

# Pedagogy Matters: Episode 12 Transcript

Hello and welcome to the latest episode

of the Pedagogy Matters podcast.

The purpose of the podcast is to bring to

the fore some key topics of conversation

in relation to learning and teaching,

to discuss to break their aspects

of practice and provide snippets,

advice and guidance as to how to

integrate these into our daily practice.

Today, I'm delighted to be joined by

Anna Styles and Carolyn Jarvis from

muscles in college and at Caroline.

How are you? Hi hi Johnny, good thanks.

Thanks by the way I am Caroline

and yeah I'm good as well.

Thank you so much for different podcast.

Have done previous web.

I've got two guests.

Will be kind of vying,

ving to talk and yeah so be it.

Interesting there.

But today we're going to look at  
outdoor learning and the specialist  
pedagogy of the outdoor classroom.

And also this is a project that's  
been going on West login so and I  
think you're going to kick this off  
by telling us about what this is.

OK, so in terms of our.

You are learning over the last  
couple of years,  
we've really developed our  
outdoor learning pedagogy.

Unless really came about through  
our self evaluation process and in  
dialogue and conversations with our  
partners in the local authority,  
we worked really closely with our  
partners and they had approached us  
and asked us specifically what we were

doing to ensure that our practitioners

where skilled and understood.

The pedagogy behind outdoor

learning before they transitioned

into both placement and ultimately

to becoming practitioners.

So really,

the journey began with us identifying

as a team the most appropriate site to

locate a forest classroom on our campus,

and we are quite fortunate in

that we do have quite extensive

grounds around the campus,

so we agreed on an area that we

could develop that, you know,

has some trees, lots of ground.

There was lots of potential

that we could see they are,

and it started off really by.

Engaging with students across the

college and we asked our Uniform public

services to assist in volunteer and  
clearing some of the land around the campus.

We also engaged with our facility  
staff who really did a fantastic job in  
supporting the early development of the area.

Thing is, a fire pet fences around and  
shooting the site with secure building,  
some mud,

kitchen and lots of external lots of  
resources to allow us to have then.

Encourage children to come on to site,  
so that's really where it started  
and how it's developed from kind  
of the the early days,  
which is about two years ago.

Now.

Yeah,

that's my first question.

Terms of sort that's been  
in place for two years.

What do we write this?

Humans evolved over that time  
as well in terms of its grown,  
or it's been added to that as well.

Yeah, it's definitely  
evolved since their initial,  
so since that initial point where  
we identified the land in their  
staff with Intel to practice.

Then obviously upscaled to  
make sure that we were able to  
deliver in a sort of like outdoor  
learning pedagogy in our practice.

So that meant our sales going  
on a couple of courses in to  
try and give us those skills,  
but at the same time,  
in the Forestry Commission,  
is that right, Anna?

That who would fail under a  
developed in Level 7 in a,  
you know in terms of forest,

kindergarten,

in with the in conjunction

with Juliet Robertson,

who is like basically the

educational space specialist in.

Outdoor learning and we were fortunate

to have been awarded 5 spaces on

the very first training course

for that which then which then

meant that we were in a position

we are in after sort of like the

like you know towards the early

part of when we had the site we

could then develop an actual unit

to be delivered to HNC cohort,

which was basically our first

point of actually embedding

outdoor learning pedagogy within

in an actual like you know.

A course framework so that was delivered

into our whole agency cohort last year,

which are quite about 100 students  
that went through it and basically  
the feedback that we got from that  
from the students was that it was  
really well received and particularly  
when they went on out to practice,  
it gave them the opportunity  
to sort of embed those skills.  
As a practitioner an it was fully  
desirable by the local authority  
where most of them would then go on  
and get jobs in as a result of that  
success over like that year and also  
the coming years up to where we are now.

We've then taken that outdoor learning  
and embedded it from level four.

Rate the way up to level 8.

So basically,

all levels of students were regardless  
of the course of the entry level.

Within tilted practice,

will have some form of experience of  
outdoor learning within our forest  
classroom or the surrounding college areas,  
so that we instill that sort of like,  
you know,  
pedagogy of the benefits of outdoor learning  
for children from the very very start.

So it's a progression so that  
what they learn in Level 4 is then  
built upon in level 5 Level 6,  
and then when they get to HNC.

To do the formal SQL unit,  
which is the only unit so far in Scotland,  
it is actually recognizable  
unit qualification that you  
can get certificated for.

So we've developed like you know,  
nice QA units as a result of that.

No,  
that sounds fantastic,  
and there's so many questions there can.

I want on pick,

and I guess the first one

is you talk about your views that

across multiple levels of courses,

which is great, so I guess.

Within that, what benefits have you

notice them from your level folders up

to level 8 and in terms of them engaging

within after the outdoor learning outdoor

classroom throughout their programs?

So, particularly with the lower levels in

in relation to light level 4 and level 5,

this is the first year that were fully

sort of embedded that within their courses

and I would have to say that the feedback,

because obviously I am sort of

supporting those levels within

that with other colleagues,

and there are also delivering

these units is that they,

like the practical element.

And the fact is that like when  
they go out and do in activities  
within the forest classroom,  
whether that be like bushcraft  
literacy and numeracy,  
whatever it is,  
then building whatever the focuses  
of that week session is that they  
tend to be calmer and they approve.  
They don't feel like they're at college,  
because although we're on the college campus,  
you do feel like a bit taken away from that.  
So they basically forget about  
the fact that there are college,  
and they're just focused on their learning.  
But they also in particular feather  
stressful day before they come to college.  
They all do say that.  
Relaxes down even though they're learning,  
but when they go to actually then  
write up their sessions or to use that

within like assessment format that much  
able to relate that much more because  
of the practical experience at the pads.

Yeah,

3 messages.

I know one of the first episodes we did  
as part of podcast looked at retrieval  
practice and just different ways of adding  
learners to store memory information  
store information in their memory,  
and that's a prime example there.

You know I've kind of learners engaging with  
some invocation relevant and then adding  
their understanding their articulation.

Of that learning and content

and we will transfer,

you know.

So it's really interesting and  
myself and Carolyn were talking  
pretty cordon around the unique  
vocational element that students

can typically receiving a college  
compared to study with other providers.

And this is a prime example of that.

So I guess what you're trying to do  
is prepare learners for their next  
steps and together for the workforce.

And we assume that a lot of a lot of  
schools of destinations that students  
would be progressing into will be  
doing more forest type activities.

Compare or more outdoor learning  
to activities compared to.

5-6 years ago is that fair to  
say there as well?

I think that's absolutely fair to see,  
and particularly as a result of the pandemic.

You know that that's really kind of changed.

Everybody's expectation  
in terms of classroom.

So although it had been.

More common for early years to be,

you know, outside,

and that was kind of the norm.

Certainly for primary schools,

there's definitely a shift in the

dynamic of, you know, indoor, outdoor,

and I think the beauty of our connect

setup is that obviously pre covered.

We had children on campus,

so all the way from from nursery

children on campus up to primary 7

and indeed some third year boys.

One of the projects we were running

with with third year boys so that allows

our students to have that practical

experience in a safe environment

so they develop their skills.

That interaction that communication

with children and young people

before they are then exposed to the

replacement and also having them too.

Work and understand and manage the

dynamics of a team so it really  
is a supportive environment for  
them to develop those early skills  
where they feel safe and supported.

Yeah, and also in addition to that  
I think as well with the students,  
particularly younger students.

Not a lot of them have had outdoor  
learning experience themselves.

They're not used to being outside  
playing like his children because  
we're sort of like move to that  
sort of risk of their society,  
where, like you know,  
letting children just go out and  
play in the streets, like quote.

Would have done when I was younger,  
it just doesn't happen.

So actually I live in and have another  
a children from local settings  
coming into work with the students.

It's about like changing that and  
challenging that mindset of being  
risk averse to being much more  
about risk benefits into outdoor  
learning and and giving them those  
skills that they'll need to us.

They progress on.

Yeah,

that's a really keep it for me in terms of,

you know,

the skills developed,

the progression pushing students

out of their comfort zone,

and I guess it's just become a routine and

a norm for them as part of their program.

No God that came from my own

Chris in the past week when you

put students in this situation,

they often know as far as a one

off the officer notified situation

was actually this is a routine

expectation and against we're  
preparing them for the sector,  
which is ultimately what we're trying to do.  
Nova standards,  
expectations and when you draw in  
experience of working with young people  
from primary schools and so on and so forth,  
that makes it more real for them as well.

You know, challenging.

The students develop their skills,  
not different context,  
but they can't necessarily  
mess around with them.

It's they've got to have.

I'm going to work as mentality,  
you know which is really important there.

And just touching back we set out before

I'm going to kind of across college  
initiative across college engagement.

Has that progressed further then as well.

I'll send all code of impact on this,

but in terms of this type of activity  
or project based learning or elements,  
is that work more broadly across the  
college then as well for more experience.

Yes,

definitely.

We've had opportunities  
to work more closely with  
our colleagues in construction,  
so it's giving them an opportunity to  
actually, we became their customer,  
so we had a group of construction students  
who worked with one of our lecturers.

Two, she became their customer and set them  
up brief so they've provided and and built.

Equipment for the photos so you know

they've just finished constructing

like our storytelling area,

they've developed another mud kitchen

for us and they have lots of ideas in

plans for future developments for that.

But there's possibilities for

right across the college.

You know, for lots of opportunities

to develop relationships and also

external partnerships, we've got a

number of external partnerships now.

I really keen focuses.

In terms of sustainability

and for us across the college,

we're looking at rewilding the campus.

So we're in talks with The Woodlands

Trust and the Conservation volunteers,

and it's about developing those relationships

and ensuring that our students have

an understanding of sustainability,

the natural environment, the world,

and their place within it.

Nothing is really interesting.

I know when we talked prior,

so again recording we talked

around as many transferables here,

not just for for child care.

Earlier script.

Marriott you know across a piece

of other listeners listen,

that's gonna episode in terms of

that cross college work and in terms

of working with local authorities,

working with industry,

preparing students for their industry,

we talk about national initiatives

before as well while trying to get

more meals into early years and

also working with local schools

in the partnership, you know.

So there's many different ways.

And from working in the sector

in the past in England,

some people it will be quite certain

saying you do not take boxes

actually not this is done for the

benefit of our students to help

them be exposed to the real world,  
to help them develop and progress into  
whatever their intended destination is.

And I'm kinda web.

This idea come from initial and so kind

of how does how did this come about?

Was it just to look out the window one day

in Seattle and then great let's go there?

Or was this a need from the local authority?

Where did this come from?

Well, initially it was definitely a  
conversation with the local authority,  
but.

At the same point we had applied

for some funding from the front

Scottish Funding Council to run a

pilot project to encourage young

men into careers in early years,

and we thought that these two

running alongside one another might

be an opportunity.

We're not in any way saying, you know, like.

Men would gonna work,

should be sort of kind of.

Encouraged down at their line of

outdoor education and early years,

but what we did find is as part

of the project was that.

It was really to find out about

their career aspirations and we

are their ideas of their career.

Pathways had been formed and

the interesting you know,

findings from that project

was that for many of them,

nobody had the conversation about early

years being an option for four men.

Parents didn't have the

conversations with them.

Very often careers,

guidance and and school.

And it's something that they never

could have had considered previously.

But one of the kind of key findings

for us was by third year on.

Our focus was in 3rd year boys

was that they had pretty much made

up their mind about their career

choice by that age and stage,

so it only cannot be enforced for us.

You know that the need and importance

and having these conversations on

exposing everyone and it being fair and

equal so that everybody has an idea

by career opportunities to allow them to.

To make an informed decision about

their potential career pathways,

no, I think that's really keen again

from my experience of talking a

lot of students and parents that

often don't know what's out there.

Don't know what these jobs look like.

They don't know how to get there

and it's just not trying to raise  
the awareness of that to to allow  
them to make informed decision.

Nothing that's really interesting

'cause I know the first question

people have when looking at things.

This is great, but how do I pay for it?

So yeah,

obviously we're fortunate to

receive some funding.

There are being quite yet but cute

with funding and kind of how we do it,

but I guess from what you're

seeing there is a lot of.

I love in-house development in terms

of using public service students in

terms of construction students in

terms of using the states team and

ultimately it's about providing a

curriculum that meets the needs of

the sector, which is really interesting.

Final real question for me is I  
guess think about this project and  
maybe think more that people who are  
interested in doing the same or a  
similar project in a different room area.

I guess what are the principles of  
the project but you think has made  
this approach particularly effective.

So kind of why is this?

Why is it worked?

For me for me, as I you know,  
I would say it's worked because the  
staff have been really enthusiastic  
about the whole concept and you  
know we have a core team of staff  
who have completely embraced the  
idea of outdoor learning and see it.

As you know, the way forward.

I think one thing I would say to  
anyone who's interested in you know,  
developing staff or developing

like an outdoor classroom 'cause.

I was just an outdoor classroom

that any group in the college

could access and utilize is.

It's not necessarily necessary

to have the training,

but what the training does is it gives

staff the confidence to then be able

to embrace ideas and to look further.

You know outside themselves to

look at other possibilities.

So the training for us was free and

Caroline and I both agree that it

was probably the best three days of

training we have had in our careers.

But it's not so much that the

training is absolutely necessary,

but it does give staff the confidence,

then to have you know ideas and

and see the possibilities that

you know can lead on from this,

because our projects have been,

you know, quite varied.

You know, we've worked with the S3 Boys.

We've also had a really great

project where we worked with a local

primary school for primary six and

seven on an alternative curriculum.

So we're talking about young people who had.

You know, had traumatic experiences

in their lives and the feedback from

the school in terms of the project is

that it really has made a difference

to the engagement in the school.

Working with our students has

also supported their young people

and just in general,

I think the project and all the

work we've done has provided

many benefits to our community.

You know, we've worked with local teachers,

we've supported them and.

Planning their classrooms?

We've invited them onto campus

and going forward,

that's you know what we

intend to continue to do.

That sounds fantastic.

Currently going out there.

Yeah,

I think I think that I would agree with Anna.

I think if it wasn't for the team being

so like enthusiastic to get involved

into like sort of drive the project

in the development like you know,

as much as it has then it

wouldn't have been successful.

But I think that also comes down to like

Anna and the other managers as well.

That and allowing us the opportunity

to be able to develop it because

particularly when we first started in

relation to the Forest Kindergarten

unit in there is a bit of an outlier

in terms of expense for equipment

'cause we need to have tarps,

bungees lots of different

equipment that you need.

To be able to do that and that we

can all when budgets are tight,

is quite significant in, you know,

costs that you're investing in an approach,

but I think it's paid off because

that initial budget, like you know,

sort of like outlay in terms of

equipment is still being used now,

like you know,

so it's not like it's an ongoing expense,

it's just the initial startup.

And we did too.

A lot of it as like she plays with Canon

years like recyclable materials because

you don't have to have like a major cat.

You just have to have enough.

That means that they shouldn't  
get the best experience you can,  
but we always tend to show a way of  
like this is what you could have,  
but we.

This is how you could do it  
with little or no,  
you know so that it's not just about  
equipment and being really expensive.

It's about like how you approach it and  
how you embed it within the teaching.

Because there's sometimes we just  
take classes out where there may be,  
just like you know,  
completely worksheet and things like that,

but were taken to the  
outdoor area just because.

It's like you know.

Somewhere different and a  
definite speed vironment so.

Nothing is really useful and I've got

just drop those down there and when  
I'm kind of looking back at those,  
I'm running through my second.  
It kinda really aligns to also  
principles of effective student  
program in terms of first big picture  
with a clear vision and purpose.  
Kind of what am I doing?  
Why am I doing this that comes  
back end of this project?  
Having the right treatment,  
you know and often to give that  
perspective and a different  
view on how things can be done,  
but also the necessary confidence.  
Having some key partners, you know,  
so even do it together many many,  
many there and again the same for any  
educational program for students,  
often that links to the industry in  
the key partners helps them understand

what they're doing and why they're doing it.

And the final bit counts.

People used to that is that

kind of accountability of yeah,

well, we've bought into this.

We're going to do is we're going to own this.

We're going to space.

It's the same for students

within their own program.

I'm accounting for my study.

My 'cause, my program,

my destination,

so all those things are I'm gonna say

some very clear transferable between.

Those principles that made

this program effective,

but also communicate to make any

program effective but also the

student experience effective,

and I think it's kind of really interesting,

but it's going to be exciting to

hear about it and kind of the impact

it's had on on both equipment area,

but also the broader college.

So we expect this week and

have a Golden future.

There's only plans to add

to it and develop further.

We have barbecue area or.

Oh yes,

we were planning on our next area.

The area is so popular that

it's often over timetabled,

so we are now looking at our our

next potential sites in the campus.

But we don't have a fortunate position.

You know,

we we,

we have land available to us so we've

got lots of green space around us

and and we actually just utilize any

green space that we need at any time.

Yeah, yeah,

well great well.

With those next steps and one of those is

thank you very much for joining me today,

so we can really interesting.

I'm sure listeners are kind

of very keen as well.

I'm sure we'll be in touch with

any further questions or have

a look or I'll get him to try.

Teams are going to see what it looks like,

but actually, thank you,

thank you, thank you, bye.