

The 3 P's

The professional, personal, and private pedagogue

The pedagogic role can be split into three dimensions: the professional, the personal, and the private.

- ✚ The **professional** pedagogue helps you explain and understand the child's behaviour through the use of law, policy, research, practice evidence and theory. The professional pedagogue supports and protects you in having a professional & personal relationship with the child; it helps you make sense of the child's actions and reactions, relating them to various theories and using professional concepts to direct and reflect your own practice.
- ✚ The **personal** pedagogue represents what you offer to the child in your developing relationship with them. This is based on reflections: you know what you aim to achieve through the relationship, why that will help the child/young person do what in the relationship, and you know that it requires authenticity and may involve some thought out self-disclosure used in the relationship with a child.
- ✚ The **private** pedagogue sets the personal boundaries of what is *not* shared with those you work with and should therefore not be involved in the relation with a child you care for or work with. The private pedagogue is who you are with those closest to you, and the experiences you have had that may have shaped who you are but which you do not share with a child.

The 3Ps are constantly in play during practice. Social pedagogues are aware of the interplay between each P and use the 3P model in supervision and on their own to reflect upon practice, understand the impact the child/young person may have on them and in the search to improve practice and the relationship with the child.

Although the Private P is something which social pedagogues do not share with the child or young person, it may well be impacted upon by a child or other's behaviour; it is imperative that practitioners are:

- ✚ able to recognise when their reactions to a child may have something to do with what is private to them, and
- ✚ able and open to discussing this in professional supervision so that a deeper understanding of self is gained and practice is improved.



The Common Third

*“It is not possible to teach.
But it is possible to create situations,
wherein it is impossible not to learn.”*

The concept of the 'Common Third' is central to social pedagogic practice. Essentially the Common Third is about using an activity to strengthen the bond between social pedagogue and child and to develop new skills. This could be any activity, be it cooking pancakes, tying shoelaces, fixing a bike, building a kite, playing football together, going on a fishing trip together. Any of these activities can be so much more than merely doing something – it is about creating a commonly shared situation that becomes a symbol of the relationship between the social pedagogue and the child, something third that brings the two together: they are sharing an activity, and to be sharing something, to have something in common, implies in principle to be equal, to be two (or more) individuals on equal terms, with equal rights and dignity.

The Common Third also means that the social pedagogue is authentic and self-reflective, bringing in their own personality as an important resource. It is about finding an activity in which the social pedagogue and the child are both genuinely interested. In this sense, the Common Third suggests a child-centred approach and full participation of the child into every step – the child has to be involved on equal terms in all project phases, from the beginning to the end.

What makes the Common Third especially likeable is an understanding of holistic education that also includes the social pedagogue themselves. An equal relationship means that both share also a common potential of learning, on a basis of activity and action.



Zone of Proximal Development

The Zone of Proximal Development is a model developed by Vygotsky. It states that learning is most successful in a social context, meaning that people learn more and develop further when they are supported by somebody who is more advanced in a certain area and functions as their mentor (= pedagogue).

Vygotsky defines the zone of proximal development as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers”. In this sense the pedagogue could be a practitioner or another child!

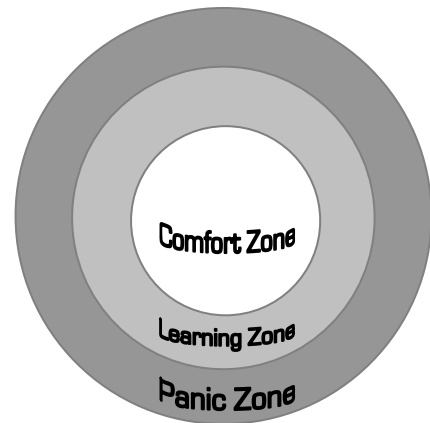
According to Schwartz (2001), the Zone of Proximal Development can be extended through four different scenarios of supporting children in their learning:

- *Starting from the child’s motivation to learn*
Children want to learn and are interested in finding out new things – this provides a great opportunity for pedagogues to support their learning.
- *Starting from where the pedagogue thinks the child ‘is’*
The starting point for learning is where the child is at, and the pedagogue can assess this through observations, reflection and dialogue.
- *Mutual process of learning together, e.g. Common Third*
Learning can also be a mutual process, in which both the pedagogue and the child learn something new and support each other in this.
- *Necessary development, things that need to be learned*
There are things that we all need to learn in order to lead a happy life in dignity, be part of society and make use of our resourcefulness.



The Learning Zone Model

*'If you want to feel secure
Do what you already know how to do.
But if you want to grow ...
Go to the cutting edge of your competence,
Which means a temporary loss of security.
So, whenever you don't quite know
What you are doing
Know
That you are growing ...'
(Viscott, 2003)*



In order to learn we have to explore: we already know our environment, our Comfort Zone – this is where things are familiar, where we feel comfortable, where we don't have to take any risks. The Comfort Zone is important, because it gives us a place to return to, to reflect and make sense of things – a safe haven.

Yet, in order to get to know the unknown we have to leave our Comfort Zone and discover the Learning Zone, which lies just outside of our secure environment. Only in the Learning Zone can we grow and learn, live out our curiosity and make new discoveries, and thus slowly expand our Comfort Zone. Going into the Learning Zone is a borderline experience – we feel we're exploring the edge of our abilities, our limits, how far we dare to leave our Comfort Zone.

However, beyond the Learning Zone lies the Panic Zone, wherein learning is impossible, as it is blocked by a sense of fear. (Any learning connected with negative emotions is memorized in a part of the human brain that we can access only in similar emotional situations.) This is why, in the transition from Comfort Zone to Learning Zone we need to be careful when taking risks that we don't go too far out of our Comfort Zone – beyond the Learning Zone – into the Panic Zone, where all our energy is used up for managing/controlling our anxiety.

Importantly, these three zones are different for different situations and different for each person – we all have our own unique Comfort Zone – Learning Zone – Anxiety Zone. This means that we must never push someone into their Learning Zone, as we cannot see where it starts or begins. All we can do is invite them into it, value their decision, take them seriously and give them support so they won't enter their Panic Zone.

