



## **Azim Premji University Faculty Seminar Series**

presents

### **"Knowing How to Teach"**

Speaker

**Indira Vijaysimha**

**Date: February 15, 2017(Wednesday)**

**Time: 09:30 am to 11:00 am**

**Venue: Seminar Hall, 10th Floor, Pixel A, Azim Premji University**

#### **About the Talk**

Several studies, my own research, as well as student reports about their interactions with teachers corroborate the notion that the practice of teaching is itself a significant source of knowledge about teaching. There seems to be an aspect of knowing about teaching that is not reducible or deducible from knowledge of the foundational disciplines of education and general pedagogical principles (if indeed there are any such). How then are we to make sense of this aspect of teaching?

In my talk I will be exploring the idea that knowledge about teaching cannot be captured sufficiently by sorting it into procedural and propositional categories. Mastery over the conceptual knowledge bases of teaching and of the skills of teaching is not by itself sufficient in producing skillful teaching. Skillful or expert teaching can be likened to a concert performance. A concert performance can be recognized for its technical brilliance and still be judged to be lacking something. What may be that something? How may this be developed in a novice teacher? These are important questions in education. I suppose they are equally important in any field that recognizes artistry. I will develop my arguments by drawing upon the philosophical work of Michael Polanyi and the analyses of teaching presented by Lee Schulman and others. While this exploration may provide some pointers about how we should go about the business of teacher preparation and development, I also hope to explore a-difficult-to-articulate aspect about knowing itself.

## About the Speaker

Indira Vijaysimha considers herself to be a maverick who strayed into academia and is more or less enjoying the bumpy ride while it lasts. Human, mother, teacher, teacher educator, grandmother, professor are some labels that might be used for her, in no particular order of preference. People do wear different hats at different times, don't they? Many decades ago Indira quit teaching in a conventional school and forayed into alternative schooling with her own three children. Her inquiry into the human condition spans many decades, much mulling over, several 'disputations', and some writing.

Indira's work as a teacher and later as a teacher educator with Centre for Environment Education (CEE), provoked a deep questioning about the processes of education that led her to found the Poorna Trust and the 'alternative' school, Poorna Learning Centre. Indira took her Ph.D. from NIAS, Bangalore, where she undertook ethnographic research on the work of science teachers in different types of schools.

Before moving to Azim Premji University, Indira served as a member of the Academics and Pedagogy group of Azim Premji Foundation. She headed the Teacher Preparation unit. Her work at the Foundation was in the area of curriculum development and implementation of elementary teacher education programmes.