INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

BANGALORE
23-25 JANUARY 2013
Azim Premji University welcomes you to the International Seminar on Philosophy of Education. The International Seminar is the culmination of a Series of Seminars held through the past year. We started early this year by announcing a series of Regional Seminars inviting papers to be presented in these seminars. 28 of the shortlisted papers were presented in the Seminars held in Dehradun, Puducherry and Jaipur. In the International Seminar, we wanted to take this process further to take stock of trends and character of work that has been done in other parts of the world and to provide exposure to leading contemporary figures in philosophy of education to practitioners in the country. An equally important aspect of this Seminar is to start a dialogue between Philosophy of Education and other disciplines that contribute to the study of Education. Some of the leading academics and educationists in India who have shaped the educational discourse in the country are participating in this seminar.

For a few decades now, philosophy of education (PoE) has been a part of the curriculum designed for degrees offered in the field of education, especially teacher education in India, in one shape or the other. However, a closer examination of the content of this curriculum would soon reveal that this invariably amounts to nothing more than an exercise in chanting some mantras, rather than an attempt to introduce and inculcate certain modes of thinking that are sine qua non to analysis of the debates on education itself. As a result, not surprisingly, courses in philosophy of education thin itself into recitation of names and ‘opinions’ and, in turn, begin to appear disconnected with the rest of curriculum.

Such a lamentable construal of what philosophy of education is not merely a feature of the curriculum of the above-mentioned programs, but is equally pervasive in what general discussions on education usually tend to assume each time the word ‘philosophy’ is invoked in the context of education. Further, the persistence of this image of philosophy of education forecloses the possibility of utilizing the analytic tools that philosophy offers in scrutinizing assumptions and concepts, defining frameworks and terms, examining justifications, implications and normative foundations. What is indeed lost sight of here is, one may conclude without much effort, the foundational role philosophy of education has carved out for itself as well as the need to carry over the habits of thought as a tool while reckoning with other aspects of the discourse on education. One may raise a related point concerning the weakening of the philosophical component in these programs as follows (which at once sounds alarm about the thinking behind the very design of these courses). Consider the syllabi in force at various teacher education institutes, for training programs at different
levels. These syllabi, while claiming to be receptive to the needs of an inevitable interdisciplinary approach, seem to offer little and, in some cases, almost nothing to ground the concerns raised by the theoretical foundations that form the matrix of such an interdisciplinarity. In its place, what is found is a tendency to draw recklessly from a wide range of disciplines, which in turn appears to be piece-meal and ad-hoc. Moreover, the inclusion of these disciplines as resources to draw from seems to pull the programs in myriad directions and the lack of emphasis on introducing a set of conceptual tools to ground these approaches merely add to the mounting issues.

If the above account is resonant of the problems philosophy of education as a discipline faces today (and by extension programs in education), it is imperative that we open the possibilities philosophy of education has and, thereby, seek to rejuvenate the practice of the same in a rigorous manner. Such a task, however demanding it may be, needs to be cognizant of the following:

a. Take stock of trends and character of work that has been done in other parts of the world.

b. Provide exposure to leading contemporary figures in philosophy of education to practitioners in the country.

c. Explore the possibility of articulating a philosophy of education drawing from indigenous traditions in the country.

d. Provide a platform for individuals to pursue their interests in philosophy of education, present their work and initiate discussions.

The Philosophy of Education Seminar Series across the country is Azim Premji University’s first step in this direction with the hope of collaborating and connecting with scholars in different universities both in India and abroad. The International Seminar is seen as an event where established scholars in the discipline from across the world will make presentations on current issues in PoE. It will be a means to connect the debates in Philosophy of Education world over to the Indian scenario and to bring a significant number of academics in India together. It is planned that this seminar will just be the starting point towards a larger ongoing discourse on PoE in India.

Regards,
Prof. Rohit Dhankar
Philosophy of Education,
Azim Premji University
For more details please visit http://www.azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/PoE
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Introduction to the Seminar & Programme Structure |  
| 9.30 am – 10.30 am | Session 1 | ‘Diverse Senses, and Six Conceptions, of Education’  
David Carr |  
| 10.30 am – 10.45 am | Session 1 | Tea |  
| 10.45 am – 11.45 am | Session 1 | ‘Education, Human Development and Teaching - On A Complex Interrelation’  
Krassimir Stojanov |  
| 11.45 am - 12.30 pm | Session 1 | ‘The Idea Of An Aims-Based Curriculum’  
John White |  
| 12.30 pm - 12.45 pm | Session 1 | Closing Remarks by Chair |  
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| 2 pm – 3 pm | Session 2 | ‘Education Reform and Philosophy of Education - Taking a closer look at the Regime re-defining Education, Knowledge and Human Beings’  
Mina O’Dowd |  
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Claudia Schumann |  
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Roop Rekha Verma |  
| 5.15 pm – 6.15 pm | | A Philosophy in Practice – Reflecting on J Krishnamurti’s Educational Challenge  
Alok Mathur |  
<p>| 6.15 pm - 6.30 pm | | Closing remarks by Chair |</p>
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<td>‘Epistemology on the Firing-Line – A Guide To Popular Delusions, Myths And Misapprehensions’ D. C. Phillips</td>
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<td>‘Autonomy vs Authority in Educational Epistemology’ Benjamin Zenk &amp; Arindam Chakraborty</td>
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<td>‘Indian Experiences with Science: Considerations for History, Philosophy and Science Education’ Sundar Sarukkai</td>
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<td>‘Primary Education: Purposes and Moral Issues’ Hriday Kant Dewan</td>
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Session 1

9.00 am – 10.00 am  ‘Philosophy of Education in Teacher Education Syllabi in India’
Avinash Kumar

10.00 am – 11.00 am  ‘Perspectives on Initial Teacher Education in Germany: Structure of ITE, Legal Contexts and the Rationale of the Teaching Profession’
Dina Kuhlee

11.00 am – 11.15 am  Tea

11.15 am – 12.15 pm  ‘Theory in Teacher Education’
Christopher Winch

12.15 pm – 1.15 pm  ‘Teacher Education: Foundational vs Integrated Approaches’
Rohit Dhankar

1.15 pm – 1.30 pm  Closing Remarks by the Chair

1.30 pm – 2.30 pm  Lunch

Session 2

2.30 pm – 3.30 pm  ‘Aims of Education: Philosophical Issues for Educational Research’
Richard Pring

3.30 pm – 4.30 pm  ‘Empirical Research in Education: Why Philosophy Matters’
Robin Barrow

4.30 pm – 4.45 pm  Tea

4.45 pm – 5.45 pm  ‘Learning Culture: School as Cultural Learning and Person Formation’
Padma Sarangapani

5.45 pm – 6.00 pm  Closing Remarks by the Chair
This short paper revisits the bedrock question of educational philosophy and theory – that of how we might or should understand or define the term ‘education’ itself. It is the present view that despite considerable past and present attention to this problem, the most serious confusions in contemporary educational theorizing and policy making follow from mistaken analyses of the concept of education. In this regard, the first part of the paper focuses upon the widely influential contemporary claim that education is a ‘contested’ concept, arguing that recent post-modern or ‘anti-foundationalist’ claims that diverse educational perspectives reflect ‘rival’ social constructions are mostly based on confusions of different senses with different concepts or conceptions of education. However, in the second part of the paper, several different (though by no means culturally ‘local’) conceptions of education are identified by reference to four persisting normative tensions in educational theorizing and policy-making. These tensions – discernable in the educational traditions of diverse cultures – are between egalitarian and non-egalitarian aims of education, between instrumentalist and non-instrumentalist purposes of education, between the roles of schooling in promoting both conformity and independence, and between different views of the educational value of schooling. In terms of these tensions, the paper identifies six (though more might be identified) competing conceptions of education as schooling, namely: Platonic or elitist traditionalism; liberal egalitarian traditionalism; utilitarian traditionalism; psychological (psychoanalytic) progressivism; pragmatist (instrumental) progressivism; and educational radicalism or ‘de-schooling’.
My purpose in this paper is to reconstruct the distinctions and interrelations between two quite different meanings of the term “education” – education as a particular form of “human development”, and education as “teaching”. Only on the ground of this reconstruction we can discriminate between pedagogical activities and arrangements, which are educationally supportive from those which are not.

In order to elaborate on the first meaning of education, that is, to determine the particular understanding of human development the concept of education stands for, I first discuss the concepts of education of Dewey and Peters. My claim with regard to these authors is that they ultimately fail to draw a clear analytical distinction between the two meanings of education mentioned above. That is why in the next section of the paper I introduce the Hegelian theory of Bildung as a theory of the development of the human ability to participate in the universal logical space of the world that consists of concepts and of inferences between concepts, that is, of arguments. To inhabit this space means basically to transform one’s own beliefs to conceptual contents and to assess the validity of these beliefs by articulating them in argumentative discourses. Hence, teaching is then only educationally supportive, when teachers first acknowledge empathetically the pre-cognitive beliefs and ideals of students, and when, secondly, teachers encourage students to articulate conceptually these beliefs and ideals by involving them in practices of public reasoning.
This paper initially describes the different incidents that have impacted the way of designing the school curriculum. This paper comes at a time when a revision of the English National Curriculum is in progress. As in many other countries across the globe, it is constructed around a number of largely academic school subjects.

The paper focuses on “An Aims-based Curriculum” which spells out a ground-breaking alternative. Its starting point is not subjects, but what schools should be for. It argues that aims are not to be seen as high sounding principles that can be easily ignored: they are the lifeblood of everything a school does.

The paper shows this by beginning with general aims that equip each learner to both lead a personally fulfilling life and help others do so too. From these are derived more specific aims covering the personal qualities, skills, and understanding needed for a life of personal, civic, and vocational well-being. Thereafter the process of deriving aims further based on political realities of implementation is described.
International organizations (IOs) have increasingly grown in power and importance, not least as regards their influence on education. Included in this term are such organizations as Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the European Union (EU), the European Commission and its many directories, and the World Bank. We maintain here that taken together these IOs constitute a regime that strives to govern “the actions of those involved in specifiable activities or set of activities”. If, for the sake of argument, we even maintain that these IOs function together and in collaboration and co-operation with one another, which seems to be a fair assumption, we might even stretch ourselves to maintain that taken together, these IO constitute one powerful regime, with similar goals and expectations, especially as regards education, the topic of our concern.

In this paper the common goals for education are clarified, such as they are situated in the common theoretical and empirical model used in this regime, Human Capital Theory. After a brief summary of the history of Human Capital Theory, the paper will discuss how the underlying assumptions of HCT contrast to the philosophy of education, especially as related to definitions of education, knowledge and human lives.
Certain strands of cosmopolitanism have been criticized on various occasions for merely mirroring the mental framework of global elite that stresses a positive attitude for mobility, flexibility, and disinterested objective detachment to the detriment of “rooted,” local and national values. In this way, it is argued, it presents a one-sided opportunistic or naively affirmative picture of processes of globalization rather than taking seriously the challenges posed by the inherently normative dimensions of cosmopolitan thought and practice.

The present paper will argue for a return to the critical core of the cosmopolitan idea and proposes that the critique of reification, which recently received renewed interest from philosophers of the so-called third generation Frankfurt School, can serve as a vital tool for re-imagining the cosmopolitan teacher education as critique. Especially, the discussion around the recent turn towards a standards and competencies oriented teacher education in Germany will be critically examined in this regard.

Firstly the concept of reification will be shown to provide the conceptual resources to describe and select relevant characteristics of contemporary social pathologies that cannot be adequately captured within liberal social philosophies. The closer analysis of reification as a deficient relation to oneself, to others, or to the world will then lead to the second question of how to conceive of non-reifying forms of relatedness, commitment and boundedness as enabling new forms of expressive freedom. Instead of one-sided, narrow and hasty reactions towards a perceived “global challenge” – either fetishizing borders or their transgressions, an educational cosmopolitanism as critique should bring into focus how educational institutions such as teacher education can provide, strengthen, and enhance the conditions for binding ourselves as citizen of the world in non-reifying ways.
With the changing scenario of technological developments, accompanied by a market-dominated and corporates-dictated politics, the vision of education is changing fast. The lofty, but essential, discourses of humanity, wisdom, search of knowledge and expansion of identities are being pushed to invisible and inaudible backgrounds. Instead, training in skills and mastery in “cutting-edge-subjects” is gaining the main stage as the aim of education. Not so much in words but more so in practice, the major aim of education seems to be preparing the child in the appropriate lifestyle, strategies, attitudes and techniques of a corporatized society.

In the midst of “modern” outlook of education it may be worthwhile to revisit some older conceptions of the aims and nature of education and examine if education can still be restored as a tool for humanizing society. And, in this process, it is worth examining if education can be so molded as to become an instrument of ameliorating conflicts, conflicts of different kinds of identities and interests. Education as a tool for peace has never been given a fair trial. This can be shown by an analysis of the text books which are widely used by both government and private schools in several states. The paper aims to present this analysis and revisit the purpose and essence of education.
This paper identifies key educational questions that the philosopher and peripatetic teacher, J. Krishnamurti, enjoined his audiences to engage with, and indicates how his inquiry into the human condition finds expression in the setting-up of schools located in varied geographical and cultural contexts. The aims of these schools and the values and practices that flow out of these aims are briefly discussed in the context of Krishnamurti’s approach to the complex and urgent crises experienced by peoples across the globe. The paper posits two interconnected and generative notions deriving from Krishnamurti’s educational work: ‘philosophy in practice’ and ‘school as a center of inquiry’. The meanings of these notions are explored in a school setting, along with implications for the lives of students and teachers in the contemporary world.

‘Philosophy in practice’ is shown to have multiple possible meanings in the context of a school, which are however tied together by a few distinctive and vitalizing features. As it manifests in schools, ‘philosophy in practice’ is seen as being generative across the poles of ‘vision’ and ‘present awareness’. The possibility of the emergence of ‘philosophy in practice’ is however contingent upon the structuring of the school as an institution, and is directly influenced by the axes of authority-autonomy on one hand and that of competition-cooperation on the other.

The notion of ‘school as a center of inquiry’ is shown to be the cumulative resultant of the emergence of ‘philosophy in practice’ at multiple levels in the school – individual as well as collective. It encompasses in its ambit a range of inquiries, from curriculum, school practices and discipline, to a widening engagement with individual, social, environmental and global issues that a school community is willing to become cognizant of. The paper attempts to place these notions in the wider framework of the calls for educational reform and renewal in the 21st century.
EPISTEMOLOGY ON THE FIRING-LINE:
A GUIDE TO POPULAR DELUSIONS,
MYTHS, AND MISAPPREHENSIONS

At the beginning of my academic career, many decades ago, I found it futile to describe myself as an epistemologist when at conferences of educational researchers and other education professionals. No one seemed to understand, and certainly no one seemed to care. My strange little secret – that I was interested in the “theory of knowledge”, in issues concerning the grounds upon which we can claim to know something – could only be spoken about in the narrow confines of meetings of that small and exclusive breed – philosophers of education. Nowadays much has changed. Epistemology is discussed (by non-philosophers, it is important to note) at a wide range of education conferences, and in a variety of education journals – judging by the frequency with which the term is used, epistemology is a topic that many educational researchers, policy people, trainers of teachers and designers of curriculum, have come to care about very deeply. What a pity they still seem not to understand!

In this paper I describe (and illustrate) the most common misunderstandings about epistemology, and discuss the criticisms of mainstream epistemology raised by those academics who believe that it is a tool used for the domination of minority groups. I will also point to, but not discuss, important epistemological issues in educational research and the field of policy.
Before undertaking any voluntary activity the agent must be motivated to do it. Learning a difficult subject, for example, epistemology itself requires a lot of interest and perseverance. What would motivate a student to even begin to do it, especially since one can hardly give a pragmatic justification such as it would help to make money or get a career. It is only by first knowing the subject that one can actually know its use, yet without knowing its use one cannot be motivated to exert oneself to learn it. Educators, of the humanities, and especially of philosophy face this paradox or vicious circularity—perhaps a form of Meno’s Paradox—why would you inquire unless you know what you are inquiring about, and if you already know it why would you inquire? Teaching, in the face of this destructive dilemma, seems pointless.

In these days of information overload, and the spreading cult of unenthusiasm and uncuriosity about anything except the pragmatically useful, the above problem is aggravated by a more grave predicament of the teacher-student relationship. When rationality requires that we do not take anything on merely the authority of another person, how could some teacher other than the learner’s own autonomous self impart any teaching whatsoever? When philosophy is supposed to give us the skill of questioning authority, how could training in philosophy get off the ground in a hierarchical situation where one has to start by taking it for granted that another person knows better than me what knowledge is needed by or useful for me?

Using Radhakamal Mukherjee’s description of Vedic-Upanishadic pedagogy which often tries to dismantle the authority of the teacher by Socratic confessions of the teacher not knowing what one is about to teach, this paper would proceed to attack this problem head on. Jacques Ranciere’s radical claim that it is stultifying to permit the teacher’s intelligence to stand between the subject and the pupil’s own mind, will be critically examined in this context.
J. Krishnamurty and St Augustine, each in their own way, would agree with Ranciere that no teacher can make me know what I cannot know by myself. How does one go from not knowing to knowing a discipline? And why should one teach at all then? No state or private patron would pay a philosophy teacher, in any currency, other than a cup of Hemlock, to help unwilling learners know how little they know. The paper will sharpen the sense of this genuine problem and try to suggest a way out.
For schools in non-western societies, particularly erstwhile colonies of Western Nations, 'culture' is a problematic of curriculum. Attempts to address the 'culture question' in mainstream Indian education have by and large been within the framework and form of the institution of modern school—whether it is to establish more continuity, or to create more ruptures in relation to culture.

However where the education of tribal children in India is concerned, 'culture' seems to emerge not just as 'a', but as 'the' problematic, which cannot be contained in or addressed through the institution. It demands a centrality accorded to it, so much so that in comparison, the culture question in mainstream schooling appears as a marginal matter, and largely 'solved'. One part of the reason for this is the imagination and construction of the category 'tribal' which essentialises culture and makes it central to social/political identity. Another part has to do with the idea of culture itself, and what is it that is learnt when culture is learnt/transmitted. In this presentation I want to explore the concept of culture as it is relevant to education discussion and the idea that learning culture involves primarily learning social ordering that simultaneously constitute the person and society. This social ordering is basically a pedagogic principle.

Based on this idea, I will try to build an argument that while there are discontinuities between modern education and mainstream Indian society, these are on the surface, and in fact there is a deep continuity between modern education and mainstream Indian society. On the other hand, schooling represents a deep rupture in the case of tribal societies. This distinction will be useful in trying to understand why some cultures seem to be 'compatible' with modern school, and why others are not, and what the consequences of EFA through schooling will have for the diversity of human societies.
The purpose of education is to share with learner, ideas about how to live. It helps develop the ability to make appropriate intuitive and instinctive choices as well as rational ones. A child learns much in interaction with the community and family. The naturally acquired capabilities include that of making choices, judgments and responses. The question is: What can the school, as an externally structured formal system, do for children and their choices?

In the school, a child is externally assisted and influenced through a directed process. In current practice development of ethical values, moral edicts, appropriate attitudes, moral reasoning are the kind of terms used to define the role of school.

The unpacking of the current practice and discourse includes considering what the school should attempt to do, how it should proceed and what should be the elements it should emphasise. The first is to analyse whether it should provide edicts or it should do something else and the second is to explore choices between justice, equality, bravery, loyalty and other possibilities. The last is to choose whether to reinforce values of the community or help them arrive at an alternative framework or at least have a dialogue on the need to alter some.

In the context of India, the emphasis has largely been on moral edicts and relating texts including stories to communicate these. The basket of values considered important has also been a contested list. We explore where such choices emerge from and the rationale behind each. We also point out that ethical principles chosen and their interpretation are rooted on some fundamental assumptions about humans, society and relationships. With respect to how the school moves forward it is important to ask whether the development of the ability to make choices is prefaced by following instructions.
Or does it emerge from experience and imbibing from them? Or should the effort, right from the beginning, be on moral reasoning? And, therefore, the position that the role of school is largely to provide the tools for moral reasoning?

The author also explores the attempts at infusing development of moral experiences, reasoning and choices through the school, the basis and constraints for choosing these. He points at the varied intensity of interpretation of meaning of some of the key moral concepts and diversity of perspectives on them.
This paper investigates and attempts to answer three questions. First, what is the position of ‘philosophy of education’ in the syllabi of teacher education programmes in India? Second, is the way philosophy of education presently conceived and taught in teacher education programmes most conducive to the goal of developing teachers as required by National Curriculum Framework, 2005, and envisioned in National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, 2010? And third, can a re-conception of philosophy of education in teacher education, and a re-alignment of its contents and methods, assist in making teacher education more effective?

The author will begin by presenting the results and analysis of a survey of the B. Ed. syllabi of some Indian universities, and showing how philosophy of education in Indian teacher education still aligns more closely with the ‘traditional’ approach. Presenting a brief historical survey of the field of philosophy of education, the author then highlights some of the limitations of this approach and certain key features of the analytical school which replaced the former in some Western countries. The author then underscores the relevance of some salient features of analytical approach for contemporary teacher education, by showing its congruence with the ‘visions’ of a teacher in NCF, 2005 & NCFTE, 2010. The paper will conclude by suggesting that incorporation of certain features of the broadly conceived analytical tradition may better serve the needs and objectives of Indian teacher education.
The pathway to qualified teacher status in Germany is a highly regulated route involving university studies and practical training with an overall duration of seven years. Although the actual design of this route may differ depending on the Federal state responsible and the school type the trainee teacher intends to teach in, entering the teaching profession requires the successful completion of this teacher education route.

For a deeper understanding of the German teacher education structure and the teaching profession it is essential to examine German educational policy and its recent developments. It is also important to examine the historically and legally defined role of the state in education and the allocation of competences on the one hand, and on the other, to examine the inner workings of the teaching labour market, as well as the legal status of teachers within the system. Additionally, it is important to take into account the German understanding of teaching as a profession and its justification, for example, by educational theory. These different aspects strongly affect teacher education and teaching in Germany today, as well as reform intentions and reform realities regarding ITE structures.

This paper therefore intends to provide an overview of German teacher education structures, its legal contexts with regard to the role of the state in education, and its embeddedness in the rationalities of teaching as a profession. Furthermore, the paper introduces some recent developments and problems in German ITE. Finally, it presents some contrasts with the situation in England and its most recent shifts into a “craft philosophy” of teaching.
The time has come to re-assess the role that Educational Theory has to play in the education of teachers, both at the beginning of and during their careers. Detailed references will be to the UK, and to a more limited extent, Germany, but the argument has much wider applicability within an international context in which the theoretical components of teacher education programmes have come under growing scrutiny, while at the same time, the need for a more highly qualified teaching force is becoming increasingly widely recognised.

This paper outlines three influential conceptions of teachers: as craft workers, as executive technicians, and as professionals. It sets out the relationships between each of them and shows where they are compatible and where incompatible. It relates these conceptions to different models of initial teacher education. It considers these conceptions in relation to particular national traditions and policy initiatives and concludes with some reflections on policy developments in England and Germany and their possible relevance to the contemporary Indian policy scene.
Teacher education is an important strand of national debate on educational improvement in India today. Curricular reform in teacher education seems to have shown some movement in the last decade and many states have revised their elementary teacher education curricula. The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) responded to National Curriculum Framework 2005 (NCF 2005) and Right to Education Act 2009 (RTE 2009) by issuing National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework (NCFTE) in 2009, which is supposed to form the basis of Teacher Education curricula in the nation. The NCTE has also issued what it calls “Re-envisioned Two-Year Elementary Teacher Education Programme” (ETE Syllabus) which “sincerely hope[s] that the proposed syllabi will work as a basic framework within which other teacher education courses will be reviewed and redesigned”. The ETE Syllabus can be considered as an example of syllabi generated on the basis of NCFTE.

The NCFTE expects teachers to be professionals who are capable of self-improvement in their practice through reflection, to be able to undertake educational research, critique school curriculum and textbooks, and create pedagogical knowledge, among other things. This article examines whether the prescribed approach to and scope of theoretical knowledge in NCFTE and ETE Syllabus fulfill the stated expectations. In the process of this examination the issue of foundations versus integrative approach is discussed; and strengths and weaknesses of both the approaches are noted. Discussing strengths and weaknesses of the two approaches brings to the fore the dilemma involved in this choice, as neither of the approaches seems to be satisfactory and either choice involves a heavy trade-off. Towards the end, an interconnected (distinct from integrated) disciplinary approach is suggested as a possible way out of this dilemma.
The discussion and conclusions in the article are of general interest for teacher education curriculum; however, two documents prepared by NCTE (the NCFTE and Elementary Teacher Education Programme syllabus) are used as examples of a prescribed approach and scope of theoretical knowledge in teacher education.
It is usually assumed that an engagement with the nature of mathematics (NOM) is relevant only for a small set of academics, who inquire into the many possible philosophical positions about the discipline of mathematics and about its objects of study. Broadly, the positions can be grouped into three categories: the instrumentalist, the Platonist and the problem-solving (Ernest 1988). However, they appear to play no explicit role in the teaching of mathematics at any level.

It is argued in this paper that engagement with NOM is important for those who teach mathematics. Some studies have been carried out on the attitudes and beliefs held by practising teachers with regard to the discipline of mathematics and its teaching/learning, including one at the University of Delhi (School Mathematics Project, 1993). These reveal that elementary school teachers often have tacit positions on these issues that militate against the aims of education as articulated in curriculum documents, and that are therefore likely to hamper their teaching. While it may not be possible to incorporate a full course on NOM in teacher education programmes, engaging with it is likely to have a positive effect on their practice. Some questions that could be addressed are ‘What is mathematics?’, ‘What makes mathematics difficult?’, and ‘What is unique to mathematics among school subjects?’
Science is an enterprise to bring about correspondence between the world of ideas and the external reality as perceived by our senses. This is an exercise in model making which perforce involves an inductive leap in going from observation to theory making. There are therefore no absolute truths in science because scientific theories are based on observation and are contingent upon them. They may make predictions of increasing accuracy but can never be guaranteed to be absolutely true because the possibility always exists that they may have to be abandoned should future observations prove contrary to what they predict.
As the last century drew to a close constructivism had emerged as a major philosophy about knowledge creation, transmission and assimilation with direct implications for educational practice. School faculties, national and state curricula designers, teacher trainers and everyone were being exhorted to reformulate their approaches within a constructivist framework. For educational researchers also it was declared as the preferred ‘paradigm’ and it has overwhelmingly dominated conference and seminar proceedings as well as published articles in journals.

The appeal of constructivism gradually spread to various countries across the globe with varying speed and style. In India, the National Curriculum Framework of 2005 has signaled a switchover to constructivism as the preferred framework for overhauling the educational system. Thus understanding constructivism has become a major challenge in the educational discourse at all levels. One would like to begin with the assumption that for such a dominant trend of thinking there is either a single interpretation or at least a broad consensus with various interpretations and positions. As one scours through a variety of literature and debates, the realisation dawns that this assumption is far from fulfilled.

In the context of science education, in particular, the concept of constructivism has been critically examined from various philosophical perspectives. Such examination has drawn upon rich seams of philosophy of education and philosophy, epistemology, sociology and history of science as well as a range of multicultural, feminist and broadly reformist arguments.

This paper attempts to trace these arguments to the differing and at times opposing positions taken by various scholars. It also tries to examine the impact and implications for practice of science teaching, particularly in the Indian context. It highlights the gains from a rigorous philosophical examination of such an influential thought.
This talk is based on my chapter for the Springer Handbook on HPS and ST, edited by Michael Matthews, to be published shortly. It explores how perspectives on science drawn from Indian experiences can contribute to the interface between History and Philosophy of Science (HPS) and science education (SE). Beginning from the consideration of independent India’s explicit embrace of science and its consequences for educational policies, I will discuss two major challenges to science education: definitions of science and the nature of science. Both these themes need philosophical intervention. I will argue that contemporary HPS does not have the wherewithal to understand some alternate conceptions of science. I will draw on the arguments of multicultural origins of science as well as the nature of science debate to suggest how philosophy of science can be relevant for science education. This talk aims to make both HPS and SE more sensitive to other cultural formulations of science and scientific method.
Educational research concerns the ways in which people might be more effectively educated. But that requires some exploration of what it means to be educated. What counts, for example, as an educated 18 year old (the age at which many leave school) in this day and place? Although this question is crucial for educational policy, practice and research, it is rarely pursued to any depth. The consequence is, first, that much of so-called educational research is not educational research at all, and, second, that (even where it is) it is flawed by ignoring crucial philosophical issues.

This paper, therefore, is divided into two parts. First, it analyses what could be meant by an educated person, thereby placing education more within the realm of ethics than in that of the social sciences. Second, it draws out some of the consequences for educational policy, practice and research, with particular reference to

- language of education,
- pursuit of higher standards,
- assessment of standards through testing,
- false dualism between ‘academic’ and ‘vocational’,
- the practice of teaching

The issues are internationally relevant as countries across the world seek to raise standards, compare themselves with other systems in international league tables, and ‘borrow’ policies and practices from elsewhere.
There is widespread demand for “evidence-based” practice in education, generally translated into empirically determined rules of practice. Whether given teaching methods are effective is certainly an empirical question; but it does not follow that an answer can be empirically determined. Research in the fields of physical and mental health is contrasted, it being argued that the latter is suspect, given serious conceptual problems and related problems with controlling variables. The situation in education is worse. Education is a contested concept, and, as a consequence, different research programs proceed with different (and inadequate) conceptions of success.

The natural sciences have developed because the natural world turns out to be governed by laws. The “social sciences” are based upon the questionable and unproven assumption that human action and interaction are likewise governed by significant laws. There are of course rules of thumb pertaining to human conduct, but no laws of great significance. Failure to recognise this may lead to a failure to recognize personal responsibility.

Thus, it is not surprising that, despite the inevitable claims made about individual pieces of research, overall it is generally conceded, even by those engaged in empirical research, that there is little to show for a hundred years or so of research into teaching.

The conclusion is drawn that character and an imaginative understanding of one’s role is more important than a set of “proven” methods in teaching, and ethos is more important than formal rules of procedure in schools. Teacher preparation should be based upon philosophical inquiry into the nature of the enterprise rather than an attempt to pass on a science of teaching. Philosophical inquiry is essential both to challenge the pretensions of those who believe in a science of teaching and, positively, to cultivate an imaginative and plausible understanding of the enterprise of education – in short, to provide a worthwhile vision.
We emphasise in this paper that the social organisation of schools and interpersonal factors in learning situations are crucial variables in learning and wellbeing. These social factors are not independent of biological or cognitive factors; in fact, the three are deeply intertwined. We intend to argue for an integrative conception of wellbeing or flourishing that can offer new insights about effective learning and functioning. We need to conceptualise the cycle between social, psychological and bodily conditions in a manner that does justice to all three.

This paper is an exploration of wellbeing across levels, connecting the normative accounts - primarily at the social level - with psychophysical accounts - at the bodily level. What we argue is that the 'normative' and the 'natural' are porous categories that can be distinguished but cannot be separated radically. We use the notion of embodied cognition as a crucial bridge between the many levels at which our conception of wellbeing operates. We do not work out a comprehensive “theory of education” drawn from such a notion of wellbeing. We end this essay with the insistence that a broad-based notion of wellbeing must inform educational theory. We also suggest that ideas in Buddhist and Indian philosophy of mind and their normative implications may offer an alternative route to understanding and inquiry that is significant for education.
Azim Premji University has a clear social purpose – to make significant contributions towards a just, equitable, humane and sustainable society. The University aspires to do this through the development of talent and the creation of knowledge which can facilitate systemic change in education and allied development areas. This is an explicit commitment to the idea that knowledge and learning have human and social consequences and that their pursuit cannot be separated from these consequences.

**Goals:**
Azim Premji University is committed to developing outstanding programmes of learning, research and advocacy in education and allied development domains. The objectives of the University are:

- To develop outstanding, creative and socially committed professionals for the education and development sectors in India.
- To significantly invest in research to expand the frontiers of knowledge in education and development and continuously stretch the boundaries of our thought and action.
- To contribute to strengthening existing professionals in the education and development domains by creating high quality continuing education programmes and learning content.
- To significantly impact practice in the areas of education and development in the country.
- To serve as a national education and development resource centre.
- To present an authentic alternative voice for educational and social change in India.

In an era when education is increasingly being seen solely as an instrument for economic development and it is also assumed that its human and social purposes are best served through the route of increased participation in economic life of the society, the very idea of education undergoes a radical transformation. As a result, it becomes imperative to examine the assumptions that underlie and persuade such a transformation and gauge its implications.

Azim Premji University’s charter includes knowledge creation and establishing domain knowledge, in various areas to help engage in issues related to theoretical and practical concerns in education and development. This means both intensive work - deeper in relevant disciplines - and extensive work - covering multiple disciplines.

The Philosophy of Education Unit is conceptualized with the objective of generating interest, creating opportunities for research, improving the quality of teaching in the area and creating knowledge in Philosophy of Education in India.
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