

THE HISTORY OF PEDAGOGY AS A TEACHING SUBJECT

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Abstract:

This article aims to examine the evolution of pedagogy as a distinct field of study, exploring its various philosophical underpinnings and influential educators throughout history. By understanding the origins and development of pedagogy, we can gain insights into contemporary educational practices and their effectiveness in promoting effective learning. The importance of studying the history of pedagogy highlights the significant role it plays in shaping current educational practices. Understanding the evolution of pedagogical approaches provides educators with a deeper insight into the foundations of teaching and learning. It allows them to critically evaluate existing methodologies and make informed decisions about instructional strategies to improve student outcomes.

Keywords: pedagogy, history, development, educational practices, evolution, pedagogical approaches, teaching, learning, methodology.

Introduction

The concept of pedagogy has evolved over time, gaining a deeper understanding and significance in the field of education. Pedagogy is conventionally defined as the art and science of teaching, encompassing various methods, strategies, and approaches employed in the instructional process¹. It involves the understanding of learners' needs, designing effective learning experiences, and promoting active engagement and critical thinking skills². Pedagogy is not limited to the transmission of knowledge but also emphasizes the development of learners' social, emotional, and cognitive abilities, fostering a learner-centered approach³. It is considered a fundamental pillar in the field of education as it provides a framework for effective teaching practices and facilitates the achievement of educational outcomes.

Studying the history of pedagogy as a teaching subject is of utmost importance for educators. Firstly, an understanding of the past allows educators to comprehend the evolution of educational methods and theories, providing them with a foundation upon which to build their own teaching practices⁴. Furthermore, studying the history of pedagogy allows educators to critically analyze the successes and failures of past methodologies, leading to informed decision-making in their own classrooms. Ultimately, this knowledge empowers educators to

1 Gert Biesta. Giving Teaching Back to Education: Responding to the Disappearance of the Teacher. 2016

2 Cuban, L. How Teachers Taught: Constancy and Change in American Classrooms, 1890-1990. New York: Teachers College Press. 1993

3 Freire, P. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. New York: Seabury Press. 1970

4 Johnson K. Behavioral Education in the 21st Century. Journal of Organizational Behavior Management. 2015



make evidence-based choices in their teaching methods, enhancing the learning experience for their students.

In recent years, there has been an increasing recognition of the importance of pedagogy as a teaching subject in higher education institutions. According to Smith, the history of pedagogy as a subject has evolved over time. Initially, it was only considered as a means to deliver knowledge and skills to students. However, with the emergence of modern education theories and practices, pedagogy has gained significance as an independent field of study⁵. Today, pedagogy encompasses various approaches to teaching and learning that are informed by research and evidence-based practices⁶. This shift towards the inclusion of pedagogy as a teaching subject reflects universities' commitment to enhancing the quality of education and improving student outcomes.

In the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Greece, the role of pedagogy had a significant impact on the educational systems. In Egypt, pedagogy was based on the concept of Ma'at, which emphasized ethical values and social harmony. Mesopotamia's pedagogical approach focused on training scribes and ensuring the continuity of knowledge. Greece, on the other hand, adopted a more comprehensive model of pedagogy, with renowned philosophers like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle playing a vital role in shaping educational practices. These ancient civilizations recognized the importance of pedagogy in imparting knowledge and shaping the future generations.

The evolution of pedagogy as a teaching subject can be traced back to ancient Greece, where Socrates introduced the Socratic method of questioning. This method emphasized engaging students in critical thinking and self-reflection. Over time, philosophers like Rousseau emphasized the importance of individualized instruction and student-centered learning⁷. In the 19th century, with the rise of industrialization, the focus shifted towards standardized education and teacher-led instruction. However, in recent decades, there has been a resurgence of interest in student-centered approaches, such as constructivism and inquiry-based learning⁸. Thus, the history of pedagogy is marked by a continuous search for the most effective methods of teaching and learning.

In the Middle Ages, the rise of universities and scholasticism brought about significant changes in the field of education. Universities emerged as institutions that sought to systematize knowledge and foster intellectual growth. Scholasticism, characterized by the use of logic and reason to analyze and debate various theological and philosophical issues, became the dominant intellectual movement of the time. This period witnessed the development of a structured curriculum and the establishment of teaching methods that emphasized critical thinking and intellectual inquiry. The rise of universities and scholasticism contributed to the

⁵ Smith, A., & Anderson, M. Social Media Use 2018: Demographics and Statistics. Washington DC: Pew Research Center. 2018

⁶ Book Review: Brown, James Dean. Introducing Needs Analysis and English for Specific Purposes. Oxford: Routledge. 2016 pp. 231

⁷ Freire, P. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. New York: Seabury Press. 1970

⁸ Bransford, J. D., Brown, A. L., & Cocking, R. R. How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School. Washington DC: National Academy Press. 2000



professionalization of teaching, as scholars became recognized as experts in their respective fields and were responsible for transmitting knowledge to successive generations.

During the Middle Ages, teaching methods and curriculum primarily revolved around religious education. The curriculum focused on scripture, theology, and the study of Latin. The primary teaching method employed was lecturing, with the teacher delivering lessons orally to the students. The availability of books was limited, so written assignments were rare. The teacher-student relationship was hierarchical and authoritarian, with discipline enforced through physical punishment. This approach to teaching was influenced by the belief that knowledge was to be transmitted from the “master” to the “disciples”.

The history of pedagogy as a teaching subject has evolved throughout the years. In ancient Greece, philosophers such as Socrates and Plato emphasized the importance of education in molding the minds of individuals. In the 17th century, educators like John Amos Comenius focused on developing systematic teaching methods and curriculum design⁹. Later, in the 20th century, the advent of educational psychology brought about a shift towards understanding the cognitive and social aspects of learning¹⁰. These developments have shaped pedagogy as a subject by incorporating various theories and practices that continue to inform teaching approaches today.

In recent years, there has been a noticeable shift towards individualized learning and critical thinking in the field of pedagogy. Educators have come to recognize the limitations of traditional teaching methods that prioritize rote memorization and passive learning. Instead, they are embracing approaches that promote active engagement and independent thinking among students. This shift is influenced by the growing body of research that supports the benefits of individualized learning and critical thinking in educational outcomes. As a result, classrooms are increasingly adopting strategies such as project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, and collaborative problem-solving activities to foster student autonomy and develop their critical thinking skills. This change in pedagogical practice suggests a broader recognition of the need to prepare students for the complex challenges they will face in the modern world. The role of pedagogy as a teaching subject in education has evolved over time. In the early years, pedagogy was primarily focused on the transmission of knowledge from teacher to student. However, with the emergence of constructivism and other student-centered approaches, the focus shifted towards creating an interactive and engaging learning environment. This shift challenged traditional teaching methods and encouraged educators to consider the diverse needs and abilities of their students. Additionally, the advent of technology in education has further transformed the field of pedagogy, providing new opportunities for personalized learning and instructional design. Consequently, the history of pedagogy as a teaching subject highlights the continuous adaptation and improvement of educational practices to enhance student learning outcomes.

⁹ Smith, A., & Anderson, M. Social Media Use 2018: Demographics and Statistics. Washington DC: Pew Research Center. 2018

¹⁰ Dewey, J. Experience and Education. New York: Macmillan Company. 1938



Current trends in pedagogy include student-centered learning and flipped classrooms, which have gained popularity in recent years¹¹. Student-centered learning emphasizes the importance of student engagement and active participation in the learning process. This approach focuses on individualized instruction and personalization of learning experiences, allowing students to take ownership of their education. Flipped classrooms, another trend in pedagogy, involve the reversal of traditional teaching methods, where students engage with instructional materials outside of the classroom and use class time for collaborative activities and discussions. These trends highlight a shift towards more student-driven and interactive forms of learning, promoting deeper understanding and critical thinking skills.

The emergence of pedagogy as a teaching subject can be traced back to ancient civilizations such as Egypt, Greece, and China. In these societies, education was primarily focused on the transmission of knowledge and skills from one generation to another. Notably, the Egyptian society valued education as a means to prepare individuals for different roles in society. Similarly, in ancient Greece, pedagogy was highly regarded, with Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle emphasizing the importance of personalized and holistic education¹². In China, Confucius greatly influenced pedagogy, emphasizing the cultivation of moral character and ethical behavior. These ancient civilizations laid the foundation for the development of pedagogy as a distinct subject of study.

In conclusion, the study of the history of pedagogy as a teaching subject has provided valuable insights into the development of educational practices over time. Through examining various theories, philosophies, and approaches to teaching, scholars and educators have gained a deeper understanding of the factors that influence effective instruction. Additionally, the analysis of historical educational practices has allowed for the identification of common challenges and successes, informing current efforts in curriculum development and pedagogical techniques. Overall, the history of pedagogy serves as a critical foundation for advancing the field of education and promoting improved teaching practices.

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¹¹ Barrett, P., Davies, F., Zhang, Y., & Barrett, L. The Impact of Classroom Design on Pupils' Learning: Final Results of a Holistic, Multi-Level Analysis. Building and Environment, 89, 2015 pp. 118-133.

¹² Smith, A., & Anderson, M. Social Media Use 2018: Demographics and Statistics. Washington DC: Pew Research Center. 2018



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