories of learning, and to some extent on the philosophy of education, which considers the aims and value of education from a philosophical perspective. Accordingly, Merriam-Webster (2023) describe pedagogy as 'the art, science, or profession of teaching'. However, contemporary educational scholarship does not offer a universally accepted definition of the term. Major reference works, such as the Macmillan Encyclopedia of Education (2002), avoid directly defining pedagogy. Instead, they direct readers to texts like Pedagogy of the Oppressed or teaching frameworks such as 'brain-based', 'critical' or 'culturally responsive pedagogy'. Over the past five decades, researchers, primarily from the United States and the United Kingdom,

have called for greater focus on pedagogy, occasionally drawing on the northern European tradition, which regards pedagogy as a distinct academic discipline. Discussions of this tradition often lack clarity, framing pedagogy within empirical research and school reform. Shulman (1987), for example, advocates codifying 'practical pedagogical wisdom' and developing strategies to improve teaching effectiveness, aiming to broaden pedagogy's impact on diverse student populations.

Pedagogy, as an educational concept, varies widely in its application and understanding. Scholars such as Anders (2015) and Murray (2015) have highlighted its lack of a consistent definition, noting a range of interpretations and practices. While some see pedagogy as simply another term for teaching, Murphy (2008) questions this view, arguing that pedagogy operates within what Murray (2015, p. 1719) calls a 'contested and dynamic space'. Within this space, pedagogy is continually reshaped and redefined by different perspectives, contexts, and educational traditions. This complexity is particularly evident in England, where the role of pedagogy has been critically examined. Simon (1994) famously asked, 'Why no pedagogy in England?' Comparing England to other European countries, Simon observed that pedagogy holds an 'honoured place' (p. 10) in continental Europe but has not gained similar recognition in England. He argued that pedagogy in England had 'never taken root and flourished' (p. 14). This critique did not imply a lack of teaching but highlighted the fragmented and inconsistent nature of pedagogic discourse. Alexander (2001, p. 540) expanded on this analysis, describing English pedagogic discourse as 'confused, anecdotal and eclectic', lacking clear structure, organization, and direction.

Pedagogy is a complex concept that resists simple definition. Even the term pedagogy itself remains somewhat ambiguous. Watkins and Mortimer (1999) define it as 'any conscious activity by one person designed to enhance the learning of another' (p. 3). Alexander (2003) offers a more specific definition, suggesting that pedagogy involves both action and discourse, "Pedagogy is the act of teaching together with its attendant discourse. It is what one needs to know, and the skills one needs to command in order to make and justify the many different kinds of decisions of which teaching is constituted" (p. 3). Leach and Moon (1999) expand on this by describing a 'Pedagogical Setting' as "the practice that a teacher, together with a particular group of learners, creates, enacts, and experiences" (p. 267). This definition underscores the idea that pedagogy is a collaborative process in which learners play an active role, highlighting the social interaction between teachers and students. Other scholars, such as McNamara (1991), Brown and McIntyre (1993), Black and Wiliam (1998), Ireson et al. (1999), Bruner (1999), and Loveless (2002), acknowledge that the factors influencing teachers' pedagogy are multifaceted and complex. These factors include not only government policies but also the school environment, a teacher's position within the

broker (Stairs, 1995). However, pedagogy is only one part of what Bernstein (1971) called the three message systems of formal educational knowledge which can be considered to be realized through education, the other two being curriculum and assessment. Education at its best is when there is an alignment and coherence between these three. Alexander in 2008 writes that: 'pedagogy is best defined, then, as the act of teaching together with the ideas, values and collective histories which inform, shape and explain that act'. (Alexander, 2005, p. 2)

Pedagogy is not only a system of information or subjects that are organised for students but an ordering of social fields that defines the categories and distinctions that legitimate what is to be thought and taught about. At its core therefore pedagogy can be viewed as a system of discipline 'by which hierarchies-markers of social distinction and aspirations-are established (Britzman, 1992, p. 136). For example, the physical arrangement of a class-room can suggest coercion, control and surveillance or cooperation and empowerment (Britzman, 1992). Alexander (2001b, p.7) asks whether there is any 'irreducible core of elements in teaching which are universal in the sense that in some form they are replicated in any and every context and can therefore form the basis for legitimate extrapolation from one context to another'. In particular the cultural gap between a learners' everyday world and the world of school can result in unauthentic and ineffective teaching and learning. The world of pedagogy, on the other hand, should mediate between the everyday world and the world of school.

Pedagogy may be commonly defined as the art and science (and may be even craft) of teaching. However, viewing pedagogy in this way fails to honour the historical experience and connect crucial areas of theory and practice. To understand the term fully, it needs to be explored through the thinking and practice of those educators who look to accompany learners, care for and about them, and bring learning into life (Encyclopedia Britannica 2015). Teaching is just one aspect of their practice. In recent years, there has been more intense and wider discussions on this term perceived from different directions. Freire, for instance, has been seeking a pedagogy of the oppressed or critical pedagogy and has proposed a pedagogy with a new relationship between teacher, student and society. As a result of the broader debates on pedagogy, practitioners have been wanting to rework the boundaries of care and education via the idea of social pedagogy; and perhaps most significantly, governments wanting to constrain the activities of teachers by requiring adherence to preferred pedagogies (Smith 2012).

## **Definition of the Word Pedagogue**

The Greek word for child (usually a boy) is pais (the stem of this is 'paid'), and leader is agogus-so a paid-agogus or pedagogue was literally a leader of children. Later, the word

Part 2

# Conceptualizing pedagogy

## Etymological Meaning of Pedagogy

Pedagogy has emerged in the educational literature in various countries (Alexander, 2008), at various times (Hamilton, 2009), and with varying interpretations and agendas for various people (Waring and Evans, 2015; Watkins and Mortimer, 1999). In Ancient Greece, wealthy families would employ a large number of servants, often slaves, one of whom would be tasked with caring for the children. These slaves would frequently lead or escort the children to their educational institutions. A pedagogue is someone who can make the perfect match and successfully transfer knowledge. A natural pedagogue will take advantage of any chance to impart their expertise and education in order to aid, assist, or enlighten others. They will do this by adapting their teaching approaches to their students' or learners' intellectual capabilities, learning styles, and individual requirements. A schoolteacher is one example of a pedagogue. Another, less flattering description implies that pedagogues are persons who educate in a dogmatic or pedantic style.

The term 'pedagogy' has a long history. It stems from a Greek word meaning 'attendant leading a boy to school' (Watkins and Mortimore 1999, p. 1). In other accounts, 'pedagogue' is translated as a 'slave who ushers the children forward until they are ready for their private tutor' (Best 1988, p. 157). 'Pedagogy' entered the Oxford English Dictionary in 1571. In modern day usage it stands for: (i) 'A place of instruction; a school, a college; a university'; (ii) 'Instruction, discipline, training; a system of introductory training; a means of guidance'; (iii) 'The art, occupation, or practice of teaching. Also: the theory or principles of education; a method of teaching based on such a theory' (Oxford English Dictionary, 2018).

Pedagogy comes from the Greek word *pais* (παῖς). The prefix *ped* means 'boy' or 'child'. A pedagogue in ancient Greece was a slave or attendant who would lead children to their place of learning. A derivative form of the prefix *ped* is *pedia* referring to upbringing, education or learning. This element can be found in the word *encyclopedia*, meaning

‘circles of knowledge’. The prefix also appears in the late Latin word *pedant*, from the French *pedant* and Italian *pedante*, and translates to ‘teacher’ or ‘schoolmaster’. The term now refers to one who over-emphasises minor details or points of learning as opposed to the bigger picture. Merriam Webster says a *pedant* ‘annoys other people’ with their correction of minor errors. The suffix of pedagogy in ancient Greek, *agogos* (ἀγωγός), means ‘leader of’. From this perspective, we find ourselves using pedagogy to refer to the leading or teaching of children.

Etymologically, pedagogy refers to child teaching. *Pedagoge*, refers to ‘schoolmaster, or teacher of children,’. Accordingly, French word *pedagoge* refers to ‘teacher of children’. At the same time, Latin *paedagogus*, and Greek *paidagōgos* means ‘slave who escorts boys to school and generally supervises them,’. Later, it indicates to ‘a teacher or trainer of boys,’. In nutshell, *pais* (genitive *paidos*) denotes to ‘child’ and *agōgos* refers to ‘leader’, and *agein* indicates to ‘to lead’. Since in Greek *agogos* means leader, a *paidagogos* was a slave who led boys to school and back, but also taught them manners and tutored them after school. In time, *pedagogue* came to mean simply teacher; today the word has an old-fashioned ring to it, so it often means a stuffy, boring teacher. The word *pedagogy*, though, is still widely used, and often means simply teaching. And *pedagogic* training is what everyone majoring in education receives. The term pedagogy has its roots in ancient Greek and appears to have originated from various derivatives of the classical Greek word *paidagogas*: a combination of the words for boy and leader based on the notion of a man (the household servant) having responsibility for a child’s education and upbringing (Hamilton, 2009; Leach and Moon, 2008; Watkins and Mortimore, 1999). The Greek word for child (usually a boy) is *pais* (the stem of this is *paid*), and leader is *agogus*-so a *paid-agogus* or *pedagogue* was literally a leader of children. The word is derived from the Greek *paidagogia* meaning ‘to lead a child’ which was, in turn, taken from *paidagogos* or teacher of boys. In the Greco/Roman culture, a *paidagogos* was a slave responsible for the education of boys. The word *pedagogue* was originally used to refer to the slave who escorted Greek children to school. Later, the word *pedagogue* became synonymous with the teaching of our young.

Pedagogy and pedagogue come from the Greek *Paidos* boy or child plus *agogos* leader. Pedagogy refers to the teaching profession as well as the science of education. This might be one reason that the word, *pedagogue*, is often used for a teacher who is overly interested in rules and details, hence the science of teaching, rather than actually getting through to his or her students. Pedagogy is another word for education, the profession and science of teaching. The word pedagogy is a derivative of the Greek *παιδαγωγία* (*paidagogia*), from *παιδαγωγός* (*paidagogous*), itself a synthesis of ἄγω (*ago*), ‘I Lead’ and *παῖς* (*pais*, genitive *παιδός*, *paidos*) ‘boy or child’: hence ‘attendance on boys, to lead a child’. It is pronounced variously, as /pedəgɒdʒi/, /pedəgoudʒi/, or /pedəgɒgi/. The

## Chapter 2

# Theories of pedagogy

### Context of the Study

Pedagogy is a contested term, unevenly received in pedagogical discourses in the English-speaking world and continental Europe (Alexander 2008; Best 1998; Watkins and Mortimore 1999). While in continental Europe pedagogy is regarded as a well-established academic discipline, in the English-speaking world, pedagogy, which has received attendant criticisms about being a poorly defined and ill - conceived term, became historically neglected (Watkins and Mortimore 1999, Simon 1981). Instead, in Britain and the United States, discourses of curriculum have become more prominent, which is reflective of the history of devolved responsibilities for curriculum construction in that part of the world (Alexander 2008). As a result, in Britain and the United States, pedagogy was made ‘subsidiary to curriculum’ (Alexander 2008, p. 47).

The term pedagogy has a long history. It stems from a Greek word meaning ‘attendant leading a boy to school’ (Watkins and Mortimore 1999, p. 1). In other accounts, ‘pedagogue’ is translated as a ‘slave who ushers the children forward until they are ready for their private tutor’ (Best 1988, p. 157). ‘Pedagogy’ entered the Oxford English Dictionary in 1571. In modern day usage it stands for: (i) ‘A place of instruction; a school, a college; a university’; (ii) ‘Instruction, discipline, training; a system of introductory training; a means of guidance’; (iii) ‘The art, occupation, or practice of teaching. Also: the theory or principles of education; a method of teaching based on such a theory’ (Oxford English Dictionary, 2018). Etymologically, pedagogy refers to child teaching. Pedagogue, refers to ‘schoolmaster, or teacher of children,’. Accordingly, French word pedagogue refers to ‘teacher of children’. At the same time, Latin paedagogus, and Greek paidagōgos means ‘slave who escorts boys to school and generally supervises them,’. Later, it indicates to ‘a teacher or trainer of boys,’. In nutshell, pais (genitive paidos) denotes to ‘child’ and agogos refers to ‘leader’, and agein indicates to ‘to lead’.



Since in Greek *agōgos* means 'leader', a *paidagōgos* was a slave who led boys to school and back, but also taught them manners and tutored them after school. In time, *pedagogue* came to mean simply 'teacher;' today the word has an old-fashioned ring to it, so it often means a stuffy, boring teacher. The word *pedagogy*, though, is still widely used, and often means simply 'teaching'. And pedagogic training is what everyone majoring in education receives. *Pedagogy* and *pedagogue* come from the Greek *paidos* 'boy' child plus *agōgos* leader. *Pedagogy* refers to the teaching profession as well as the science of education, for example as a college subject. This might be one reason that the word, *pedagogue*, is often used for a teacher who is overly interested in rules and details, hence the science of teaching, rather than actually getting through to his or her students.

More frequently used than *pedagogy*, the word *pedagogue* is used today to describe a strict, pedantic, and demanding instructor. The ancient Greek word, *παιδαγωγός* or *paidagōgos*, etymologically had a very different connotation. The 'paidagog' of Plato's time was an adult who-in servitude-and with great care, literally walked children to school each day. In ancient times, the word was taken to mean, the one who guides, protects, or leads. That 'pedagog' seems gentler than those associations the word conjures up nowadays. However, the idea of *pedagogy* is much more complex than either of these. In contemporary discourse, the word *pedagogy* is used sometimes to describe learning theory and other times used to describe the practice of such theory. It has become an example of academic language, referring to the exploration of how knowledge and skill grow as facilitated within the context of another person or other people (i.e. students and teachers). When curriculum structuralists explain the meaning of this *pedagogy*, they use the word *transfer* instead of the word, *grow*. But, since I'm no curriculum structuralist, I use the word *grow*.

Etymologically, *pedagogy* is derived from the Greek word *paidagōgos* that means a slave who led a boy to school. The concept or schooling or a child implies how the instructions are imparted and to what objective. As a method of teaching, *pedagogy* thus includes the art, and the science of teaching. If the art of teaching includes teaching as performance with the humanistic intent or education, the science of teaching means the methodological objective and rigour in application as a normative practice. As science, maintains Fredrick Gruber, it studies "psychology and the behavioral sciences, points to practical applications. It encompasses much in the domain of metaphysics and epistemology, having no answers but only probabilities" (1973). In addition, its concerns also include ideological, empirical and conceptual dimensions. As a process, *pedagogy* helps in honing the abilities of human beings leading them towards perfection and liberation. Education is considered as a life-long process that imparts knowledge and wisdom in enhancing the ability or good judgment. The learning so developed also has a cultural context that provides continuity across generations.

Ultimate and Absolute: it can help man establish a Synthesis with the universal will and universal reason. By the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century, Johann Friedrich Herbart and Friedrich Wilhelm August Froebel following Locke stressed on the scientific way of teaching learning. Understanding both nature and society are considered important in the education of a child. Johann Gottlieb Fichte of Germany maintained that education could be used as an instrument for social and political reforms to achieve social solidarity and national awakening. Parker emphasized that learning for living through his Quincy Method which later came to be known as progressive education.

Modernist pedagogic method started with John Dewey and others. For Dewey, knowledge is not an end in itself but a means of liberation and development. Knowledge is built on problem solving experiences of our life. Ivan Illich differentiated between education and schooling and emphasized on abolishing control over education. Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus underlined existentialist thoughts in education. They believed that life is never free from conflict and contradiction; therefore, man must make room for resolution of conflicts and contradictions. Attainment of selfhood which is free, responsible and has the ability to choose are the aims of existentialists, for them education should pave the way for realization of human subjectivity. Kierkegaard, Jaspers, Heidegger also contributed to the understanding of human existence. Man's will and selfhood with a clear understanding of one's condition and location become important for these thinkers. The modernist thesis considered education as human progress. Having many internal contradictions, the Modernists push forward a scientific technological education to ensure that such an education would make human life comfortable. However, such a premise has also resulted in the horrors of the two world wars. Modernist education also deals with the ambivalence in understanding class, race, gender and issues of marginalization and subordination in a society. Postmodernist pedagogical theories, rooted in 20th-century radical thought, form the foundation of CP as developed by Freire, Apple, Giroux, Kincheloe, Shor, hooks, and others. Drawing from the Frankfurt School, Foucault, feminist theory, and postmodernism, Critical Pedagogy is not a fixed concept but varies among scholars. It is a form of pedagogical activism aimed at transforming social structures and empowering the marginalized. Influenced by Illich and Dewey's ideas on democracy and autonomy, it also engages with theories of subjectivity, hegemony, class, ideology, and other forces of subjugation.

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Dr. Rajendra Kumar Shah

# Essence from Within: Unveiling Pedagogical Perspectives from Ancient to Modern Era

## About the Book

Pedagogy constitutes a critically important domain within the field of education, maintaining profound interconnections with diverse academic disciplines. As an essential component of the curriculum in university departments of education, it plays a crucial role in shaping the professional competencies of teachers, curriculum experts, educational administrators, and other stakeholders in the education sector. Despite its recognition as a well-established academic discipline, scholarly literature on this subject remains relatively scarce. In response to this gap, the present book has been meticulously developed to address the need for comprehensive academic resources on pedagogy. The first chapter offers a thorough assessment of the definitions of pedagogy that have evolved from antiquity to the present, critically analyzing their meanings and relevance within contemporary educational discourse. The second chapter presents a rigorous exploration of fundamental pedagogical concepts, delving into the diverse theoretical perspectives, scholarly debates, and areas of consensus that have shaped the discipline. The final chapter provides an extensive review of the major pedagogical theories developed to date, offering a detailed analysis of their historical evolution, contextual significance, distinctive characteristics, and practical applications. It is anticipated that this book will make a meaningful contribution to addressing the academic and professional needs of its readers.

## About the Author



Rajendra Kumar Shah, PhD, MED, BCom, earned his bachelor's degree from Shankar Dev Campus and his master's degree from Mahendra Ratna Campus, Tribhuvan University, Nepal. He obtained his Doctorate in Education from Lucknow University, India. Dr. Shah is an Associate Professor at Sanothimi Campus, Tribhuvan University, with an illustrious teaching career spanning over four decades. As a senior member of the university's Education Department, he has gained extensive administrative experience, serving in various capacities,

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