

SCHOOL

Unique Education Journal



IN THIS ISSUE

- Are Parents the Best Guides for Education?
- Write Smarter: Academic Research Made Easy with Mendeley
- The Power of Listening in School and Life
- Philosophy of Education: Every Teacher Should Know
- Remembering Dr. Sharanabaswappa Appa (1933–2025)

SUBSCRIBE TO SCHOOL UNIQUE JOURNAL OF EDUCATION

INSIDE EVERY ISSUE:

Editorials – Provocative essays tackling the real issues in Indian education.

News Digest – A curated mix of education research, policy updates, and innovative school stories.

Voices in Education – Fresh perspectives from educators, researchers, and change-makers.

Ideas & Reflections – Exploring the timeless ideas, and fresh perspectives about teaching, learning, and the purpose of schooling.

Tributes & Remembrances – Honouring the lives and legacies of great teachers and educationists.

Resources for Schools – Practical ideas to strengthen teaching and school management.

WHY SUBSCRIBE?

Because School is more than a magazine — it is a forum for conversation, reflection, and reform. Whether you are a headmaster or teacher every page gives you something to think about, discuss, and put into practice.

Annual Subscription: Rs 600 (12 issues)
Perfect for school libraries, teachers' common rooms, and education leaders.

Download sample copy OR Subscribe online at www.SchoolReformer.com/subscribe

Rs 600
12 Issues



Download sample copy



Scan me

Contents

Are parents the best guides for education?	5
---	----------

How to write good academic research papers	11
---	-----------

Vinayak Arali, a research scholar at Yenepoya University, emphasizes the importance of accurate citations in scholarly work and introduces Mendeley as a practical, user-friendly tool to simplify reference management. Arali explains why citations matter, how Mendeley streamlines the process, and offers step-by-step guidance for integrating it into academic writing.

Importance of listening	13
--------------------------------	-----------

Seema Gangrade, a seasoned Spoken English Coach, highlights how active and empathetic listening can transform communication, build trust, and foster stronger relationships. Through practical tips and thoughtful reflections, she teaches readers to master this vital skill in both personal and professional spheres.

Feeling good in school	15
-------------------------------	-----------

Dhanya C is a teacher who works with young students. She talks about why it's important for children to feel happy and safe in school. She shares easy tips for teachers, parents, and counsellors to help kids be kind, stay strong, and balance schoolwork with having a good life. 15

Becoming strong by speaking kindly	17
---	-----------

Poornima Sasidharan is a trainer who teaches people important life skills, tells stories to help others, and has many years of experience as an English professor. She talks about why it's important for children to be strong and bounce back from problems, and how parents and teachers can help. Using real-life stories and simple tips, she shows how challenges can be turned into chances to grow.

Philosophy of Education	19
--------------------------------	-----------

Every teacher should understand the philosophy of education to see the bigger picture behind classroom practice. Adapted from Encyclopaedia Britannica, this article explains how educational aims, values, and methods are rooted in deep philosophical ideas—and why these insights are essential for shaping meaningful teaching and learning.

Dr. Sharanabaswappa Appa (1933–2025)	22
---	-----------

A rare man, a rare life.



SCHOOL REFORMER

NEW IDEAS. BETTER SCHOOLS

What is School Reformer?

School Reformer is an independent online platform that brings teachers, school leaders, and education experts together to share ideas and spark innovation.

We host online meetings where educators exchange practical strategies and fresh solutions. Our goal is simple: inspire creativity in classrooms and build a nationwide network of change makers in education.

Have an idea that could make a difference?

Become a Guest Speaker and share your insights with educators across India. Your talk will be recorded and shared on YouTube to reach thousands more.

Get Invited to Speak

Register on website

WWW.SCHOOLREFORMER.COM

SCHOOL*Unique Journal of Education***Established 1965**

September 2025 Issue

Founder & Chairman
V. IsvarmurtiManaging Editor
Kartik IsvarmurtiBusiness & Operations
ShanmugaPriya
9945218904Editorial Coordinator
Praveena Kothakota
praveena@schoolreformer.comAdmin Coordinator
Rajani Jain
support@schoolreformer.comCustomer Care Number
9620-320-320Website
www.schoolreformer.com
Email:
editor@schoolreformer.comPublished by
Vadamalai Media (P) Ltd.Registered Office
Pichanur, Coimbatore-641105Editorial & Marketing Office
C-2/286, 2-C Cross, 4th Main,
Domlur 2nd Stage, 3rd Phase,
Bangalore - 560 071, INDIA.
Tel: 9620320320Printed, Published & Edited by Mrs.
Shenbi on behalf of
Vadamalai Media Private Limited from
C-2/286, 4th Main, 2-C Cross, BDA
Layout, Domlur II Stage, III Phase,
Bangalore - 560 071 and Printed at
Print-O-Graph, No.124, Sultanpet,
Bangalore.

* Copyright-Vadamalai Media (P) Ltd.

Are parents the best guides for education?

In India, parents play an outsized role in shaping their children's early education. They are the most visible, vocal, and invested stakeholders in school life. This raises the central question: Are parents really the best guides for education, or do they sometimes hinder more than help?

Parents care deeply about their children and want them to succeed. Many sacrifice personal comforts to secure admission to a "good" school, attend meetings, monitor homework, and even provide extra tutoring. Up to Class 10 or 12, their attention can be obsessive. Conversations at home revolve around marks, ranks, and comparisons. At times, parents even try to live out their own unfulfilled dreams through their children — pushing them into medicine, engineering, or government service, regardless of the child's own interests.

But the picture changes after school. The same parents who tracked every single mark often stop paying attention once the child enters college. This is puzzling, because college is when real education begins — when students specialise, think critically, and prepare for their future.

Even more troubling is the treatment of non-STEM subjects. Parents frequently dismiss the humanities and arts with the question, "What job will you get?" In doing so, they discourage curiosity and exploration. With all the obsession about scoring well in school or clearing competitive exams, parents rarely encourage genuine interest in a subject. This leaves students well-trained to crack tests but poorly prepared to think deeply, creatively, or independently. Of course, not all parents fit this mould. Many do encourage independent choices, support unconventional careers, and nurture curiosity. And given the intense competition in India, it is understandable that parents push hard to ensure a secure career. But concern must not slip into control. What we need is a shift: parents must move from being supervisors of marks to partners in learning. This means asking children what they understood, not just what they scored. It means talking about ideas, books, and current events at home, and above all, knowing when to step back and let children make their own choices.

Schools also have a role to play. By celebrating creativity, projects, and problem-solving alongside marks, they can help parents broaden their own definitions of success.

In the end, parents are not always the best guides if their role is limited to pressure and control. But they can be the best guides if they walk alongside their children — supporting, encouraging, and trusting them to find their own way.

And perhaps this is the real question parents must ask themselves: How far might my child have gone if I had not interfered in their choices? Many children, if left free to pursue what truly fascinates them, could discover talents, passions, and careers that parents themselves never imagined.

Parents must remember that they are not the sole guardians of a child's journey in life. They are companions for a time — but the journey belongs to the child. The greatest gift a parent can give is not direction but freedom, not control but trust.

LETTERS TO EDITOR



TYRANNY OF MARKS

Sir,

I read with appreciation your editorial “Tyranny of Marks” in the August 2025 issue. As a parent of two children in Lucknow, I strongly agree with your call to rethink our obsession with marks.

In our home, exams often turn learning into anxiety. My son once scored poorly in mathematics despite understanding the concepts—just a few careless mistakes left him branded “weak.” My daughter, meanwhile, asked why she should try if only toppers are recognised. For every child who celebrates seeing their name on a merit list, there are hundreds who quietly feel invisible. This is not the purpose of education.

Marks may appear objective, but they often misrepresent a child’s true ability. Broader grading bands, as you suggested, would reduce unhealthy comparisons and allow children to value genuine learning, effort, and improvement. Recognition must extend to diverse talents—creativity, curiosity, problem-solving, and kindness—not just exam scores.

I have also noticed how marks affect the way children see

themselves. A child who consistently scores in the 60s begins to believe they are “average,” even if they show remarkable talent in other areas. This narrow label can crush confidence at a very young age. We cannot allow numbers on a report card to decide a child’s self-worth.

As parents, we too must change our outlook. Education should not be about chasing numbers but about preparing children to grow into confident, ethical, and well-rounded individuals. Schools and families must work together to create an environment where every child feels valued, not just the top rankers. I thank you for opening this important discussion and hope more schools will take the lead in reform.

Yours sincerely,
Radhika Sharma
Lucknow

Sir,

I read with interest your editorial on the “Tyranny of Marks” (August 2025). While I appreciate the concern behind this view, as a secondary school teacher of over twenty years I would like to offer a different perspective.

Marks, for all their shortcomings, remain one of the most practical and objective ways to evaluate students across schools and regions. Without detailed scores, how would universities or scholarship boards select fairly from lakhs of applicants?

In my experience, many children from modest families feel immense pride when their names appear in a public merit list. For them, it is often the first recognition they or their parents have ever received.

Marks also help teachers identify subject-wise gaps, and they allow parents to see clearly how their child is progressing.

Of course, I agree stress is a serious issue. But rather than abolish marks altogether, reform should focus on changing attitudes. If parents and schools present marks as feedback rather than as judgement, much of the anxiety can be reduced.

Yours sincerely,
A school teacher (name withheld)

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

We want to hear from you!

Our editorials spark debate and reflection on the future of school education in India – but the conversation isn’t complete without your input.

Read our editorials and share your thoughts, feedback, and fresh ideas.

Tell us what you agree with, what you’d challenge, or what new perspectives you can add.

Your voice can shape the dialogue on school education.

Write to:
editor@schoolreformer.com

Join the dialogue. Be part of the change.

CORRECTION

In the August 2025 issue (page 18), we published an article by Mr. Mahesh Iyer with his designation as Principal, Bhavans Smart Indian School, Kuwait. This was incorrect. Mr. Iyer is no longer the Principal of that institution; his correct designation should have been Ex-Principal.

We regret the error.

– Editor



GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS HAVE 10 LAKH TEACHING POSTS VACANT

India's public education system is in the grip of a massive teacher shortage — with over 10 lakh sanctioned posts lying vacant. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 envisions a pupil-teacher ratio of 30:1 (25:1 in disadvantaged areas), yet in many states the reality is far worse. In Bihar alone, more than 14,000 schools have ratios exceeding 40:1. Many schools operate with only one or two teachers, and some have none at all.

The crisis has forced urgent directives, such as Bihar's order that every primary school must have at least three teachers. But in the rush to fill gaps, many states resort to appointing unqualified or under-trained personnel, weakening classroom instruction.

Meanwhile, private tuition and the booming ed-tech industry are pulling away capable educators from government service, offering better pay, flexibility, and status. This migration leaves government schools — particularly in rural and disadvantaged areas — struggling with both quantity and quality of teaching staff.

Unless policymakers tackle hiring delays, inadequate pay, and the loss of professional dignity in teaching, the next generation may pass through school without ever having true mentors. The

teacher shortage is not just a staffing gap — it's a warning bell for the future of Indian education.

₹45 CRORE BOOST FOR TRIBAL SCHOOL BUILDINGS IN ANDHRA PRADESH

Andhra Pradesh has approved ₹45.02 crore to overhaul school infrastructure in the remote Aluri Sitarama Raju district. The funds will construct additional classrooms for 286 schools currently lacking buildings or in need of entirely new structures, and carry out major and minor repairs in 85 more schools. Work has been ordered to start without delay to ensure every tribal school has a permanent facility.

TAMIL NADU'S GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS SURGE: 910 STUDENTS INTO PREMIER INSTITUTIONS

Tamil Nadu's government school students have seen a remarkable leap in higher education admissions this year. A total of 910 students from state-run schools secured seats in prestigious institutions across India during the 2024-25 academic year—a substantial rise from just 75 students in 2021-22, and a marked improvement from 274 in 2022-23 and 628 in 2023-24.

EDUCATION NEWS DIGEST

These students gained admissions across 93 different institutions and 50 academic disciplines, showing the breadth of opportunity opening up. Notably, three students earned full scholarships to study in Malaysia, and others are likely heading to Taiwan.

Among the standout achievers, P Vetri Tamil became the first Tamil Nadu government school student to be admitted to the National Institute of Design (NID), Ahmedabad, for a Bachelor of Design. Another, D Sivaramakrishnan, a hearing-impaired student, cleared CLAT and secured a place at Tamil Nadu National Law University.



DELHI PASSES LANDMARK BILL TO TAME PRIVATE SCHOOL FEE HIKES

The Delhi Assembly has passed the Delhi School Education (Transparency in Fixation and Regulation of Fees) Bill, 2025, aiming to rein in arbitrary fee hikes by private unaided schools across the capital. Schools must now secure prior approval before increasing tuition or other charges. This legislation mandates that schools present a three-year fee plan, employs a three-tier fee

regulation and grievance system (school, district, and state levels), and requires parent representation in fee decisions—complete with veto power. An index-linked formula ensures standardized and fair increases.

Stringent penalties are in place: first offenses could draw fines between ₹1 lakh and ₹5 lakh, with repeat violations up to ₹10 lakh. Schools delay fees refund? Fines double after 20 days, then triple after 40 days. Persistent offenders risk losing school recognition or even inviting government takeover.

Supporters hail this as a long-overdue victory for parents, promising transparency and accountability after decades of unchecked hikes. Chief Minister Rekha Gupta celebrated the move as ending a "52-year wait for parents."

Critics, led by AAP leader Atishi, argue the bill favors private schools—not parents. They cite high thresholds for complaint filing (15% of parents required), removal of civil court access, and weak parental oversight as significant drawbacks. The omission of audit requirements remains a core concern.

In sum, while the bill introduces much needed fee regulation, it has sparked a debate over how effectively it balances protection for parents with bureaucratic oversight.

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND: KERALA'S SOCIAL POLICING TARGETS 'BACKBENCHERS'

Kerala is launching a pioneering initiative under its police-backed social policing programme to address the persistent stigma of the "back-bencher" in classrooms. The scheme aims to holistically support underperforming students—often relegated to the back rows—not by disciplinary measures, but through enhanced engagement and development-focused interventions. In parallel, the state's education department is rethinking traditional row-based seating layouts. General Education Minister V. Sivankutty has announced plans to abolish the notion of "back-benchers," citing the negative impact it can have on students' confidence. A committee of experts will recommend inclusive seating models—such as U-shaped or circular layouts—that promote equal visibility, participation, and psychological well-being for every student.

Together, these dual reforms—structural and social—signal a bold shift toward equity-focused education in Kerala, ensuring that every learner receives the attention and support they deserve.

MP SCHOOL DITCHES 'BACKBENCHERS'—ADOPTS U-SHAPED CLASS SETUP

A bold classroom redesign is underway at Government High School, Dongargaon in Burhanpur district, Madhya Pradesh. The school is the first in the state to trial a U-shaped seating layout, discarding the traditional “backbencher” format. Inspired by Kerala’s inclusive model and the Malayalam film *Sthanarthi Sreekuttan*, the new arrangement places all students face-to-face with the teacher, fostering better visibility and engagement. Since its launch in Class 10, the setup has sparked a wave of confidence and participation—students in Class 9 also requested the same arrangement, prompting extension across grades. Neighboring schools are now watching closely and planning to adopt similar reforms.

Why It Matters:

Equitable Learning: No child gets “lost at the back”—the layout ensures equal attention and participation.

Boost in Confidence: Teachers report a rise in student interaction and curiosity, especially from previously quiet or reserved learners.

Scalable Design: While experimental now, similar programs in Kerala and Tripura show the model’s potential for broader adoption.

Considerations

While the U-shape layout shows promise, some caution is warranted: medical experts in Karnataka have flagged potential risks like neck strain and slower detection of vision issues due to reduced distance viewing—especially relevant for older students. Rotating seating and encouraging head movement are suggested mitigating tactics. In summary, Dongargaon’s experiment signals a cultural and pedagogic shift—from hierarchical classroom designs to more inclusive, interaction-driven spaces. It’s a small but significant step in reimagining how education spaces shape learning dynamics.

PUNJAB REWIRES ITS SCHOOL SYSTEM.

Punjab has staged an extraordinary transformation in its education landscape. Once languishing at 22nd place, the state now ranks No. 1 in the National Achievement Survey (NAS) 2024 — reflecting exceptional performance across Grades 3, 6, and 9. This marks the culmination of years of focused, data-driven reform. A careful blend of policy and innovation underpins this success. The Punjab Education Collective’s interventions — particularly its Punjab Youth Leadership Programme (PYLP), where fellows are embedded in government schools to boost

pedagogy and governance — played a pivotal role. Their efforts helped propel Punjab from 13th place in 2019 to No. 1 by 2020–21.

In addition, infrastructure revitalization and academic investments continue to bear fruit:

Over 1,000 higher secondary schools achieved 100% pass rates, rural schools even outperformed urban ones (96.1% vs. 94%) in the latest board exams.

The ‘Sikhiya Kranti’ initiative delivered further gains — 44 government school students cleared JEE Advanced in 2025, aided by the targeted PACE coaching scheme.

TRUMP PUSHES U.S. COLLEGES TO PROVE THEY DON’T CONSIDER RACE IN ADMISSIONS

President Trump signed an executive action directing U.S. colleges and universities to submit admissions data to the federal government, demonstrating that race is not used as a factor in their selection processes. The move comes in the wake of the Supreme Court’s 2023 ruling striking down affirmative action, though institutions may still allow students to discuss how race has shaped them in personal essays.

Under the new directive, schools must report demographic breakdowns—including race and sex—to the National Center for Education Statistics. Failure to comply could result in penalties related to Title IV funding, which governs federal student aid.

Supporters argue this increased transparency will uphold civil rights and ensure merit-based admissions. Critics, however, contend that requiring such data may have limited effect. Since colleges no longer request race explicitly, any demographic data may be incomplete or unreliable. Additionally, many institutions are shifting to socioeconomic-based admissions practices to maintain diversity post-affirmative action.

INTERNATIONAL CAMPUSES LAND IN INDIA: A NEW FRONTIER FOR GLOBAL EDUCATION

India is emerging as a pivotal hub in the global higher education landscape, with top UK universities now establishing physical campuses within the country. Regulatory reforms and strategic demand shifts are fueling this transformation—here’s a breakdown:

1. Regulatory Green Light & Market Demand
Changes in India’s regulatory framework have paved the way for foreign universities to establish branch campuses. As per NEP 2020 and UGC’s 2023 rules, institutions ranked among the

EDUCATION NEWS DIGEST

world's top 500 can now set up operations in India. The motivation? India's massive youth population and an unmet demand for quality higher education create fertile ground for global institutions.

2. Southampton Makes the First Move

The University of Southampton inaugurated its first offshore campus in Gurgaon in 2025—the first of its kind under UGC regulations. Offering four undergraduate and two postgraduate programmes (e.g., business, computer science, economics), it draws from UK-accredited curriculum and faculty, while charging lower fees and even permitting students to study part of the programme in the UK or Malaysia. The campus already invites global and local students and aims to hire over 75 faculty members.

3. Trend Gaining Momentum in Delhi-NCR

Delhi-NCR is quickly turning into a launchpad for international education in India. Besides Southampton's Gurgaon campus, partnerships are flourishing: the University of Hull has tied up with Delhi Technological University, Delhi University is collaborating with the University of Leeds, and Shiv Nadar University is leading cross-border research initiatives.

Why It Matters

Accessibility: Students can now access globally recognized degrees without facing the financial and immigration hurdles of studying abroad.

Global Prestige: Indian tertiary education aligns more closely with international standards, aiding the nation's ambition to become a global knowledge hub.

Sustainability for UK Institutions: With shrinking overseas enrollments and tight finances at home, foreign campuses offer UK universities a new revenue stream and expansion opportunity. India's opening doors to international branches isn't just a policy shift—it's a strategic leap in shaping the future of higher education in the region.

WHY RELATIONSHIPS MATTER IN TEACHING: A MISSING LINK IN STUDENT SUCCESS"

A blog post from Oxford University's Rees Centre emphasizes that teaching isn't just about instruction—it's about connection. For children who have experienced trauma, learning becomes possible only when they feel safe, seen, and valued by educators who act as trusted adults—or "secondary attachment figures" in their lives. These relationships can transform classrooms into spaces of care and stability.

Even in remote settings, meaningful connections

can be built. One educator recounts meeting online students in person and witnessing the profound impact such encounters can have on trust and engagement. Such bonds remind us that education is as much relational as it is academic.

Broader research supports this insight: positive teacher-student relationships enhance students' affective and behavioral outcomes even more than cognitive gains. A large meta-analysis found that relational teaching correlates moderately ($r \approx 0.31$) with holistic learning improvements across hundreds of thousands of students. When students feel their teachers genuinely care, they are more motivated to participate, take risks, and persist through challenges.

In short, relationships are not an optional extra—they are foundational. For students to truly thrive, especially those facing adversity, schools must prioritize creating environments where every student feels emotionally supported and connected to their teacher.

WHEN THE SCHOOL BELL RINGS, CONNECTION FADES: A QUARTER OF STUDENTS DISENGAGE IN YEAR 7

A study by UK's UCL's Department of Education, led by Professor John Jerrim, reveals that over 25% of students begin to disengage during their first year of secondary school (Year 7)—a transition point that often marks a lasting drop in enjoyment, trust, and sense of belonging.

Key findings include:

- Primary students scored 8.4 out of 10 on the statement "my marks are my responsibility," but this dips to 6.8 in secondary school, indicating a loss of agency.

- The top 25% most engaged secondary students were 10 percentage points less likely to be persistently absent compared to the least engaged peers, highlighting a clear link between engagement and attendance.

- Girls and pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) faced the biggest drops in trust, enjoyment, and safety—girls increasingly reported feeling unsafe or anxious between ages 11 to 14.

This decline during the shift from primary to secondary school isn't just a phase—it's a structural issue that can influence academic outcomes. The findings underscore the importance of early detection, targeted support, and safeguarding student engagement, especially for those most vulnerable during this challenging transition. Schools can spark new passions, build confidence, and give students the belief that their dreams are within reach.

Vinayak Arali

How to write good academic research papers

Vinayak Arali, a research scholar at Yenepoya University, emphasizes the importance of accurate citations in scholarly work and introduces Mendeley as a practical, user-friendly tool to simplify reference management. Arali explains why citations matter, how Mendeley streamlines the process, and offers step-by-step guidance for integrating it into academic writing.



Vinayak Arali

Manually compiling references can consume hours that might otherwise be spent on analysis and writing. Tools like Mendeley offer a smart solution, allowing researchers to collect, organise, and insert citations with ease and accuracy. This article discusses why citations matter and how Mendeley can transform what is often a laborious task into a quick and seamless process.

Completing a research paper is an intellectually rewarding endeavour; however, the process of compiling and formatting citations often presents a significant challenge. Manually creating references can consume

substantial time, detracting from the research and writing process. Reference management tools, such as Mendeley, offer an efficient and accurate solution to this problem. By streamlining citation creation, they enhance the credibility, organisation, and integrity of scholarly work.

It may be a feeling of accomplishment for having finished writing a 5000-word article or a paper,

but after this only comes the most daunting task of writing as many references in an APA or MLA style. It is a task that may take hours, but when the right reference management system is used, it takes only a few minutes. This reference management system simplifies the process of citing or writing references and sharing with collaborators. A recent study revealed that most researchers spend 20% of their time writing the references manually. We should understand that it is a smarter way to use a reference maintenance system.

Why should we cite? The first reason is to give credit to the original authors by acknowl-

edging their work, ideas, research, and words from their work that we have used. This is the basic method to respect intellectual property and to avoid plagiarism. The next reason is to provide evidence for our arguments by citing reliable sources that strengthen our arguments. It shows the work is based on established knowledge and supported by research. The next reason is to enable the readers to verify our work, which, according to me, is a very important reason to provide citations. This provides the roadmap for the readers to trace the source of information we have provided. They can further explore the topic and understand the broader context of the research. To quote an example, if I am writing an article, and I have used in-text citations, when the reader reads my article, he may want to know more about my article, and he can easily track the references that I have used in my work as they would have been cited. The fourth reason is to demonstrate the research depth. A citation shows that we have thoroughly researched the topic, found many perspectives, and our work was based on the foundation of existing knowledge. It is also important to avoid plagiarism. Failure to give citations may lead to doubt and accusations of plagiarism, which is a legal violation in academic and professional settings. We are transparent about the origin of our information through citations.

EFFORTLESS REFERENCE MANAGEMENT

There are many reference management systems available on the market. Mendeley is a very user-friendly software, and it is free and open-source software. We do not have to pay any money for this. We can download it

VOICES IN EDUCATION

from the Google Play Store. We have to analyse how we will read and annotate PDFs, how to cite research while writing, and how to collaborate with other researchers. In Mendeley, there are three aspects: Mendeley reference manager, Mendeley cite, and Mendeley importer. When we start using it, we will understand how easy it is. We can add the references directly, manually, and add PDFs on a desktop so that we can directly import the files into Mendeley. For example, if I write a journal article on the Institutional Repository, I look into Google Scholar for scholarly published articles. I can do a literature review, take the one that I feel will be useful. If there are more authors, I can put the author's last name first and check.

CITATIONS MADE SIMPLE

I can easily download the app from the Google Play Store. When I click on the Mendeley web importer, it will list all the articles shown on Google Scholar. I will find good references on the page. I have to add now to the Mendeley website. So I will be using these articles for my work. I will take about 5 articles and add them to the Mendeley Reference Management System. Once I have added the reference, I can start writing the article. I can use Microsoft Word. I need to add the Mendeley site to MS Word. When I click on references, I can see all the article references. Now, I can start writing the article. When the research question is formulated, I have to do the literature review and then start writing the article. I can start with an introduction. I would have written a paragraph that is not my own; I would have taken it from someone else's work. So, I have to cite the work, so I have to click on the Mendeley site in my collection, which

will show the articles that I have chosen in MS Word.

When I click on MS Word, I will see the articles that I have selected. Since I have taken the content for the paragraph that I completed from one of the references, I have to click on it, insert the citation. It will automatically generate the index citation for the paragraph. Like this, I can go on writing the articles and add citations from the articles I have selected.

So at the end of each paragraph, we can see the in-text citation. I can change the citation style also. I can use the American Psychological Association 7th Edition or MLA style. While using MLA 9th or 7th edition, I can select whichever I want. Medical researchers mostly use IEEE. We have one more reference style called Nature. There are many reference styles available in the market. Most of the journals use APA style. I can use whichever I am familiar with. After writing the article, bibliographies have to be added at the end. We can take information from the articles. I need to put the cursor at the end of the paragraph.

I must write the author's last name, a comma, and then the year. This is called APA style. I can take the information for the index citation from one of the articles, click on this, and it can be added to the in-text citation for the article. Once I have finished all the articles, at the end of the article, at the end we need to write a bibliography.

I can click on insert bibliography, and it will ask for the location to insert. In this way, I would have used all the articles I chose, listed at the end of the article. I can change the citation style also. I can use MLA or IEEE style for this. Every style has its advantages. I would have now finished the article with citations and bibliography.

It may take time to sign in for the Mendeley web importer. I can add references by importing the files. If I have all the articles in one folder, I can directly import all of them into the Mendeley website. I am currently writing an article on IB vs CBSE, a comparative study. I have added more than 15 references to that.

ORGANISE WITH EASE

Mendeley is an open-source software. If we are using JSTOR, we can directly use the web importer for JSTOR and organise references in alphabetical order. We can organize them based on years, also. We can arrange them alphabetically, or by author's name, also. The last name of the author comes first, and when I organise them alphabetically, the article with the author's name starting with A will show on the first of the references, and so on. In this way, we can organise all references in Mendeley. Mendeley integrates only with MS Word right now. We can directly import the references from the web importer into MS Word.

There are many videos available on YouTube on how to download Mendeley, how to create an account in Mendeley. It is easy to download the app from the Play Store. It is user-friendly. There are many more reference management software available, similar to Mendeley, such as Zotero and more tools. I prefer Mendeley because it is very user-friendly. Anybody can use Mendeley as it is free of cost.

Contact:

Vinayak Arali
Assistant Librarian
Stonehill International
School
M: 9164801996
E: vinayakarali@gmail.com

Seema Gangrade

Importance of listening

Seema Gangrade, a seasoned Spoken English Coach, highlights how active and empathetic listening can transform communication, build trust, and foster stronger relationships. Through practical tips and thoughtful reflections, she teaches readers to master this vital skill in both personal and professional spheres.

In a world full of noise, truly listening has become a rare and powerful skill. It's more than just hearing words — it's about understanding feelings, building trust, and connecting deeply with others. Great listeners don't just wait to speak; they create space for voices to be heard and valued. From this article, we learn how, when we master the art of listening, we unlock the heart of effective communication.

The power of listening lies in unlocking the secret of effective communication. What is listening? It is a crucial aspect of communication as it enables understanding, builds trust, and fosters meaningful connections with people. When we communicate, the most important aspect is listening, which helps in understanding the speaker's perspective, emotions, needs, and will trust and respect. There is no misunderstanding between the speaker and communicator. Great communicators are great listeners. We should always try to listen patiently and understand what the communicator says.

Most of the people listen with intent to reply without understanding the concept. They do not wait for the full answer, as there is a presumption or assumption about the communicator. They prejudge, interrupt many times, and become prejudiced. Prejudice refers to the preconceived opinion and judgment. We often think that our opinion is correct and try to impress upon the communicator.

The opinions may be negative sometimes, and so we should try not to be prejudiced during the communication. We should never be biased, either. Bias is a tendency to favour or lean towards a perspective, a person, or a group with opinions. This can be conscious, explicit, or implicit. These two things stand as barriers to effective communication and multitasking.

We also find that people do not focus on what the communicator is saying or their views. They start working on the phone, or engage in their conversation, or engage in other activities. We often confuse listening and hearing. While listening is a passive process of perceiving sound, it is an active process of understanding, analysing, and responding. Stephen Covey says that people do not listen with the intent to understand, but with the intent to reply. Hearing is a basic process of perceiving sound, and listening is an activity involved in paying attention, interrupting, and responding to what is being said. So, we should try to listen and not hear so that we can focus on what we hear.

What good happens when we listen? When we listen consciously, patiently, it builds trust between the communicator and the listening group, shows empathy, and respect. The communicator would like to express his thoughts and opinions, which encourages openness. We also feel valued when somebody is saying something to which we pay attention, em-

pathy, and respect. It reduces our conflicts and misinterpretations often, and it enhances our problem-solving skills to make informed decisions. At the end, we leave with a good and valued decision as we communicate the elements.

For this, we have to pay attention, eliminate distractions, and we have to focus on the speaker. We can use nods and eye contact apart from verbal affirmation. The listener should not say anything but only show interest by making eye contact. By nodding their head, the listener can express the comfort feeling with the communicator. We have to listen to the whole conversation and come to a conclusion on what the speaker says, and before that, we should not assume what the communicator is saying.

There are a few simple ways to improve listening skills. We can pause before responding, listen carefully, and then ask clarifying questions if we have any doubts. We have to reflect and summarize the key points. After the communicator finishes his talk, we can ask. We have to summarise thoroughly so that we can get the key points also, and we need to practise mindfulness to stay present. We should avoid planning the reply by listening. Often, people, when they listen continuously, plan their answers by assuming in advance that the communicator would want to say and prepare their answers. We have to avoid this and improve our listening.

WHY LISTENING MATTERS?

Where does listening make the difference? Listening makes a difference in workplaces. It strengthens teamwork and problem-solving skills. It also helps in enhancing relationships and fosters deeper con-



Seema Gangradew

nections and trust. Listening enhances comprehension and retention and helps in solving problems. It also helps in leadership skills by inspiring and motivating others. Our listening will improve others' inspiration by looking at the patience with which we listen and give our views to motivate others. Listening is a skill that can be mastered with practice. It makes relationships more meaningful. We can listen to podcasts on Spotify to improve our listening skills. In the class, we can ask the students after the class is over, to summarise it either the same day or the next day. If the students have understood what the teachers said, they can do it. Or one student can tell a portion of the lecture by the teacher to another student, which can be passed on to the next student, till it comes back to the first student. This is a listening activity and can be done in pairs. Active listening builds better relationships and understanding.

CONNECTION THROUGH LISTENING

In a fast-paced world, we can focus fully on speakers, without restrictions, be patient, and avoid forming responses when a person is speaking. We should never be judgmental, and we should practise mindfulness. We have to show facial expression or body language and not interrupt the communication. In this way, we can enhance our listening in this fast-paced world.

Listening reduces conflict as we understand the other person's concern, validate their feelings, and find common grounds. It creates an environment of mutual respect and connection. Thus, we can resolve our conflicts. For leadership skills, listening is very important. Good leaders listen to their teams to understand the challenges, get a diverse perspective, and build trust. Listening promotes inclusivity, better decisions, and makes employees satisfied. So any good leader has a quality of listening.

ZOOM IN ON LISTENING

For virtual communication, the good techniques are to minimise multitasking. We should focus on the conversation, and any multitasking in between leads to distraction. Often, people tend to eat something or engage themselves in other topics. They assume that they are listening to the communicator. They also get phone calls

to which they attend and try to listen to the communicator. We should minimize multitasking and focus on the conversation, and use verbal affirmation to show engagement and understanding. The communicator would also feel comfortable and valued. At the end, we can summarise what the speaker said. In this way, we can use good techniques in listening during virtual communication.

EMPATHY BUILDS CONNECTION

Empathetic listening is very critical in communication. It helps to understand the emotions and intent behind the word. When we are empathetic and show our trust towards the communicator, it also builds emotions and the intentions behind the use of words, and it fosters a deeper connection between the communicator and listener. It reduces judgment and promotes trust and mutual respect. For schools, cultivating listening is nothing less than reform. A school culture where teachers truly listen to students, and students practise listening to peers, creates an environment of respect, empathy, and collaboration. If every classroom encouraged active and empathetic listening, not only would academic learning improve, but children would also grow into compassionate, thoughtful citizens. Schools must therefore make listening a core value—woven into teaching practices, assemblies, and everyday interactions—so that education shapes not just sharp minds, but also caring hearts.

Contact:

Seema Gangradew
English Speaking Coach
M: 9753491686
E: gangrade9@gmail.com

Dhanya C

Feeling good in school

Dhanya C is a teacher who works with young students. She talks about why it's important for children to feel happy and safe in school. She shares easy tips for teachers, parents, and counsellors to help kids be kind, stay strong, and balance schoolwork with having a good life.



Dhanya C

Emotional well-being is the heart of a fulfilling life, and it shapes how we think, act, and connect with others. This article discusses how, in today's fast-paced, high-pressure world, caring for our mental and emotional health is no longer optional; it's essential. When we nurture our emotions, we build resilience, create stronger relationships, and unlock the confidence to face life's challenges with grace. UNSDG has ranked personal well-being as number three, which goes to show the importance of being given to our emotional well-being, how to tackle the problems, etc. The person

can understand what he is going through, how to manage it, and express it properly. We should teach the community the methods to understand what we are going through, how to manage it, and how to present it more healthily. We should be resilient in balancing the emotions. When we are facing the challenges of our life, it is the time we have to come back properly. A survey shows that over 70% of students are facing emotional issues, anxiety, and there are many reasons for it. More than 50% educators also feel burnt-out. We should not give importance to academic excellence alone, but also to our emotional well-being. Once students understand this, they will focus better on their academics and develop their social skills and personal life holistically. We should also know how to maintain the work-life balance. They should know how to tackle emotions properly. Mainly, the assessments and back-to-back homework are the challenges faced by the students. The older generation managed it somehow, but the current generation feels the pressure of the expectations of educators and parents. Each child is unique, and when we set an expectation in the class, it is

stressful for them. We should know if they understand what we are teaching.

The next pressure is bullying, not just from peers or friends, but also when somebody judges the other person. The teachers should not be judgmental about their students when they express their emotions to them. There are emotional literacy gaps, which are nothing but situations where the student is not able to speak up about what he is going through. This is currently seen even in grade 1 students. If we do not address these issues, they will break out differently or withdraw themselves completely from everything. Educators also feel this sense of burnout because of long working hours. Post-COVID, the online classes have created an expectation on both sides. They are unable to meet the benchmark set for themselves, which leads to procrastination. The emotional demands at home we do not know how to handle. Work-life balance is very important, but many of us do not know how, where and when to balance. Most of the organisations or schools do not have an SEN educator or a counsellor, and so the students do not know where to go and speak up. Often, students need somebody to listen to them and not advise them. So, these are some of the challenges faced by the educators.

NURTURING MINDS, BUILDING RESILIENCE

To build a holistic development of emotional well-being, we have to focus on emotions, social well-being, be open with colleagues and be friendly with them. We need to be physically fit also by doing exercises, getting proper sleep, and eating a proper diet. Everything is a lesson and experience. So, we need

VOICES IN EDUCATION

to be physically, emotionally, socially, and mentally healthy to achieve holistic development. To achieve emotional literacy, we can spend a few minutes on an activity in the classroom, such as circle time. By following this, the students build social and emotional learning into their curriculum or by doing activities like gratitude journaling. We can thank someone for the good food, good dress, a proper place to live in, and we can introduce meditation in the class and breathing exercises. The children can focus on breathing rather than thinking about assignments or tests. There should be peer support in the classroom to support each other.

SAFE SPACE FOR CHILDREN

We should also provide a safe space for the children. We should never be judgmental of a student when he tries to share his problems or emotions with us. Activities such as gratitude journaling, storytelling, role-playing with moral values, and being empathetic towards others can be taught. Kindness chain is a small activity where in chits we can write some good points which will make a change. The students can thank somebody, praise a teacher or someone, and it is basically an appreciation note. The educators should have professional development too. We can have a workshop on how to practise a self-care routine and prioritise health. We need to take a break now and then and pursue our hobbies. We need to have SEN educators or counsellors who can visit the classrooms often to vent out our emotions. Journaling on what they did on that day, how they felt about it, etc, can be written there. There should be constant monitoring of the child and the educator to

solve their problems. The sensitive needs should be met and not ignored. When a student or an educator is going through tough times, they can practise breathing exercises. Apps like Mood Meter will tell us a detailed report about our mental health. So, emotional well-being should be given priority, unlike the olden days when we did not know about this. We can discuss with other teachers about students' behaviour and emotions. We have to pay proper attention to our emotions. When we have counsellors in the school, they will assess the children, use a questionnaire for this purpose, which will help them understand what the child is undergoing. This will help them to measure the children's emotional well-being, and also for the educators. Yes, feedback matters a lot. We have to discuss this with the parents also. Sometimes, the children will not open up to their parents but will talk to the teacher. So, as a learning community, it is the duty of the counsellor and the school to share what the assessment tells about the child to the parents for them to understand. In olden days, there were no assessments given to students, nor were there any counsellors. Counsellors were available outside the school. But every school or most of them now have SEN educators in the school as full-time employees to address the issues of students and educators.

We have to have an orientation session with the parents. We need to talk to them because the whole community or world population does not give importance to emotional well-being. We know we are stressed, but we will not give importance to it. So, we need to talk to the parent community, give them a strategy on how to handle kids at home. Parents will come up

with different points about their children's behaviour. So, having an open forum will surely help the parent community to handle the children at home when it comes to emotional needs. The first challenge is parents questioning the school about whether their child is mentally and emotionally ok. It is still considered a stigma when we talk about emotions. So, the parents may not allow their children to attend the assessment. For this, an open forum in the school where we talk to parents will help. We should be open to discussing this with them.

REFORMING SCHOOLS

We, educators, should be open-minded in accepting the emotional turmoil and the need to address the issues. If schools are to prepare children for life, not just for exams, then emotional well-being must be placed at the heart of education reform. Every timetable should carry space for reflection, peer support, and self-care activities alongside academics. Professional development for teachers must go beyond subject mastery to include training in empathy, active listening, and emotional literacy. By making counsellors, safe spaces, and well-being practices a non-negotiable part of school culture, we can ensure that every child grows up not only knowledgeable, but resilient, compassionate, and confident. Reforming schools with emotional well-being at the centre will shape a generation ready to thrive in both learning and life. This shift will also reduce teacher burnout.

Contact:
Dhanya C
Junior School Coordinator
M:9994354418
E:dhanyamca4@gmail.com

Poornima Sasidharan

Becoming strong by speaking kindly

Poornima Sasidharan is a trainer who teaches people important life skills, tells stories to help others, and has many years of experience as an English professor. She talks about why it's important for children to be strong and bounce back from problems, and how parents and teachers can help. Using real-life stories and simple tips, she shows how challenges can be turned into chances to grow.



Poornima Sasidharan

If we are to define resilience, it is the ability to quickly bounce back when the hardships of life knock us down, which also defines our resilience. It can be taught by teachers and parents, and it is a very important quality for everyone to survive in this world. When children are in school, they not only learn subjects but also life skills to manage the outside world. They absorb the lessons and observe how we speak to them. The way we interact with them makes a huge impact on their mind. In the olden days, any misdeed was dealt with

they are reprimanded.

Role of parents and teachers in building resilience in children
Students usually feel that their parents and teachers are very much above them, as they are very experienced, trained, and qualified. They have a higher responsibility towards the students. I remember an anecdote from E. R. Braithwaite's autobiography where he discusses a student's behaviour. When the students were attending a lecture by Mark Thackeray, a student barged into the class without asking for any excuse or apology. When I was reading

corporal punishment by the elders, irrespective of where we were at that moment. But it is debatable if this brought any change in them. When they are afraid of something, they will never learn. When we adults are reprimanded in our workplace, we start feeling disconnected from the people who do it to us. We start feeling guilty and develop fear. We feel low in our morale and consider the workplace toxic. In the same way, children also feel low when

this portion, I felt the teacher would have been annoyed and blasted her. But the scenario was very positive, and it had a great impact on my life too. Mark Thackeray paused for a second, and this pause is very important in our lives. While all the other students were waiting, holding their breath to witness Mr. Thackeray blast the student, Mr. Thackeray had other ways of handling this. He said there were two ways to enter the class. One way was to behave in a ladylike manner, and the second one was to behave like a brat. The other students were eagerly watching what the girl would do. She went out of the class, and while the others thought she would walk off without attending the class, to their surprise, she knocked on the door, got the teacher's permission, and entered the class. As teachers, we always have the responsibility to think before acting.

LESSONS BEFORE CORRECTION

We can learn four important lessons. We have to connect with the children before we correct them. If we speak harshly to them, they will get afraid and immediately disconnect from the teachers or parents. They will stop learning from then on as they will not understand anything, and they may want to go away from that place. Secondly, we should never label children as stubborn or poor in studies. We have to give space to them, space to understand, and they should never get intimidated. Thirdly, we have to make them understand that they will learn from their mistakes. And fourthly, each situation should be made a part of learning. When they commit mistakes, they have to consider each sit-

VOICES IN EDUCATION

uation as a learning platform. In this way, their mentality will change. The power of kindness that the teacher shows her students will achieve this. Students in a classroom are from various backgrounds, but they are studying the same syllabus under the same teacher. It is the approach of the teacher that will help them learn from situations. Another scientist used Petri dishes filled with water. To the first one, he spoke very lovingly, the second one in abusive words, and another one with gratitude. He froze them, and after some time, he found the first one had developed snowflakes. The remaining ones did not develop any shape. He then used rice from the same batch, poured water, and repeated the same treatment on each dish. After some time, he found that the first one smelled good and fermented well, the second one got moldy, and the last dish rotted. This goes to show that when the students need help from us, we have to be kind to them. We, as teachers, have our limitations, and we cannot give individual attention to the students.

COMPARISON OF STUDENTS NOT ADVISED

We should never compare the students with others, but we have to give positive directions. They will get clarity. They can express what they are going through, which will make our job easy. This self-reflection is very important for struggling students. They should learn to correct their mistakes and move forward. Making mistakes is not their identity, and they should remove this from their mind. They need support and encouraging words to find the correct direction. They will have the confidence that they can approach us for any of their problems. They will learn to find solutions to any problems

and develop positive thinking. Not all children are blessed to have unconditional support, and such children need someone to support them. This can be understood from the life of Thomas Alva Edison, whose mother was there to give him such support when the school authorities informed his mother that he would not fit in the school. She hid the letter from him, encouraged him to focus, and in the end, we are aware that the world has one of the best scientists. They should never ponder quitting, but we have to give them the affirmation that they are capable. They will develop confidence and ward off negative dialogues from their mind. Dr. A P J Kalam has said that for a good teacher, there is no backbencher or frontbencher, all are students only.

ENCOURAGING STUDENTS TO TAKE RISKS

For example, if a student fails in maths and is scared of it, we have to make him understand that it can be learned. We can teach it in a simplified way so that he understands it better by going down to his level. When the student knows the teacher will not punish him but will give him space to learn, his mentality will change, his mental block will go, and he will learn. We can give sums in various ways until he understands. We can ask him to refer to other books and learn, and appear for competitive exams. Children also learn through stories, from which they can relate to many things. They are told stories from a very young age. The child will retain in their memory if they find stories associated with values, which has been a proven fact. Imagery will help them associate images with the necessary facts that they may need later.

TEACHERS TO PRIORITIZE THEIR WELL-BEING

We should know that we will be challenged by students, as the children will push the boundaries. We should understand why the child is doing something and approach them in a way they can understand. When the child feels defeated because his marks are low, the teacher has to ensure the topic is taught in a way the student can grasp. The student should not feel that he is poor in his studies. Next comes the students' inability to sit in one place for a long time listening to the teacher. So filtering is important here. If schools are to truly build resilience in children, reform must go beyond academics to embrace kindness, patience, and life skills as part of everyday learning. Classrooms should be places where mistakes are seen as opportunities, not punishments, and where teachers are trained to respond with empathy rather than reprimand. Schools must integrate resilience-building activities—storytelling, reflective exercises, peer support, and creative problem-solving—into their routines. By reshaping school culture in this way, we can nurture confident, adaptable young people who see challenges not as setbacks but as stepping stones to growth. Such a reform will also create a more supportive environment for teachers, reducing stress and encouraging creativity in their teaching methods. In the long run, schools that prioritise resilience will produce not only better learners but stronger human beings.

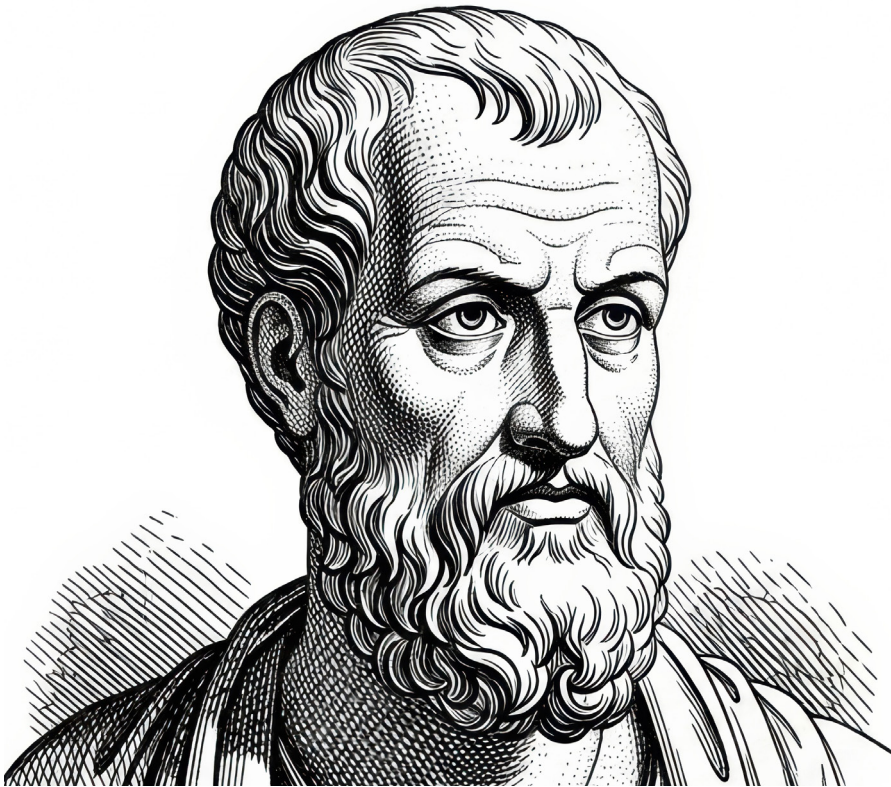
Contact:

Poornima Sasidharan

Soft Skills Trainer

M:8807941509.

E:poornima.sasidharan82@gmail.com



What are the aims of education?

Every teacher should understand the philosophy of education to see the bigger picture behind classroom practice. Adapted from Encyclopaedia Britannica, this article explains how educational aims, values, and methods are rooted in deep philosophical ideas—and why these insights are essential for shaping meaningful teaching and learning.

There are a number of basic philosophical problems and tasks that have occupied philosophers of education throughout the history of the subject.

THE AIMS OF EDUCATION

The most basic problem of philosophy of education is that concerning aims: what are the proper aims and guiding ideals of education? What are the proper criteria for evaluating educational efforts, institutions, practices, and products? Many aims have been proposed by philosophers and other educational theorists; they in-

clude the cultivation of curiosity and the disposition to inquire; the fostering of creativity; the production of knowledge and of knowledgeable students; the enhancement of understanding; the promotion of moral thinking, feeling, and action; the enlargement of the imagination; the fostering of growth, development, and self-realization; the fulfillment of potential; the cultivation of “liberally educated” persons; the overcoming of provincialism and close-mindedness; the development of sound judgment; the cultivation of docility and obedience to authority; the fostering of autonomy; the maximization of

freedom, happiness, or self-esteem; the development of care, concern, and related attitudes and dispositions; the fostering of feelings of community, social solidarity, citizenship, and civic-mindedness; the production of good citizens; the “civilizing” of students; the protection of students from the deleterious effects of civilization; the development of piety, religious faith, and spiritual fulfillment; the fostering of ideological purity; the cultivation of political awareness and action; the integration or balancing of the needs and interests of the individual student and the larger society; and the fostering of skills and dispositions constitutive of rationality or critical thinking.

All such proposed aims require careful articulation and defense, and all have been subjected to sustained criticism. Both contemporary and historical philosophers of education have devoted themselves, at least in part, to defending a particular conception of the aims of education or to criticizing the conceptions of others. The great range of aims that have been proposed makes vivid the philosopher of education’s need to appeal to other areas of philosophy, to other disciplines (e.g., psychology, anthropology, sociology, and the physical sciences), and to educational practice itself. Given that consideration of education’s proper aims is of fundamental importance for the intelligent guidance of educational activities, it is unfortunate that contemporary discussions of educational policy rarely address the matter.

CLARIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL CONCEPTS

A perennial conception of the nature of philosophy is that it is chiefly concerned with the clarification of concepts, such

IDEAS & REFLECTIONS

as knowledge, truth, justice, beauty, mind, meaning, and existence. One of the tasks of the philosophy of education, accordingly, has been the elucidation of key educational concepts, including the concept of education itself, as well as related concepts such as teaching, learning, schooling, child rearing, and indoctrination. Although this clarificatory task has sometimes been pursued overzealously—especially during the period of so-called ordinary language analysis in the 1960s and '70s, when much work in the field seemed to lose sight of the basic normative issues to which these concepts were relevant—it remains the case that work in the philosophy of education, as in other areas of philosophy, must rely at least in part on conceptual clarification. Such analysis seeks not necessarily, or only, to identify the particular meanings of charged or contested concepts but also to identify alternative meanings, render ambiguities explicit, reveal hidden metaphysical, normative, or cultural assumptions, illuminate the consequences of alternative interpretations, explore the semantic connections between related concepts, and elucidate the inferential relationships obtaining among the philosophical claims and theses in which they are embedded.

RIGHTS, POWER, AND AUTHORITY

There are several issues that fall under this heading. What justifies the state in compelling children to attend school—in what does its authority to mandate attendance lie? What is the nature and justification of the authority that teachers exercise over their students? Is the freedom of students rightly curtailed by the state? Is the public school system rightly entitled

to the power it exercises in establishing curricula that parents might find objectionable—e.g., science curricula that mandate the teaching of human evolution but not creationism or intelligent design and literature curricula that mandate the teaching of novels dealing with sexual themes? Should parents or their children have the right to opt out of material they think is inappropriate? Should schools encourage students to be reflective and critical generally—as urged by the American philosophers Israel Scheffler and Amy Gutmann, following Socrates and the tradition he established—or should they refrain from encouraging students to



subject their own ways of life to critical scrutiny, as the American political scientist William Galston has recommended?

These questions are primarily matters of ethics and political philosophy, but they also require attention to metaphysics (e.g., how are “groups” to be individuated and understood?), philosophy of science (e.g., is “intelligent design” a genuinely scientific theory?), psychology (e.g., do IQ tests discriminate against members of certain minority groups?), and other areas of philosophy, social science, and law.

CRITICAL THINKING

Many educators and educational scholars have championed the educational aim of critical thinking. It is not obvious what critical thinking is, and philosophers of education accordingly have developed accounts of critical thinking that attempt to state what it is and why it is valuable—i.e., why educational systems should aim to cultivate it in students. These accounts generally (though not universally) agree that critical thinkers share at least the following two characteristics: (1) they are able to reason well—i.e., to construct and evaluate various reasons that have been or can be offered for or against candidate beliefs, judgments, and actions; and (2) they are disposed or inclined to be guided by reasons so evaluated—i.e., actually to believe, judge, and act in accordance with the results of such reasoned evaluations. Beyond this level of agreement lie a range of contentious issues.

One cluster of issues is epistemological in nature. What is it to reason well? What makes a reason, in this sense, good or bad? More generally, what epistemological assumptions underlie (or should underlie) the notion of critical thinking? Does critical thinking presuppose conceptions of truth, knowledge, or justification that are objective and “absolute,” or is it compatible with more “relativistic” accounts emphasizing culture, race, class, gender, or conceptual scheme?

These questions have given rise to other, more specific and hotly contested issues. Is critical thinking relevantly “neutral” with respect to the groups who use it, or is it in fact politically biased, unduly favouring a type of thinking once valued by white European males—the philosophers of the Enlight-

enment and later eras—while undervaluing or demeaning types of thinking sometimes associated with other groups, such as women, nonwhites, and non-Westerners—i.e., thinking that is collaborative rather than individual, cooperative rather than confrontational, intuitive or emotional rather than linear and impersonal? Do standard accounts of critical thinking in these ways favour and help to perpetuate the beliefs, values, and practices of dominant groups in society and devalue those of marginalized or oppressed groups? Is reason itself, as some feminist and postmodern philosophers have claimed, a form of hegemony?

INDOCTRINATION

A much-debated question is whether and how education differs from indoctrination. Many theorists have assumed that the two are distinct and that indoctrination is undesirable, but others have argued that there is no difference in principle and that indoctrination is not intrinsically bad. Theories of indoctrination generally define it in terms of aim, method, or doctrine. Thus, indoctrination is either: (1) any form of teaching aimed at getting students to adopt beliefs independent of the evidential support those beliefs may have (or lack); (2) any form of teaching based on methods that instill beliefs in students in such a way that they are unwilling or unable to question or evaluate those beliefs independently; or (3) any form of teaching that causes students to embrace a specific set of beliefs—e.g., a certain political ideology or a religious doctrine—without regard for its evidential status. These ways of characterizing indoctrination emphasize its alleged contrast with critical thinking: the crit-

ical thinker (according to standard accounts) strives to base his beliefs, judgments, and actions on the competent assessment of relevant reasons and evidence, which is something the victim of indoctrination tends not to do. But this apparent contrast depends upon the alleged avoidability of indoctrination, which itself is a philosophically contested issue.

THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

A number of interrelated problems and issues fall under this heading. What is the place of schools in a just or democratic society? Should they serve the needs of society by preparing students to fill specific social needs or roles, or should they rather strive to maximize the potential—or serve the interests—of each student? When these goals conflict, as they appear inevitably to do, which set of interests—those of society or those of individuals—should take precedence? Should educational institutions strive to treat all students equally? If so, should they seek equality of opportunity or equality of outcome? Should individual autonomy be valued more highly than the character of society? More generally, should educational practice favour a more-liberal view of the relation between the individual and society, according to which the indepen-

dence of the individual is of fundamental importance, or a more-communitarian view that emphasizes the individual's far-reaching dependence on the society in which she lives? These questions are basically moral and political in nature, though they have epistemological analogues, as noted above with respect to critical thinking. kind)? **Conclusion**

All educational activities, from classroom practice to curriculum decisions to the setting of policies at the school, district, state, and federal levels, inevitably rest upon philosophical assumptions, claims, and positions. Consequently, thoughtful and defensible educational practice depends upon philosophical awareness and understanding. To that extent, the philosophy of education is essential to the proper guidance of educational practice. Knowledge of philosophy of education would benefit not only teachers, administrators, and policy makers at all levels but also students, parents, and citizens generally. Societies that value education and desire that it be conducted in a thoughtful and informed way ignore the philosophy of education at their peril. Its relevance, reach, and potential impact make it perhaps the most fundamental and wide-ranging area of applied philosophy.

By Harvey Siegel

Citation:

This article is adapted from "Philosophy of Education," Encyclopaedia Britannica, published on 31 May 2025 by Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. (Accessed August 09, 2025).

For those who enjoyed this reading, we encourage you to explore the full article at Encyclopaedia Britannica <https://www.britannica.com/topic/philosophy-of-education>

Dr. Sharanabasappa Appa (1933–2025)

A Public School with an Indian Philosophy



With deep regret and much sadness, we record the passing of Dr. Sharanabasappa Appa, the eighth Peetadhipathi of the Sharanabasaveshwar Samsthan, Kalaburagi, who left us on August 14, 2025, at the age of 91. He is survived by his wife, Smt. Dakshayini, seven daughters, and a son. His life was an extraordinary blend of spiritual leadership, educational innovation, and distinct social service. We in this magazine had a special bond with Appa that goes back more than two decades. Around the year 2002, we published an article titled “A Public School with an Indian Philosophy”, describing the unique vision behind the institutions he founded. That phrase caught Appa’s attention. He promptly extended a warm invitation to us to visit Gulbarga. It was typical of him to notice even

small efforts and encourage them wholeheartedly—a quality that endeared him to all who came into contact with him. It was a memorable journey. We were received with rare hospitality. Appa personally guided us through the Sharanabasaveshwar Residential Public School and other institutions, and asked us to speak to the students and teachers. From that moment, a relationship of mutual respect and

affection blossomed. Ever since, whenever our magazine reached out to his office for support, the response was unfailingly generous. He remained not only an admirer of our work but also a patron, encouraging us in ways that few leaders of his stature ever did.

Born in 1933, Appa pursued his postgraduate studies at Karnataka University, Dharwad, and went on to become a syndicate member there. He played a crucial role in persuading the government to start a postgraduate centre at Kalaburagi and later chaired the state-appointed committee to identify land and facilities for a new university in the region.

After ascending as the eighth Peetadhipathi in 1983, Appa took upon himself the mission of modernising and expanding the educational institutions of

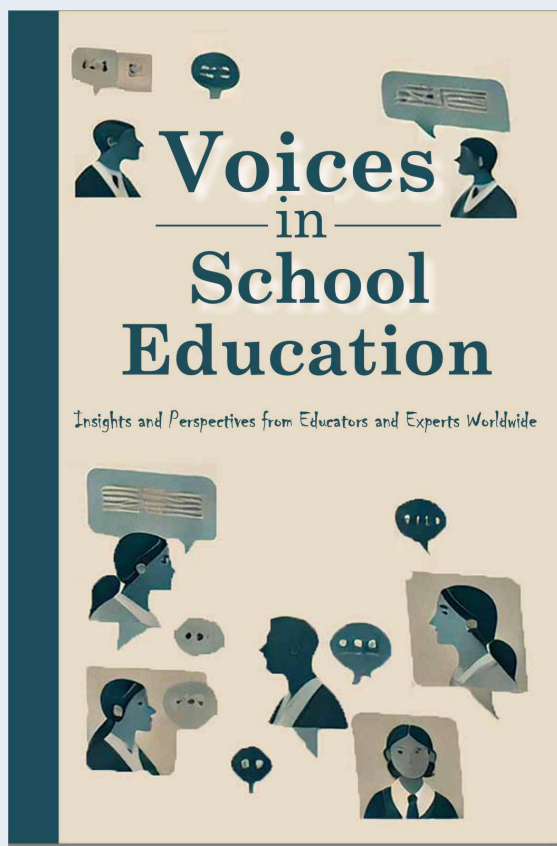
the Samsthan. He firmly believed that education must shape the whole personality of the learner, blending modern knowledge with the moral and spiritual wisdom of Basavanna’s vachanas. Under his leadership, the institutions grew into centres of discipline, quality, and research.

One of his most pioneering contributions was establishing the first specialized engineering college for women in North Karnataka, a bold move at a time when women’s higher education still faced many barriers. He often pointed with pride that in his institutions, women teachers outnumbered men—a reflection of his progressive outlook. In this, he left behind not only institutions but a legacy of empowerment for generations of young women. Many of his students went on to become leaders in their own fields, carrying forward his ideals in society at large.

Appa’s passing has left a great void, not just in Kalaburagi but across Karnataka. Thousands of devotees, students, alumni, and admirers thronged the Sharanabasaveshwar shrine complex to pay their last respects. His mortal remains were laid to rest with full state honours, in the presence of family and dignitaries including Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar and other leaders.

For us, however, the memory of Dr. Sharanabasappa Appa is more personal. We will remember him as a man who combined rare vision with rare humility, who embraced modernity without letting go of tradition, and who encouraged this magazine. A rare personality indeed. May his soul rest in eternal peace..

V. Isvarmurti
Founder, School – Unique
Journal of Education



Get a copy for your school library
Download sample copy
Order Online

www.SchoolReformer.com/book

Download sample pages



Voices in School Education

A Must-Have Book for School Libraries

What do teachers really think about our education system?

Voices in School Education brings together the reflections of nearly 100 school teachers from across India, offering a rare and authentic glimpse into the world of classrooms, challenges, and change.

Through candid interviews, this collection reveals:

The real struggles and triumphs of teachers.

How educators are adapting to new technologies.

Insights on balancing exams with creativity and critical thinking.

The urgent need for education reform in India.

More than a book, this is a platform for teachers' voices—a celebration of their contributions and a call to action for rethinking how we educate the next generation.

Essential reading for educators, school leaders, policymakers, and anyone passionate about the future of learning.

Ideal for school and college libraries as a reference on Indian education.

"A must-read for anyone invested in the future of India's education system."



BRING GLOBAL EXPERTISE TO YOUR SCHOOL

School Reformer connects you with experienced educators – including school leaders and teachers from India and the UK – available as part-time or full-time consultants.

They can help you:

Upgrade teaching standards

Redesign curriculum and assessments

Strengthen leadership and management

Improve learning outcomes

With international best practices tailored to your needs, your school can take the next big step in quality education.

Register at www.SchoolReformer.com – part of School Reformer's School Improvement Services.

Partner with experts who can transform your school.

