

10th Edition
September 2025



CHALK OUT

Unwritten Curriculum

SCHOOL



What's new?
10th Edition Celebration Segment
Alumni Section

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NOTE TO READERS

It is with immense pleasure that we present to you the 10th edition of Azim Premji University's very own education magazine- Chalk Out.

This edition comes with anecdotes, reflections and stories of how schools and the way education is executed shapes us and the lessons we learn without being 'taught'.

In education, we call this the 'Hidden Curriculum'- the unwritten, unofficial, and often unintended lessons, values, and perspectives that students learn in school. While the "formal" curriculum consists of the courses, lessons, and learning activities students participate in, as well as the knowledge and skills educators intentionally teach to students, the hidden curriculum consists of the unspoken or implicit academic, social, and cultural messages that are communicated to students while they are in school. (The Glossary of Education Reform - Read it [here](#)).

It can be the school culture, the ideologies followed, how teachers handle the classroom, etc., which sometimes look objective and neutral, but are deeply rooted in and reflective of social norms. Many times they look rather random, but are a result of unnoticed biases. They stem from, and hence reproduces, norms, values and expectations. We would recommend reading the foreword of the magazine which introduces the concept.

We extended this concept of learning 'unwritten' lessons in schools and invited stories about how education has produced social change by explicit or implicit teaching.

For the very first time, we are delighted to receive contributions from alumni and we look forward to making this a permanent section in the magazine. Another interesting fact about the magazine is our colour coding-

Current
students and
faculty
contributions
- RED

Dear Diary-
PINK

Alumni
Contribution-
ORANGE

From the
Frontline-
YELLOW

10th Edition
Celebration
Segment-
BLUE

Teacher
Feature-
TEAL

As you read this edition with the idea of hidden curriculum in mind, we would like you to stop at the 'Questions to Mark' page at the end and reflect on the prompts given. After all, as we discovered in our last edition- we are nothing but a patchwork of our interactions and experiences; and this edition explores the role of education in it.

PS- Don't forget to check out of 10th Edition Celebration segment where we revisit the old curators and editors of our dear magazine and read their perspectives!

With love,
The Chalk-Out Team

Foreword

I was in 6th or 7th grade when our class teacher walked in and asked all the girls to line up and move to the auditorium, and the boys to just stay in the class. Without any clue what was following, we were happy to know that there would be no class for us that afternoon. We had a session on menstruation, what it is, how to deal with it, etc., as we were approaching that age, but did we just learn about periods that day? No, we learnt that this is something which is not supposed to be discussed with boys. We learnt that pads should not be carried casually in public. They never said it out loud, but this was a lesson taught to us behind the bushes. This one session, which was supposed to make us aware of this process which every girl goes through, taught us to feel a small flicker of shame for something entirely natural.

We were taught to hide pads up our sleeves. To speak in code with our friends. And the boys? They learned just as much from outside. That this was something not for them to know, and therefore, something to mock, fear, or ignore. These are the lessons that don't appear in the syllabus. No one tests you on them, but somehow, everyone passes. Because schools teach more than math and grammar.

We are taught how to speak, who gets to lead, and what must remain unsaid. In every school, along with the lessons taught in books, there's another kind of learning happening, silent, constant, and powerful. These unspoken lessons often stay with us longer than anything on an exam. **Educators call this the hidden curriculum.** A girl learns not to wear short skirts and not to talk loudly. While boys are taught to handle people, not to cry (girls cry, not boys). Without any words or class, we know that girls and boys are not supposed to be getting along and sitting together. This is not the age to do this. And yet not all these silent lessons are harmful. In school we learn to respect teachers and seniors (elders) and be nice to juniors. A child who sees a teacher greet the school gardener with respect learns that dignity isn't tied to profession.

When we work in groups, we learn cooperation and divide work equally because we all are equal. It also teaches us patience and our sense of responsibility; these things are not listed in the curriculum but are very much inculcated in our regular classes. A school that encourages listening during circle time might quietly teach empathy in a way no moral science chapter ever could. The hidden curriculum shapes us in ways we're often unaware of, sometimes by reinforcing stereotypes, sometimes by teaching us important life ethics. We often speak of education as a tool for transformation. But perhaps the most powerful changes come not from what is explicitly taught, but from what is modeled, implied, repeated and rarely named. As we imagine a more just and equal future, we must pay attention not only to what we teach, but to what is learnt in between the lines. Because sometimes, the most lasting lessons are the ones no one remembers teaching.



Manya Thakur
B.Sc. B.Ed.
Mathematics, 2023

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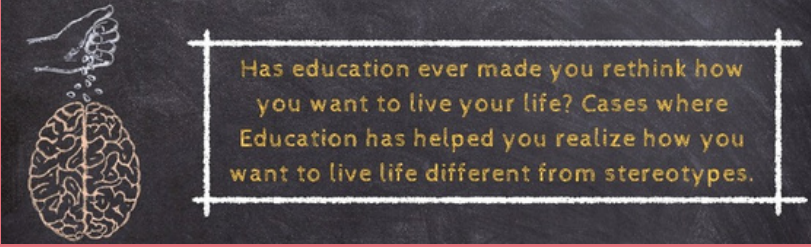
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c O N f U S I O N H i
c o n f u s i o n
s O l u t i o n k u c H P A t a h A i ,
n a h I .

“Has education ever made you rethink how you want to live your life?”

That’s the first prompt in the email we sent for contributions.



A n d m y h o n e s t
a n s w e r ?

Education has constantly made me rethink how I want to live my life.

Each subject fascinated me and in each I saw wonders. Biology pulled me toward **NEET** - I even took a drop year for it - but I did not get through. History and civics made me try **CLAT**; I studied for it alongside 12th and scored decently ... just not enough to enter the top government law schools. Economics, with its elegant graphs of supply and demand, and the randomness of statistics, made me apply for a **triple major at Christ University**. I got in, but now I think it is probably a blessing I did not go - it is apparently *very* hectic.

Modern physics in 12th stirred something deeper, and the way math seemed to dance with physics pushed me to apply to **Azim Premji University**. My first preference? **BSc BEd in Physics**. Second? **Maths**. “Why BEd?” you might ask. Because somewhere along this **rollercoaster of confusion**, I met incredible teachers who turned even the most ordinary subjects into something alive. And that made things worse - in the best way. Now everything seemed worth pursuing.

I also applied for **JEE, NHCMCT JEE (yes, hotel management)**. And about **six other colleges**. I wasn’t just confused - I was doing confusion professionally.

And it did not end there.

From a course called **School and Society** in my BEd Programme...

School and Society – lit the match.

→ Sociology dreams bloomed.

A metaphysics course called **Understanding Reality** made me realize how little I understand reality.....

Every physics course – from **Mechanics to Quantum Mechanics** – whispered...



Understanding Reality shattered my sense of it.

I realized I don't. ...which means, obviously, I must.



And yet, my **BEd courses** kept calling me home to teaching...

Teaching tugged me back.

The BEd whispered too.

"You love this. You always did."

So now I ask - which thread do I follow?

Do I chase the truth?
(Physics, forever unfolding...)

Or is the choice itself the lesson?
The act of not choosing... already a kind of path

Or do I teach the youth?
(The classroom. The spark.)

And what if I'm just circling the question like it's some black hole?
hoping gravity will decide for me..

WHERE **THOUGHT** **SPIRALS,**
PURPOSE **SPLINTERS** - **MAYBE**
THAT'S **WHERE** **I** **BEGIN.**

Choices. So many choices. Too many.

The burden of choices - a privilege, or a curse?



Everything seems worthy of a life's devotion.

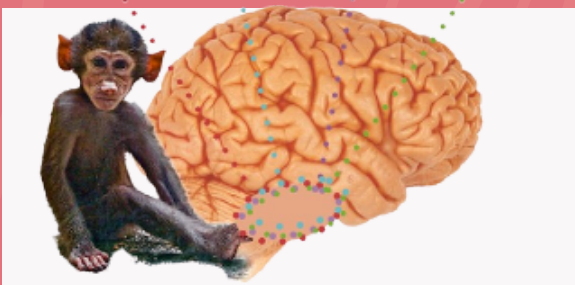
But what even is a life?

How do I do everything in the limited time I have?

What is time?

Do I pick one, or none?

Why do I have to do anything at all?



“Do what makes you happy,” they say.

But everything makes me happy.

What is happiness?

But then, if you've seen 3 Idiots, you know what comes next after “Confusion hi confusion hai...”

It's “All is well.”

Aal Izz Well

Dil jo tera baath-baath pe ghabaraae
 Dil pe rakh ke haath use too phuslaa le
 Dil idiot hai, pyaar se usko samajh le
 Honth ghumaa, seetee baja, seetee baja ke bol
 Bhaiya all is well
 Are, bhaiya all is well
 Are chachu all is well
 Are, bhaiya all is well

Aal Izz Well
 Swanand Kirkire, Sonu Nigam, Shaan

Credits Show all
 Swanand Kirkire
 Main Artist, Author Follow

Writer and Designer



जो किताबों में नहीं बच्चों के इल्म में बहता है
उन सीख-ओ-तालीम को Hidden
Curriculum कहा जाता है

इस गुलशन-ए-तालीम में है हर किसी के
अपने-अपने फूल
अपने महक-ए-गुल पर दूसरों के गुलों को न
कुचलो

भले ही तूफान-ओ-शब के साए में घिरा हो
सारा जहां
मगर हम बच्चों को चराग-ए-साहिल देना नहीं
भूलते

चश्म-ए-नफ़रत को हुस्न-ए-मोहब्बत में
तब्दील करना
यही है अच्छी तालीम की मदरसा-ए-इल्म में
पहचान

रफ़ता-रफ़ता सिखाते हैं अपने आकाओं को
सलाम करना
मगर जब आका ग़लत हो तो इंक़िलाब कौन
सिखाएगा ?

हम मानते हैं विज्ञान में आने वाले समय की
सदा
मगर फ़ुनून-ए-लतीफ़ा को दफ़नाना इंसानियत
की हत्या है

जो कुछ भी कहना है तुमको अंग्रेज़ी में कहना
है
ये कहकर मेरे ख़वाबों ख़यालों का गला घोट
दिया

इ पी ता ली म

H i d d e n C u r r i c u l u m

This poem is a critique and visionary reflection of the hidden curriculum in Indian schools.

Throughout different stanzas I have pointed out general practices which are followed in Indian schools. Such as promotion of science over arts, blind submission to authority, lingual preference of English over regional or mother tongue languages. By following some cultural practices or beliefs in dogmas and doctrines we as a society give birth to inequalities at various levels across the grid.

These inequalities are rooted in some notion of hatred or the desire to have control over the power dynamics. Whereas the job of the hidden curriculum is to extinguish these biases through the spread of love for humanity in the hearts of the children. While we do that, no matter how doomed this world might be, there is always hope for the better world from the generations to come.



Akash Shukla
B.Sc. B.Ed. Physics, 2021

That which doesn't flow in the
books but rather in the minds of
children,
Those teachings and learnings are
called the Hidden Curriculum.

In this garden of knowledge,
everyone has their own flower
To keep your own fragrance sacred
don't trample the other flowers.

Even if the entire world is caught in
the shadows of stormy night
We never forget to pass our children
the torch, to guide them to shore.

To turn the eyes of hatred into the
beauty of love
This is the hallmark of education in
the school of knowledge.

Slowly we teach our children to
salute their teachers
But when the teachers are wrong,
who will teach them revolution.

We do believe that the science is the
dawn of the centuries to come
But for that to bury our art and
creativity is to kill the essence of
humanity.

“Whatever you want to say, you must
say in English.”

With this command you strangled
the neck of my dreams and thoughts.

-Zulmat

Education for Social Change: A Lifeline to Transformation

Education is usually regarded as the solution to poverty and social restrictions. Learning is not just about acquiring facts or attending school—it is the means to opening doors and shattering old perceptions. Growing up in a small town and attending a semi-English school, I experienced firsthand how education was the only method of advancement for most students. Some of the students from my school belonged to families where parents were illiterate or unable to pay school fees. Some worked part-time to finance their studies—assisting in shops, doing manual construction work, or working during summer holidays. They juggled school and work, determined to get the best out of their opportunity for education.



For them, learning was not merely about individual achievement; it was about ensuring a better life for their families as well. Education did not only benefit people; it transformed communities. In my hometown, those who went on to further studies were role models, mentoring younger scholarship students on careers and education. Girls, who were usually called to leave school young, were inspired by seeing older girls graduate and earn money on their own. Education also bridged social lines, integrating students from various backgrounds and introducing the concept of equality.

Even with the effect of education, numerous students continue to suffer from financial constraints or family obligations. Girls, especially, are subject to societal pressures that favor domestic work over schooling. Although government initiatives assist, greater awareness and assistance are required.

Education is not merely about obtaining a degree—it is about empowerment and transformation. I have witnessed how it transforms lives, enabling students from the toughest backgrounds to rewrite their futures. The transformation is gradual, but it is genuine, and each student who achieves it inspires others to follow their dreams.



Kanchan B Shende
BA English, 2024

Why not her?

We all talk about how education facilitates multiple people to overcome the discrimination they face. Education is also said to be liberating. Then how is it acceptable when an educator restrains a student or discriminates against them? This is one such story. My school life has been shaped by diverse experiences, having attended different schools over the years. Each one left me with valuable takeaways, but one particular incident has been etched in my memory. This was from my middle schooling in Kerala.

I was an active participant in sports, regularly representing my school in tournaments back then. This meant leaving class often for practice sessions, where I needed to change out of the uniform into sportswear: jersey and shorts. One day, just after changing, a few of my guy friends and I briefly returned to the classroom to take our water bottles before heading to the field. That's when my teacher questioned why I was wearing shorts in front of the entire class. Her concern? That my knees were visible.

What shook me was that she said nothing to the boys in the same attire. Her disapproval was directed at the only girl, me. She hesitated to send me for practice and suggested that I bring full length leggings henceforth for my practice sessions. I respectfully showed her my permission slip and told her that I need to leave, so she hesitantly let me go. But that moment stayed with me.

What is this?

Am I different?

DOUBLE STANDARDS

Why did it happen?

Why not boys?

Sadly, this wasn't an isolated incident. Many of us girls faced similar scrutiny by our own teachers because THEY were uncomfortable seeing us in normal sportswear, something they never questioned when it came to boys. That double standard stung. It made me feel unfairly policed for just being a girl who wanted to play. This gender discrimination did more than just upset me, it awakened me. I began to question: Why is she being told to cover up when he isn't?

Over time, these experiences fueled the rebel in me to not tolerate any prejudice and stereotype. Today, I take pride in wearing what I want, expressing myself through my own style without the shame or fear of being judged.

Looking back, I now see how powerful a teacher's words can be, especially when said in front of peers. It can either affirm or destroy a student's confidence. Teachers are not just educators; they are role models. In that moment, my teacher didn't just criticize my clothing, she reinforced the idea that girls must not expose any part of their body or they will be considered "indecent".

But it doesn't have to be this way.

If I become a teacher someday, I want to be the kind of teacher that I needed. Someone who chooses fairness over prejudice, and empathy over judgment. I want to remind my students regardless of gender that their bodies are not shameful, and that their potential is not defined by their clothing. I will challenge outdated norms, not enforce them. And above all, I will strive to make my classroom a space where every child feels respected, valued, and free to be who they are.

Because every girl deserves to ask the question:

WHY NOT HER?



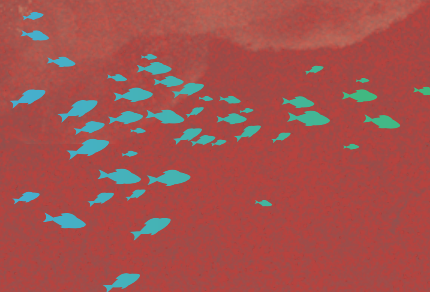
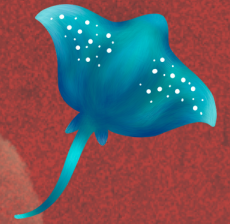
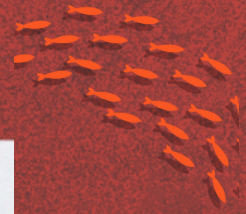
Written and designed by

KRITHI NAMBIAR

B.Sc B.Ed Biology

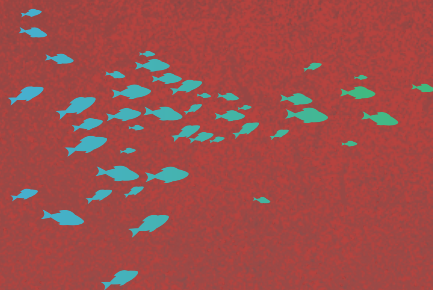
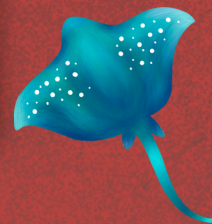
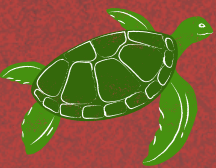
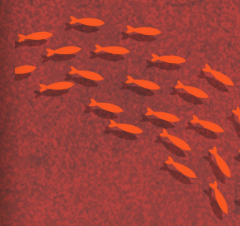
A LETTER TO MYSELF

Human memory, accumulated through experiences, leaves profound imprints and shapes us. Individuals are all integrals of what we consume throughout life. Schools are the foundational settings where knowledge, interactions, and actions are transacted, and innumerable memories are created. Schools provide a fertile environment for students to acquire valuable insights through experiences. Every student learns best experientially. I have a few impactful experiences that have aided my growth, which are worth sharing. I have been a student at six different schools, lived in three different cities, and two states before joining the university. Hence I carry myriad experiences of cultural and social diversity that have bestowed upon me opportunities to learn languages, relish cuisines, and observe the differences between ways of life.



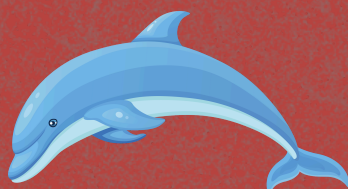
Shashwat Concept School in Amravati, Maharashtra, follows a curriculum that firmly believes life beyond the formal curriculum is also worth prioritizing. It exposes students to life beyond school by orchestrating events and activities. Our batch, with fewer children, was privileged to explore such fascinating experiences, which had a profound impact on my learning. We got several opportunities, like cooking in a natural space on the school campus, conducting a conference with media personnel and press reporters regarding an age-inappropriate advertisement and learning about the POCSO Act, visiting IAS and IPS officers, a lawyer, and Amravati's Guardian Minister at their homes, going on an environmental awareness trip to Rajasthan, conducting science exhibitions, organizing a bookstore, interacting with the man who made India's first supercomputer (PARAM), Dr. Vijay Bhatkar, on the school premises, and observing the filmmaking process in the school, which intended to question whether we truly are free or not. If not, then think about the change that can be achieved. Being an individual with such extensive experiences has aptly nurtured my schooling days.

It was after the 10th board exams that my father introduced me to a summer camp through an NGO, which turned out to be an adventurous experience. I stayed there for 7 days and gathered many learnings and memories like never before. Each day consisted of various thrilling experiences through tasks like early morning runs, yoga, networking in the community, book selling, activities, storytelling, and discussions on many topics. I learned to articulate my perceptions to others more clearly, build confidence, enhance lateral thinking, and develop an interest in community engagement, interviewing, and networking.



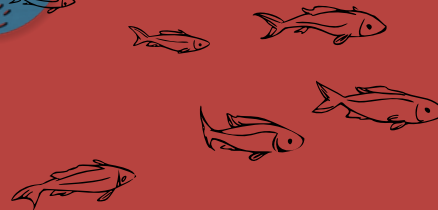
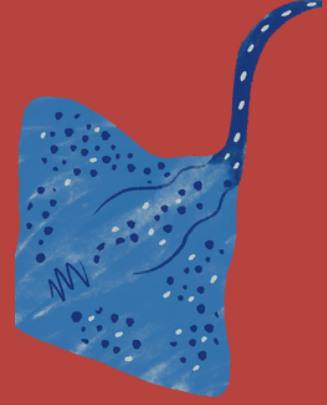
The unique occasions of sharing some eatables at the borstal in my hometown have taught me a few subtle insights. Visiting the borstal was a yearly custom. Whenever I visited the place with my father, I would hear stories of transformation, meet intrigued new faces, and spend quality time sharing some food with the children. Amidst these interactions with the authorities and children, I came to understand both the governmental support and the limitations of such centres, the contributions and struggles of the staff, and the intricate lives of the children—many of whom consider even a single meal a privilege.

Interacting with the children and employees at such places deepens one's awareness of marginalized sectors of society, empowers vocational paths for children, and reveals transformative stories of character building. It brings me immense joy and puts a smile on my face to visit such reformatory spaces built through government and NGO efforts, aimed at improving children's lives by fostering civil responsibility and personal growth.



I enrolled in the Library course at APU to understand children's behaviours through interactions and activities, and to experience the dynamics between teacher and student in a classroom setting. Through seven visits to the Digital Library in Handenahalli village, I was able to fulfil this intent.

I found that these dynamics centred around establishing connection and understanding, while embracing uniqueness, diversity, innocence, wonder, creativity, active listening, integrity, curiosity, problem-solving, patience, empathy, and respect for elders. These values helped nurture fraternity and a positive, healthy environment where interpersonal relationships between teachers and students could truly flourish. These activities sparked my interest in creatively designing artefacts, building models, and exchanging ideas and narratives on local issues.

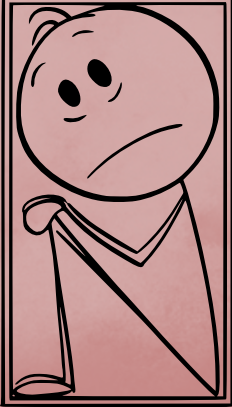


TANMAY PATANKAR
B.SC. B.ED(BIO), 2022

Experiences like these have fostered inquisitiveness, lateral thinking, emotional intelligence, confidence, and worldliness. They have also reinforced the belief that learning beyond the curriculum can surpass formal learning—because it allows learners to connect, network, and integrate diverse ideas, thereby contributing more effectively to discussions and deeper understanding. Reflecting on all that I have learned, I aim to acknowledge and promote the value of lived experiences in every individual's life.

“Experiences provide lifelong insights, create lifelong learners, and shape independent thinkers.”

ROOM



Room... I realised the isolation that word stood for only when I came to APU. I didn't think there was much of a difference in saying "I am going to my room" versus "I am going back to the dorm." But there is. There really is.

I studied at Peepal Grove School, a residential school from 4th to 12th grade. Literally all of my life that I have a memory of. From 4th to 8th, I stayed in dorms that were shared among eight people and three such dorms made a house. This was a co-ed space. Boys stayed with us till 7th grade. Each house had a bird name and house parents (wardens who took on a pseudo-parental role). Then I shifted to the girls' block from 9th to 12th grade, where I shared a dorm with four others.

Living in a dorm meant there was no scope for a mask. I was who I was. There was no hiding, because at some point, that bubble would burst. Whatever I was feeling was evident to everyone. There was no privacy in that sense. If I was mad at someone, there was no walking away. If I was crying, there were always people who noticed. And if I was super happy about something, there were always so many people to share it with.

But at that point, I didn't know how good I had it. I suppose the grass always looks greener on the other side. I was so looking forward to having my own room in college, to having more privacy.

Now that I live in a college room, I don't share that excitement anymore. Living on the 36th floor in a prison cell-sized room, which I share only with one other person, affected my mental health more than I care to admit.

I had always lived close to the ground, surrounded by trees and silence and the sky that felt within reach. But here, so far above the ground, with no balcony and barely any space, I felt boxed in. I'm not using hyperbole when I say that. Though many people shared a dorm at school, the space was big. But now, my room is so small, and my space feels so much smaller. It makes me feel congested and ever so slightly claustrophobic.

And the true nail in the coffin was being in a room with only one other person, someone not from my major, not part of my friend group or even social circle. I was never able to bond that much. I have good friends, peers, and colleagues but I live with none of them. That has been the hardest part to adjust to.

At school, no matter how much we fought or laughed, I always returned to rest with people I knew. I miss that, coming back to people at the end of a long day. That sense of belonging, of shared life and rhythm.

Until now, I hadn't realised that my school's living structure formed such a big part of who I am today. Though I lived in a dorm, I did feel solitude at times. But living in a room with just one person, I've felt the most alone I've ever been in my life.

I am now realising that it's hard to do the right thing when nobody's watching. And I find myself re-evaluating: who am I when no one is there? And who am I when others are around me?

The question that chews at me is: which is the real me?

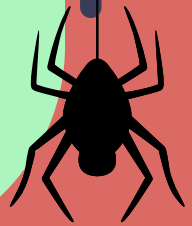




Sathyavathi Y

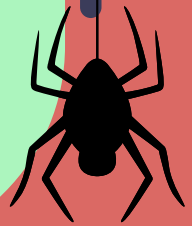


BSc BEd Biology

I see my life as a book, with each phase marking a new chapter. The most important chapter – my school life – shaped who I am today (partially though, I put in some efforts too 😊). This chapter usually decides how the story goes on. Once that chapter is over, you carry its memories forward, even if you don't revisit them every day. One has to accept that the chapter has ended – along with the golden and not-so-golden days of school. But that does not mean we forget the chapter altogether.

This chapter of mine was a rollercoaster – a mix of excitement, dullness, drama, and joy. The last two years of schooling have helped me unveil myself and taught me so many life lessons. I became me – the now cheerful, extroverted, optimistic soul – in grade 11. I used to live a monotonous life of waking up, going to school, coming back home, studying, and sleeping. This was my cycle of life. Whenever I meet my early classmates now, they ask in wonder, “தயா, இது நீதானா மா? உனக்கு என்ன ஆச்சு? நீ இப்படி மாறி இருப்பனு நாங்க எதிர்ப்பார்க்கவேயில்லை!” {Dhaya, is this really you? You've changed so much! We never expected you'd change like this!}



To this day, my teachers still wonder how I changed so much. Maybe lockdown helped a bit. But the most important shift happened because of my classmates. I met new people, became friends with them, and we're still close today. We've had our ups and downs, but in the end, it was all worth it. These new relationships taught me some scary yet important life tips. I learned to stand up for myself and to accept people for who they are – without trying to have expectations about who I want them to be. Good friendships teach you a lot, and my school helped with exactly that.



My teachers felt more like friends – every one of them. These kind, friendly, and sometimes annoying people. Some showed me how classes should be taken, and others... not so much 😅. But it was fun. Interacting with them, and sometimes teasing them (in a good and playful way, of course 😊) made my school years evergreen. When it came to academics, I never felt pressure. My school focused more on supporting students at their own pace of learning. That's why I was able to enjoy my non-academic life and still get good grades. Learning never felt like a burden.

“Learning felt like play. Though ironically, sports were the toughest – they only trained the pros. I’ll never forgive them for that! 🙄 Overall, I’d definitely grade my school at least an A 😊.”



**:- Dhayashri
B.A. Economics (2023)**

A Personal Reflection on Gender and Education

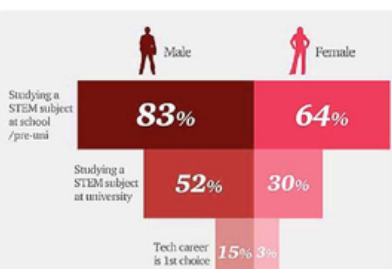
My journey in education – as a student, parent, teacher, and teacher educator – has shaped my understanding of the subtle but profound influences of gender dynamics in teaching. These diverse experiences over three decades have led me to a stage where I feel compelled to share my perspectives, hoping that these views would resonate with others in the field of education.

My native place, a small rural village in Tamil Nadu with limited access to quality education valued education deeply. We had access to only government institutions in and around our village. Growing up as a student in the late 80s and early 90s, I vividly recall my secondary classrooms, where male students vastly outnumbered female students at a 10:1 ratio. A similar imbalance existed among our teachers; nearly every subject except language was taught by men. Did they discriminate against female students? My answer would be a “Big No”. I always felt that all our subject teachers genuinely encouraged every student to do well, regardless of gender.

Similarly, girls were equally encouraged to participate in sports events. However, there were subtle differences in the way girls were expected to dress, talk, and behave in public forums. I still remember our school’s annual day events, where boys always performed Western-style dances and girls with traditional styles like classical or folk styles. In many instances, both the genders were not allowed to dance together on stage. Result – girls dressed as boys while performing together.



Girls are less likely to study STEM subjects at school and this continues through university and into their careers



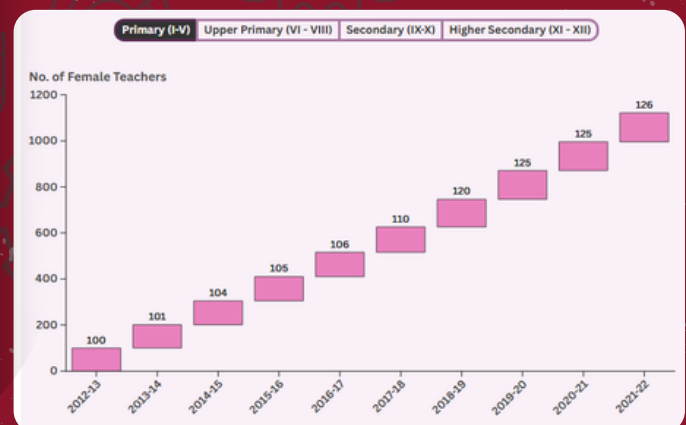
Reference: Learning through Arduino projects: Does gender matter? - Scientific Figure on ResearchGate. Available [here](#). [Click to access](#).

During my undergraduate days, only two rooms out of 10 rooms in girls’ hostels on each floor were occupied by the mathematics and science students. This was because arts and humanities subjects were considered easy and deemed more appropriate for girls, while science and mathematics were considered more difficult and perceived as suitable for boys. I am somewhat sure that these were not enforced but were present. But why? In my village, I observed parents urging boys to pursue engineering or science, whereas girls were being asked to undergo teacher training. The reason? A better work-life balance to effectively manage the family. During those days, I never perceived such a divide as a result of discrimination. But in retrospect, I now recognize how societal norms quietly dictated our roles.

Over time, when I transitioned from a student to a parent, teacher and later a teacher educator, I began to recognize a remarkable shift in the female representations within the teaching community. Cognitive science research also supports this shift by showing an improved participation of students in the early ages due to the very nature of the empathetic and caring attitude from the female teachers. Is this the actual reason? Visiting my son's school during his pre-primary years (2013-2015), I felt happy and satisfied to see my son sitting on the lap of a female teacher. But would a parent feel equally comfortable seeing a girl child sitting on a male teacher's lap? Could this be a hidden reason why the teaching profession is now largely being considered a "female profession"? Later, in the same private school where my son studies, I started to teach secondary school science. We had only a handful of men teaching, mainly arts, music, and sports. Through various experiences, I understood that teaching is often being perceived as a stable but low-paid career in our society. Is this the reason for branding teaching a "female profession"? Or are the private schools extra cautious while recruiting male teachers due to historical incidents of child safety, parental and societal perceptions?

As per the government data, by the year 2019, the number of female teachers in primary to secondary levels in schools had surpassed the number of male teachers. Such a transformation poses important questions.

- What are the unintended consequences of this increased **feminization of the teaching profession?**
- How long will **engineering, medicine, and other fields be associated as male dominated professions** with financial security and prestige?



These questions are not being asked here for the first time, and in fact, these have been the subject of scholarly debate over the years. Such gender stereotypes would continue to discourage men from pursuing teaching, especially at the school level. Though such a shift could positively impact the gender perceptions of male students, there is no denial that we also need more male role models for students in the education field too. I feel this from the needs of my own son, who is a teenager now.

Personally, both male and female teachers played a pivotal role in shaping my academic and professional growth. My Ph.D. guide, being a remarkable female scholar, has been an amazing role model, just as my male math teacher in the government high school and the professors at my graduate level left a long-lasting impact on my journey.

To share a few anecdotes of my experiences with male teachers during the non-PTM era that stand out beyond classrooms.

1. My primary government school teacher confronted my aunt for beating me.
2. My middle school principal went above and beyond to meet my father to ensure that I am allowed to pursue higher studies.
3. My high school math and social science teachers encouraged boys to see me as an example of the benefits of reading beyond textbooks in public libraries.
4. My undergraduate professors offered to sponsor me for my post-graduation when my family was struggling to make ends meet.



Gender should not dictate career aspirations

Knowing that gender should not dictate career aspirations, we as educators must challenge such stereotyped environments of gendered expectations while choosing subject choices or career aspirations rather than conforming to societal norms. We need to acknowledge and address such biases for a balanced and empowered learning environment. Without continuous reflections and actions from the educators, students, and policymakers, true gender equality or equity in education would never be possible. Institutions like Azim Premji University have made progress, with many male students pursuing BSc BEd programmes, but we must initiate many more attractive means and systemic changes to encourage more male students to enrol in BSc BEd programmes to cultivate an inclusive and balanced education system. Current students also must question such traditional narratives and break such gendered career expectations to redefine how gender influences education. Schools and policymakers must constantly work towards providing equal opportunities for all genders. Only then can our nation move towards a balanced, ungendered, and holistic learning environment.

Muthulakshmi RTS
Teacher Education Faculty
Azim Premji University

Teacher Feature

This section of the magazine features an interview, a conversation or a write-up from a teacher. This section is dedicated to teachers sharing their knowledge and understanding of schools, classrooms and students.

This edition features the interview of Ms. Christina Thankachan (currently teaching at Vidyashilp Academy, Bengaluru) on Hidden curriculum. Ms. Thankachan has shared her experiences and understanding of the theme and has also shown how her time as a student affected her attitude and behaviour as a teacher.

Flip to the next page to read!

CHALK OUT: EDITION 10

What is your understanding of the term "hidden curriculum"? Has your understanding changed over time?

My understanding of the 'hidden curriculum' has deepened over time. I've come to realize that it's the unwritten, unofficial and often unintended lessons, values and norms that students absorb in educational settings. These implicit teachings can shape their social interactions, cultural identity, and behaviours in profound ways. Through my experiences, I've seen how the hidden curriculum can have a double-edged impact - sometimes fostering a sense of community and cooperation, while other times perpetuate biases and inequalities.

Reflecting on my own educational journey, I've recognized the subtle yet powerful influence of the hidden curriculum. I've witnessed how teacher-student relationships, classroom dynamics, and school culture can convey powerful messages about what's valued, what's acceptable and what's expected. This understanding has prompted me to be more mindful of the implicit lessons I'm teaching and to strive for a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Have you noticed aspects of hidden curriculum in your classroom or others you have observed?

From my experience, I've noticed that the hidden curriculum is alive and well in my classrooms. I've seen how social dynamics between students and teachers can shape learning experiences, it should be often in unintended ways. For instance, I've observed how implicit expectations around behavior and participation can favor certain students over others. Cultural norms and values can also be perpetuated in the classroom, sometimes unintentionally marginalizing students from diverse backgrounds. Recognizing these dynamics has been a crucial part of my growth as an educator.

What kinds of values or behaviours do you try to reinforce in your classroom?

In my classroom, I strive to create an environment that values respect, humanity, empathy and open-mindedness. I encourage students to engage in critical thinking, collaboration, respecting boundaries and teamwork and I have given due importance to growth mindset and resilience. I'm intentional about using inclusive language and behavior and I work to create a safe space where students feel comfortable sharing their perspectives. By inculcating these values, I hope to foster a positive and supportive learning environment.

Have you had to unlearn something you were unintentionally teaching students? What made you realise it?

A pivotal moment in my teaching journey was when I realized I was unintentionally fostering a competitive environment and comparisons in certain areas that overshadowed students perspective and team collaboration. Many times the student feedback and introspection helped me recognize this blind spot. I recall a particular student's comment that struck a chord: "I feel like I'm in an Olympic race, not a learning space." This feedback sparked a shift in my approach. I do prioritize collaborative learning experiences, encouraging students to work together and celebrate each other's strengths. This experience taught me the importance of self-awareness, resilience to external pressures and adaptability in teaching.

Have any instances of hidden curriculum from your time as a student influenced your teaching style today? Are there any specific moments you remember clearly?

My own experiences as a student have profoundly shaped my teaching style. I vividly remember my school days there were teachers who made me feel seen and heard and those who didn't. These experiences have instilled in me a deep commitment to creating a supportive, inclusive and growth-oriented learning environment. I prioritize building strong relationships with my students, fostering a sense of belonging and promoting social-emotional learning. By being mindful of the hidden curriculum's influence, I strive to create a space where every student feels valued, motivated and empowered to thrive.

As I reflect on my teaching journey, I'm reminded that every interaction, every lesson and every decision has the potential to shape the minds and hearts of my students. I have gratitude for the teachers who inspired me and with dedication to those who will come after me, I commit to being a catalyst for growth, compassion and curiosity in the lives of my students. I want my classroom to be a sanctuary of learning, creativity and connection where every student leaves feeling seen, heard and their presence empowered to make their mark on the world.



**Ms. Christina Thankachan,
Vidyashilp Academy**

DEAR DIARY

This diary account is based on true life events of renowned neurosurgeon **Dr. Ben Carson**.

An African- American child with a violent temper who became an inspiration for disadvantaged youth. His mother was his most influential inspiration who pushed him to devote himself to learning.

DISCLAIMER-

The instances are inspired from true events as told in the documentary *From Poverty To Purpose: The Ben Carson Story | Timeline*

The writer has taken the creative freedom to frame them together as a series of diary entries.

He did a BA in Psychology at Yale University. Carson earned his M.D. at the University of Michigan Medical School and later at the age of 33, was appointed the Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital, the youngest person ever to hold that position.

Carson continues to promote education for children through **Carson Scholarship** and maintaining **Carson Reading Rooms** for children to inculcate a book reading habit which changed the course of his own life.



He was the first brain surgeon to **successfully separate twins conjoined at the back of the head**. Ben Carson has been granted 67 honorary doctorate degrees and the United States' highest civilian award, the Presidential Medal of Freedom (Timeline, 2020).



**WATCH THE DOCUMENTARY HERE-
FROM POVERTY TO PURPOSE: THE BEN
CARSON STORY | TIMELINE**

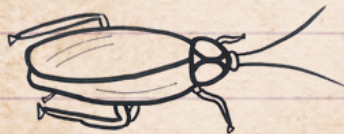


Dr. Benjamin Solomon Carson Sr.
(Born September 18, 1951) Groundbreaking Neurosurgeon

Dear Diary,

May 14, 1960, 4:30 a.m.

I don't know where to even start from. My father... he had another family. All this time he was with us, who could have imagined. But diary, that's not the worst part- the worst part is mum and dad are divorced. I- I don't know what to do. We left Detroit today and arrived at my aunt's and her husband's house in Boston. Oh my mother, I did not introduce her to you- her name is Sonya. She is one of her 24 siblings. I don't want to go to her, she is also not doing okay. Anyway, right now I am here in Boston and the place here?! A tenement- large multi-family dwelling boarded up windows and doors. And just an hour ago I heard sirens and gangs fighting. Not forgetting the gigantic rats and aggressive roaches everywhere.



This place is dangerous. I saw bodies of black people lying with bullet holes and stab wounds. I heard that our cousins, who we adored, also met the same fate some time back. I am sure I won't live past 25 years in this place. And it makes me think why is mum working so hard when living itself is the treasure here. She has taken up 3 jobs and she is already packing because she will leave at 5 am for work. I don't think she'll be able to make it back here before midnight.

I will see you tomorrow. It has been a hard day.

Love,
Ben

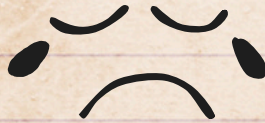


Dear Diary,

June 25, 1960, 10:51 p.m.

Long time, no see. I am getting back to you because things are going down and I almost forgot I said I will come back. My academic performance is going down. People say fifth grade is easy but I am a horrible student, so much so that everybody calls me a dummy and I have become the reference for any joke referring to anyone as dumb. I don't like it but all I do is pretend I don't care. Should I tell mum about it?

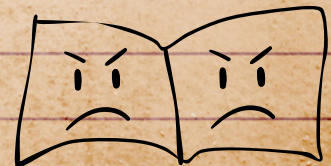
And what do I do about my anger? Today, I lost control. It was a small dispute over which radio station to listen to and..and I just lost control. I took out my knife and attacked the person. His belt buckle saved him. What was I about to do? I locked myself in the bathroom and read the Bible for three hours. What is wrong with me, god help me...



Dear Diary,

July 7, 1960, 3:30 p.m.

YOU KNOW WHAT SHE DID? She pulled out the TV plug today. Mum believes that me and Curtis, my brother, are wasting our time watching Tv. What else am I supposed to do? This is my only happiness here. But that's not even the worst part. The worst part is this →



She won't allow us to watch TV, go out or anything until we complete school HW and read 2 books per week and submit her written reports! She even checks the reports to whatever extent she can read because of her education till third grade. Everyone around her tells her that we are big enough to leave the house, earn some money but she insists on doing book reading. Why are these library books free? If only there was money for them, we would have been saved from this reading atrocity- because we don't have money for anything.

Dear Diary,

November 28, 1960, 7:35 p.m.

I have a confession to make, diary. It has been a month and I can't believe it but I enjoy reading books. Just so that I can understand what is written in the books more clearly I have started paying attention in school and I am doing better. I love reading about people who have tremendous accomplishments in all types of fields and it makes me realise- the person who has the most to do with what happens to you in your life, is you. I feel bad for saying bad about mum, she realised the importance of education way before I understood it. Only her intervention could have and has helped me realise my potential. And you know what, I don't mind the poverty and hardships around me now- because I know, for a fact, that since I am the one who decides what happens with me- this all becomes temporary. I have the ability to change mine and the circumstances of my loved ones.



And now that we are talking about the 'changing' me, I want to tell you something. The other day we were at the hospital and I saw everyone being extremely irritated- "I'm sitting there waiting for these doctors" but I love it! Going to the hospital is like the best thing in the world- I love waiting for the doctors. I sat in the hallway and listened to the PA system "Dr. Jones Dr. Jones to the emergency room, Dr. Johnson to the clinic!!!!", they sounded so important and I would be thinking one day they'll be saying Dr. Carson Dr. Carson 😊
I am developing an interest in anything related to medicine.



Love,
Ben


FROM the FRONTLINE

FEATURING

aaina.edu@gmail.com
[aaina_edu](https://www.instagram.com/aaina_edu)



aaina



The goal is to reimagine education as empowering for all, not just the privileged.

Inequality and self-reflection among the privileged are central to our lens. We also conduct workshops and interactive sessions with student and teacher communities to think through and respond to educational inequality. We work collaboratively- choosing themes, reviewing research, and refining messages through team discussions. Posts avoid jargon, focus on emotional experience, and aim to model honest, vulnerable conversations.

Aaina is a platform that promotes critical reflection on education among students, teachers, and others. We create resources exploring how learning connects to society, history, and culture. We share accessible, research-driven content weekly on Instagram and Facebook, covering topics like curriculum, pedagogy, assessments, relationships, emotions, and education funding.



Each post begins with a premise, explores the issue, and ends with a simple explanation and recommendations. We cite readings and often co-create with others who suggest topics.



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Aaina

Education

An initiative to encourage reflections on education and society.

https://open.spotify.com/episode/2GWQCOXEVUiaAwB7ZQcLW?si=KrmANEMfTvg-9_6ZFzESmQ&fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAae2VuERys0oIW8hcFH5eKRRfZYNs-bz-IX0epVGUKfGTjIPVhmb_Yvtvha0g_aem_TTeliwkeX0MI2JxID_j-kg&nd=1&dlsi=1ed27ca7363a433c



POSTS

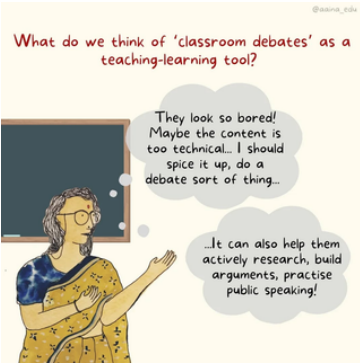
REELS

TAGGED



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...



Debates are widely believed to be a useful pedagogic tool to build research, argumentation and public speaking skills. But as educational institutes and teachers use debates to promote 'active' discussion on social issues, they also need to think through some of its problems:

1. Debates privilege the certainty of 'arguments' i.e. claims supported by reasons/evidence, which could devalue the complex ways in which social realities are actually understood (through emotional uncertainties, contradictory questions, evolving observations etc)
2. Further, framing an issue through a debate often simplifies it as a clash between arguments/positions, shifting the motivation to 'winning' rather than deepening inquiry
3. Debates often borrow from authoritative templates of public speaking (media, UN debates), discouraging tentative, reflective, or 'messy' speech
4. If not thoughtfully moderated, debates can reinforce problematic biases, promoting the views of dominant social groups and reducing/dehumanising others.

How do we think of using debate as a pedagogic tool? Illustrations by Teesta Nayak.


Further Reading- Brandon Merrell, Kevin J. Calderwood and Todd Graham, "Debate Across the Disciplines: Structured Classroom Debates in Interdisciplinary Curricula."



aaina_edu

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Teacher diaries #F2



I'm feeling a bit upset today

Omni and Nitin came after class, and said they can't get most of what I'm saying in English...

Sometimes when I use 'simpler' English, I feel I'm reducing the content... sometimes I don't know if I can find the right words in Hindi...

I want to talk in many voices, be more approachable

I want students to feel invited into disciplinary conversations, participate without feeling they don't belong, that they can't belong...

But if I'm not accessible, some students will play an endless catch-up game, a game rigged against them...

How do teachers in higher ed think of being accessible in how they speak and communicate with students?





aaina_edu How do teachers reflect on and regulate their emotions in the classroom?

Teacher diary #3
On emotional regulation

I felt frustrated today. And I've been feeling it for a while.

Why don't students submit on time after promising? How patient and accommodating will I be? And on top of that, they didn't even read and come to class today...

For a moment, I really wanted to yell today. Properly lose my temper.

I didn't...

But I still felt like a victim. I felt like I'm being taken for granted, disrespected, even exploited. It's not that I agree with my feelings...

I know there are many reasons for why students do what they do. It's not about me, always.

I also know that sometimes my expectations are just echoing what the institute unrealistically wants: that everyone behaves perfectly, obediently, always...

But that's also not possible.

I remember teachers who yelled at us, who turned authoritarian when they felt challenged.

We felt dissociated from them. I didn't understand then, why they behaved that way. And...maybe we ended up picking up some of their behaviours?

That doesn't feel right does it?

Maybe students have genuine reasons, maybe they're taking me for a ride.

But I have to understand them more.

I have to invite them into a dialogue, I have to talk about my expectations in a way that's not resentful.

I want students to know I'm under a lot of pressure too, but don't want to push them away by guilting them, expecting sympathy. Is that even possible?

I also need to reflect on why I feel so hurt at certain moments, where it's coming from. It all feels very mysterious sometimes :)



aaina_edu How can teachers think about incorporating student feedback?

Teacher diary #4
On receiving student feedback

I want my students to be honest with me, even about how they feel about me.

But as I encourage them to speak up, I also think I come off as anxious.

I'm not actually sure I can handle what they will say.

But if they don't say anything, I suspect they're hiding what they truly feel about my work. That they sense my anxiety and clam up.

My students shouldn't have to manage my anxiety.

It's unhelpful to be so self-conscious...How do I present myself to invite honest feedback? And how do I receive the feedback, make the classroom better?

I'm worried sometimes feedback will really wound me.

Or how sometimes it will not make sense, and I can't change who I am to accommodate it.

How do I let myself incorporate feedback without crumbling, without self-loathing, or giving up who I am?

I want to be less fixated on myself.

I want to be able to experience the classroom beyond myself, even being comfortable with not fully knowing what students think...

I want to be an open, stable self in the classroom.

I want to listen and act in responsible ways, ways that feel true to my thoughts and yet, move with the current of students' thoughts, needs...



aaina_edu How can teachers think about incorporating student feedback?

Imagine you're reading a piece of student writing, and you notice the sentences are incomplete, grammatically unconventional, abruptly transitioning from one to the next...

What are the first assumptions you make about the writer?

Her thought process is too basic

He needs to fix his grammar first

He's not able to grasp the content well

Would you have these thoughts? Do people around you have these thoughts?

Why are we so quick to diagnose 'writing' as a clear marker of student thought and intellect?

According to Joan Turner's research, this happens because there is often a hidden assumption that academic writing transparently conveys thought, and thus the quality of writing must convey the quality of thought...

Writing struggles to give voice to thought, shape and develop thought. But it may only capture a slice of thought, or what one intends to communicate.

Writing is a complex yet unreliable marker of the quality of student's thought and understanding of content.



Epistemology of Loss from my Education: Lost Petals of Time

Akheel Mohammed

The Ball Poem **John Berryman**

What is the boy now, who has lost his ball.
What, what is he to do? I saw it go
Merrily bouncing, down the street, and then
Merrily over—there it is in the water!
No use to say 'O there are other balls':
An ultimate shaking grief fixes the boy
As he stands rigid, trembling, staring down
All his young days into the harbour where
His ball went. I would not intrude on him,
A dime, another ball, is worthless. Now
He senses first responsibility
In a world of possessions. People will take balls,
Balls will be lost always, little boy,
And no one buys a ball back. Money is external.
He is learning, well behind his desperate eyes,
The epistemology of loss, how to stand up
Knowing what every man must one day know
And most know many days, how to stand up
And gradually light returns to the street,
A whistle blows, the ball is out of sight.
Soon part of me will explore the deep and dark
Floor of the harbour . . I am everywhere,
I suffer and move, my mind and my heart move
With all that move me, under the water
Or whistling, I am not a little boy.



The Ball Poem was not part of my grade ten syllabus in 2018.

I read the poem in 2024, after graduating from APU, while awaiting my results for admission at IITB.

The poem made me stare down the paths I've opted to reach till here -
and like the speaker in the poem, I'm left with the question of
'what is' Akheel 'now', who has lost 23 years of his life.

This poem came to my attention because it is part of my brother's grade ten syllabus.
In the NCERT textbook First Flight, the poem ends with 'how to stand up'.

There is no indication that this is an excerpt, that seven lines are omitted is not mentioned.
This made me ponder how most of our losses leave no physical trace
and thus remain unquantifiable.

Even though I've lived almost one decade more than my brother,
there is no way to be sure I've lost more in terms of time than him.
Even if we're identical twins,
what differentiates us
will be the differences in our losses.

Though I scored more in Social Science than in Maths or Science,
my decision and fate paved the way for me to do
Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and Maths instead of History, Political Science,
Geography, and Economics.

My five years from grade six to ten went 'merrily bouncing, down the' lane of time
'and then merrily over'.

Over the next two years, in eleventh and twelfth grade,

'an ultimate shaking grief fixed' me.

I was 'rigid' and 'trembling',

which made me feel busy for the first time.

Busyness is the byproduct
of our attempts to reproduce textbooks.

I'm not busy when I've plenty of work to do.

I'm caught up in busyness

when readers of my work can't associate it with me,
that is, when it reeks of the mediocrity of AI.

Then, I stood up,

taking my 'first responsibility' to choose APU
to pursue a B.Sc. B.Ed. in Physics.

Found harmony and love.

No longer being busy bothered me.

Love is found when we seek while in peace.

People say love sprouts

where selfishness turns into selflessness.

However, the fruit is often ignored.

The fruit is selffulness—

gained from the reflection of you
from the beloved.

Of course, the trajectory of your love
is defined by the eagerness
for the selffulness searched for by the beloved.

Of course, the trajectory of your love
is defined by the eagerness
for the selffulness searched for by the beloved.

We ought to 'explore the deep and dark'
for love

to honour the lost petals of time.



Steps Beyond Syllabi

When Classical Dance enters Rural Lives



Sathvika
BSc. BEd. Mathematics 2020-2024

Breaking the Boundaries of Access

In a society marked by economic divides, access to classical arts has long been a pronounced inequality—a hidden curriculum that silently determines not only who gets to learn it, but also who gains access to the profound personal and social growth they can offer.

My experience of facing this system was never a plan—but two years ago, standing in a quaint ashram in rural Karnataka, watching village children's eyes widen at our Bharatanatyam performance, I stumbled into that role.

"Akka, will you teach us Bharatanatyam?" they asked with the boldness and love only children possess. "Start a class Akka, and we'll all come," one of them grinned. There was something in their expectant faces we couldn't refuse. That sparkle of determination; that hunger for something they had witnessed but never been offered. And so, one class turned into many, and an inadvertent weekend commitment evolved into a powerful testament to what can happen when the unwritten curriculum of exclusivity is rewritten.

The Classroom Beyond Textbooks

Every class, fifteen eager-eyed and impossibly determined girls, gathered under the hall. They had no experience, and no understanding of what Bharatanatyam truly demanded. But they brought pure soul to it—and that made all the difference. The classes were offered at no cost, making it a space where passion, not privilege, set the tone. And while we taught adavus (steps) and mudras (hand gestures), something much deeper was taking shape—emerging naturally from the environment we created together.

Teaching art demands a fundamentally different approach than conventional subjects. Where science offers clear right and wrong answers, dance requires constant observation, and a readiness to constantly work on oneself.

These students went far beyond what I had imagined they could do. They came to every class with an eagerness to learn that was beyond measure. They valued the opportunity deeply—practicing without fail. I remember one student reflecting, "I thought dance was just moving our hands and feet. But after dancing in aramandi (half-sitting posture), and going to bed that night with aching muscles, I understood that this is something that requires real discipline."

Within seven months, they were ready for their first exam, and by ten months, their first stage performance. Though the discipline of classical dance can be gruelling—yet these children embraced it with ease and resilience.





The Unintended Lessons

The most heartfelt aspects of our dance class were never planned in our teaching notes. When I fumbled through Kannada instructions and they patiently corrected me, our traditional teacher-student hierarchy dissolved. Our class being a multi-age group one, birthed something completely unexpected - older students began mentoring and taking responsibility of younger ones, and without any formal instructions asking them to.

Truly, what happened in that space couldn't be captured by any syllabus. There was no test for self-confidence. No grading rubric for resilience. But it all manifested—in how they stood taller, how they corrected each other with care, how they practiced even when no one was watching. Most of these girls had never stepped onto a stage before. Now, they lead warm-ups, remind each other of the nuances, and share their dreams of dance with a confidence that transforms not just themselves but their entire community's perception of what is possible.

"It's my kanasu, Akka—my dream," one girl told me when asked why she wanted to learn dance. For someone from a rural area, where classical arts seemed unreachably distant, this was an opportunity, and a permission to dream beyond prescribed boundaries.

I vividly remember the tears in the eyes of the children after their first stage performance—a truly humbling experience, assuring us teachers as well that all efforts were worth it. The impact rippled beyond the individual dancers and the entire community's perception shifted. Parents who had once seen classical dance as far-reaching or unfamiliar now beamed with pride at their daughters' accomplishments. Other children approached us, asking when they could join. Through the class, the children are being socialised in ways deeply rooted in their village life—participating in their first formal extracurricular activity, engaging with cultural traditions once beyond reach, and growing into confident artists and performers. But beyond all this, something greater has taken shape. Their shared dream is no longer just personal—it is reshaping what the communities around them believe is within reach.

The Transformative Power of Inclusion

As a teacher, I learned that through simply enabling this education and creating the environment for growth, the girls didn't just learn dance—they internalised the message that excellence was within their reach. That culture and heritage belonged to them as much as anyone. That they were fully capable of mastering complex traditions, and inherently worthy of love, hope, and empowerment.


The most powerful lessons were never explicitly stated: They emerged in their feet, striking away the prejudices once holding them back. In their leaps, jumping distances beyond social barriers. And through their wide smiles, paving their futures.

I realise that as educators and community members, we have a collective responsibility to examine the unwritten curricula operating in our spaces. To ask ourselves: Who has access? Whose knowledge is valued? What messages are we implicitly conveying about belonging and capability?

Because in the spaces where no syllabus dares to go—where learning dances free from conventional constraints—we find the true measure of education's transformative power. Not just in what students know, but in who they believe themselves capable of becoming.


MORE THAN JUST DOODLES

It was the lesson right after lunch. The aroma of my mom's iconic Chole masala was still hovering around my desk. My eyes were lost in thought, my ears were busy fighting the noises attempting to reach my ear drum - a few phrases related to abiotic and biotic factors delivered by my Science teacher, a bird's chirp from a distant tree, a synchronous applause from an adjacent classroom, and a few faint ones. My fingers were more interested in the texture of my pen rather than putting it to work.




"Class! Focus." My senses began coming back to the classroom. "Quick! Note this down. You have five minutes". I wondered how my science teacher managed to stay active even at such an hour. I glanced at the blackboard. My brain refused to take in every word written on it. I tried to hold onto my pen firmly, in an attempt to note things down. However, my brain could only comprehend a few words written on the board - "Fish", "Humans", "Water", "Land", "Trees". I decided to at least write these words in my notebook. But, my mind had a different plan. I found myself drawing a fish instead of writing the word. It looked something like this - . Suddenly, I was interested in what I was doing. Soon, I drew a human, well a representation at least, water, land and a few trees. I began to feel more energetic.

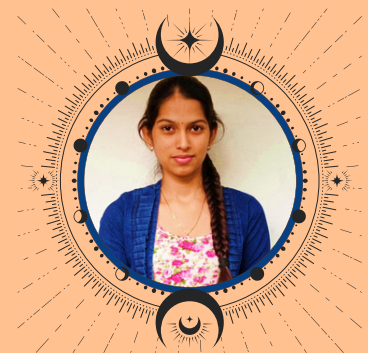
$$a^2 + b^2 = c^2$$



"Two more minutes." Surprisingly, this time I was wide awake. I began to take notes. "Time up!" Guess what - I was done! I had never felt more awake during any lesson followed by lunch. Years later, in a lecture hall, I glance at my notebook and notice the same pattern - every page divided into two. Half filled with key points and half filled with doodles. Who knew, something this minute, something this simple, something this effortless, would help me concentrate better.



Doodling is something everyone would have done at least once in their lifetime - drawing in the leftover space on a sticky note after noting down the phone number, writing with a stick in the sand while watching the sunset on a beach, scribbling on the walls with a crayon, and many more. But unfortunately, even today, many teachers discourage doodling inside their classrooms. The impacts of doodling vary with every individual widely, one might get carried away while one might concentrate better. So it is really important to ponder upon the question - "Should we generalize this rule of 'No doodling' inside a classroom or should we consider its role in fostering an inclusive learning environment?"



Akhila P

B.Sc. B.Ed. 2020

REWIND REWIND REWIND



1,2,3,.....,10th edition already!?

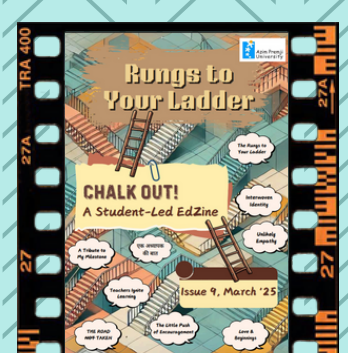
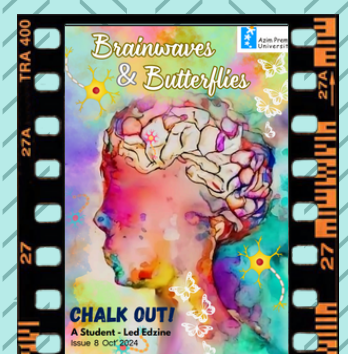
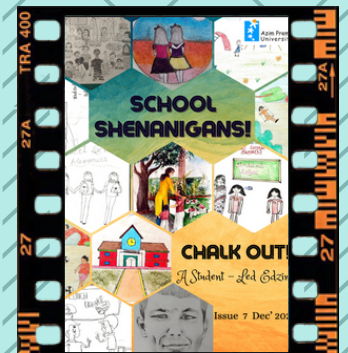
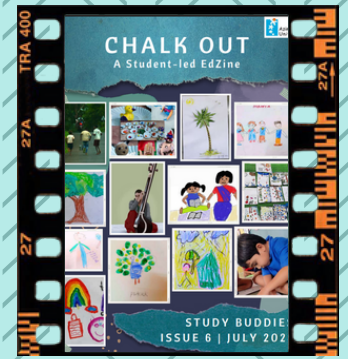
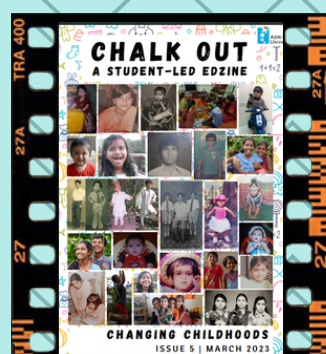
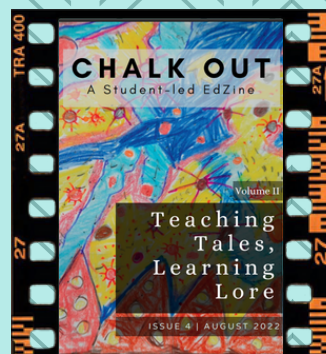
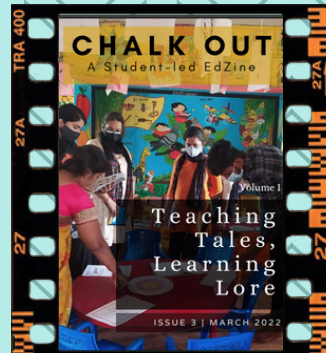
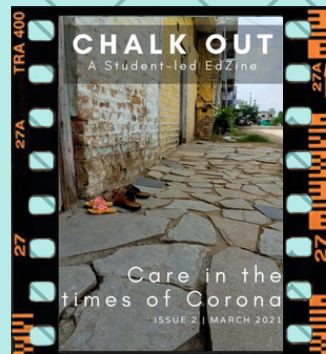
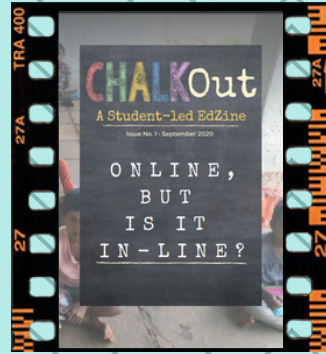
5 years, 26 people, and 10 issues later - it's hard to believe how far Chalk Out has come.

This feels like the right moment to pause, rewind, and remember all the hands and hearts that have kept it going.

Let's revisit the teams behind each edition - and the different corners of education we've explored along the way.

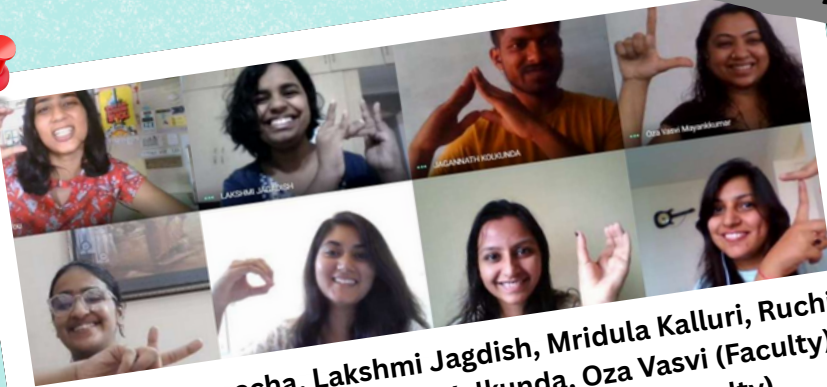


Click [here](#) or scan to read our previous editions.



Meet the Teams!

2020 - 2021



Manasi Barmecha, Lakshmi Jagdish, Mridula Kalluri, Ruchi Mathur (Faculty), Jagannath Kolkunda, Oza Vasvi (Faculty), Megha Ramachandra, Sonika Parashar (Faculty)

The OGGG

2021 - 2022



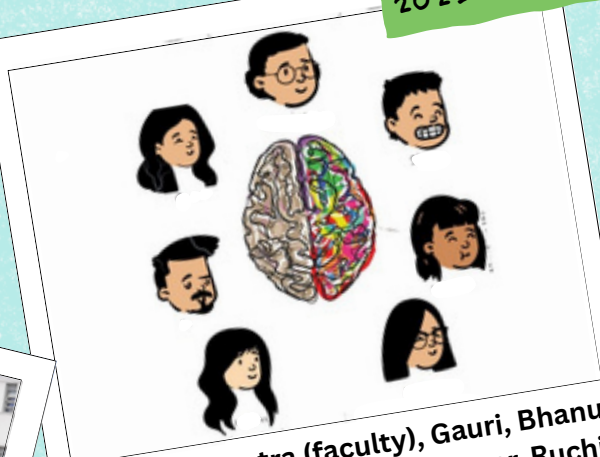
Veda Maskey, Sonika Parashar (Faculty), Ruchi Mathur (Faculty), Risha Vaidya, Deepthi Perlapu, Juhi Jain, Sai Kripa Giri

2022 - 2023



Akhila P, Akheel Mohammed, J Shalem Nissie, Janani Abirami Sriram, Sonika Parashar (Faculty), Jioo Nimkar

2023 - 2024



Ashruti Seventra (faculty), Gauri, Bhanu Prakash, Achinthy, Shiva Kumar, Ruchi Mathur (faculty), Lalitha

2024 - 2025



Ruchi (faculty), Aaratrika Khanwalker, Viral Jain, Shivaswamy Madem, Chaitanya Sanjeev, Kinshuk Ghosh, Hitika Gilhotra, Ashruti Seventra (faculty)

And this is us :P

I will not lie- we live in uncertain times. All around us, people on opposite sides of the philosophical spectrum seem to find it immensely challenging to pull up chairs at the same table, listen, and learn from each other. As our world grows and the landscapes of our classrooms change, I wonder if we may have forgotten how to reckon with our differences constructively.

Some of us may relate to how our schools tended to drill a sense of uniformity in us. Beyond our appearances, and more so in thought and speech, aspects of our school-going identities seemed shaped by this sense of blending in to ensure a kind of parity.

Habermas is known for his conviction in the idea that we, as a people, are stronger when we interact with each other. My years at APU really forced me to grapple with the expansiveness of diversity. One of the spaces where I most keenly felt every shade of joy and trepidation in participating socially, as Habermas would recommend, was at Chalk Out. Some of my best memories are the evenings spent with my teammates—Deepthi, Juhi, Risha, and Sai Kripa—huddled over one computer, either butting heads, biting our nails, or marvelling over our progress on an issue. While we did not always agree, through these experiences and our fieldwork, an incredibly strong sense of togetherness was forged that gradually expanded to the larger group of my BSc-BEd peers.

For me, challenging the notion that we must all be the same is incredibly liberating. I like to think that I carry this belief even now, in hand with lessons I learned as a student of education about what we can do when someone is different from us and when someone may not agree with us.

Veda Maskey



Sonika Paraghar



Faculty (Teacher Education, Chalk Out Faculty Coordinator)

Celebrating its Essence: Chalk Out at Ten

"In this NCF, 'curriculum' refers to the overall goals, plans, arrangements, and practices that shape the experiences of students in schools. Thus 'curriculum' does not just refer to the subject content of textbooks and other teaching-learning materials (TLMs) and their pedagogy, but also includes aspects such as school environment and culture. It is indeed only through such holistic and integrated changes across all these key aspects of the curriculum that we will be able to positively transform the overall learning experiences of our students."

- National Curriculum Framework for School Education
(NCF-SE) 2023, India

Despite the multiple definitions and varied ways of understanding the term 'curriculum', one can agree that it represents a set of experiences that lead to learning, typically organised under the auspices of an educational institution such as a school, college or university. A wide majority of people believe that only a formal or written plan of action, learning goals, outcomes, content, teaching-learning material and assessment is what a curriculum entails. However, the 'hidden curriculum'— the unwritten, unintended, covert or unplanned set of learning experiences —is what leads to an equal or at times more learning than the planned, written and intended curriculum. This hidden curriculum can come to light when one critically looks at the culture of a particular context, such as a school, a university campus, or any classroom. When looked at closely, it becomes clear that the hidden curriculum is extremely valuable in not only developing knowledge and skills but most importantly in developing attitudes and belief systems that at times become 'out of syllabus' in 'content-heavy' classrooms.

The tenth edition of 'Chalk Out' is a celebration of this space of learning that often goes unnoticed but has the potential to be the most influential in the learning trajectory of an individual. This edition's theme could not be more timely as it honours the very space that was created through 'Chalk Out' for our students of Education.

Discussions on education amongst the ones committed to the field can never be confined to the limits of the four walls of a classroom, the hands of a clock indicating the end of a class or to the learning outcomes and syllabus planned for a course. They are bound to and should spill beyond these structured and planned spaces, giving more and more opportunities to learners to organically, often unconsciously, experience learning moments.

Sonika Paraghar



Faculty (Teacher Education, Chalk Out Faculty Coordinator)

During the lockdown in 2020, we found ourselves physically distant from our students but mentally absorbed in figuring out ways to continue our engagement in and outside the online classroom. We knew our students were unable to fully experience the hidden curriculum that very often finds a presence in how a class is organised in terms of its culture, norms and interactions. Thus, we began asking ourselves — How could we create a space where students could question what was happening around them, where they could respond to their daily experiences, where they could reflect on and make sense of the inequalities, injustice and lack of access to opportunities and means of survival experienced by the majority of people in our country? Extending the popular metaphor by Rudine Sims Bishop (1990) in the context of children’s literature, we wondered what kind of a space could allow for our students of education to experience discussions that not only mirrored their lived realities but also provided a window into the realities that others were living, and, if possible, became sliding doors for our students to enter through and immerse themselves into the lives and times of the childhoods that were unfolding around us. We wondered if this space could disrupt the “danger of a single story” (Adichie, 2009) and provide a platform for the diverse voices that are often made inaudible under the loud hum of the events that a select privileged few would be experiencing.

An answer to our reflective queries was found in a student-led multimodal multilingual ed-zine — a zine created out of a love for sharing ideas, thoughts, and creativity, on the themes in education, by students of education, covering a wide variety of modes of expression such as an audio-video, podcast, written article, art, comic, anything or everything that could express the musings of our students in the different languages that they were comfortable in.

Now, as we mark five years and ten editions of our beloved ed-zine, I feel proud of our students who continued on this journey, sustaining the space that we had envisioned for all engaged with the field of education. I feel honoured to have been a part of this journey right from the start, initially as the faculty-coordinator for the first five editions and later as a regular reader who followed each edition with admiration.

I miss the intense discussions with the student core team members—right from the theme or content to how the edition should finally be designed and presented to all. But I am also heartened to witness the consistency in commitment; even as the core team members changed each year, the spirit of critical inquiry, dialogue and care for education remained unwavering. I am also delighted to see how the zine itself has grown over the years, with each edition bringing a new flavour, shaped by the unique perspectives, voices and talents of the contributors and the editing and design teams.

As powerful and thought provoking as it is, my words today are not for the content of ‘Chalk Out’. Today, I write to acknowledge the ones behind the scenes, working tirelessly to put different wheels in motion to present to you a brilliant and meaningful ed-zine bi-annually without fail. I write today to celebrate and reminisce about the journey taken together by those passionate about thinking, discussing and articulating about issues in education, and the journey that moved on from milestones after milestones. Finally, I write today to wish for many more engaging and transformative editions of ‘Chalk Out’ ahead that can continue to inspire voices and spaces that allow for a dialogue on education.



Akhila P.

B.Sc. BE.d. Biology (2020-2024)

I was part of the Chalk Out core team for Issues 5 and 6, and it remains one of the most fulfilling experiences of my time at Azim Premji University. I was primarily involved in designing the issues, and I loved shaping how each submission was experienced by readers.

Seeing Chalk Out reach its 10th edition fills me with pride. Watching it grow and continue to be a platform for diverse perspectives on educational themes has been truly heartening. Whenever a core team member pours their heart into Chalk Out, it becomes more than just a line on a resume – it becomes a legacy. I'm grateful to have been part of this incredible journey, and I look forward to seeing it continue to grow.

Dear Chalk Out team,
Hi, warm hello from me.

I'm Megha. I was part of the very first group of students who started Chalk Out and my gosh, it's been so long ago that I've honestly forgotten how it began. It started in COVID. It came from a space of wanting to discuss more ideas around education and what we were learning in our courses. I'm very happy to see that it grown so much since then.

Coming to the theme, unwritten curriculum. I'm a designer and illustrator. Even though I'm not actively teaching (I do tutor a few biology students sometimes), there are a lot of essential skill sets that you end up learning from school and college and any course you do, and I would think that those are a lot more useful to you in whatever profession that you choose to do, because once you learn how to learn, you can pretty much go into any field possible. And for me, I think a major skill that I picked up was effective communication, be it through design, be it through text, be it through drawings and illustrations, or be it through dance. One of the first things that we were taught through our courses was how to communicate with children. You need your communication and logic to be extremely precise, clear and simple to get the message across. I would say that this is the biggest thing that I have learnt from school, from college and from working on magazines.

So wishing you guys all the very best and have fun.

B.Sc. B.Ed. Biology (2018-2022)

Megha Ramachandra

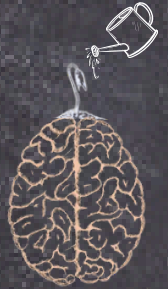


QUESTIONS TO MARK

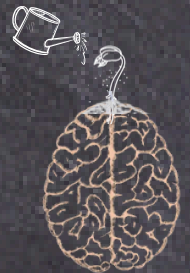
Has education ever made you reconsider how you want to live your life—especially in ways that challenged stereotypes or social expectations?



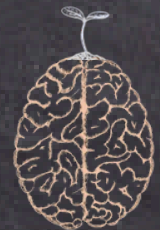
How have school activities or traditions influenced what you do now?



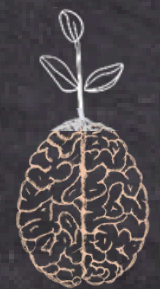
What are some peculiar habits or ways of thinking that you developed in school? (You must have found something over casual interactions with friends :))



What's something your school did really well that still influences you today?



What has been your experience with 'Education for Social Change'? Has education ever empowered you or someone you know—by providing social capital, offering hope to overcome difficult conditions, or helping to rethink and challenge social hierarchies and stereotypes?



Something you noticed in university classes that is different from the values you developed in school.



If you were a teacher, what's one thing you'd change based on your own school experience? Change in terms of what you will teach your students differently based on your experience.



Education for Social Change: A Lifeline to Transformation

The editor-in-chief, Ms. Christina Thankachan, shares her thoughts on the importance of education in transforming society. She discusses how education can empower individuals and communities, leading to positive social change. The article highlights the role of educators and students in creating a more just and equitable world.

Teacher Feature

Ms. Christina Thankachan, Aaina, our dearest alumna and Sonika Parashar, share their experiences and insights as educators. They discuss the challenges and joys of teaching, the importance of student-teacher relationships, and the impact of education on their lives. The feature includes photos and personal reflections from both women.

Dear Diary

A personal reflection on gender and education by Ms. Christina Thankachan. She shares her journey as a woman in the field of education, discussing the challenges she has faced and the support she has received. The article is a powerful statement on the importance of gender equality in education.

Why not her?

Ms. Christina Thankachan reflects on the gender inequality in education. She asks the question, "Why not her?" and explores the reasons behind the underrepresentation of women in various fields. The article is a call to action for creating a more inclusive and equitable educational environment.

Breaking the Boundaries of Access

Ms. Christina Thankachan discusses the challenges of providing quality education to all students, regardless of their background or location. She shares her experiences of working in underserved areas and the importance of breaking down barriers to access. The article highlights the need for innovative solutions and community support.

The Classroom Beyond Textbooks

Ms. Christina Thankachan explores the importance of experiential learning and the role of the classroom beyond textbooks. She discusses how teachers can create a more engaging and meaningful learning environment by incorporating real-world experiences and projects. The article emphasizes the value of critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Epistemology of Loss from my Education: Lost Petals of Time

Ms. Christina Thankachan reflects on the loss of time and the impact of education. She discusses the importance of learning and the value of every moment spent in the classroom. The article is a poignant reminder of the power of education to shape our lives.

NOTE TO READERS

A message from the editor-in-chief, Ms. Christina Thankachan, to the readers of the magazine. She expresses her gratitude for their support and feedback and shares her vision for the future of the publication. The note includes information about the magazine's content and how readers can get involved.

Even though the theme is unwritten curriculum, our appreciation for everybody involved in the magazine should not be!

A heartfelt message from the editor-in-chief, Ms. Christina Thankachan, to the contributors and staff of the magazine. She expresses her appreciation for their hard work and dedication to creating a meaningful and impactful publication. The message is a testament to the collaborative spirit of the magazine's team.

Wrapping up with Gratitude for...

Our contributors!

Thank you for sharing with us the powerful instances that shaped you and gave us and the readers an opportunity to reflect. Thank you to the students, faculties who contributed, Ms. Christina Thankachan, Aaina, our dearest alumna and Sonika Parashar.

Our Dearest Sub-Committee!

To whom we proudly hand over the legacy of Chalk Out. Thank you Krithi, Manya and Sathyavati for staying with us till the end of the magazine. Keep up the good work, train a good sub com so that they call you and us to celebrate the numerous coming milestones :)

Readers!

To you, the readers! Thank you so much for reading this. We hope you took a moment to appreciate the silent presence and the significant impact of unwritten curriculum in life.

Credits		
Thank you to our faculty coordinators Ruchi Mathur and Dhruva Desai!		
	Written by	Designed by
Cover page		Aaratrika
Confusion hi confusion hai solution kuchh pata nahi	Kinshuk	Kinshuk
A Letter to Myself	Tanmay	Chaitanya
En School Days	Dhaya	Chaitanya
Room	Sathyavati	Sathyavati
Why not her?	Krithi	Krithi
Education for Social Change: A Lifeline to Transformation	Kanchan	Manya
More than just Doodles	Akhila (Alumni, 2022-23 Core team)	Chaitanya
Dear Diary	Hitika	Hitika
A Personal Reflection on Gender and Education	Dr. Muthulakshmi RTS (TE Faculty)	Shivaswamy
From the Frontline: Aaina	Initiative by Viral, curated by Hitika and Kinshuk	Hitika and Kinshuk
Steps beyond Syllabi	Sathvika (Alumni)	Aaratrika
Epistemology of Loss from my Education: Lost Petals of Time	Akheel (Alumni, 2022-23 Core team)	Kinshuk
Questions to mark	Aaratrika, Hitika, Kinshuk	Hitika and Kinshuk
Chhupi Taleem	Akash	Hitika
Teacher Feature	Ms. Christina Thankachan	Aaratrika
Foreword	Manya	Hitika
Note to readers	Hitika	Manya and Hitika
Meet the team	Photograph by Communications Team, APU	Aaratrika
Credits page	Hitika	Hitika. Ideated by Kinshuk
Contents page		Kinshuk
10th edition celebration segment	Veda, Megha, Akhila P, Sonika Parashar (faculty)	Aaratrika, Hitika, Kinshuk

Foreword

I was in 6th or 7th grade when our class teacher walked in and asked all the girls to line up and move to the auditorium, and the boys to just stay in the class. Without any clue what was following, we were happy to know that there would be no class for us that afternoon. We had a lesson on menstruation, and it is how to deal with it, etc., as we were approaching that age, but did we just learn about periods that day? No, we learnt that this is something which is not supposed to be discussed with boys.

This chapter of mine was a rollercoaster - a mix of excitement, distress, drama, and joy. The last two years of schooling have helped me understand myself and taught me so many life lessons. I became me - the now cheerful, extroverted, optimistic girl - in grade 11. I used to live a monotonous life of waking up, going to school, coming back home, studying, and sleeping. This was my cycle of life. Whenever I meet my early classmates now, they ask in wonder, "Bhabhi, you became such a star now, why? You were such a shy girl in school." I reply, "It's this really good! You've changed so much! We

These experiences and our feedback, an incredibly strong sense of optimism was forged that gradually expanded to the larger group of my 6th-8th peers. For me, challenging the status that we must all be the same is incredibly liberating. I like to think that I carry this belief even now, in hand with lessons I learned as a student of education about what we can do when someone is different from us and when someone may not agree with us.

Veda Maskey



An
Azim Premji
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Publication

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