



Call for Papers

Philosophy of Education Conference, 2017

Azim Premji University, Bangalore

January 9 – 11, 2017

Last Date for Submission of Paper Extended till November 15th 2016

The terms ‘theory’ and ‘practice’ are often counterposed to indicate a dichotomy or dualism that is impossible to bridge. Across a wide range of domains including education, the oppositional pairing of theory and practice is understood as a central problematic, often as one that is intractable and seriously detrimental to enterprises that seek or rest upon a robust relationship between knowledge and action. Those who view the relationship between the two in dichotomous terms characterize understanding as a purely intellectual endeavor involving detailed analysis and examination of presuppositions, leading to abstract theoretical formulations such that the resultant offers very little that is concrete, and what is offered is deemed positively unhelpful in guiding action.

In the domain of education, especially, we find this view expressed in the claim that there is too much of ‘theory’ in the curricula of both school education and teacher education programs leading them to be irrelevant to the present, or in the alternative claim that their contents are too abstract and remote to be comprehensible to teachers and students in any context. According to this view, theorizing is necessarily attuned to abstraction that seeks to subsume the particular, itself always the site of action/intervention, under inscrutable generalities, and that further intellectual efforts are required to bring the theoretical to bear on the particular. An extreme, though popular reaction to this alleged uselessness of theory is to reject the need for theorization and focus entirely on acting/intervening.

Assuming for a moment that theorizing amounts to abstraction and that this is not without problems, how tenable is the position that seeks to reject theory, particularly in the domain of education? One may argue, for example, that the view which is suspicious about the importance of theory cannot offer much in the way of helping us to distinguish between actions that are arbitrary and those that are not. A further retort might be that apart from the possibility that actions may turn out to be arbitrary in the absence of principles to guide and ensure consistency, *sans* theory, it is impossible to initiate practitioners into such domains of inquiry and action in a meaningful way.

Such contrasting positions are abundant in discussions on curriculum and pedagogy, to cite but two important concerns in the domain of education. There are also several views that occupy the space between these extremes. As a matter of fact, these discussions are ever present and require to be revisited very often in educational discourse. For instance, these issues were vigorously debated in the United Kingdom and USA in the 1960s and 1970s. If education requires both sophisticated understanding of a range of factors, from the context of the child to the nature of knowledge, and if we want such understanding to significantly contribute to meaningful, consistent and justifiable action, then it is imperative that we think hard about the relationship between theory and practice.

How, then, are we to think about each of these terms in the pair and how are we to think of the relationship between the two? Is there a way in which we can envisage a relationship between the two such that specific constraints of practice systematically and meaningfully draw the limits to theorizing? How have the various debates on these issues in the last several decades shaped our understanding of the relationship between theory and practice?

Conceptions of the theory-practice relationship gives rise to the multitude of questions and issues in the domain of education. These questions arise partly because of the uniqueness of the domain itself: the domain draws on, and is of interest to a range of disciplines. It employs a rich repertoire of theories in illuminating a variety of issues and each of these theories have their own presuppositions and commitments. Some of the questions, therefore, one may ask are: Are there theories that are distinctly recognizable as educational theories or are these theories both in their nature and scope rooted in the traditions of various disciplines in social

sciences? Both ways, how do we understand the nature of these theories and how do they contribute to educational practice? If it be argued that there are theories that uniquely address educational domain, what is their nature and how do they provide a better integration with educational practice?

These and related questions that arise in various specific aspects and contexts of education are proposed for deliberation at the Fifth Conference on Philosophy of Education to be organized by Azim Premji University in January 2017. We invite contributions on one or more of the following themes and issues:

- The nature of educational theory and educational practice and the relationship between the two. Contributions that explore relationships between theories of different order in education, and map the relationship in terms of how these different types of theory relate with educational practice are also welcome. We also welcome contributions that engage with these issues the way they have been shaped in the context of education in India.
- History and development of educational theories and their relationship with similar developments in other disciplines. We look forward to contributions that explore the impact of non-foundationalism in social sciences on educational theory, and understand such impact upon the relationship between educational theory and practice.
- How does the vexed relationship between theory and practice gives rise to problems in the context of educational policy framing and implementation, educational research, specific curriculum development and pedagogy, especially in the case of pedagogy of specific disciplines (languages, mathematics, moral education, development of skills, etc.), and how are these to be negotiated or overcome? We are also interested in receiving contributions that specifically address the theory-practice relationship in the context of particular conceptions of education, for example, liberal education.
- In what ways does the relationship between theory and practice pose problems in the context of teacher education, especially the relationship between knowledge and action across a range of situations, including those that demand reflection on moral principles and moral judgment?

- Given that education as a social enterprise is never without an emancipatory dimension, does theorizing necessary have to be ethically grounded? How does this desideratum affect the nature of educational theory?

The conference encourages authors to explore the given themes as well as related ones from a variety of perspectives. We particularly encourage young scholars and doctoral candidates to write papers on these themes.

Deadline for Submissions

Complete papers between 4500-5000 words should be uploaded at the link provided on our website www.azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/poe by October 31, 2016, 11:59 PM, IST. Authors are advised to follow the prescribed word limit. They may also note that incomplete papers, extended abstracts, or papers exceeding the word limit may not be considered.

Important Dates

- Deadline for submissions: November 15, 2016
- Communications on acceptance of submissions: November 25, 2016
- Conference dates: January 9-11, 2017.

Instructions for Submissions

Submissions should be made by registering as 'interested speaker' in the online system and subsequently uploading a copy of the paper in MS Word format. Please don't upload pdf versions of the papers.

Young scholars and doctoral students are requested to specify that they are submitting under the young scholars' category.

All submissions should have two documents;

I. Information about the author; name, institutional affiliation, email ids, and phone numbers.

2. Complete paper with the title, and containing an abstract of the paper in 200-300 words. Authors should not write their names, institutional affiliation, email id or any form of identification on the paper.

Enquiries

In case, you don't receive an email acknowledgement on submission, or if you have any other query regarding the conference or paper submissions, please write to poe.conference@apu.edu.in.

Review Process

All submissions will be blind reviewed by a panel of reviewers. The decision regarding selection of the paper will be communicated by email to the authors on or before November 15, 2016. The decision of the Conference Committee will be final.

Travel and Accommodation

Authors are advised to first explore funding possibilities at their home institutions or other institutions and then contact us for travel funding. Azim Premji University will be supporting partial or full cost of travel for a limited number of authors based on individual merit and need. Lodging and boarding for the period of the Conference will be provided by Azim Premji University, Bangalore