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# Bimblecast: Using ecopedagogy in business education

Matt Offord<sup>1</sup> and Sebastien Marciak<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

In our playfully retitled 'Bimblecast', we explore practical ecopedagogy in business education. The podcast was recorded in October 2024 whilst walking from Bowling to Maryhill, 15 kilometres, in Central Scotland. The purpose of the discussion is to explore the practical application of ecopedagogy in a light-hearted and accessible way, and to capture the essence of outdoor pedagogies. After quickly, and superficially, exploring the philosophical roots of ecopedagogy, we argue that this approach, typically used in environmental education, is equally valuable in business education, and we outline our reasoning for this statement. The discussion moves on to explore practical strategies for embedding ecopedagogy in business education, making the point that it is simple to achieve through basic 'campus field trips'. Because we are going further than exploring campus environments in our own teaching, we also describe how the lowland leader qualification, a UK wide qualification for taking groups on organised walks, is helping us to build an outdoor learning capability in our business school. Through this discussion, we outline the preparation and study required to become a wild pedagogue, but we also discuss more modest planning for simple, short excursions. In all cases, safety is important. During our discussion, the listener will hear of situations and wildlife we encounter, demonstrating the power and authenticity of this approach to learning.

## Keywords

bimblecast, ecopedagogy, business education, authentic learning, walking pedagogies

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<sup>1</sup> University of Glasgow, Glasgow, UK

### Corresponding Author:

Matt Offord, Adam Smith Business School, University of Glasgow, 2 Discovery Place,  
Glasgow, G11 6EY, UK

Email: [Matt.Offord@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Matt.Offord@glasgow.ac.uk)

## Introduction

Ecopedagogy is an approach to education, inspired by Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed (Freire, 1970). Shifting the definition of the oppressed from learners to the planet itself, this approach is fast becoming a movement in environment education (e.g. Khan, 2010). Ecopedagogy is an activist approach to teaching that advocates eco-awareness and global citizenship through critical pedagogy (Bayer & Finley, 2022). In our podcast, which we have playfully re-titled as a 'Bimblecast', we set out to argue for the use of this approach in business education. Our argument is simple, ecopedagogy speaks as much to businesses which can harm our planet as it does to the activists and policy makers who seek to restore our environment. Here, we will outline some of the literature on ecopedagogy. For those who wish to learn more, the literature identified will provide entry points into what is a deeply theoretical field. We will also define what we mean by 'Bimblecast' and offer our thoughts on podcasts, more generally, as a form of scholarship output.

## Ecopedagogy

A good primer for the ecopedagogy movement is Richard Khan's (2010) 'critical pedagogy, ecoliteracy and planetary crisis: the ecopedagogy movement', widely regarded as an important text in deciphering a movement which is influential and gaining ground, despite being written over a decade ago. Khan makes the immediacy of planetary crisis clear in no uncertain terms and underscores the role of education in navigating catastrophic climate change (Khan 2010:6). Khan outlines the potential impact of ecoliteracy, environmental education and education for sustainable development (ESD). Ecopedagogy is rooted in Paulo Friere's critical pedagogy and many Frierian institutes around the world have advocated the approach shifting the sense of the oppressed from students (Friere 1970) to the planet itself. Thus, Kahn provides us with a backwards glance at the origins of ecopedagogy before engaging with a deep socio-political and philosophical narrative concerning the importance of the movement to counter the ravages of neoliberalism and to challenge the logic of sustainable development (Ibid.). The book serves as a manifesto for ecopedagogues and remains a rallying call for placing the planet at the centre of education. Ecopedagogues such as Richard Khan and Greg Misiasek evaluate the movement as a political/activist/revolutionary struggle against the advancing tide of neoliberalism and its subsequent oppression (e.g. Misiasek 2022). We cannot, therefore, suggest that ecopedagogy is apolitical, it has an activist character which must be acknowledged (Bayer & Finley, 2022). During the DESD the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were established, including pertinently, SDG 4 (quality education) (Misiasek 2022). Education continues to be a key part of the UN mission to overcome environmental and social injustice as sustainable development remains a key term, despite the paradox that development is usually unsustainable and emphasises inequality (Misiasek 2022). Nevertheless, the research into ESD through the lens of ecopedagogy continues to grow and has developed key themes: ESD, environmental justice, social justice, global citizenship, place (Gruenewald 2003), experiential learning (Kolb and Kolb 2017), postdigital ecopedagogy (Jandrić & Ford, 2022) and practical ecopedagogy (Bayer & Finley, 2023). The conversation remains almost exclusively within the realm of environmental education dichotomising it with 'big business', the villain of the piece. This is justifiable, given the impact of private concerns and ambition for wealth

on the planet. However, the business leaders of tomorrow also must be educated and the movement is yet to make equal impact there. The literature from ESD goes some way to outline why ecopedagogy should be used in business education, but does not guide educators as to how, within a business context. Indeed, there is very little in the business literature, but we can turn to practical ecopedagogy for help.

## Bimblecast and podcasting in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)

The term 'bimble' is defined:

To move at a leisurely pace, esp. on foot; to amble, wander.

(Oxford English Dictionary, 2024)

Here, we wish to convey a sense of relaxation and ease, to reflect the positive impact being outdoors has on our wellbeing. This is because we wish to share the positive aspects of the approach in terms of the ease of implementation, the impact on wellbeing and its ability to promote critical and creative observation of the world around us. We choose to do this, not in opposition to the more serious philosophical and political arguments for ecopedagogy, but to highlight this often-neglected side of ecopedagogy.

While we wish to emphasise the value and accessibility of the approach we recognise that taking students into the outdoors is not trivial, so we also discuss how we are building up our skills in leading students outdoors through the UK lowland leader qualification (Mountain Training, 2024). There are several simpler options than a serious, which we also outline, such as 'campus field trips' which require no formal training. However, we argue that risk assessment should be considered as a minimum before sending students outdoors.

This 'Bimblecast', then, is a basic introduction to ecopedagogy, a justification for business education (and other disciplines), strategies for simple 'campus field trips', an outline of more serious and formal training and, finally, a series of signposts to further reading. All these objectives are achieved while spotting wildlife, avoiding cyclists, motorbikes and some laughter.

While this was a perhaps flippant and humorous attempt to redefine the podcast, the sense of movement, as described by the speakers creates a sense of purpose and a storyline, which makes the narration relatable as well as conveying the practical experience of moving through a built landscape. For this reason, we advocate the 'Bimblecast' as a new sub-category of the podcast which is a relevant form of scholarship for walking pedagogies, outdoor learning, visiting sites of learning in archaeology, geography and so on.

The podcast remains, in our view, a valid expression of SoTL, which is often, but not always, considered to be broader and multi-model, compared with discipline research (Poole 2013, p. 136). The podcast provides accessibility where text create barriers in terms of learning differences or sight loss (the transcript providing an alternative for those with hearing loss). Additionally, verbal applications of theory must be more concise, rendering the explanations and discussions both relatable and easier to understand. Podcasts can

be a preferred mode of learning when, for example, using commute time to study. It should also be noted that non-traditional methods of dissemination are equally prolific as book and journal publishing and should be considered when the context lends itself to a specific type of communication (Bonnet & Méndez-Brady, 2017). On, then, to the 'Bimblecast'...

## Transcript

Matt: Hello and welcome to the Bimblecast, the title of this Bimblecast is *Using ecopedagogy in business education*, my name is Matt, and joining me today is Sebastien, hello Sebastien.

Seb: Hello Matt.

Matt: We're at Bowling [Dumbartonshire, Scotland] station and we are about to embark on a 15Km walk along the Forth-Clyde Canal Path and this part of our preparation to use the outdoors in education and you'll be hearing more about that from us. But at the moment we're at Bowling station. It's a very wet, grey day here in Dumbarton, um it's very overcast and it's raining quite hard now. So thankfully, both Sebastien and I were prepared for this. We looked at the weather, obviously, before we came out and we are fully clad in our waterproofs. And we'll catch up with you, once we start the walk from Bowling Harbour.

Matt: OK, welcome back, we're now at Bowling Harbour, so it's a three quarter of a mile walk from the rail station to the beginning of the trail, but we are now but we are now on the Forth-Clyde Canal erm... path so we are heading to Maryhill, we are walking from Bowling to Maryhill today, we're at the Bowling Basin. There's lots of canal boats here that are alongside and there's some lock gates to our left and the path stretches away towards Maryhill which is where we are going to be going. In fact, we may as well start walking, eh, Sebastien?

Seb: Yes, happy.

Matt: So let's do that erm yeah [mumbling] [laughs] It's still raining pretty hard at the moment and Sebastien and I are bedecked in our waterproof ponchos [laughs]. Which are fantastic, by the way. Terrific, inexpensive item to put into your pack so...

Seb: As long as you ignore the fashion er... fashion aspect

Matt: Yeah, don't worry about the fashion side of it, definitely. Erm so, just a quick introduction then. Let me start with Sebastien and he can tell you a bit about his background and how he comes to this business of ecopedagogy.

Seb: Eh, yes, thank you Matt, so my name is Sebastien. I am a Learning Innovation Officer at the Adam Smith Business School. I have been in this role for about three years now. Erm...my background is actually quite varied, I don't come from economics ...or management background at all. My background is in the Arts, Fine Arts and more specifically, print making, I have a Master in print making from the School of Art in Brussels, So I studied the Arts for about nine years, actually nine years specifically er... and moved to Glasgow to work as an artist at the Glasgow Print Studio, that was the start of my artist career, I suppose. I think, quickly I realised it would be extremely difficult to make a living in the arts. So I've worked in retail, I've had various jobs. One of them was to be a trainer at Apple, using technology to teach people to use the Apple devices, for their

businesses, for their personal use. And this is how I got into learning technologies more specifically in an educational context. I suppose the artistic background helps for this idea of using technology to enhance their learning experience. For me I see that as important for all the users, so the students, the academics, the lecturers, the professional services, if you like. We tend to focus on the students and that's ultimately I suppose the end goal, but for me it should be everyone, everyone should benefit from creativity in Higher Education. So I suppose...

Matt: It's great, love it.

Seb: It's a long chat but what I wanted to say is for me, ecopedagogy has this creative element in it. It isn't necessarily about specifically learning ecology or geography or the environment around you, although this is obviously a big part. It's the creative aspect, how do we engage students outside of the classroom, and for me that's the key concept. So I guess I'll stop here, Matt and let you carry on.

Matt: Fantastic! That's great. And we can talk a little bit about Sebastien's art background and how that has really helped me to develop some these ideas. But my name is Matt, I'm a leadership scholar at Adam Smith Business School. So I teach leadership, I'm a lecturer erm....yeah[distracted] [laughs]. We're just looking at the beautiful boats that are here on the Forth-Clyde Canal here, they really are beautiful. And I suppose that's one of the things we can get from outdoor learning, is we can get a sense of place. But let me erm... get back to my introduction. As I mentioned, I teach leadership and I came to ecopedagogy because I wanted to create an outdoor experience initially for my students and we actually got a supplier, an external supplier to do that and we had a huge amount of success. We worked with the supplier, they were very helpful and very thoughtful about how we teach students in particular. It wasn't about 'outward bound', 'climb every mountain', kind of very physical sort of things. It was accessible learning experiences in the outdoors, about using the outdoors as your classroom. And we are going to talk about that a little bit more later. So that kind of sent me on the journey to learn about ecopedagogy and we will be sharing with you on this podcast, a little bit more about what we discovered and why we are now traipsing down the Forth-Clyde Canal. There are two beautiful swans that we are just looking at here and actually this does say that er...this a great place for wildlife, so again lots of things to reflect on and a great environment for that reflective observation and we will be talking about all that a bit more later.

Matt: And we're continuing our walk down the Forth-Clyde canal path, we are now what did we say? Two and half...

Seb: Yeah

Matt: Two and a half, three kilometers, something like that, into the walk. The rain has relented...thankfully. So its quite overcast, but at least it is not raining. There is a...what will that be? A chaffinch... no... actually a goldfinch in the tree, so that's amazing [laughs]... er, we are seeing so much wildlife here but the purpose of this Bimblecast is to talk about ecopedagogy and we've been talking about that but we haven't explained what it is. So let's just start by saying what is ecopedagogy and I am going to ask Sebastien 'what does ecopedagogy mean to him?', Sebastien?

Seb: Yes, so for me its being really...being creative. I mentioned the creative aspect, which is to not really to see learning in a university context by being in the classroom, although there is nothing wrong with that. But it's to be outside the classroom, so take people

outside and plan these activities, obviously, for them related to what they are learning. But to me the key is to think beyond what they are going to learn, as in management, or related to management that is obvious in some ways, but what are the other things that they may not be aware of? So I think that is how we define it, “learning about the world by being in the world” [quote from Paolo Freire (Freire, 1970, p. 50)].

Matt: Very nice

Seb: ...something we use [laughter] but I borrowed that from something you read er...

Matt: It's from Paolo Freire

Seb: It's from Paolo Freire. So I've not invented that [laughter]. I will make this mine for the sake of this podcast.

Matt: Absolutely! [laughter] Yeah, no...that's great...that's a really great insight and yeah, I'm chuffed that you've remembered that phrase. Ecopedagogy is a fairly hefty educational philosophy erm...it comes originally from critical pedagogy which was developed by Paolo Freire erm, and this was then developed further by thinkers such as Richard Khan and also Greg Misiaszek. And they've written great things, very deep philosophical things, very complex things about ecopedagogy, which we are not going to get into here. But there is this... I think the word is oeuvre of philosophical writing about ecopedagogy. But Sebastien and I really want to talk about what it means for us and I have very much taken a practical ecopedagogy line on it, which is ...how can we use ecopedagogy? So it starts off with a concern about the planet. Paolo Freire spoke about the pedagogy of the oppressed and with ecopedagogy, the planet becomes the oppressed. So it becomes very much about eco-awareness, about citizenship.

Seb: About place.

Matt: About place, is very important. Actually, that's a really good point, Sebastien. Because there is kind of like, there are three elements of ecopedagogy. Starting with Freire's critical pedagogy. There is also pedagogy of place [(Gruenewald, 2003)] and erm... there is also experiential learning theory from Kolb and Kolb (2005). So those are the three elements. I am an experiential educator, so I come to it from that. And I wanted to try and translate all of the kind of eco-awareness and environmental education into what I do as a leadership educator because I felt that if you are doing an environmental course erm...if you are engaging in environmental education then ecopedagogy is a natural fit. But what that means is that lots and lots of students will graduate in that field and they will be working in that field and doing lots and lots of good things. But its actually businesses that are probably doing the damage. So I thought 'well...is there something I can do here? Can we start to teach ecopedagogy to leadership students, management students?' to help them to understand the responsibility they have for looking after the planet, looking into the future. So that was my take on it and therefore I was very interested in finding a practical way to do that, and we are going to talk about that in the podcast. But I suppose I would distil all of that philosophy and all that eco-awareness and that sort of citizenship education, citizenship into responsible leadership.

Seb: Responsible, authentic... [murmurs]

Matt: Yeah, authentic, that's good, and er...responsible leadership because that actually is a nice fit for the kind of courses that I am running. And later in the podcast, we are going to talk about how do we do that?

[outside noises]

Matt: OK, so we are now 6 kilometres through our 15 kilometre walk. So we are sort of approaching the halfway, we are still on the Forth and Clyde canal path and we've just walked through Clydebank, so...quite an urban backdrop erm...and it's still quite urban, we can still hear quite a lot of noises from that urban environment, but what we are seeing with our eyes is this sort of beautiful canal erm with lots and lots of ... yeah... lots of autumn leaves laying on the surface, lots of er...lots of golds and red and so on. And we've seen some amazing wildlife while we've been here. So, in a sense it really feels like we are away from that urban environment. And there are lots of walks like this around Glasgow, which I think is really interesting if, you know, we want to take students outdoors, we don't have to take them into the wilderness, because we have lots of outdoor reflective spaces which are very nearby. And that's kind of what we are going to talk about now, in this section because we have spoken a little bit about ecopedagogy: what it is and, I suppose more importantly, what it means to Sebastien and I, but now I want to talk a little bit about how we've actually been using ecopedagogy, so that as a listener, you can get some kind of idea about 'well, how does this actually work?'

Matt: So, I'm going to start talking a little bit about reframing about reflective observation. And then I am going to hand over to Sebastien because Sebastien has this really interesting viewpoint which comes from his artistic background, about observation, and then I am going to finish off with what I call the campus field trip, which is not my idea but comes from the book *Ecopedagogies* (Bayer & Finley, 2023), and we will put the reference in the transcript for you, so you can look that up because it is a fantastic book. Bayer and Finley<sup>1</sup> and the contributors to that book really talk about going outdoors and it is what Sebastien mentioned right at the beginning, it's what Freire said about learning about the world by being in the world. Freire was really against this idea of, you know, what he called "ivory tower academics" (Freire, 1970, p. 50) and he spoke about passive learning and what he called the 'banking method' of learning where students turned up for a lecture and information was sort of deposited with them (Freire 1970, p.44). He was very much about getting outdoors, well not necessarily about getting outdoors but getting out into the world. And where that tends to lead us to when we talk about going outdoors, is we might think particularly in Scotland, we might think about getting onto the hills, those beautiful, stunning landscapes. But what Bayer and Finley discuss in the early chapters of their book is something they call "define the field loosely" (Bayer & Finley, 2022, p. 6). And what that means is, we are going into the field but we don't need to go into a wilderness, er....and we can go much closer by and actually I use the built environment for this. I take students outdoors but I take them into the built environment because I am teaching about business and leadership in business and around the campus, Byres Road, for example, which is near the Glasgow campus, is full of businesses. [Laughs] and there is loads of evidence of leadership going on there that we can go and discuss. But there obviously is an all too familiar nature to that, so students are walking through that campus environment in order to get to the lecture, and then we send them back out onto the campus. That's going to be very familiar and taken for granted. And this is something actually John Dewey spoke about and he said that it's not just about giving experiences, it's about reflecting on those experiences [(see Kolb and Kolb 2005)]. And you're unlikely to reflect on those experiences if they are just familiar. Your brain doesn't

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<sup>1</sup> In the Bimblecast, the authors refer to Bayer and Byrd Finley but state the correct citation is Bayer and Finley.

really take any notice of it. So we have to have a way of defamiliarising that built environment and that's a process of reframing. And there are really three ways... key ways that I do that, which I have taken from the Bayer and Finley book [(2023)]. One of them is to reframe something a student comes across, say a building, from a temporal perspective (Niess & Knittle, 2022, p. 19). So we might look at a building on the Byres Road, perhaps it is a charity shop or something like that. But the building itself, I normally ask them 'when do you think this building was built?' Many of these buildings are 100 years old, or perhaps even older er... on the Byres Road. By asking them to shift their focus in a sort of temporal way, and can then think about 'well... what was leadership like 100 years ago when this building was built?' Or I could look at something like the People's Palace and say, 'that was a built a little over a 100 years ago, how would that project have been managed?' Building that People's Palace? It would have been pretty hierarchical ... sort of... traditional leadership would have been used. If we compare that with how we would build a building today, it's a much more kind of networked form of leadership that happens, so we can look at time frames. Another thing we can do is to look at the physical scale of buildings, the physical scale (Neiss and Knittle, 2022, p.21). Again, if we look at the People's Palace, that's a very imposing structure, so what does that tell us about the message that the people who built that building wanted to convey? Was it about power, was it about influence and so on? And then we can compare that with a modern building and see whether that perspective has changed or not. And finally, we can look at the social scales (Ibid. p.22). The example I give for this is er... looking at a tea shop, or a coffee shop, or something like that, I can get them [the students] to look at the individual scale. In other words, what does this venue mean to an individual? Somewhere they can get a nice cup of coffee or a cup of tea? What about on the group level? Is it somewhere where people can meet? Is there a social life attached to this building? And then we can look at the global scale and say, 'OK so where are those coffee beans coming from?' Who is harvesting those coffee beans, what is the logistics to get them there? And what is the impact of that, say, environmentally, for example. So those are three examples of how you can reframe things. And now I am going to hand over to Sebastien who is going to talk about observation and his particular....er...sorry some ducks have just....I say ducks erm...[they laugh]...I'm not actually sure what that was....I will look that one up when I get home [laughter]. So yeah, so Sebastien is going to talk a little bit about his art background and how that helps with observation, in particular.

Seb: Yes thanks, Matt. I suppose so far, we've er...we've talked a lot, well Matt has [laughter]

Matt: As usual! [laughter]

Seb:...mentioned a lot of practical examples and the key is that the students will have to engage with all different activities. When Matt mentioned businesses on Byres Road, well that implies, obviously looking around ah, using your eyes: stopping, observing, noticing. So one of the activities that potentially, well, I think we will eventually, plan for the MBA students, as an example, is to look at monuments in Kelvingrove Park. One of them being, the statue of Lord Kelvin. [Audio become echoing due to walking through a tunnel] So if we asked the students to look at the statue now, are we asking them to look at the statue, or are we asking them to observe it, are they noticing anything? What I find interesting is whether noticing comes after observing or before? Which one is more active or passive? And when I was doing a bit of research on this, I found contradictions online, I guess as you would expect but I thought that was actually interesting. For some people, observing



is actually passive whilst noticing is active, because you have noticed something specific about a corner of a bridge that is crumbling or ...you know. But to me, and not only just me, I think they are linked, you will notice something because you have looked, you have observed, that's how I see it anyway. So, in relation to observational drawing, if I take a very specific practical example of the Lord Kelvin statue: I will look at it, I will walk around it, I will try to gauge its size, the material. And all that's observing but I am noticing things as I am observing. So to me, both are connected, I don't think we can really say one is passive, the other is active. I think they are both active, they both engage your senses. And observation, in observational drawing ...sorry we're er...

Matt: Navigational adjustment [both laugh].

Seb: So, when you observe and you try to draw while you are observing, there are a lot of things going on in this process. If you never drew before, you will try your best to represent accurately the object, and its dimensions, and its ...even character. So, if the statue is really jaggy and really dark, you may want to give some of that feeling into the lines you are going to use to draw, as an example. What I also find really interesting about observation is that you can take this further and go into creative observation territory. And that is that you can imagine what this statue would be if it was a dog or if it was a... Kelvin was a man, so if it was a woman, how would she be represented? So...Now, here again with the practical example of the statue. So the statue is already a representation of a human being but the creative imagination sorry... er... the creative observation pushes the observation further and you start to just your imagination to run wild, so you can prompt yourself, you know, like I said 'if it was a woman, what would be the representation of that person?' If it was an animal, if there was an historical fact, and so on, you get the idea. But by doing that, you make the experience memorable as well. It's a strong point that I take from Ecopedagogies (Bayer & Finley, 2023) practical examples of experiential learning, they mention this, it is pretty important, that they are memorable experiences you create for the students. Again, there is nothing wrong with a lecture but sitting and listening for x number of hours might not be as memorable as this as what we just described. And for me, that is what I am taking away.

Matt: Ah, that is really amazing, and just as you spoke there, you used the word representation, and I think that's a super interesting word, actually, which I haven't before, until you just said it. But I guess when we are taking notes in a lecture, we are creating a representation of something...

Seb: Our understanding, yep.

Matt: Some knowledge...and looking at monuments and statues has been really interesting because I ask students, 'what are you seeing?' And they always see really surprising things er... they will notice...

Seb: Because they have observed.

Matt: Because they have observed, yeah! And they will say, 'he's got a wrinkle in his eyebrow, so that means that he is quizzical, or he is thinking.' I once received a piece of work from a student and she was talking about Millicent Garrett Fawcett, and her statue in London. And she observed that the statue was probably not portrayed...the representation of Millicent Garrett Fawcett probably wasn't how she lived her life. Because she was on top of this big statue and she had this commanding position and that was probably not who she was in life, or who she wanted to be. So I think the

representation, so noticing that a representation is wrong or has a political message that is connected with it...is really really important. So I am just going to finish up here, before we talk about why on earth are we walking 15 kilometres to Maryhill... in the rain [laughter] we are going to be talking about that, but just before we do I just want to mention something called the campus field trip. Which is again an idea from that book *Ecopedagogies* by Bayer and Finley [(2023)], great book. And they talk about defamiliarising the familiar [(Harrison, 2022)] using campus field trips by using really really short expeditions, and by short I mean 30-40 minutes erm where... and I've actually done this with a classroom of 350 students. You cannot supervise 350 students [both laugh], you cannot provide first aid cover. You can do a risk assessment, and you can assess that, well these students have walked through the campus to get here, so they are not taking any additional risk by walking back out to the campus. And I give them tasks to do in 30 minutes. And it sits really nice to do in a two hour lecture slot. So I can talk to them for half an hour, by which time they are well and truly glazed over [laughter] so I can then send them out...

Seb: In the rain [laughter]

Matt: Maybe not, maybe not in the rain but erm. [aircraft noise] Oh, that's an aircraft going across, just in case...

Seb: Beautiful weather for this...

Matt: I imagine he is landing on his instruments or her instruments because I can't imagine that the pilot can see very much er up there, but at least it gives the listeners an indication of the authenticity of our podcast. We really are outdoors. But the campus field trip, after half an hour, as I say they've glazed over a bit. So I send them on the campus field trip, it's a leg stretch for them. I've done this with level one undergraduates, these are students that are 17, 18 years of age on average, erm, straight out of school. You don't know for sure that they are going to go when you ask them to go, you don't know for sure, they are going to come back when you ask them to come back. But I've done this for a couple of years now and actually they do. And they enjoy it, and towards the end of the course, when you are in week 9 or 10, ...they are actually asking to go out and do campus field trips because they are enjoying it. And I tend to send them out with a task to do. So for instance, if I am talking about gender and leadership, I will ask them to go and look for buildings which are named after women, and how many buildings can they find that have women on the plaques or names. And then we can come back and have a discussion about, 'well if there are so few buildings named after women, which is the case, what does that mean for the visibility of women and therefore female leadership?' Or women's leadership, so it's a really great way to sort of cue up a discussion about noticing again. And again, yeah, that's a really good point, because these are buildings people walk past every day, including myself. And we don't notice things, but how can we take action, unless we notice these things. So we have to turn the everyday objects around us ...and I think this applies to data as well. We have to turn data into information and information into knowledge...

Seb: Make it explicit.

Matt: Make it explicit and that knowledge is for action. Because if we know, for example, we are not doing a very good job of making women visible, in that society, well now we can actually do something about it. So, we are going to pause there, and we will catch up

and talk about 'ok so that was a campus field trip, but we actually take them out for longer walks and, yeah, day out trips and excursions'. And the purpose of us doing this walking is that we are training ourselves to become, what I am just calling, very casually, outdoors tutors. Its not really a thing, its just something I made up, but the idea is to have some kind of familiarisation, training if you like as to how can we take students out and keep them safe while they are out, and that's what we are going to talk about next.

[Indistinct conversation and bird call]

Matt: Ooh, what's that? That is, that was a Moorhen.

Seb: With the red beak?

Matt: Yeah. Welcome back, we are just spotting Moorhens, we can see two Moorhens, we've seen so much wildlife on our walk. We are now...

Seb: Birds.

Matt: Mostly birds, we've seen wigeons...

Seb: Dogs [both laugh].

Matt: We've seen lots of dogs. We saw a yellow wagtail, any birdspotters, this is absolutely fantastic. We've seen a dipper, also and...cormorants er so, we've just seen so much. But we are now 12 kilometres down the Forth and Clyde Canal Path. It's cleared up, stopped raining and its er... lovely and quiet, we can hear the bird singing erm, we've got beautiful views across the canal and what we want to talk about now is actually why we are on this walk. So in the beginning I was talking about and Sebastien was talking about ideas about reframing, about reflective observation and about ecopedagogy . And I made the point that we can do this without going too far from the lecture theatre or the campus. So why are we walking 15 kilometres from Bowling to Maryhill?

Sebastien is going to talk to us a little bit about first aid and about the lowland leader course and why we are doing this kind of preparation, and then I am gonna come in and talk about risk assessment but it will probably be more of a conversation actually but I am going to talk about risk assessment at the end.

Seb: yes, yes

Matt: So Sebastien, do you want to talk us through about your experiences learning first aid and why you think that it is important and that side of it?

Seb: Sure, happy to. So, I have done couple of different first aid courses throughout my different jobs. You are sent by your company to do it, well if you have an interest in first aid, which I had. So, I had couple of different trainings and they tend to obviously cover all the essential of preserving life and not making things worse basically...

Matt: [Laughs]

Seb: ... if you do walk into a difficult situation.

Matt: Sorry I was gonna say, I am a bit like you, I've done a lot of first aid courses over the years. In my previous occupation, we had to stay in date for first aid all the time, but we were really lucky, with the first aid course that we did, we did the first aid outdoor course and that was probably the best course I have done.

Seb: I very much agree, the first aid course, the outdoor first aid course that is needed to follow and obtain a certification to be able to go on the lowland leader course itself. But the course was fantastic, John, the leader was phenomenal, mountain leader, mountain rescuer, incredible and really experienced. [conversation indistinct]

Matt: Yes, and what I liked was he had a very experiential approach himself. One of the things that I will absolutely take home is... you know, if I am just taking the students to Kelvingrove Park, then, you know they aren't really undertaking any more risks than they would be in their ordinary lives but I figured if I do this enough and I am working with students, sometimes in groups of 400 I think eventually something will happen... [laugh], well I am hoping not, I am hoping not, but statistics, you know; and I suppose this is one of the downsides of having statistical training is that I understand very well that the more you do it the more likely that even an unlikely thing will happen erm so, it is good to have that first aid kit and have the knowledge to try and use it.

Seb: If anything, talking about first aid, we tend to think about the most dramatic thing like you've got to resuscitate someone, that is obviously the worst situation you can possibly be in but first aid could be, 'I have a blister and I am struggling to walk or I twisted my ankle' there's all sorts of levels.

Matt: And would also like to point out that, you know for our listeners, if you are thinking about using ecopedagogy and you are thinking about taking students outdoors, you do not have to do a first aid course because as I said before, you are not exposing the students to any risks; I think if you are going to take the students out on a walk like we are now on a trail or something like that, probably it is a good idea and the lowland leader is a good idea but you know you don't have to do this. My feeling is, well we've both chosen to go down this route...

Seb: Sorry, yes I was just contributing to what you said. if anything, it is a requirement to go on the lowland leader course.

Matt: Right, yes for the lowland leader course you have to do your first aid... We had a kind of our idea in the beginning, you know, we wanted to develop... We don't do outdoor education in Adam Smith Business School, if we want to do something outdoors, then we have to go through the supplier procurement process and find somebody who is suitably qualified and experienced to create that safe environment to use the outdoors...

Seb: More involved as well with equipment and...

Matt: yeh and actually, I worked with one company in particular and I won't name them but I will say that they are absolutely amazing and they do amazing stuff for us but if we want to have an organic capacity ourselves, then I think this is a different sort of pedagogy and, you know there are all kinds of different pedagogies of course, we were talking earlier on the walk about games based learning, you know, all of these different pedagogies are something that we might not want to go all in on but we would like to be kind of aware of...

Seb: ... Exposing people to.

Matt: Yeh, exposing people to, in case there are other academics who want to use it so my idea at the beginning, er, before Sebastien and I came together on this one was about creating a sort of outdoor education unit and then Sebastien and I put our heads together to think well...

Seb: How can we do that? [laughs]

Matt: How can we do that, right, so we started with first aid because that was an obvious thing, so and then we looked at the lowland leader, so perhaps you could say a bit about the lowland leader Sebastien, and where we are with it.

Seb: Yes, absolutely, so the lowland leader is a qualification you can obtain to safely take people outdoors... So an aspect is that you are asked to record, to log ten walks of four hours minimum each. You've got to... well, it needs to be lowland, so it has to be at sea level, canal path, coastal path, forest track and so on. No elevation so you are staying low ground. You record those experiences, you have to keep... a bit like a reflective journal, a bit like Matt mentioned, trying to log back into what students are doing at ASBS... Reflective journals on those walks. You describe the walk, you describe the walking conditions, the weather and so on; your risk assessment... So there is a lot and just to finish on that and let Matt chip in... I find that really interesting because, we often, we have said many times throughout this podcast that it isn't about taking the students in an outdoor environment in a sense of extreme like the mountains, but yet we are actually reconnecting with this all the time... The lowland leader, the mountain organisation, the mountain training; the syllabus that we need to read and be familiar with, which is all about mountain skills: navigation, risk assessment, forecast, weather forecast, this is really good and I think this is highlighted in the book as well Matt mentioned many times... [(Bayer and Finley, 2023)] and it is that they say that as well, they say start early, start with the park and you can maybe stick to that but actually there is nothing wrong, if you can, take them to a bit larger scale experience where that may be by a loch or a small hill... Obviously build your confidence and capabilities this way.

Matt: Yeh, I think for me what really done it, you know, you are saying about larger scale as well and I think... Thank you... just have to let a bicycle go by, with an authentic bell so once again, we really are outdoors! So, you know, I had an experience actually where a walk was organised for basically training purposes and it was a large group of people and once again, I think the organisers... I was just a bystander really, I was involved in something else, this was before I really got into outdoor learning, so I wasn't performing a role here, but I was a bystander, I was involved in the walk. The organisers had been quite ambitious. And I think this is what happens a little bit with the outdoor environment is that people think, 'oh we are going outdoors so let's go and climb a mountain, let's go do something adventurous'.

Seb: Which is interesting to note, it's what people think first...

Matt: It is what people think and actually I've had on the other side of this when I have been talking with colleagues about using outdoor experience words like 'outward bound' have been used. Erm, the implications being this is an inaccessible, macho kind of adventurous thing, it's exclusive, you can't include people.

Seb : ... Yes, you need to be physically fit and...

Matt: Yeh, you've got to be fit, and that is really not what we are going for at all and what happened with this organisation was that there were no proper guides, there wasn't any thoughts about risk and the group set off and within 10 minutes, people were getting lost and eh you know, towards the end there were cases of dehydration, yeh it was pretty bad actually, I mean heat exhaustion, we didn't have any cases of heat stroke but definitely heat exhaustion and... this is what we would call a near miss right? So, no one actually got

hurt but the potential was there and it just dawned on me that doing something like the lowland leader course... I think some people might think is a bit of overkill, you know if you're taking students for a walk down to the Kelvingrove park, why do you need to do like navigation skills you know; you got Google Maps.

Seb: Google Maps can fail on you [laughs].

Matt: and I can understand that and I think this is a valid point of view and I am not, I am sure you're the same Sebastien, we are not saying if you want to go outdoors you need to do this course, but for us it's been really, really helpful. Learning about navigation has been really helpful ... So we've spoken about the lowland leader and we've spoken about risk and we've spoken about first aid and I'll conclude this section by saying we're not mandating anything. We are not the authority are we Sebastien? We are just finding this all out for ourselves; I think we've gone ultra safe honestly; but you know I'd rather be too safe than have an accident. I mean accidents can happen but having an accident that you should have prepared for is not something I particularly want to have in my life really... so we've gone a bit uber safe and that is not to tell you what you should be doing because you have to risk assess that in your own context. I think the mandatory part would be the risk assessment. You have to do that.

Um, so we are just coming across a whole bunch of lock gates now; I think we are approaching Maryhill; Um how many kilometres have we done now?

Seb: 15, nearly...

Matt: So what I'll do I think is just conclude the podcast at this point; I think we got about 40 minutes. Eh, I don't know what it will be after we've edited it... So... just to conclude, ecopedagogy I guess is a very deeply philosophical complex topic but what Sebastien and I have done is taking that very practical line and we tried to apply it to business education so it is a particular adaptation and we've done that by essentially creating an outdoor environment where students can reframe, observe and use that critical reflection, so I think it is really important for those skills... It is all about you know the experiential learning cycle of Kolb and Kolb 2017 [I made a mistake here, its (Kolb & Kolb, 2005)], their experiential learning cycle is about concrete evidence ermm, it's about... or concrete experience should I say, it is about active experimentation... yeh with reflective observation which we've spoken about a lot and it is also about abstract conceptualisation so it is about theory as well. So there is no reason why you can't have theory and I do know of an economist in London who gave a talk at a learning and teaching conference last year, sorry, earlier this year, doing a blue plaque walk around Bloomsbury looking at different economic theories by visiting the plaques of these particular economists back in the day, so there is no reason why you can't do theory as well. But the psychological and physical safety I think is super important and you have to do whatever you think needs to be done to make sure that that happens. Anything else Sebastien?

Seb: Yeah I would like to just mention, it's a... I will actually read it to you because I find it is a really powerful quote and for me it emphasises on the aspect of creativity and I suppose in some way in opposition to the traditional standard institutionalised education if we can say that. So, I will just read it to you, it is an extract [summary] from Wild Pedagogies by Jickling et al. (2018), and so they:

[...] argue for outdoor learning experiences that escape the control paradigm of institutionalised education. Standardised exams and testing, prescribed learning outcomes, ranking of students via R-scores or GPAs - these features of an industrialised model of learning, in their view, indicate how deeply we have allowed the flourishing of human natures to be colonised by a reductive set of means and ends. (MacKenzie & Smyth, 2022, p. 99)

Matt: Very nice! That's very powerful.

Seb: Very powerful. And I am not trying to end on...

Matt: No, no! I love it, I think it is beautiful. I don't think resistance is a bad thing. I don't necessarily want to get into a political discussion about that, but what I would say you know is that resistance can take many forms and one of the ways of resisting might be just to think outside the box. We are still working within a system but just trying to add some value to the standard offering and that quote for me really kinda brings that home. I don't think there is any problem with being you know, a bit rebellious.

Seb: I would agree!

Matt: So, I think that is a great thing to end it on, we are just walking into Maryhill, we are approaching Lock 23, um, it is very very still, the water is very still but the ambient noises are creeping up. We just got overtaken by a guy on a motorbike which I wasn't expecting and we are definitely walking back into um, into an urban setting and it is a shame actually to leave that beautiful canal along with its wildlife behind but we have walked 15 kilometres and that is another qualifying walk for our lowland leader so um, we hoped that you've enjoyed this podcast and we will leave details if you want to get in touch and um any of the literature that we've referred to I will put that in the transcript as well. Thank you very much, bye bye!

Seb: Thank you all!

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