

Education for social purpose:

A reflective booklet on pedagogical
approaches and practices





© 2026 Azim Premji University

Education for social purpose: A reflective booklet on pedagogical approaches and practices

Azim Premji University, 2026

This publication may be reproduced by any method without fee for teaching or non-profit purposes. The publication shall not be used for commercial purposes. Rights are reserved under Creative Common Licence: Attribution+Non-commercial+ Share Alike. Any derivative works shall also be protected under the same licence. For copying in any other circumstances, or for reuse in other publications or for translations or adaptation, prior written permission must be obtained from the publisher.

Citation: School of Development (2026) Education for social purpose: A reflective booklet on pedagogical approaches and practices, Azim Premji University, Bengaluru.

Education for social purpose

A reflective booklet on pedagogical
approaches and practices



Preface

As a university with a social purpose, teaching and learning is at the heart of everything we do. Our aim is to prepare students to be reflective and critical thinkers, with the ability to act, to address some of the biggest challenges of our times with competency, integrity and social commitment.

Since the inception of the university 15 years ago, we have worked relentlessly to create a learning environment conducive to achieving this goal. This endeavour has led our faculty into deep explorations of curricula and pedagogies which foster reflection, critical thinking, affective and experiential learning, and dispositions towards ethical social action. Furthermore, having a large proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds in our classrooms has led us towards creating educational experiences which strengthen confidence, agency and competence.

Creating such teaching-learning spaces for students requires faculty to constantly innovate pedagogic approaches and practices. Faculty members' reflection and learning based on classroom experiences, intense discussions and debates have helped us develop a shared understanding of the pathways towards these educational goals, based on values of equity, social justice, inclusion and pluralism.

I am delighted to welcome you to Azim Premji University's conference on the 'Teaching and Practice of Development in the Global South' to further explore these ideas and practices. We hope that you will find the discussions insightful and invigorating.

Richa Govil

Vice Chancellor, Azim Premji University, Bengaluru



Prologue

This note on **‘Education for social purpose: A reflective booklet on pedagogical approaches and practices’** attempts to capture our collective deliberations, reflections, and learnings over a decade on facilitating teaching-learning at the university. The School of Development has faculty members drawn from different disciplinary training such as Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science, Ecology, Economics, Development Studies, Community Health as well as those from the world of development practice. We view ‘Development’ as a transformative agenda of social change through creating conditions for individual and collective wellbeing in an equitable and sustainable manner. Values of equity, social justice, democracy, pluralism are central to this pursuit and our shared commitment to contribute to this pursuit is through teaching, research and practice.

As a university that was established with a clear social purpose of contributing to a just, equitable, humane, and sustainable society, our educational programmes are at the centre of contributing to this purpose. This we pursue through preparing reflective and critical practitioners who can bring their educational experience at the university to practice on the ground — with competency, integrity and social commitment.

With this larger purpose, the School of Development hosts many programmes in Development including the MA in Development, PG Diploma in Development Leadership, MBA in Development Management and many certificate programmes for in-service professionals. This note focuses our experiences on teaching-learning in the MA in Development programme, which is now almost 15 years old. In 2011 we began with a cohort of 70 students and now 225 students graduate every year in the programme. In these 15 years, we as teachers have also grown in our pursuit of teaching and learning. This growth is more than finding the best way to teach Amartya Sen’s idea of capability or D E Beauchamp’s argument on public health as social justice. It is about our experimentation, innovation, and reflection on our pedagogical approaches and practices keeping the student diversity, programme objectives and the broader purpose of education in mind. This note captures an essence of such reflections and learnings that makes us evolving and growing teachers. This is a continuing journey bringing its share of struggles and joy, both individual and collective. This note details those and provides snippets of our collective experiences. At the same time, numerous fundamental questions form the undertone of this note. We end the note not with a firm prognosis, rather urging for theorisation. In this spirit, the conference on “Teaching and Practice of Development in the Global South” becomes an important platform and a springboard towards this endeavour. We invite our fellow teachers and practitioners to join us in this shared journey of reflections and sustained commitment in the pursuit of teaching and practice of development.

Arima Mishra

Director, School of Development



The first question the panchayat (representative of local self-government) member facilitating our field learning in Rajasthan asked was about our caste. While few of my classmates in our group mentioned it with ease, I had a dilemma. If I said I was a dalit, I would not have been allowed access to the community but if I evaded the question or hide my caste, I would not feel comfortable specifically after all our discussions on caste in the classroom.

- A student sharing his field immersion experience during the Sociology of Modern India course discussion in the classroom

How do I facilitate discussions on inter-generational trauma in the context of mental health where many students in the class themselves have faced such trauma? How do I do it in a way that it does not act as a trigger yet allows them to situate their personal experiences in a larger socio-economic-political context? I am thinking aloud, what pedagogies will help?

-Faculty member who teaches an elective on Critical Perspectives on Mental Health during a discussion on pedagogy





The excerpts draw on our collective experiences and deliberations around facilitating teaching-learning in programmes on Development at Azim Premji University. The imagination of Azim Premji University stems from the ideas of the Azim Premji Foundation. The vision of the Foundation, and therefore the University as well, is embedded in our constitutional values, and the goal is to work towards building a just, equitable, humane and sustainable society. The Foundation focuses on improving school education, public health, livelihoods in several states in the country while the objective of the University is to offer socially relevant programmes in the realm of higher education as well as continuing education for government officials, social sector professionals, school and college teachers, and others.

In a country like India where the representation of historically marginalised sections of the society in higher education is abysmally low, access to and participation in quality higher education becomes both a means and an end to social justice. Our university stands out in this respect. Yet at the same time, our experience at Azim Premji University mirrors a larger reality not only in India and the global south but also across continents that suffer from inequalities, marginalisations, and injustice. The historical injustice in the form of colonisation, indentured labour, slavery, discrimination of various forms including race, gender, religion, disabilities, reproduce themselves in the global north as well. It would therefore not be untrue to say that there exists a 'global south' in the global north as well. Further, there are only a few higher education programmes curated towards preparing professionals for the social sector. Limited resources are often put forth as an explanation for scarcity of such institutions in the global south. However, without an explicit design, purpose, and intent, the participation of the marginalised, structurally and systematically excluded social groups in the process of higher education cannot be envisioned. The explicit social purpose of preparing changemakers through educational interventions is what makes Azim Premji University a rather unconventional University space and it has a direct impact on the kinds of programmes we offer, the student cohorts we invite, and the teaching-learning processes we facilitate in the University.

Contrary to popular belief and a rather technocratic understanding, pedagogy is not a set of tools and practices, nor is it a skill to be acquired through adopting certain strategies in the classroom only. Broadly speaking, three separate elements of pedagogical practice can be identified: firstly, the intent behind pedagogy captures the larger perspective that drives it; secondly the substance or more simply the curriculum may need decoding because of its rather opaque nature; and finally, the process of classroom pedagogy itself. (Hickey-Moody, Savage & Windle 2010). Most conversations about pedagogy seem to limit themselves to classroom pedagogy while the underlying intent generally remains outside the scope.

For us at Azim Premji University, the intent behind our pedagogical practice is particularly important. Here, pedagogy is primarily a set of principles, values and ideas that underpin the act of teaching. In this sense, pedagogy is linked with the larger idea of “teachers as transformative intellectuals” (Giroux 1988), working towards realising the transcendental yet social goals of “truth, beauty and goodness” (Du Bois 1903), within complex and dynamic boundaries of knowledge and power.

Further, this understanding of pedagogy is inherently part of the social nature of education. Given the fact that education is perhaps the most critical aspect of social reproduction and social mobility, pedagogical practices deeply influence the process of self and agency formation of students. Due to these considerations, our pedagogical approach is guided by four principles: the first is that education is fundamentally a social object and relation, the second, the need to create democratic classroom spaces, not in composition alone but in their essential functioning, the third is about valuing and integrating experiences of all participants because experience as a form of knowledge and communication of experiences makes a democratic society possible and finally making reflexive and iterative learning possible through complementing classroom with the field and vice versa.

We share, in the following sections, our pedagogical journeys (with faculty members, students, field partner organisations), learnings, dilemmas, and insights that make our roles as teacher-facilitators challenging, joyous and more importantly, make us reflective beings.



The social purpose of education

In simple words, the social nature of education needs to be understood in two meanings: first, that education (especially its aspect of curriculum or what is to be taught) represents in principle the totality of society's accumulated knowledge that it wants to preserve and propagate; and secondly, the process of education is about social communication and it is this aspect that makes education closely linked with democracy "as a way of life" (Dewey 1916). Almost every social and educational thinker of various intellectual persuasions has argued that education, above all, is a social process. Despite this unanimity, we underline this point because education nowadays is often reduced to individual achievements, attaining prevailing notions of excellence, and learning marketable skills.

One of the early philosophers of education and an advocate of mass education Jotiba Phule, considered education as "Trutiya Ratna" (the third jewel), that is the prime enabler of social transformation, especially the liberation of the exploited sections of society (Omvedt 1971; Rege 2010). In his submission to the Hunter Commission in 1882, Phule demanded the broadening of the social base of teaching and learning in India. This "social function" of education was further clarified by B R Ambedkar, where the "social" was not given but reconstructed as an associational form of living or in other words democracy. Thinkers as varied as Ivan Illich (1971), Paulo Freire (1970) and Paul Willis (1977) have highlighted the crucial role played by education in social reproduction through material, ideological and pedagogical practices such as multilayered and hierarchical education systems, "culture of silence¹," and limiting of possibilities for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

During the Indian national movement, we do see often intertwined and at times contradictory quests for (social) justice, self-identity, and (economic) progress, all of which were sought to be achieved through educational policy after independence (Kumar 2005). Essential points about the social nature of education can be found in the life and works of Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi as well: Santiniketan was built with the understanding that educational institutions should not only perform an intellectual function but educate students to live in harmony with nature and society. The Institute of Rural Reconstruction (named as Sriniketan) worked directly towards realising this ideal (Aronson 1961; Kabir 1956; Mukherjee 1970).

¹ Paulo Freire (1970) describes this in his pedagogy of oppressed where the marginalised sections of students feel unable to speak up due to systemic power imbalance.



Gandhi considered his idea of Nai Talim or the Wardha Scheme of Basic Education (1937) as a “silent social revolution” that could be achieved through cultivating the spirit of self-sufficiency and autonomy (Acharya 1997). Gandhi’s idea behind establishing Gujarat Vidyapith in 1920 (of which he remained the life-long Chancellor) was to foster holistic development of head, heart, and hand for national reconstruction and Hind Swaraj (self-rule) focusing on self-reliance (khadi and village industry), character building, truth, non-violence, dignity of labour and service to humanity.

As we mentioned earlier, at Azim Premji University, the fundamental question of “what is to be taught” is linked with the larger social purpose of the Foundation: contribute to justice, equity, humaneness and sustainability. Following this social purpose, the objectives of the MA in Development programme have been laid out in a manner that enable students to work towards the transformative agenda of development and social change.

The MA in Development programme is uniquely designed as an interdisciplinary programme which nurtures students from diverse disciplinary and socio-economic backgrounds to contribute to theoretically informed, methodologically grounded, and ethically mindful development practice.

MA in Development: Programme objectives

Build a cohort of development practitioners who are grounded in the values of pluralism, democracy, equity, justice and sustainability.

Draw students from diverse social and disciplinary backgrounds to constructively engage with India’s existing and emerging development challenges, informed by relevant perspectives, knowledge and skills.

Prepare students to appreciate the complexity and ethical basis of development ideas and actions.

Equip students for development action, foregrounding the realities and contexts of diverse groups and communities in India.



While our programme objectives have remained the same, the curriculum has undergone revision thrice (between 2011-2024) based on our learnings (through consultations with faculty, alumni, social sector organisations which employ our alumni and/or host our students for field practice) in running the programme.

The curriculum revisions have had to navigate questions around balancing critical perspectives with practical skills, plurality of knowledge frames (through a range of texts and resources), decoding what it means to prepare students to be development 'practitioners', dispositions to work in the social sector (what dispositions are critical, and if these can indeed be facilitated through teaching), within and beyond disciplinary boundaries (how do we develop a sociological or economic sensibility in students without getting caught up in the disciplinary canons), nature of conversations between the field and the classroom and many more. Our challenge has also been that although students sign up for the programme with an interest and commitment to work towards the transformative agenda of development, for many of them the transformation is more immediate, here and now in improving their (including family's) economic conditions by getting a job. Yet many others have not only engaged in meaningful work in the social sector but have taken an additional step to found their own social enterprises to address questions of providing livelihood with dignity for differently abled persons, solving challenges of marketing opportunities for Adivasi communities in central India or simply exploring documentary films as a medium to share stories on Development [Azim Premji University 2024].

While through the educational programmes, we continue our efforts to prepare students to contribute in meaningful ways to the project of development, nurturing this purpose and overall values that guide this purpose is never easy nor straightforward.

As a founder of a social enterprise a student shares:

“

During our field work, we realised that audio-visual medium showcasing real stories from the field had a greater impact than reports and presentations. This was the spark.

*-Alumnus, MA in Development 2011-2013,
Founder, Travelling Tripod Films*

”





Development knowledge(s): Navigating vocabularies

It is important to underline that development by its very nature is an interdisciplinary, even transdisciplinary, enterprise. Further, the experiences of development across different societies have shown that a bottom-up, field-oriented approach to development works better than aggregative macro-prescriptive models. Keeping this in mind, our curriculum reflects not only a multidisciplinary outlook but tries to transcend disciplinary boundaries to tackle real questions of development on the ground, in all their complexities.

At the level of the curriculum, we have deliberated which disciplinary knowledges need to feature keeping the programme objectives in mind. Within each discipline itself, we have engaged with questions of what core concepts, theories, and frameworks to draw on without compromising on the disciplinary rigour yet making these relevant and meaningful for students of Development. In fact, we have asked ourselves if an entry through disciplinary knowledges is feasible or even desirable while designing an interdisciplinary programme like Development. Our learnings have indicated that students grounding themselves in disciplinary insights (hence doing courses on Indian Economy and Development, Sociology of Modern India, Environmental Perspectives on Development in the first semester) is useful. Yet for us how to help students integrate and synthesise insights drawn from these disciplines when they are engaging with a development problem remains a challenge. Beyond the core disciplinary courses, our elective courses also confront this question of interdisciplinarity or even trans disciplinarity (drawing on insights from the world of practice) in its design and pedagogy. Hence, a course on mental health engages critically with the dominant knowledge frame of psychiatry to allow students to develop a societal lens (drawing on insights from social sciences) that is sensitive to politics of language, knowledge, realities of diverse communities, and contexts. Such a critical lens that transcends disciplinary boundaries, also builds on students' individual and collective experiences, insights from actual interventions on the ground by civil society organisations or Government to deconstruct many concepts around stigma, intergenerational trauma, social determinants while developing an empathetic lens to engage with such sensitive issues. The journey to facilitate these traverses through several challenges as documented by our colleagues teaching this course (Gundi and Sharma 2024).



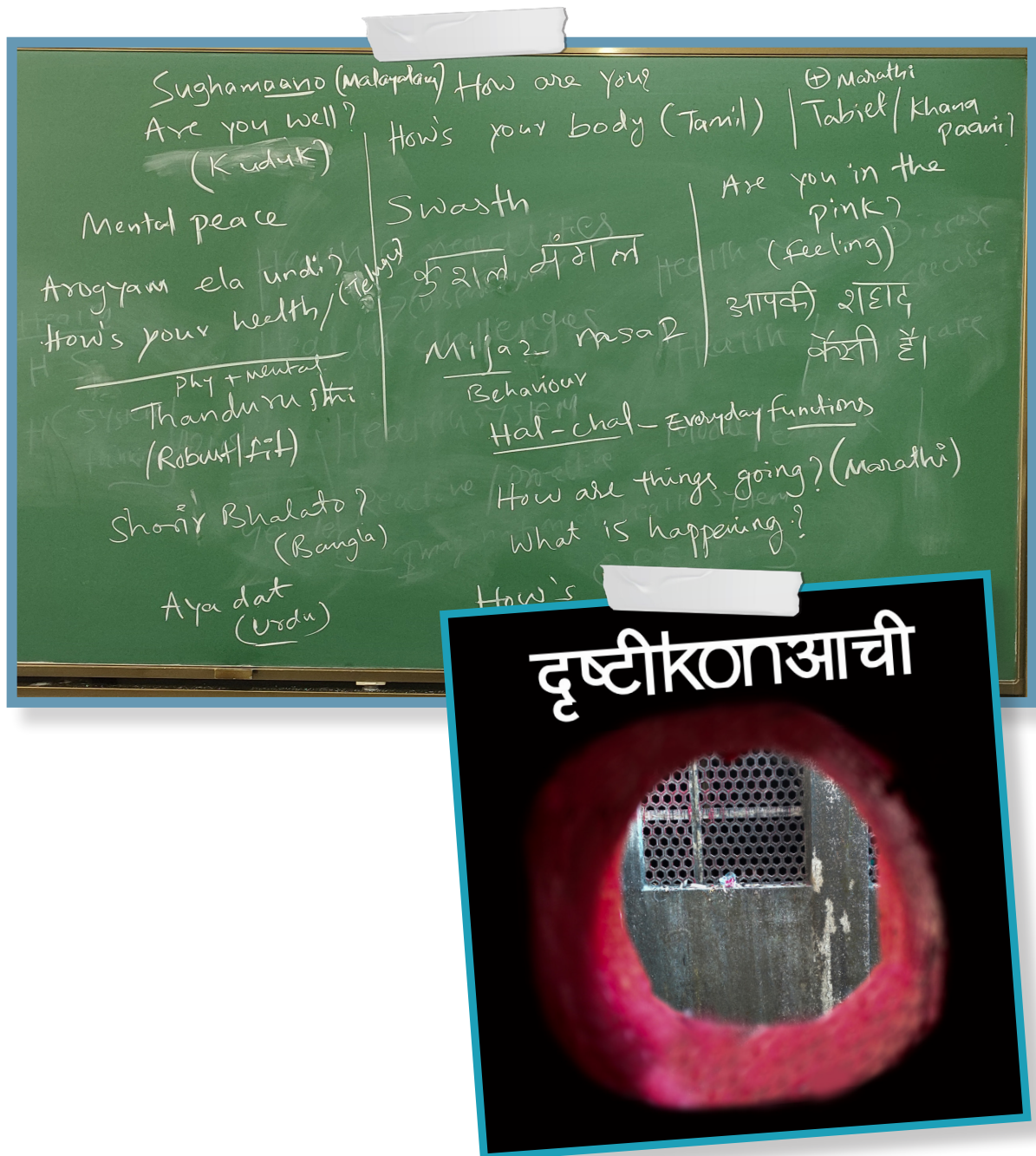
Note: Students' group assignment on an analysis of 'community' based mental health intervention initiated by a civil society organisation in West Bengal.

A more complicated challenge is “translating” a lot of what happens in the classroom into the developmental discourse that we produce invariably in an academic institution. Here, translation does not mean conveying an idea from one language into another language - it is a translation of worldviews, especially those that have been sidelined historically. We have realised that to be able to make pedagogy truly democratic we need to build new vocabularies around development itself. By vocabularies we mean disciplinary languages as well as experiences, worldviews and perspectives of development actors, participants (such as our students) and communities, especially the most marginal ones, on dimensions of development as expressed in their languages (spoken, written, drawn, etc.). The social and economic concepts such as caste, vulnerability or poverty discussed in the classroom are not alien topics happening somewhere outside, rather they are in the lived experience of the students in the classroom space itself.

This can make the classroom an uneasy space for both the student and the teacher-facilitator to navigate through these concepts and the real living experiences, bringing meaning to these terms. At times, we find that the meaning and importance of the term development itself is revisited in this process. Students have drawn attention to the limitations, complex applications of certain constructs (rather than linear approaches) or even challenged mainstream knowledge on development based on their individual and collective lived experiences. Students have asked why the readings on patriarchy do not adequately reflect contributions from Dalit feminists, why the literature from middle eastern countries don't have a place in the history of mental health, and many more.

Yet on other occasions, their own personal experiences and observations have also been challenged by engaging with certain theoretical constructs. A democratic classroom, in this sense, exists as a dynamic and fluid space of a multi-sided conversation.

The question of navigating vocabularies signals a journey of learning and unlearning for us as faculty members too as we continuously engage in conversations beyond our disciplinary training and/or engagement in practice.



Here is a poem written in Hindi by one of our students (2016-2018 batch) on searching for an answer to what development is. This search for an answer was triggered by his field immersion experience during semester I:

ऐ विकास तू रहता कहाँ

ऐ विकास तू रहता कहाँ ज़रा मुझे तू अपना पता बता
चला था मैं कुछ अनसुलझी सवालों के जवाब ढूँढने इस बात से बेखबर कि इस सफर में कुछ
नए सवाल ही खड़े हो जायेंगे ।
चला था मैं कुछ अनसुलझी पहेलियाँ सुलझाने के लिए इस बात से अनजान कि कुछ नई
पहेलियाँ ही मेरे रास्ते में आ खड़ी होंगी ।
होकर चला था मैं तैयार अपने अनुभवों को समेटे हुए एक अनजाने सफर पर इस बात से
बेखबर कि कुछ नए अनुभव ही मेरी जिंदगी का एक हिस्सा बन जायेंगे ।
होकर चला था मैं तैयार उगते सूरज की वो किरणें देखने जो इस जहाँ को रोशन कर देंगी
इस बात से बेखबर कि कुछ जगह तो अभी सिर्फ अँधेरी रातें ही हैं ।
होकर चला था मैं तैयार अपने नज़रिये से इस दुनिया को देखने के लिए इस बात से
अनजान कि ये दुनिया तो खुद ही एक नज़रिया है इस दुनिया को देखने का ।
होकर चला था मैं तैयार उस विकास को ढूँढने जिस विकास के बलबूते पर हम अपने देश को
दुनिया की महाशक्ति के रूप में देखना चाहते हैं इस बात से बेखबर कि ये विकास तो सिर्फ
कोरी कल्पनाओं में ही बसता है ।
ऐ विकास तू रहता कहाँ ज़रा मुझे तू अपना पता बता ।
मैं तो तुझे ढूँढने चला था उस किसान के खेत में जो खुद भूखा रहकर पूरे देश की भूख
मिटता है ।
मैं तो तुझे ढूँढने चला था उस मज़दूर के घर में जो बड़ी-बड़ी इमारतें बनाकर खुद एक छोटी
सी झोंपड़ी में रहने को मज़बूर है ।
मैं तो तुझे ढूँढता हुआ जा पंहुचा था उस घर में जहाँ दो वक्त की रोटी के लिए मासूम बच्चे
इंतज़ार करते दिखाई देते हैं ।

ऐ विकास तू रहता कहाँ ज़रा मुझे तू अपना पता बता ।
क्यों तू आँख मोड़ लेता है गाँव कि उन गलियों से जहाँ से गुजरते लोग हर पल ज़िन्दगी की
एक नई जंग लड़ रहे हैं ।
क्यों तू आँख मोड़ लेता है किसी गुमनाम सी जगह पर बैठे उस मासूम बच्चे के चेहरे से जो
अपने सपनों की एक नई उड़ान भरने का इंतज़ार कर रहा है ।
क्यों तू आँख मोड़ लेता है उन नदियों पर बाँध बनाकर जिन नदियों ने कभी रुकना नहीं
सीखा ।
क्यों तू आँख मोड़ लेता है उन जंगलों को जलाकर जो ज़रिया हैं न जाने कितने लोगों के
जीने का ।
क्यों तू आँख मोड़ लेता है ज़हर फैलाकर पर्वत और पहाड़ों पर बहती उन हवाओं में जो हर
पल हमें जीने का एक नया एहसास कराती हैं ।
ऐ विकास मैं पूछता हूँ तुझसे आज कब तक करेगा तू ये विकास!

Aman Walia,
MA in Development 2016-2018



O' Development, where do you stay?

*O' Development where do you stay?
Let me have your address*

*I was on a quest for finding answers to numerous unanswered questions
Without any hint
that
more questions will come up on the way*

*I was on my way to solve riddles
unaware of new puzzles coming my way
Gathering my experiences
I walked on an uncharted path
oblivious of new experiences that will be part of my life*

*I was prepared for the dawn,
the morning rays will enlighten the world
I didn't know the darkness of night scattered across many places
I went to see the world through my own lenses
unaware
the world in itself is a lens
to see and make sense*

*I was prepared to search development
that development in whose shadows we wish to see our nation as a super power*

*Alas!!
such development lives only in imagination*

*O' Development where do you stay?
Let me have your address
I went to see you in that farmer's cottage
who remains hungry to feed the nation*



*I went to see the mazdoor's home,
who makes these skyscrapers and yet
forced to live in drudged hovels*

*In search of you I reached a place
where innocent children wait for their square meals
O' Development, where do you stay?
Let me have your address*

*Why do you sidestep from the alleys
of those villages
where
the people struggle and fight for survival
every moment*

*Why do you turn your eyes from those nondescript places
where children are waiting
to give wings to their dreams*

*Why do you steer away after making dams on those rivers
who never learnt to remain static*

*Why do you escape putting fire to those forest
that was a way of life
for many inhabitants*

*Why do you evade those hills and mountains
after spreading poison in their air
The air,
that gave a new meaning to life
every moment*

*O' Development, I am asking you now
again
how long will you continue with this development!*

English translation by Amalendu Jyotishi
Faculty, School of Development, Azim Premji University



“Field in the classroom, classroom in the field²”

The overall approach to pedagogy and learning in the MA in Development programme at Azim Premji University is based on principles of reflexivity and the iterative nature of learning. Reflexivity here simply means that the “field” is not a place but an epistemological standpoint. Any student or researcher interested in development should appreciate that every text occurs in a context. The context matters in our understanding of developmental phenomena and possibilities. The field offers epistemological possibilities of complexity, uncertainty, unique contexts, and moral dilemmas that are central to understanding development as a process. Going back to Geertz (1973) and Hirschman (1967), however, it is important not to peculiarise and exoticise the field, rather every small observation should be linked with larger issues of development. This means the field comes back into the classroom in a structured manner and conversely, the classroom does appear in the field in terms of social and developmental realities. This also takes us to the idea of the iterative nature of learning. The integration of field learning into the “mainstream” of development studies is needed to appreciate that field learning is both inductive and deductive at the same time. Knowledge creation in this framework requires multiple engagements and iterations.

At the same time, realising ‘the field’ as an abstract concept is not an easy process to navigate. There are operational challenges in these iterative and interactive processes. Keeping these learnings in mind, the field as a site of knowledge is imagined in the MA in Development programme as a systematic and sequenced process with explicit learning outcomes. The engagement begins in the classroom and continues in the field. We initiate fieldwork with community learning and reflection (for 2 weeks) which emphasises observations and reflections – a journey of students in groups of ten or less immersing in the everyday contexts and lives of communities in different parts of India. This is to allow them to go beyond their familiar contexts and to ‘see’ realities from different perspectives within their own group of peers as much as from that of the community members in the fields. This idea of multiple perspectives is meant to speak to their initial learnings of perspectives from different disciplines in the first semester. This immersive field component is also a journey to look ‘within’ (beginning to understand what reflexivity means) to acknowledge their privileges, assumptions, as well as emotions. From this, the students move to working with an organisation for an extended period of 6 weeks. This internship component allows students to learn by ‘doing’ – being involved in live projects in the organisation. This is not just an exposure to a project but to critically reflect on problematisation, strategies, approaches and modalities of development action adopted in different

² Inspired and adapted from Rege (2010).

organisational contexts. Subsequently, towards the latter half of the programme, students take on an independent project which can be a piece of research or action, or intervention, or documentation using different media (text and audio-visual) for which they spend 8-10 weeks of time in the field (Figure 1). This last component of the field practice i.e., the field project offers students a wide range of opportunities to imagine, conceive and execute projects towards development practice. Students' projects range from formative research on invisible communities to building community library, designing arts-based sessions as part of geriatric care, training manual for students to generate sensitivity towards people with disabilities and many more. One of the students from the Oraon community took the field project opportunity to build a common library for people in her own community. She was clear about her motivation to take up this project:

“I wanted to open a community library. Not just for exams but for reading, stories and happiness. I wanted children to love books not fear them.”

(<https://ruralindiaonline.org/article/in-dooars-a-room-of-books>)

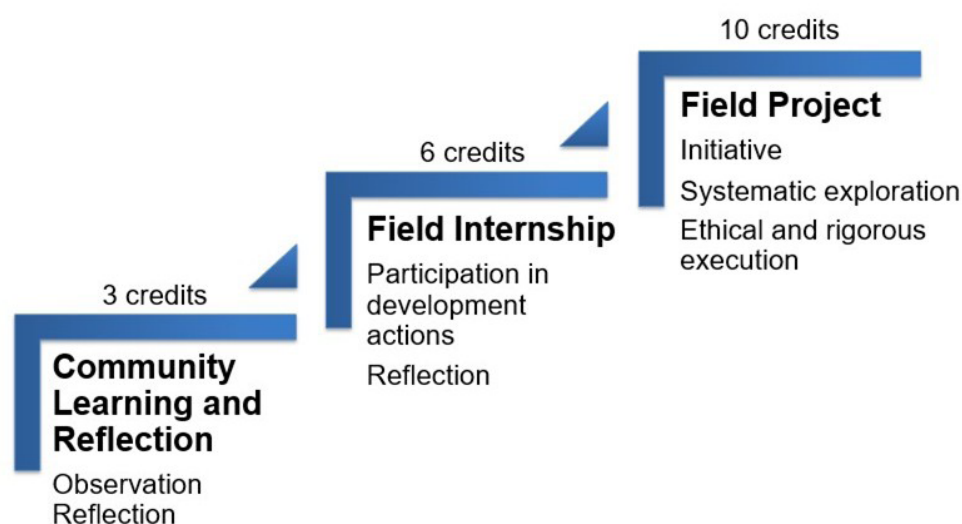


Figure 1: Field practice components in MA in Development programme

³ More details on our students' field practice related publications, see <https://azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/student-field-studies/field-practice-ma-development-students>

Facilitation of field learning with its uncertainties, surprises, and the learning outcomes which include dispositions of empathy, ethical sensibility, reflexivity is quite challenging. Yet affective component of learning is critical. Students take time to appreciate that articulating their confusions, frustrations, uncertainty and experiencing different emotions in the field are part of the learning itself. Below are few excerpts from students' field journals that capture some of these dimensions.

Excerpts from students' field journals



We were supposed to go at our allotted families in different villages today. I could sense fear and a lot of resistance inside me. I felt like I was thrown out of my comfort zone. The vehicle which took us dropped my friends first. On the way, I was thinking about how things would be, what all have I to do, how possibly the villagers would react. The van finally dropped us to our specific families. Breaking the ice was not tough; they were very open and approachable people. All the images I had in my mind that they would be orthodox and conservative wiped out immediately. I could not get their language easily as it was not pure Hindi, but a dialect called Dingri. I talked about the weather and cattle to start with. It took a little time to understand each other.

They were very curious about me. Women from the neighbourhood had come to see us. They asked me many questions. Questions were the last thing I expected from them. They enquired about my food habits. I got an overall sense that they were trying to relate to me as much as they could. They were very receptive about my gestures and answers. So, I had to be careful while answering. After a while I left to visit the neighbouring houses. We have so many pre-conceived notions about

how the village would be, how its people would be, how they would behave. Like my dressing, I was so concerned, what to wear? What must be acceptable? They are just curious more than us. I realised what cultural beliefs they have are confined to them. They do not expect us to follow them.

During my internship, the field coordinator from the organisation suggested that when I interact with officials and community representatives, I should not say my real name (least it will reveal my religious minority status) but a name that he suggested for me.

Throughout my field interactions I introduced myself with this pseudo name. I was conflicted between being sensitive to contexts and people (and hence it is ethical that I do not cause any harm to the field staff of the organisation as the external political environment was too volatile and vice versa as the organisation was worried about my safety) yet unethical within but more importantly how could we bring about social change to say the least mutual respect for all religions. What is ethical after all?

Though I prepared myself on how to create a non-judgemental space so that interaction with transgender communities does not trigger or contribute to their existing struggle. The first interview indeed challenged many assumption. The interaction reinforced the need to introspect my prior assumptions about concepts like transition, marginalisation.

Mere medical surgery cannot be called transition. The process of transition means different things to different people. The epiphany about the unified identity of transgender people not being represented by a single frame was imperative. The complexity of the community is not something that can be understood by the naked eye but I realise is a constant exercise of learning and unlearning.





The field components, through a gradual and iterative process, have made students go through a cognitive, affective churning which improves their preparedness to contribute to the world of development practice. Pedagogically while we have tried out many practices including dedicated workshops, detailed feedback on daily journals and debriefing sessions to cultivate both cognitive and affective dimensions of field learning, our challenges remain around developing a shared understanding of learning objectives of each of the field components among faculty members, students and organisations that host our students, structured (yet not too structured) continuing conversations between the field and the classrooms and assessing learning outcomes, for example: what assignments work best to assess if students have made efforts to reflect or developed a sense of empathy or even ethical sensibility?⁴

Finding a voice: Classroom as representative space

The question of representation in higher education is intricately linked with the emergence of plural voices in the social and discursive realms. In this way, a socially representative classroom is not an abstract term, rather it is central to social and political democracy. Democratising classrooms is important, not in the sense of numerical representation alone, but in its manner of enabling every voice to participate and flourish. The social character of education, the need for a truly democratic classroom in its very essence (not in composition alone), compels us to think about the question of experiences and their communication in the classroom more deeply. The play *Trutiya Ratna* by Jotiba Phule referred to earlier is written in a dialogical style, even though the play takes a strong subaltern standpoint. This is because social and educational philosophers have always understood education as a sphere of dialogue. Dewey (1915) considered a good and efficient society as one that fosters a new “socialization of mind which is actively concerned in making experiences more communicable; in breaking down the barriers of social stratification which make individuals impervious to the interests of others.” (Dewey 1915, p. 130, emphasis in original). Going further, Ambedkar defined “social endosmosis” as the possibility of exchange and fluidity between social groups that could eliminate “social isolation” experienced by deprived classes in a society (Kumar 2020). In this context, education is one of the few effective avenues that allows social endosmosis to take place.

⁴ Pedagogical reflections on nurturing an ethical sensibility in a health elective course are discussed in Mishra, A (2018) ‘Now we feel ethics is everywhere: Reflections on Teaching a Course on Ethics in Public Health Practice in Mishra, A and Subbiah K (eds) *Ethics in Public health Practice in India*. Singapore: Springer



It is extremely important to note that Dewey and Ambedkar speak about the communication of “experiences” and a new socialisation of the “mind” rather than transmission of facts and/or conditions of life of various segments of society. It is the effective communication of experiences that creates the conditions for the emergence of empathy and solidarity. Education, then, is reconceptualised an aspect of democracy itself (Kumar 2004).

The MA in Development programme (like other programmes) at Azim Premji University, takes the question of a socially representative classroom very seriously. Our applicant pool and classroom reflects this: about 40 percent are female and a small proportion represent other genders; about 75 percent come from low-income households; about 70 percent belong to scheduled and backward castes, tribes and minority communities; about 40 percent have completed higher secondary education in vernacular medium; and almost 45 percent describe their families’ primary occupation as agricultural labour or unskilled workers in the informal sector. Beyond socio-economic diversity, our classrooms represent regional diversity with students from almost 25 states in India.

Such representation from diverse regional and socio-economic backgrounds does not happen automatically. This is a result of careful design, outreach, making the admission process inclusive, and wherever there is a need, providing students with financial assistance. The admission criteria focus on dispositions to work broadly in the social sector, academic aptitude and preparedness for higher education keeping the diversity in mind instead of the usual criteria of elimination. Our students have shared what an admission to the university has meant for them: for some, it is a milestone in their journey to be proud first-generation learners, for others who have dared to break away from social norms of early marriage it offers a fulfilling path forward and for some others, it is a conscious choice to come here and do something more meaningful in their lives as the programme has an explicit social purpose.

The key question becomes how do we operationalise values of equity, inclusion in our classrooms? How do we enable a learning environment that is itself transformative for students, specifically those who come from historically marginalised sections of the society where many of them are first-generation learners? For us and the students, equity, social justice, humaneness are not distant intellectual concepts to learn from writings of political thinkers alone but they need to be ‘seen’ and ‘felt’ in the classroom setting itself. Our pedagogical practices reflect a constant endeavour towards this. These include several experiential tools such as Power Walks, Gender Games, Climate Games to allow students to experience different social locations



and appreciate the ‘what’ and ‘why’ of injustices observed in terms of unequal distribution of resources in a society - thus distinguishing inequity from inequality. However, simulations can take us only this far. Our struggles in fostering equity in the classroom itself are not free from challenges and dilemmas. Considering the diversity of the student cohort - where to pitch a discussion so that all students remain motivated; balancing between nudging students to participate and their feeling of being ‘singled out’; traversing through languages and worldviews; are part of these struggles and challenges. For many students, being part of an educational environment where each student matters, their questions, ideas, and viewpoints are valued, each student has his/her/their own learning journey is an empowering but awkward journey as many come from a prior educational experience that does the opposite. No formal ranking of students nor any public display of grades is an integral part of the conception and design of this university. Students do go through a rite of passage across the four semesters in their learning journey.

For example, one of our male students who hailed from a marginalised caste and class had done his undergraduate studies in agricultural science in vernacular medium shared this with his faculty mentor:

“

“Ma’am if you remember when I was in my first semester, I hardly spoke in the class. I was unable to comprehend the academic readings, forget about critical thinking. Marx, Weber, Rawls sounded alien to me. I kept thinking I did not belong here. I used to get nervous when others spoke so fluently in English in the class discussion. But now (in his last semester) I feel I really belong to this university. This is my space.”

”



We have been part of countless student journeys defined by resilience amidst personal and academic challenges. Although we meticulously select resources and pedagogies to ensure an inclusive environment, we acknowledge that the classroom is an evolving process rather than a flawless product. Students' encounter with such diversity in the first semester is unsettling, intimidating, and challenging (intellectually, socially and culturally). For some students, patriarchy/feminism or even gender fluidity is standard vocabulary. For others, while the ideas some of these terms represent might be familiar, the vocabulary is new to them. Yet while certain vocabulary might sound familiar, going beyond just the familiarity to ground these concepts in different sets of experiences of the peer groups discussed in the class can be equally unnerving.

In our MA in Development programme, from day one of the programme orientation, students learn how their own life experiences and the experiences of their peers (including of the faculty) are sites of knowledge and the fact that each student's experience is equally valued. This message itself is quite revolutionary for many students who have been forced to suppress sharing their life experiences in what Freire calls a "culture of silence". However, appreciation does not automatically empower students to share these experiences without inhibition. Therefore, students share not in the collective space of the classroom but in the individual setting of their interaction with faculty members during office hours. It takes several months for many students to value and consider their own experiences as being worth sharing with others. Even while students wish to share their experiences, they struggle to have the relevant vocabulary to express themselves. It is an equally challenging task for many students from relatively privileged backgrounds to relate to these experiences. One student, while narrating his experience of getting financial assistance from a political representative, shared how he was shunned when the representative got to know that he lived in a slum. It was the initial days of the first semester when students were settling down and this statement that he lived in a slum led to an uncomfortable silence in the class. Although students knew about the diversity in the classroom, a few did not expect this. At the same time, some others were silently encouraged to reveal where they came from. In another instance, a student genuinely shared this concern with the faculty member outside the class:

"I appreciated the heated discussions in the class and understood why few of my classmates were so emotional about the discussion on reservation (policy). But I genuinely want to know beyond trying to understand and listen to them, what else should I do? Frankly speaking, I have never faced any of these, so I don't know how caste really matters."

So, the challenge is not only about encouraging students to share their experiences but about how to help them relate to each other's experiences.



Experiences are drawn not just for class discussions but also form an important component of contextual learning which is reflected in the design of assignments. Students can take the opportunity offered by individual assignments to not just relate to their experiences with the concepts, ideas, and theories but to also make it a liberating space towards true democratic gains. By this we mean that assignments can themselves become a means for representing the knowledge and experience of their own communities or reversing the gaze of the powerful. For example, a girl student from a nomadic community took up an independent field project on experiences and implications of invisible social isolation during menstruation in her own community. She was clear that while her own observations and experiences draw attention to invisible social isolation, literature mostly focuses on visible isolation through menstrual huts so both the social phenomena and the community settings she knows are ill-represented in the articulation of gender, stigma and menstruation. Many students pick up projects to make sense of, and possibly do something about, what otherwise would appear to be only ad hoc personal experiences and observations.

In another instance, a student from a Dalit caste took up one such assignment for a qualitative research methods course. It was on how the upper caste students have engaged with caste in the class discussions, readings, and in the student clubs where caste-based oppression, historical neglect, everyday caste norms, caste-based movements etc., have been explicitly discussed. He wanted to explore students' perceptions on caste and if these have changed at all, either intellectually or in everyday practice, including in family settings. Irrespective of the outcome, the idea of an assignment like this can itself be truly empowering for many students.

Yet for many of us, we have wondered how far we should go in leveraging the lived experiences of students from diverse backgrounds to enrich the class discussions and make concepts/constructs more situated. One of the faculty members shares this:

"One of the dilemmas I am facing is that on the one hand we encourage students to connect concepts and constructs with their own experiences in their assignments, yet while learning about what their experiences are and what they have gone or going through, I am not sure what is my role as a facilitator? While I appreciate their ability to comprehend a concept through the way they have elucidated it with their experiences, does my role end here? Should I/we be doing anything to ameliorate in some ways their situations?"

-A faculty member during a core course team meeting on the course on 'Social Interventions'



Our challenge is also about the language of instruction in and beyond the classroom. Our outreach activities take place in rather unusual locations: non-metropolitan and mofussil centres. We provide extensive support (called the bridge programme) for potential applicants and students. After they join, the Academic Resource Centre (ARC) extends substantial support in language, academic reading and writing skills. In the classroom, we encourage sharing of experiences in all languages possible (with the possibility of cross translation). However, the effort continues in the direction of making every student comfortable in English as we know language is a form of power. Students who otherwise can comprehend and relate to concepts, for example Weber's concept of bureaucracy to their everyday struggle of getting a ration card or Mill's sociological imagination through their family's experiences of farming distress, they find it difficult to share it in the classroom lest they be judged for their lack of fluency in spoken English. One student shared how she managed to speak in the class and her confidence increased manifold when other students clapped.

Another student made this request as part of his first Sociology of Development assignment in Semester 1:

I have written the response paper but please try to “understand what I wish to convey” (samajh jana me kya bolna chahata hun) and not go by what I have written. You know me (referring to his active participation in the class where he shares experiences in Hindi) so please grade accordingly.

Even while our assignments assess the effort, and not necessarily language sophistication, the legibility of ideas in English remains important. As facilitators we have struggled to do justice to the objective of the assignment and the learning outcomes while empathising with students' historical struggle with English language. How do we distinguish between difficulty in language from difficulty in comprehending while grading an assignment? For us, ensuring that all students find a voice as part of their learning journey is not a one-time assignment but a consistent effort which requires trying out a range of pedagogical practices. In our quest to expand and democratise our classrooms, we have faced challenges, we have succeeded and we have failed in equal measures.





In lieu of a conclusion: Teaching and practice of development

What does all this mean for us, the teachers and practitioners of development in India, South Asia and the Global South? Our experience shows that taking the question of education as a social process seriously allows us to make sense of our vocation: in its sociological and moral-ethical sense. Such a framework of thinking about pedagogy requires that we teachers and practitioners do not see ourselves as authoritative sources and sole torchbearers of knowledge. This is extremely important because in our society teaching-learning processes have historically accorded such a place to academicians and senior practitioners. The plurality associated with the site of knowledge is an important consideration, especially so in development education, to imagine and translate knowledge through a democratic, dignified, and inclusive process. Democratisation of the classroom and opening of the process of epistemological enquiry are natural outcomes of our standpoint.

Lastly, there is a need to “theorise” more on the implications of the changing nature of classrooms, social composition of the University and especially the way educational spaces can integrate centuries-old divide between knowledge/theory and practice in the realm of social action.



References

- Acharya, Poromesh (1997). Educational Ideals of Tagore and Gandhi. *Economic & Political Weekly*. Vol. 32, No. 12 (Mar. 22-28, 1997), pp. 601-606.
- Aronson, Alex (1961). Tagore's Educational Ideals. *International Review of Education*, Vol. 7, No. 4, pp. 385-393.
- Azim Premji University (2024) Alumni Stories: Social Entrepreneurs. Bangalore: Azim Premji University <https://azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/alumni-stories>.
- Dewey, J. (2004). *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*. New Delhi: Aakar Books.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (1903). *The Souls of Black Folk*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Giroux, Henry (1988). *Teachers as Intellectuals: Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Learning*. London: Bloomsbury Academic
- Gundi M, Sharma S. Public health perspectives on mental health: Reflections from teaching. *Indian J Med Ethics*. 2024 Jul-Sep; IX (3):241-244. doi: 10.20529/IJME.2024.018. PMID: 39183621.
- Hickey-Moody, Anna, Glenn C. Savage & Joel Windle (2010) Pedagogy writ large: public, popular and cultural pedagogies in motion, *Critical Studies in Education*, 51:3, 227-236, DOI: 10.1080/17508487.2010.508767.
- Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. 30th anniversary edition, New York: Continuum.
- Ilich, Ivan (1971). *Deschooling Society*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Kabir, Humayun (1956). Continuity of Tradition in Indian Educational Thought. *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 13-33.
- Kumar, K. (2005). *Political Agenda of Education: A Study of Colonialist and Nationalist Ideas*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Mukherjee, Arun P. (2009). B. R. Ambedkar, John Dewey, and the Meaning of Democracy. *New Literary History*, Vol. 40, No. 2, India and the West (SPRING 2009), pp. 345-370.

- 
- Mukherjee, K. C. (1970). Tagore-Pioneer in Education. British Journal of Educational Studies, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp. 69-81.
 - Omvedt, Gail (1971). Jotirao Phule and the Ideology of Social Revolution in India. Economic & Political Weekly, Vol. 6, No. 37, pp. 1969-1979.
 - Rege, Sharmila (2010). Education as “Trutiya Ratna”: Towards Phule-Ambedkarite Feminist Pedagogical Practice. Economic & Political Weekly, Vol. 45, No. 44/45, pp. 88-98.
 - Willis, Paul. (1977). Learning to Labour. How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs. Farnborough: Saxon House

*This note is written by Awanish Kumar, Arima Mishra and Amalendu Jyotishi.
Our sincere thanks to our colleagues Madhuri Ramesh, Mukta Gundi,
Nilotpal Kumar and Richa Govil for their review and suggestions.*



Pedagogical Practices in the MA in Development Programme





1. Teaching gender to learn, unlearn and practice

Nilanjana Sengupta

nilanjana.sengupta@apu.edu.in

This note focuses on teaching gender to students of development and development practitioners especially in the context of Azim Premji University. It picks up three key issues: gender teaching as a process of reflexivity and introspection; as a process that transforms the space of a classroom; as a process that teaches us to dismantle as well as build through a pragmatic approach.

Pedagogical practices in gender focus on both objective and embodied learning which comprise not only analysis and perspective building but also introspection, learning, un-learning and reflection on one's own social location and relation with the world. For decades, feminist scholars and educators have advocated for a transformative pedagogy that dismantles hierarchy and encourages dialogue, participation and critical thinking (Hooks, 1994). This becomes especially significant in a classroom space such as Azim Premji University where students come from various socio-economic and regional backgrounds bringing diverse experiences and diverse forms of knowledge. Academic reading and writing is limited in its ability to draw out the potential of every student since many of them are first generation learners from remote regions who have not had the benefit of quality education. In this regard, I have found cultural expressions, whether written, oral, visual or performative especially powerful. Our classes have sometimes started with cultural expressions; students reading poems, excerpts of writings in regional languages, songs associated with folk traditions or resistance movements associated with their regions, identities, and collective struggles. This provides a bridge for students to connect to critical discourse and each other's contexts. It also evokes emotion as a powerful tool of pedagogy. De Jong, Icaza, and Rutazibwa (2019) in their writings have also highlighted how emotion remains critical to feminist pedagogy, enabling bridge-building creation of spaces for sharing and communicating in the classroom. In the gender and development classrooms, cultural expressions in the form of skits, documentary film making, posters, song writing, etc., have also been part of the assessment process. In this case it has not only enabled better sharing and introspection, but also better contribution from each participant based on their strengths and interests. Someone shot and edited the film, someone acted or composed, someone drew and wrote—while everyone participated in the basic brainstorming and scripting of the presentation.

Another interesting experiment has been following the story of a hypothetical 'family' through various units of the course. The course would open with a case study where we would introduce a microcosm of a 'family' - wife Kalidasi, husband



Pintu and their girl and boy child -navigating various developmental issues and challenges. The family could initially be debating gender division of labour within and outside the household. It could be then bargaining over gendered access to resources and property. Given the family's social and economic location, it would experience challenges in employment, resources, education and skills, health facilities, at the intersections of caste, class, gender and ableism. Different economic and social phenomena, and shocks such as pandemic, accidents at the factory, globalisation, informality, government schemes would result in various experiences of different family members. We could also queer the concept of the family or introduce experiences of disability to examine how development often bypasses or marginalises certain identities. Sometimes worksheets would be based on the case study of the family to understand how it navigates the changing socio-economic world around it. Having the unit of family as an anchor through the course often helped in breaking down complex macro concepts and examining the impact of macro phenomena such as subcontracting or global value chain and understanding how it relates to people on the ground.

Teaching gender is not only about creating knowledge and perspectives but transforming the classroom as a space through questioning hierarchies, understanding multiple standpoints, creating solidarities without effacing specific identities, and encouraging reflexivity and curiosity. For example, no question is a wrong question, the teacher is not infallible, and everyone brings something new to the table. Pronouns of people are not assumed and students and the teacher endeavour to create an inclusive space in terms of language, knowledge materials and exposure visits. Thus, knowledge is produced through not just academic lectures, but debates, discussions, experience sharing, cultural expressions including literature, theatre and cinema, and very importantly exposure visits to sites and people of practice. For example, while teaching about women's labour and informality, it is important to meet actual informal workers, whether vendors, textile workers or waste pickers and ask them about their unrecognised and underpaid labour both in the sphere of production and social reproduction. Pedagogy in this course has involved meeting workers, observing them at their sites of work and understanding from them their stories of struggle and survival. This then dismantles the hierarchy of knowledge production since it recognises lived experiences and stories of practice as legitimate sites of knowledge.

Whenever doing group work, there has been an emphasis on cooperation and not perfection or competition. But this also means dealing with the question of how, as a collective, one can respond to a student not contributing to group work. For example, if a student is not contributing as much as others, why is this so? Are there some debilitating circumstances involved such as health issues or some personal crisis? Is the form of presentation or group dynamics intimidating the student in



question? How can this challenge be resolved or accommodated? This implies that group work is a space of learning responsibility with empathy, learning to look for solutions, working from each person's place of strength towards a collective goal. So, whether it is an academic presentation or a cultural expression, the process becomes as important as the output. Such questions are not simply classroom questions. These also shape understanding of how community institutions such as Self-help Groups (SHGs) work. When does the group cover for a defaulter and when does it call her out? What ethical perspectives enable alignment of the personal with the collective?

Finally, we reflect on what it means to teach in a programme that prepares students to become practitioners on the ground. How do we teach gender in a way that helps us to dismantle patriarchy but understand pragmatically the ground on which this work has to be carried out? How do we build hope and pragmatism in the face of longstanding resistant patriarchies? How do we work with and within institutions that have been historically patriarchal, whether it is the state or the market? Case studies of actual interventions, discussions with practitioners on the ground and frameworks of gender integration then become necessary to pedagogy. For example, as a practitioner, students will be working across various programmes such as livelihoods, health and education. A key objective of the gender and development course is creating perspectives and skills of integrating gender within these development programmes and organisations. Such integration cannot happen overnight. Given resistant patriarchies at the intersection of caste, ethnicity and other oppressive systems, such processes require time, and multiple strategies. Thus, one needs an understanding of graduation, multiple strategies based on context, and institutional engagement for sustained journeys of change. One cannot really sustain a gender responsive or transformative programme on the ground without engaging local institutions and communities. Thus, pedagogy must encompass theory, policy, and practice for creating abilities in our students to engage with gender issues on the ground.

References

- De Jong, S., Icaza, R., & Rutazibwa, O. (Eds.). (2019). *Decolonization and feminisms in global teaching and learning*. New York: Routledge.
- Hooks, b. (2014). *Teaching to transgress*. Routledge.

2. Affect and belongingness as pedagogy: Personal reflections of a teacher

Smitana Saikia

smitana.saikia@apu.edu.in

In my elective course, ‘Democracy and development in India’s Northeast’, a student spoke with genuine exasperation, “But why did she want to join an organisation that wants to separate from India!” We were discussing a text on women’s participation in insurgency movements in the region. I chose this text not only to give students a context of various political conflicts in the region but to also, through these instances, push them to think of women’s agency in newer/ different ways. This course is designed exactly for that purpose- to bring in alternate/ peripheral/ lesser-known perspectives on questions of democracy and development. We also wrestle with questions of belongingness in the course. Given the northeast has had contentious political and cultural relations with the Indian state and the national imaginary, we try to explore different ways in which people can belong to the idea of India. Given the readings are eclectic, in this course students seem excited, challenged and intrigued. But did they feel they belong to this course, especially the ones who had less familiarity with the northeast borderland of India? They can intellectually grasp these ideas, but can they truly develop empathy (in the absence of lived experience) for the people and the cultures they are reading about?

While navigating some of these pedagogic¹ challenges, in the third iteration of this course, I decided to conduct an activity to facilitate questions about identity and belonging and what better way to do it than with the metaphor of food! Of course this activity involved having a meal together, consisting of popular delicacies from the northeast- pork cooked with dry bamboo shoot, akhuni (fermented soy bean paste) and Naga king chilli; Manipuri signature chutney called Eromba (fermented fish called Ngari, boiled vegetables, local aromatic herbs) and other such indigenous dishes of the region². Since food has a universal quality of evoking emotions (happiness, shame etc.) and memories, the activity aimed to centre the sensory (smells, tastes, textures) experience of eating, as a way to enhance feelings of ‘belongingness’ to the

¹ I borrow Kouri-Towe (2023, p. 192) in that “teaching and learning is as much an affective activity, as it is a cognitive or disciplinary one.”

² As Naga anthropologist Dolly Kikon argues in her work, food is central to articulating belongingness among communities in the Northeast region, and the strong pungent flavours and aromas are deeply embedded in the politics of difference that many communities in the region inhabit.



course itself. Students were later required to produce a zine related to the topic.

While this was just an experiment, I was pleasantly surprised by the detailed stories about personal experiences and memories of food, family recipes of dishes that were personal favourites but publicly shamed, food being a social divider but food also being an expression of cultural identity and belongingness to one's community. Upon reflection, I feel this simple activity had managed to do something that many of my classroom discussions (especially conversations devoid of affect) could not. Through these zines, students were expanding their understanding of how belonging can be so powerful, and yet contested; it can bring together groups but also 'othering' them. I believe this activity came close to creating a space of 'radical empathy', to borrow from African American scholar Terri Givens (2021), in that it created space not only to hold the stories of others and put oneself in the shoes of another, but also a space to reflect on one's own possible biases. Givens insists that radical empathy requires that those torn by polarisation or difference enter the conversation with vulnerability. I believe my students showed immense courage by being vulnerable (in their zines), and through it seemed they felt they belonged to the course and to the classroom.

References

- Kouri-Tore, N. (2023). *Affective Pedagogies and Pedagogies of Affect: Gender, Solidarity and Classroom in the Trigger Warning Debates*. In Todd W. Reeser (ed.). *Routledge Companion to Gender and Affect*. New York: Routledge. pp. 188-198.
- Givens, T. E. (2021). *Radical Empathy: Finding a Path to Bridging Racial Divides*. Bristol University Press.
- Kikon, D. (2015). *Fermenting Modernity: Putting Akhuni on the Nation's Table in India*. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 38(2), 320–335. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2015.1031936>

3. Teaching field ethics through reflection and community building

Juhi Tyagi, Amalendu Jyotishi and Rajesh Joseph

juhi.tyagi@apu.edu.in, amalendu.jyotishi@apu.edu.in, rajesh.joseph@apu.edu.in

Ethics constitutes values that people hold, although sometimes with little awareness. Further, values are not only individual; they exist at various levels, such as the organisation and the society at large. At the university we define our task as aligning these multiple layers of values to arrive at dynamic as well as cognitively and affectively valuable ethical stances for the field. To reach a common set of values that are compounding and interlaced, we rely on a pedagogy that is based on collective, as opposed to individual exercises, and tools that prioritise reflection and intentional community building rather than prescriptive regulations.

While the MA in Development programme teaches ethics at various stages in a student's life cycle through theoretical and experimental methods in the classroom, the Institutional Review Board (hereafter IRB) culminates and furthers these learnings to account for changing field situations in students' own field projects. Placed in the second year of the programme, the IRB process is organised through collective, non-hierarchical dialogues and communication that help build a community capable of engaging in cooperative inquiry to arrive at a common set of values through several steps.

Firstly, students and reviewers (faculty members mentoring students' projects) are oriented to the multiple ethical situations encountered in the process of development research in the Indian context. This is facilitated through large collective sessions where cases developed with students and faculty over the years are shared, creating space through the Socratic method of arriving at ethical boundaries between researchers and participants. These sessions cover ways of understanding and respecting participant dignity and confidentiality, as well as understanding the risks and complexities of giving consent. Reviewers also become aware of their own ethical frameworks and the boundaries they need to maintain in their roles. Secondly, the entire academic community goes through multiple rounds of dialogues as shown in Figure 1. Students not only speak to one another but also engage in several rounds of discussion with their project mentors. Once approved, the reviewers review the ethical forms independently and subsequently consult with one another to arrive at a consensus. Their feedback encourages constructive, reflective inquiry by posing questions, allowing students to think rather than prescriptive statements. The IRB anchor serves as an ombudsman who, when needed, steps in to facilitate an alignment of dialogues (and values) between students, mentors, reviewers, organisations (where applicable), and the community.

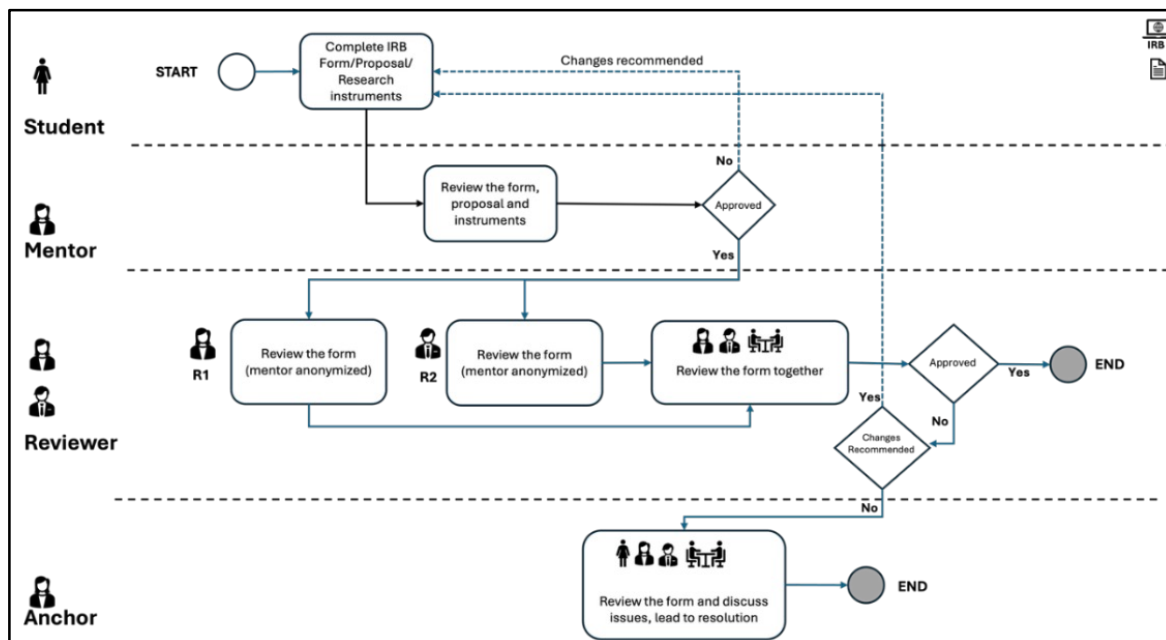


Figure 1: Outlining the organisation of the IRB process

Thirdly, to enable an honest and open process of dialogue and reflection, all members' (faculty and reviewers) names are kept confidential with only the name of the student — who is the primary investigator — becoming available. Considering the size of the exercise — involving over 200 students carried out over one month — the attempt in this non-hierarchical communication is to build an intentional community open to questions from one another, where accountability is not pinned solely on an individual and processes are arrived at together. The resulting collective processes lead to questions in the IRB form (shown in Picture 1) that are developed through several rounds of feedback from students, faculty, organisations and communities to account for the different project types and diverse data collection methods.

7. **If yes, Certification of Awareness of Legal Obligations (POCSO Act, 2012):**
If your research involves children (persons below 18 years of age), you are required to be aware of and comply with the provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012.
Please confirm the following:

- I hereby certify that I have read, understood, and will comply with the provisions of the POCSO Act, 2012.
- I understand my mandatory reporting obligations under the Act in the event that I become aware of any instance of child abuse or exploitation during the course of my research.

☐ **Yes, I certify that I have read and understood the POCSO Act, 2012.**

8. Does your project involve any sensitive populations such as people with special needs, disabilities etc?

[Note: If yes, please explain what specific challenges and needs your participants may have. This does not include minors] [Word limit: 100 words]

9. For the current study what tools will you be using to communicate/engage with your project participants/collect data/ pilot the intervention? (eg. Interviews, FGDs, observation, surveys, telephonic interviews, online tools such as google form, chat apps, video platforms, social media or other technology)

[Word limit: 300]

10. In case of intervention projects, if you plan to develop and use any materials, tools, or modules as part of the intervention, do any of these contain content that could be considered sensitive, potentially distressing, or ethically/legally risky (e.g., topics related to violence, trauma, sexuality, mental health etc.)? Please elaborate a) how you will assess and review such materials for appropriateness before they are introduced to participants b) who will be responsible for vetting or approving the content (e.g., experts, ethics committees, institutional authorities), and what criteria will be used in this process?

Picture 1: A snapshot of the ethics form (questions 7-10)

Similarly, FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) have been developed over the years through discussions with students and faculty. These introduce such topics as positionality, verbal and written consent, and how to think about photographing passersby and buildings in addition to people, among other topics.

In sum, the School of Development hopes to encourage students to take up critical questions in development that could involve risks while balancing ethical considerations. We do this by using the pedagogical tools of reflection and community building to not only discuss the fundamentals of ethics but to arrive at values that are cognitively and affectively meaningful. This raises the skills of students to reflect, dialogue, and articulate ethical considerations. Although this is an evolving process, with all stakeholders learning and growing with each iteration, its collaborative and non-hierarchical nature helps our students learn how to become responsible practitioners who can arrive at dynamic ethical frameworks through iterative processes on the ground.



4. Nurturing empathy through praxis: Field practice pedagogy

Asim Siddiqui, Edward Premdas Pinto, Alok Ranjan

asim.siddiqui@apu.edu.in, edward.pinto@apu.edu.in, alok.ranjan@apu.edu.in

In the pursuit of preparing students to be development practitioners with ethical sensitivity, the MA in Development programme at Azim Premji University, has centrally located empathy in its curricular objectives as ‘empathetically engage with lived realities of individuals and communities as sites of development knowledge and practice’.

There has been an increasing emphasis on developing relational and affective capacities in professionals and on the need of cultivating empathetic dispositions among students in universities (Walker & McLean, 2013; Boler, 1999). It is acknowledged that empathy enables individuals to ethically engage with the lived realities of communities and is essential for development practice (Nussbaum 2011). However, cultivating, and nurturing empathy among students has several challenges. Empathy is affective and relational in nature, emotional exposure can generate fatigue in students, and it can end in tokenistic learning without ethical internalisation. There are inadequate measures and pedagogical tools both to teach and nurture empathy, and those that exist are not easy and forthcoming as developing cognitive capabilities.

The Field Practice (FP) courses of MA in Development offer pedagogical insights through the trajectory of field-based courses that not only integrate theory and practice but also embed the learning processes to cultivate empathy through a harmonious blend of cognitive, affective, and experiential aspects of learning. This note aims to describe and reflect on the pedagogical pathways that focus on cultivating empathy through programmatically designed three distinct, inter-related and complementing components. The FP courses comprise Community Learning and Reflection, Field Internship, and Field Project that allow for a cyclical engagement with reading about developmental contexts, engaging with communities in-person, reflecting on one’s experience, mentoring from faculty and then refining one’s comportment towards communities that they intend to work with.

The FP courses themselves are located in the broader pedagogical perspectives of the university where classroom teaching and FP courses are conceptualised as integrated and iterative. The field is envisioned as the site of knowledge and practice.



Nurturing the perspectives and dispositions of empathy are envisaged to be gauged incrementally in students facilitated through mentoring by faculty members. Field practice provides students with real-life experiences, encounters to challenge their thinking, leading to critical reflections and introspection. The pedagogical process of enabling student learning entails continuous engagement and building a triangular relationship with the partner (host) organisation, the University (faculty and students), and the community.

Such a journey with student cohorts, though rewarding, as we can see the growth of the students over two years, however, is intensive. It is founded on the premise of nurturing and balancing a delicate triangular relationship between university (faculty, enabling functions) development organisations, and student cohorts.

5. Teaching sustainability in agriculture in MA in Development programme

M. Manjula and Divya Sharma

manjula.m@apu.edu.in, divya.sharma@apu.edu.in

Education for sustainable development identifies five priority action areas and various competencies that universities must address through their academic programmes. The ‘Sustainable Agriculture and Development’ course at Azim Premji University is aligned with these priority areas and competencies. The course aims to equip students of development with ideas of sustainability in agriculture. Concerns of sustainability of agriculture arise out of the need to nurture and promote agricultural systems, technologies, and practices that are environmentally benign, socially inclusive, and economically viable. The pedagogy in the course recognises the knowledge practice- policy interconnectedness. Competencies for sustainable development are nested within these broad dimensions (Figure 1)

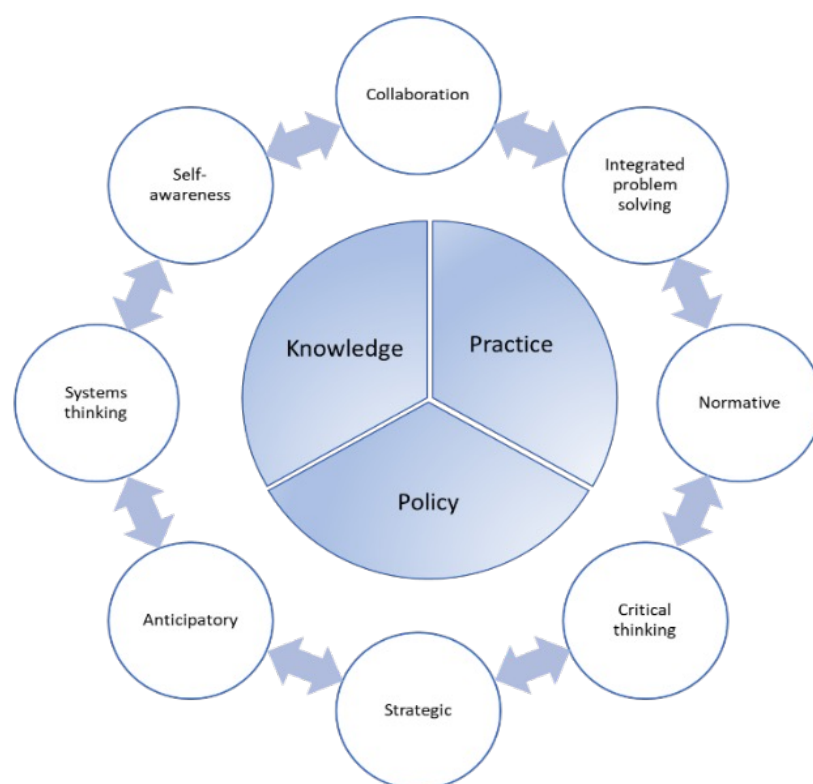


Figure 1: Framework for pedagogy: Knowledge, policy, and practice

The course has a balanced mix of theory and practice. Students engage in theorising and conceptualisation through perspective building, discourse analysis and hands-on operationalisation of the meta concept of sustainability. The course exposes them to varied systems of agriculture, the opportunity to assess production systems on the sustainability framework, and hands-on experience at farming. It also exposes them to the role of government, civil society, grass root agencies and markets in the sustainable agriculture space. This is imparted through expert talks, sharing of experiences of programmes, and discussion of field based real case studies. The case studies help students to critically reflect on the efforts by the different actors of development in making agriculture sustainable.

On-field exposure and hands-on practice in farming are integral elements in the pedagogy. Students are required to apply the learning from classes to assess sustainability of different farming systems through observation and interaction with the farmers. The course overall equips the students to reflect on the relevance of agriculture for development, issues of agricultural sustainability, existing constraints, and opportunities for promoting sustainable agriculture. The role of different actors of development – government, civil society, markets - are dealt with. At the end of the course, the students apply the learnings from the course and develop a blueprint for transformation to sustainable agricultural systems



in select geographies/agro-ecologies. It has been widely accepted that the competencies required for sustainable development are systems thinking, anticipatory, normative, strategic, collaboration, critical thinking, self-awareness, and integrated problem solving.

The pedagogy of the course can be broadly classified into domains of knowledge, practice, and policy. The knowledge domain emphasises building basic concepts and perspectives related to sustainability and agricultural systems. This is transacted over four modules in the course. The practice domain emphasises engaging with the concepts learnt in the previous module and applying them in real-life situations. This is transacted over five modules. The policy domain exposes the students to various agriculture related policies, the political economy of policy formulation, and aspects of implementation. It orients the students to issues of intersectionality and inclusion challenges in sustainable agriculture.

We have faced several challenges too. Engaging with the idea of sustainability requires a comprehensive understanding of phenomena that may not have visibility in the immediate future. In developing countries, where agricultural issues revolve primarily around food and livelihood security, talking about sustainability feels far removed from issues that are now and here.

The equity question, the responsibility and accountability to ensure sustainability is a major bone of contention. Students debate why this burden needs to be passed on to marginal farmers (less than two hectares of land), whose contribution to the problem is negligible.

These are philosophical questions, which have no tailormade right answers. During the course, students are nudged to learn and unlearn a lot of concepts and viewpoints. These competencies require questioning one's own learning pathways and mental models accumulated over the past, which at times, leaves the students confused. The sustainability paradigm makes it difficult to reach and offer a quick solution, as the competencies require facilitation of openness and inclusion, where consensus building is challenging but is fruitful in the longer run. The course on sustainable agriculture and development aims to build the competencies to challenge the old thought patterns and create room for openness and inclusivity.

Note: *This paper has been published in W. Leal Filho et al. (eds. 2024), The Contribution of Universities Towards Education for Sustainable Development, World Sustainability Series, Springer Nature, Switzerland.*



6. Teaching economics to aspiring development practitioners

Bijetri Bose, Puja Guha, Amalendu Jyotishi, Sandhya Krishnan, Indrajeet Kumar, Vikas Kumar, Paaritosh Nath and Nilanjana Sengupta

bijetri.bose@apu.edu.in, puja.guha@apu.edu.in, amalendu.jyotishi@apu.edu.in, sandhya.krishnan@apu.edu.in, indrajeet.kumar@apu.edu.in, vikas.kumar@apu.edu.in, paaritosh.nath@apu.edu.in, nilanjana.sengupta@apu.edu.in

In the post-Second World War period, development was largely imagined in terms of the growth of per capita income. Evidence from research across disciplines and practice suggests that development cannot be characterised merely as a linear function of economic growth. Rather, it is intertwined with routine economic processes as well as the broader evolution of the economic system. This calls for analysis and interpretation of the rationale and design of development initiatives and interventions from multiple perspectives, including, particularly, an economic perspective. The core course ‘Economy and Development: The Indian Experience’ of the MA in Development programme at Azim Premji University Bengaluru, therefore, tries to understand development in the Indian context using the principles of economics as our primary guide.

The course has been designed keeping in mind that students come from diverse academic and linguistic backgrounds. Learning and appreciation of the foundational concepts of economics as well as an engagement with historically informed economic debates around India’s development experience is a central aspect of this course. However, introducing the core concepts of economics to the diverse student body is challenging.

We use handouts in the early stages of the course to bridge the understanding gap of students who are new to the discipline of economics or are afraid of the discipline or have preconceived assumptions about it. Customised graphs help in singling out trends and patterns of interest in the course. Tactile material helps the students having visual difficulties. Ungraded worksheets at the end of modules offer students an opportunity to test their understanding of concepts and help teachers identify students who need additional support. It also helps students overcome the fear of examinations.

A major challenge is posed by readings that are devoid of a feel for economy and development as social processes and material realities. Textbooks and academic literature offer analysis at a high level of aggregation and present a

top-down state-centric analysis. In our attempt to bring economics closer to the reality of 'economy', we draw upon visual archives spanning private correspondence, pamphlets, newsletters, word clouds and interactive maps.

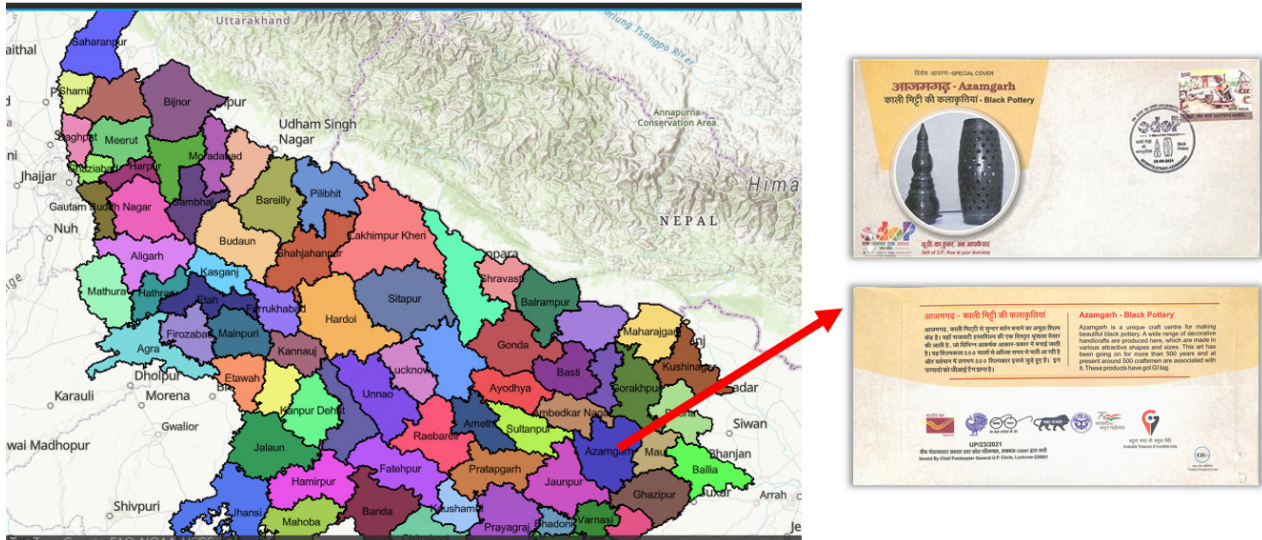
These interventions help students visualise how 'development' transformed from one among many notions of progress to an all-pervasive idea. This also helps students add a human face to the goals of economic progress through five-year plans that are usually presented in statistical terms. More importantly, the archive helps students appreciate the larger administrative and socio-political contexts in which economic policies unfold. To give an example, Harrod-Domar Model, an important growth model in economics, suggests that developing nations should increase their savings rate to come out of the poverty trap. However, economics literature is silent on how government policies in this regard trigger plan-appropriate behaviour of citizens. A large archive, centred around postal material, is used to help students appreciate the often-invisible subsidiary effort that feeds into the design and implementation of economic policies.

The course also uses word clouds based on finance ministers' budget speeches to identify shifting priorities over the years. An archive of weekly newsletters issued by traders is used to capture how the grass roots reacted to liberalisation of the economy. Interactive maps for One-District-One-Product scheme are used to highlight economic diversity within states and emphasise the need for decentralisation of policymaking.



Figure 1: Archival material on promotion of national savings

Interactive One-District-One-Product Map



Map 1: Interactive one-district-one product map

Last but not the least, the use of visual archives offers a rich insight into the history of the Indian state's development communication, which is of special interest to development practitioners.

The worksheets, handouts and archival detours help break the course into smaller chunks and make it accessible to those who are new to the discipline. However, a sizeable body of students continue to view worksheets through the prism of examination, which nudges us to identify and implement innovative modalities that can make teaching and learning meaningful. In the process, we tend to broaden the scope of the course that is perceived by some of the students as an additional burden. Overall, introducing development from an economics perspective has been an iterative process for us as teachers. The course can, in fact, be termed work in progress, or, even better, work in development.

7. Experimenting with active learning for developing environmental dispositions

Pijush Kumar Dutta, Gautam Ganapathy, Manjula M, Revati Pandya, Madhuri Ramesh

pijush.dutta@apu.edu.in, g.ganapathy@apu.edu.in, manjula.m@apu.edu.in,
revati.pandya@apu.edu.in, madhuri.ramesh@apu.edu.in

The course ‘Environmental perspectives for development’ is a core course in semester I of the MA in Development programme. The main objective of the course is to motivate students to think about the intricate interconnections between the biophysical environment and human wellbeing. Given that most of our students are drawn from diverse disciplinary backgrounds, the lack of accessible interdisciplinary texts has been a long-standing challenge. To address this, we have worked with active learning as a means of teaching and learning about the environment-development intersection. By active learning we broadly mean using tools such as skits, debates, songs, or quiz shows i.e., mostly embodied forms of learning.

Students are required to engage with 2-3 articles from themes such as conservation and livelihoods, natural calamities or sustainable cities. Groups are assessed on their synthesis of the prescribed articles, inclusion of lived experiences, group coordination and quality of questions posed to the class. Students work in groups and they present a collective understanding of the theme. Through embodied participation, students go beyond understanding the material as individuals and become actively involved in co-production of knowledge in the classroom. For instance, students have written songs together describing a cyclone and its impact; or they have engaged in role play to present a deeper understanding of the positionalities of different stakeholders, including the non-human. Such presentations by students facilitate diverse perspectives to shape class discussions. This has also been an effective way to encourage the more reticent students to express themselves. It also gives them an opportunity to employ their creative skills to learn academic concepts such as socio-ecological systems, polycentric governance and rights of nature. Questions posed at the end of these sessions helped to generate classroom discussions and avenues for cross learning.

While group work may pose a challenge for many students, the focus on active learning techniques has provided a sense of agency because there is scope to share regional, cultural, and personal experiences. Since these sessions are entirely student-driven, especially the Questions & Answers session (Q&A) at the end, they create space for healthy debates and contestations. Students also reflected on the processes and challenges of taking on the role of a ‘teacher’ to communicate



ideas - this was an unintended learning outcome but one that has made many students appreciate the effort involved in conducting classroom discussions. Through skits, the students personified nature and presented environmental perspectives that reflected both biocentric and anthropocentric approaches.

Through such sessions, we have identified how popular articles are valuable for introducing students to interdisciplinary topics and more specifically, the relevance of active learning formats to create dispositions that are sensitive to the interconnected nature of environment and development.

8. Learning by doing: An experiential approach to learn about Self-Help Groups (SHGs)

Annapurna Neti and Rajesh Joseph

annapurna.neti@apu.edu.in, rajesh.joseph@apu.edu.in

Building solidarity and collective values among a diverse group of people is not an easy pursuit.

Through these meetings, I understood both the potential and challenges. The process helped me connect theoretical understanding of SHG's with real group dynamics, decision making, participation and accountability.

-Student reflections on the SHG exercise used in the course

MA in Development graduates are often expected to mobilise and sustain collectives such as farmer interest groups, SHGs producer groups, cooperatives and Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs). Students frequently gain insight into these groups through internships, core courses such as 'Social Interventions', and family connections.



Students often translate this familiarity into notions and solutions such as ‘we should mobilise women into groups’ or ‘we will conduct awareness programmes for groups’ or ‘we will train farmer groups on sustainable practices’ without really understanding what it means to be a part of a collective of marginalised communities – how to negotiate the rules, manage conflicts and prioritise collective interests over individual benefits.

To bridge this gap, we implemented an experiential pedagogy in two electives courses: a) Managing Member-Based Organisations (MMBO) and b) Critical Perspectives on Financial Inclusion (CPFI) - where students formed themselves into SHGs and managed them over a 8–10-week period. Students were organised into self-help groups of 6-8 members. Each group was required to

- Design bylaws (group name, roles of members, meeting schedule, penalties, etc.)
- Decide on savings norms and loan terms
- Conduct regular meetings; save, borrow and manage funds
- Maintain records such as meeting minutes, savings registers and loan ledgers

Based on the learning outcomes of the two courses, assignments were linked to specific aspects of group performance. In the MMBO course, the focus was on group dynamics and in the CPFI course the emphasis was on savings and lending terms and records.

Through this activity, the students not only get an opportunity to explore the internal dynamics of collectives such as collaboration, conflict resolution and decision-making, but also critically reflect on their roles both individually and as a group. Students had several critical insights and learnings to share:

i. Understanding group dynamics: Students experienced first-hand how difficult it is to take collective decisions, manage conflicts and sustain accountability.

ii. Financial discipline: Saving small amounts regularly demonstrated that ‘small amounts add up to a large sum’.

iii. Empowerment beyond savings and credit: A few groups organically went beyond savings and credit to entrepreneurial activities (e.g., running a stall in the student cultural festival) and discussing campus level issues such as hostel maintenance and access to gym facilities.

iv. Credit as instrumental and group as empowering: Students realised that while credit is important, real transformative power comes from the collective itself.



The pedagogy seemed to have significantly enhanced students' listening skills, ability to build relationships and empathy. They learnt that SHGs have the potential to function beyond financial transactions. This 'learning by doing' approach deepened students' conceptual understanding and their reflection on real-world complexities. A few students also applied these learnings in their own lives – opening recurring deposit accounts once they started working and teaching financial literacy to children in rural areas. However, as with many other group exercises, interest levels tapered once graded assignments were completed. Further, we as faculty members, needed to balance between our involvement and student autonomy to foster effective and independent learning.

9. Janata Express: A simulation-based pedagogy for teaching livelihood and school education frameworks and concepts

Porag Shome, Saswati Paik and Rajesh Joseph

porag@apu.edu.in, saswati@apu.edu.in, rajesh.joseph@apu.edu.in

Traditional lecture- and workshop-based pedagogies have limitations in capturing and reproducing real-life dynamics in the classroom, thereby limiting the scope of learning emerging from field experiences and lived realities. In cases where teaching requires connecting theories and frameworks with lived realities, Simulation-Based Pedagogy (SBP) is particularly useful for creating real-life conditions that would otherwise be impossible due to practical difficulties or when the risks involved in creating such conditions are too high.

Janata Express is a day-long workshop curated by the School of Development at Azim Premji University. The workshop addresses the pressing academic need to connect theoretical and conceptual frameworks with real-life dynamics and lived experiences, thereby contributing to the MA in Development programme's larger purpose of preparing reflective development practitioners.



The workshop design involves perspectives and components of local governance, market systems, civil society interventions, caste-class-gender relationships, formal and informal financial institutions, local informal employment, private institutions (with a profit motive), school education system and State functionaries as core building blocks.

Additionally, the design allows (facilitators) to weave in other contemporary social issues, such as dowry, school enrolment, schooling choice, girl-child education, migration, early childcare, land acquisition, and State-led programmes, Community Based Organisations (such as Self-Help Groups, cooperatives, Farmer Producers Organisation, unions, School Management Committees), and administrative structure (such as gram panchayat, Block Development Officer and associated bureaucracy), to name a few, as per the course requirement or identified learning objectives. Even the faculty can innovate as the workshop progresses, highlighting or emphasising certain learning objectives.

The workshop's design requires participants to step into predefined roles within a small, closed community, navigating real-life challenges often encountered at the household and community levels. The roles mimic a typical rural community and include landless households, small and medium cultivators, teachers, government officials, traders, middlemen, moneylenders, and bank and panchayat representatives. Participants in pairs are provided with household-level asset details and roles, which they use to guide their lives and address the challenges that arise along the way. Financial transactions are conducted using dummy currencies and other tokens included in the simulation kit. The design creates a simulated space where participants immerse themselves in real-life challenges and dynamics. At the start of the day, the participants (as households) review their assets and (informally) analyse the factors of production available to them and the extent of financial capital required to meet the household expenses, including education, seeds, clothing, food, etc. Based on such a quick and informal assessment, each household engages with the micro-community and market (which is being simulated).

The key elements of the workshop include the opportunities to

- engage with real-life situations (linked with the cycle of production, consumption and life decisions)
- understand and experience sub-group or community-level collaborations (associated with an understanding of socio-political and human capitals)
- engage with market vagaries and challenges associated with monopoly/duopoly.

- 
- deal with social stratification (related to caste, class and gender)
 - make life decisions during financial, policy-related, weather or social crises.
 - understand the interface with State and non-state agencies and services (such as education, financial assistance, midday meals, employment guarantee work, and development initiatives by CSOs)

MA in Development graduates are often expected to mobilise and sustain collectives such as farmer interest groups, SHGs producer groups, cooperatives and Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs). Students frequently gain insight into these groups through internships, core courses such as ‘Social Interventions’, and family connections.

10. ‘Surveyypura’: A simulation pedagogical tool to make learning quantitative social research non-intimidating, engaging, and fun

Adithya Pradyumna and Mukta Gundi

adithya.pradyumna@apu.edu.in, mukta.gundi@apu.edu.in

It has been reported from various contexts that learning quantitative methods for public health and social research is challenging for students. We also observed in our classrooms that students had different challenges in conceptual and mathematical aspects of survey research and data analysis. Methods courses usually transact these concepts and skills through lectures and exploratory field studies. However, these pedagogies come with their own challenges - for instance, lectures may not be most suited for the diverse learning needs of students, and the field-based learning comes with ethical and logistical challenges. While fieldwork is essential, a simulated experience where students can ‘see’, ‘think’ and ‘feel’ doing a field-based survey within a classroom space can overcome some of these challenges in the initial learning process.

To slow down and be more deliberate about the concepts and steps of quantitative research, we designed a simulation-based pedagogical tool called Surveypura. The tool includes a large illustration of a fictional village with 155 houses, alongside data for each of the households. The features of the houses, household characteristics, and the village setting have been carefully designed to replicate the visual feel and social dynamics of an actual village, thereby better assisting the pedagogical process. Households come with their own data (printed on small cards that are placed on top of the households). This tool allows the facilitator to plan their pedagogy for concepts such as population, sample, sampling, survey planning, data collection, data analysis and inferences - which can be done across several lectures.



Image 1: *Students engaged in Surveypura during a course on Research Methods*



Students first “visit” the village, learn how it looks, go to the sampled households, collect the data, and analyse it. This allows them to make connections between the context and their data, moving from abstraction to clarity, where they can engage with questions such as “which types of houses in this village have the lowest percentage of toilets and why?” or “what is the average land size owned by people living in kachha houses as compared to those living in ‘pucca houses’, to facilitate discussions on the social dimensions of the data. The tool has been used by several facilitators with their master’s and undergraduate students at our university and outside, in courses such as Research Methods, Applied Epidemiology, and Understanding India. Our observations of the sessions and interactions with facilitators and students suggested that the tool supported more engaged learning of quantitative research methods in a non-intimidating and fun manner as it facilitated interaction and collaboration among learners.

We believe that Surveypura can be a useful simulation-based pedagogical tool to teach quantitative research methods in epidemiology and social sciences even in other contexts.

For more details, please see our peer-reviewed published journal article:

Pradyumna, A., Gundi, M. (2024) Reflections on the design and application of ‘Surveypura’: a simulation-based pedagogical tool for quantitative research methods in public health and social sciences.
Adv Simul 9, 2 <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41077-023-00275-y>

11. Preaching, teaching or learning?

Pedagogical approach for a project management course

**Annapurna Neti, Divya Sharma, V. Manikandan, Nikhil Desai,
Porag Shome, Sham Kashyap**

annapurna.neti@apu.edu.in, divya.sharma@apu.edu.in, manikandan.v@apu.edu.in, nikhil.desai@apu.edu.in, porag@apu.edu.in, sham.kashyap@apu.edu.in

Project management is a critical skill for early development practitioners who are expected to manage specific project activities independently or as part of a group. Therefore, in the MA in Development programme, 'Project Management for Development Interventions' (PMDI) is offered as a core course. The course was offered across all 5 sections with a unique pedagogical approach. Every week, the first class (2 hours duration) was used to introduce, discuss and demonstrate key concepts in project planning, implementation and management, using a sample project. The second session of the week (3 hours duration) involved a hands-on approach where students applied the concepts discussed in the first session to a hypothetical development intervention project through specific planned activities.

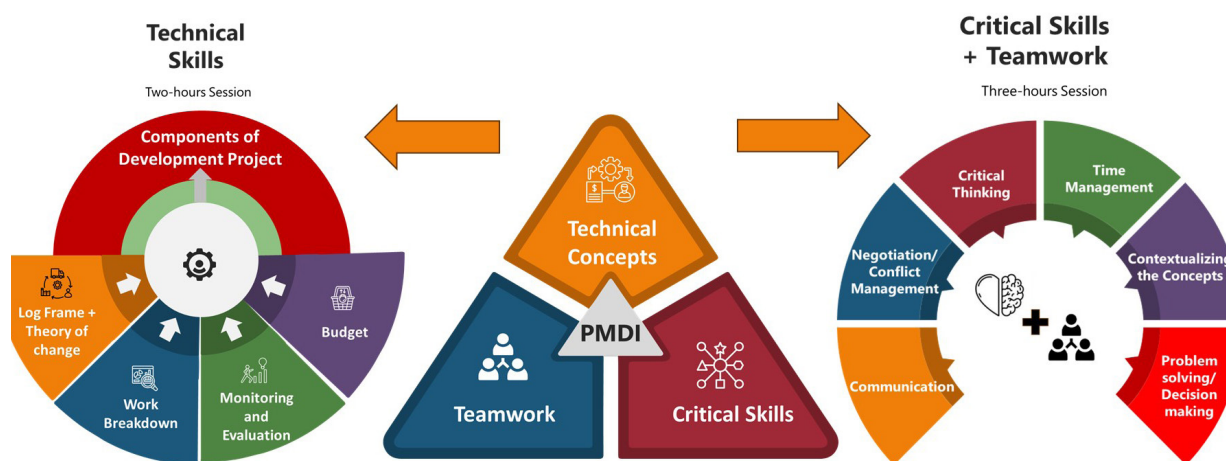


Figure 1: Session structure for the course on Project Management for Development Interventions (PMDI)



The hands-on sessions were based on collaborative principles, with the students working in groups of 6-7 students. They drew learnings from their previous experiences in core courses and internships. Each hands-on session was planned with the setting of ground rules, clear expectations, and deliverables that progressively and cumulatively covered the project management life cycle.

Based on Project-Based Learning (PBL) and Collaborative and Cooperative Learning, which included work delegation and peer instruction, groups were formed in the first week. Student groups continued to work on the same project throughout the course, building on the previous week's work. For instructional scaffolding, faculty used one project to demonstrate processes and outputs. Visual thinking and communication were facilitated using chart papers, post-its, and the use of colours for structuring thoughts within a group. Moreover, multiple mediums like excel sheets, power point presentations were used to cater to different aspects of project management techniques. This pedagogical approach was consistently applied across all 5 sections of 40-45 students each.

With the above-mentioned structural approach, the pedagogical practice in the course was also designed to contribute to the larger purpose of the MA in Development programme which is to prepare reflective and critical development practitioners. The group composition was deliberately kept heterogeneous in terms of the regions, number of years of work experience, gender and their fields of study at the undergraduate level. The pedagogy helped the students to draw from their community learning, internship and work experience. The learning process was both iterative and cumulative, building on the concepts covered each week.

There were significant learnings for us as faculty members too. While many such learnings and struggles were around group work (sustaining students' motivation to work in groups across 12 weeks specifically when assignments are not graded as well as parity across five sections and groups in facilitating learning), we have felt that simulation methods have limitations in capturing complex group dynamics and the practical challenges of real-world projects.



12. Teaching data to a diverse cohort: Strategies for inclusive and effective learning

Shaurabh Anand, Bijetri Bose, Indrajeet Kumar, Vikas Kumar, Sherry Martin and Manjula M.

shaurabh.anand@apu.edu.in, bijetri.bose@apu.edu.in, indrajeet.kumar@apu.edu.in, vikas.kumar@apu.edu.in, sherry.martin@apu.edu.in, manjula.m@apu.edu.in

Modern states depend on numbers for planning, monitoring, and evaluating policies and interventions and generate enormous amounts of data as part of their operations. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have also adopted statistical modes of reasoning and are increasingly using and generating data. As a result, in most courses of the MA in Development programme students need to engage with statistics at multiple levels. However, most students lack the skills to handle statistics. A workshop-style course called ‘Understanding Development Realities through Data’ has been introduced in the first-semester of the MA in Development Programme in 2024-25 to address this gap. The course tries to help students overcome their fear of numbers and challenges the self-image of students who believe they cannot handle numbers.

The defining features of the course are as follows. First, each session covers a development challenge, a statistical concept and a statistical tool using curated datasets and worksheets. So, introduction to new statistical tools is prefaced with foundational statistical concepts and relevant development problems. As a result, the course familiarises students with the variety of empirical approaches that inform development research and practice.

Second, the course introduces students to the whole range of databases including censuses, sample surveys and administrative datasets.

Third, the course also stands out as it bridges the traditional faculty-administration divide and relies on a whole-of-institution approach that integrates resources from the Knowledge Resource Centre (KRC) and other support functions who are skilled in handling statistics. Faculty instructors introduce development problems and statistical concepts and then demonstrate statistical applications, while KRC instructors and others from the support function units extend support to students struggling with software packages.



This course goes beyond the usual introductions to statistical methods and tools. It helps students develop a comprehensive understanding of the entire lifecycle of data, from collection to use, which helps them appreciate the mutually constitutive nature of data and development. Class discussions typically culminate in an examination of the limitations of data and statistical techniques. In the end, group projects encourage students to apply each concept and tool learnt in the course and help them appreciate how addressing complex developmental problems requires critically engaging with statistics from multiple perspectives and multiple sources. Learning in teams also happens as the workshop model fosters an environment of peer learning, which leverages the proficiencies of more advanced students in the cohort.

13. Process, insights and challenges of teaching health accountability through a practice-based course

Edward Premdas Pinto

edward.pinto@apu.edu.in

Equity and justice are integral to the MA in Development programme. Development practitioners encounter inequity and injustice in health as a significant challenge in the marginalised communities. The elective course on ‘Public Health, Rights and Accountability’ envisages students to learn both through classroom perspectives as well as through a real-time engagement with the communities.

The pedagogy entails a combination of theory and practice and uses community-based monitoring and planning tool. This tool has evolved through the civil society practice and is incorporated into the policy framework in the National Rural Health Mission. Community [Based] Monitoring (also called citizen oversight or social accountability) is an integrated process entailing a set of activities, intertwined and iterative, conducted by communities or a group of community representatives closest to the community, to assess the availability of and accessibility to affordable, appropriate public health care services of quality and to advocate for the services that the community is entitled to.



The Community Based Monitoring and Planning (CBMP) is a process-tool and has four major blocks of learning that introduces students to the entire accountability cycle through hands-on experience. This includes, a) the perspectives and framework of rights based policy and accountability; b) basic skills of preparing tools to assess the realisation of entitlements and gaps in any given community, c) evidence generation in the form of report cards, testimonies, case-stories; and, d) deploying the evidence for advocacy towards improving community's access to services.

This process tool as part of the course was offered in three iterations. Number of pedagogical insights that have enriched the course include the following:

- i. The process tool can be customised to various formats, but best works when offered in an exclusive workshop mode in a three-credit course, with students having longer and uninterrupted time for community engagement.
- ii. The key message that students take away is – CBMP is not an event or a series of events, but an iterative and integrated continuous process. It is a citizen and community centred process and not expert led.
- iii. Students internalise the non-negotiable and essential components of the CBMP process tool - policy review, preparation of relevant tool, community conversations, data processing and evidence synthesis (Report cards, testimonies, pictorial stories, case-studies, policy briefs), and using the evidence for advocacy for community's health entitlements at multiple levels.
- iv. The experiential learning is contingent on the depth and intensity of students engaging with the community during the course.
- v. The availability of continuous and uninterrupted time, varied interests of students in practising accountability and quality of time spent with the community members in the limited period are real challenges that determine the learning outcomes of the course.



14. The politics of numbers: Teaching officials statistics as if context matters

Vikas Kumar

vikas.kumar@apu.edu.in

Students of development rely extensively on official statistics but are often not familiar with the broader context of the production and consumption of numbers. The experiential session offered insights into the pedagogy of the elective course 'Political Economy of Government Statistics'. The session combined visual archives, video resources and official statistical publications to illustrate how the course helps students appreciate the broader context of demographic statistics by focussing on data about data and stories about data.

It demonstrated how bringing in archival material into the class enlivens the broader non-statistical processes and non-statistical labour that produce statistics. In particular, it used service post cards that connected field enumerators and statistical officers in headquarters during earlier censuses. It also used postal archives to illuminate how the government-built awareness about censuses in the context of poor literacy and limited means of communication.

The session showed how an appreciation of the context helps visualise government statistics as social constructs that have their own lifecycles and afterlives and as interacting flows of information that are politically and socially embedded. It then illustrated how this approach helps students understand government statistics as public goods, collective self-portraits and communication devices and statistical systems as complex adaptive systems shaped by mutually constitutive influences of data, development and democracy. The session suggested that this approach to data prepares students qua development researchers and practitioners to go beyond the increasingly technocratic and legalistic approaches to fixing problems in government statistics that inform public debates and public policy. It also helps combine insights from field engagements with large datasets by making them speak with each other.



15. Images as a pedagogical tool: Some reflections

Gautam Ganapathy and Gopi Sankar G

g.ganapathy@apu.edu.in, gopi.sankar@apu.edu.in

How do images enhance the teaching learning process? We share our experience with using images in teaching students of MA in Development: Why and how did we use images and what did we learn from these experiences?

At a fundamental level, images as a pedagogical tool complement text that we overwhelmingly rely on as instructors in higher education today. Deeply shaped by the media-suffused environment they inhabit, students find that images disrupt their experience of time, forcing them to focus on a moment frozen in time. Literature on using images as visual stimuli has recorded several benefits of introducing images in the classroom.

We show an image and pose the question “what do you see?”. Rather than working out a hypothesis or an explanation, students are asked to describe what they ‘see’ in front of them. The instructor plays the role of a facilitator here, posing the questions and recording the responses. The instructor does not give any clues or leads.

The use of images as a pedagogical tool is useful in the following ways: first, it allows students, who are usually reticent, to actively participate in class discussions. We have noticed that students from certain socio-economic backgrounds (whose medium of instruction was not English, for instance) are not completely at ease with text. When images are used to facilitate class discussion, we find that these students can actively shape discussions, especially when dealing with abstract concepts. This is especially the case when the instructor actively moderates the conversation, facilitating multiple ways of “seeing” to expound an abstract concept and illustrate a phenomenon. In the MA in Development programme, we have a substantial proportion of students coming from backgrounds where the textual form is not the dominant mode of articulation. While text tends to privilege structure and linearity, images allow for greater spontaneity and creative interpretations of distinct situations. Images are not as daunting as text for these students.



Here is an illustrative example. ‘Environmental Perspectives for Development’ is a core course for MA in Development students, in their first semester. The course broadly explores the dialectic between development and environment wherein the dominance of nature-culture dichotomy is one of the foundational debates that sets up the course. To get students to actively shape the classroom conversation, a curated set of images are used to nudge them to describe a forest - how they thought of forests when they were young; what kind of stories they heard about forests from their friends, relatives, and mentors? While some of the responses were “objective” (a scientific or an objective definition), many students came up with descriptive accounts. A few dwelt on how they experienced forests in their life. These accounts, which included the experiential as well as accounts that were drawn from the cultural world they inhabit, were vivid and imaginative. It was describing a portrait they painted as a response to the nudge to “describe” a forest. It was not a “theoretical” understanding that they shared. Students who found the nature-culture dichotomy rather abstract initially were able to engage with the text more productively after the discussion.

Second, students recognise that there are multiple ways of “seeing” (from the descriptions of their classmates). Students become conscious of certain dominant ways of “seeing” that are privileged over others. What is considered as a norm usually remains concealed and requires conscious self-reflection for it to come out in the open. Images lend themselves to collective self-reflection in class, through multiple descriptions of a phenomenon under scrutiny.

Third, images can serve different purposes - to ease into an abstract topic, generate curiosity, make students constructively uncomfortable, and initiate a conversation without having the pressure to be “right”. It is important to curate images to suit the topic, cohort and the pedagogic style of the instructor.

As students of development (we include ourselves in this category), we need to be aware that our most cherished certainties, often, end up being our frailty. Students recognise the multiplicity of dispositions that students from varied socio-economic and cultural backgrounds bring with them. Along with active participation of students, this is where substantive cross-learning or peer learning ensues in a development classroom. More than understanding the word in rather purely objective terms, use of images in the classroom discussions opens up the possibility for reflexive thinking and engagement.

16. Infographics as teaching resources in understanding health systems and policies: Reflections on design and pedagogical use

Arima Mishra, Mukta Gundi and Sonu Pandey

arima.mishra@apu.edu.in, mukta.gundi@apu.edu.in, sonu.pandey@apu.edu.in

Health systems are core social institutions that operate at the intersection of people, politics, ideas, values, contexts and not just structures that mechanically deliver health care. Health policies, hence, are complex processes that imagine health systems situated in specific histories, cultures, events, actors (and their power dynamics) and processes. How does one help students appreciate the complexity of health systems and messiness of the policy making process without getting lost in a range of theoretical frameworks and tools? How do we encourage students to not just ask critical questions but be able to situate these in relevant historical context, for example, why does current policy emphasise health insurance while successful models of health and health care show evidence otherwise? Why is the urban bias of health institutions in India not ad hoc but situated in our colonial history? For students to develop such an understanding of policies in practice in a more active and engaged way, we have developed a few infographics. These were designed to anchor the learning of policy frameworks, tools, and perspectives. They provided visual cues that stimulated class discussions and serve as a quick reference point for sustained learning.

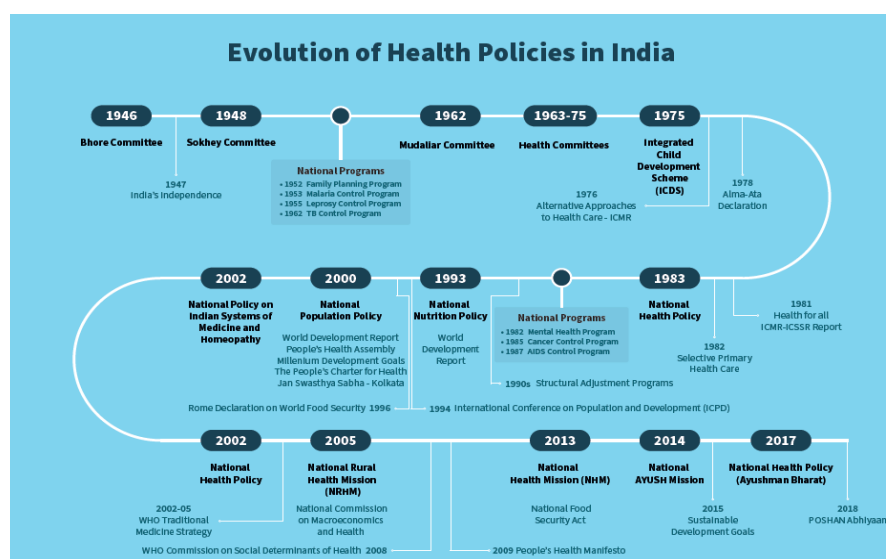


Illustration 1: Evolution of health policies in India

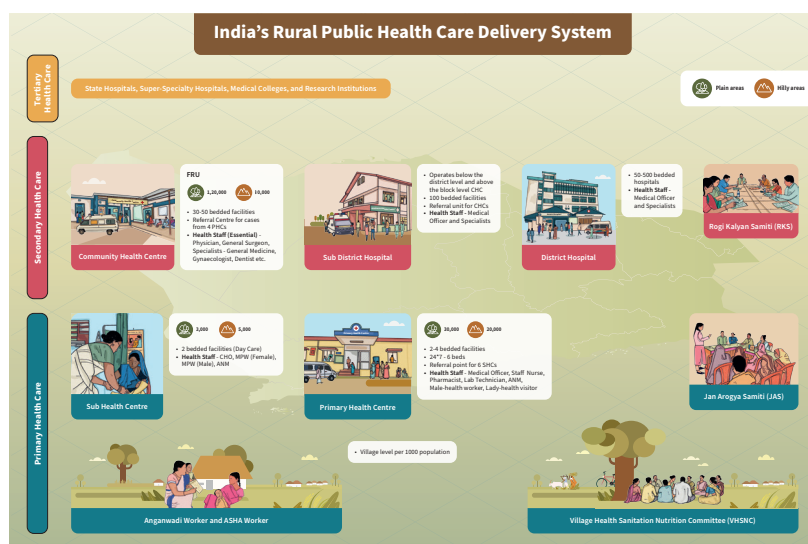


Illustration 2: India's rural health care delivery system in India

Developing these infographics went through a systematic process of reading, (peer) reviewing and designing through an iterative process. The infographic on evolution of health policies needed to be comprehensive enough to do justice to the key policy debates and tensions while not being overwhelming. The infographic was not meant to simplify the history of health policy in India rather help students to critically situate and explain a complex history. It brings together important moments including key conferences, reports nationally and globally (featuring government, multilateral agencies as well as civil society actors) and how these have shaped policy trajectory giving an opportunity for students to apply policy analysis tools to situate such a policy landscape. The second consideration is that health policies speak closely to nutrition policies, population policies as well as policies on traditional systems of medicine. We wanted students to develop an integrated lens rather than seeing these policies in silos.

Our experience of using this and other infographics in two iterations of the course has been encouraging. Students have shared why and how they found it useful:

“This was the first time we were using infographics as a learning material in class. It helped us visualise the theories, steps and landscaping of policy making, and the levels or hierarchy of institutions in the health system. The chronological arrangement of timeline was useful to imagine how policies are prioritised in a particular political context, and how the healthcare priority imagination changed from promotive and preventive to more curative.”

-Student 2024-2026 batch

However, we wish to caution that the infographics in themselves do not lend to active and engaged learning. Ways of facilitation and hence the facilitators' comfort with the wider policy canvas is important. The infographic is neither a substitute for academic readings nor reading of original policy texts. Other pedagogical practices including case studies, field practicum to a nearby Primary Health Centre as well as a role play on village level planning complemented and enhanced the use of the infographic in this course.

17. Gaming equity: Towards teaching and learning the climate action problem

Aravindhan Nagarajan

aravindhan.nagarajan@apu.edu.in

Over the past few decades, the concerns of climate change have steadily become part of national and international developmental concerns, and consequently part of the syllabi and curriculum of various higher educational programmes on development. One way to teach and understand the climate change problem is the use of interactive climate games. Climate games have in fact become a widespread tool to teach climate change to a wide variety of audiences- students, civil society, and global leaders (Meya & Eisenack 2018; Rooney-Varga, et al 2019; Gerber et al 2021). This includes role playing games (eg., climate action simulation), simulators (eg., C-Roads and En-Roads), table-top boardgames (eg., Daybreak, Lichenia, Plasticity, Mission 1.5, Reset City), and interactive websites (eg., cloud sorting, climate game).

These games are designed to signal the “immediacy” of climate action, and the need for “consensus” to avert climate “catastrophe”. These games become a zero-sum game with the objective of reducing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. As a pedagogic tool, these games perversely signal a spirit of alarmism that often portrays the concerns of the developing world merely as constraints to be overcome. By doing so these games ignore the relation of development and climate change, and the position of developing countries- despite a small historical contribution to GHG emissions, developing countries face a disproportionate burden of mitigating them and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

In contrast to the publicly available “climate games”, the author uses an equity-based climate negotiation game to help students build a “developing country” perspective on climate change. This game is part of an assessment of an elective course offered over the past seven years within the MA in Development programme. Building on course engagement, students represent different country blocks and engage in climate negotiations as a part of their course assessment. The objective of the game is to figure out ways to share the carbon budget (the physical limit on cumulative emissions for a given global warming temperature target) in an equitable manner. During the game students run different simulations to mitigate and adapt to climate change, as well as engage in text negotiations to signal policy priorities. The game itself builds on existing simulation games (such as C-rads and En-Roads), and includes elements such as negotiating climate policy texts, arriving at climate mitigation targets, data infographics, and using an open access simulation tool (run on excel and similar software) in class.



An important aspect of teaching and learning that this game helped establish is the need for expanding the canvas of student learning rather than reducing it to smaller objectives. For instance, as a run up to the game students create infographic-based emission and development profiles of countries. This was earlier not part of the course and game but something that stemmed from student initiative to negotiate better in class, as well as improve their skill to analyse publicly available data on emissions. Further, this group-based assessment is also preceded by group-based activities throughout the course (data practicums, classroom debates, case-study preparations) that build on their affective skills of empathy and group deliberation.

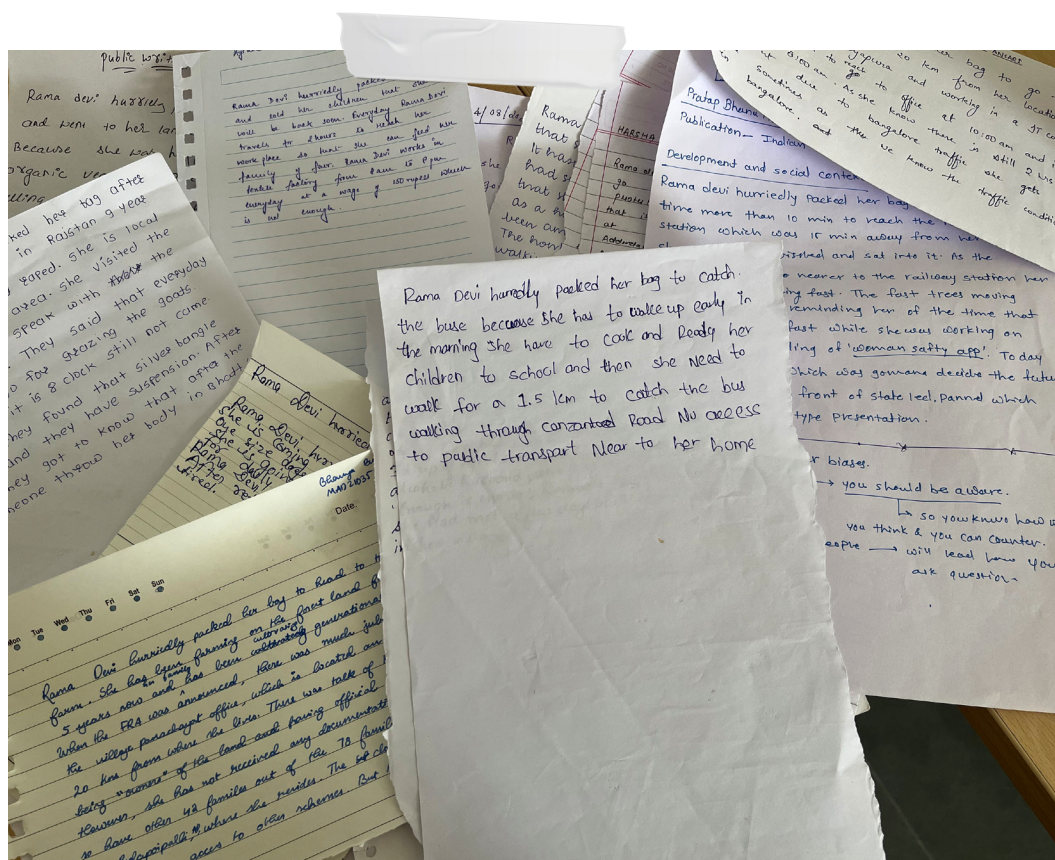
The overall objective of the negotiation game (and the course) is for students to recognise that climate change is a global collective action problem, and a complex story of current and historical inequity between and across countries in the global arena. The operationalisation of concepts such as the fair share of carbon budgets and equity in the games, brings forward a developing country perspective that Indian and global south scholars on climate change have contributed towards over the past several decades (Kanitkar & Jayaraman, 2019). The game tries to emphasise that it is not enough to recognise the immediacy of the problem but that it is important to develop a sense of ethical optimism to deal with such a problem. The climate action problem is not just a zero-sum game, but one that must also allow for participants to deliberate on the principles for arriving at such collective action (equity, historical responsibility, differential action) in an unequal world.

References

- Meya, J. N., & Eisenack, K. (2018). *Effectiveness of gaming for communicating and teaching climate change*. *Climatic change*, 149(3), 319-333.
- Rooney-Varga, J. N., Kapmeier, F., Sterman, J. D., Jones, A. P., Putko, M., & Rath, K. (2020). *The climate action simulation*. *Simulation & Gaming*, 51(2), 114-140.
- Gerber, A., Ulrich, M., Wäger, F. X., Roca-Puigròs, M., Gonçalves, J. S., & Wäger, P. (2021). *Games on climate change: Identifying development potentials through advanced classification and game characteristics mapping*. *Sustainability*, 13(4), 1997.
- Kanitkar, T., & Jayaraman, T. (2019). *Equity in long-term mitigation*. *India in a warming world*, 92-113.

18. Once upon a time: Prompt driven free writing sessions to facilitate public writing

Anuradha Nagaraj
anuradha.nagaraj@apu.edu.in



Picture 1: Student writing samples

The course on 'Public Writing for Social Action' was conceived as a skill building elective for students in the MA in Development programme and built on the rationale of empathetic, factual writing from the field on important development issues missing from the larger media narrative. The course emphasises the importance of social sector practitioners contributing to the media landscape to share experiences, highlight issues, create awareness and drive advocacy.



While the course always had enthusiastic enrolment, most students candidly admitted in the first class that they were interested in writing but did not know how to begin and were too afraid to try. In today's learning environment, shaped by AI, social media, and rapid information exchange, writing that is thoughtful and engaging feels daunting for students.

The 10 to 15 minutes of focused in-class freewriting sessions, which are only prompt-driven, were started to initiate, sustain and build public writing skills. These pen and paper writing sessions aimed to normalise the process of writing, enabling students to overcome a writer's block, streamline their thoughts, create a supportive peer group and deepen classroom discussions.

The freewriting sessions were built along the lines of Dorothea Brande's idea of 'unconscious writing' (1934) that advised aspiring writers to practise 'unconscious writing' every day where they must suspend critical thought and write.

'Once upon a time...' seemed like the apt prompt to begin these sessions with. Contrary to what I thought, it proved to be one of the most difficult prompts for students to work with. Most would spend the first 10 minutes of the writing session only thinking, unable to put any thought on paper. Many students would have questions on what they could or could not write, unable to practice the idea of 'unconscious writing'.

The underlying problem seemed to be the lack of writing guidelines. Writing, in the context of a university student, is often limited to assessment submissions and is therefore guided by instructions, texts and formats. Public writing, on the other hand, requires students to engage with issues in the larger domain outside the classroom and is primarily located in spaces unfamiliar to them, with more fluid guidelines that vary depending on the chosen format or publication.

This realisation prompted a restructuring of the sequence and selection of prompts for the freewriting sessions. The initial prompts included photographs and some context to help students write, with 'once upon a time...' coming somewhere in the middle of the course.

Other prompts like 'Rama Devi stepped out....' also threw up interesting pieces of writing that fed into the core syllabus of the course, enabling students to identify bias and stereotypes in their own writing.



Post the timed writing, there is some time allotted for reading one's writings. This is voluntary and gives students an opportunity to decide whether they would like to be private about their writings or share among peers. In linguistically diverse classrooms, it encourages in-class participation and over time generates an excitement among students to share their writings.

As the course progressed, the hesitancy to read one's writing was replaced with more hands going up to read. Students felt confident about their writing and were happy to get peer feedback for their work. They also expressed themselves better, drawing from their experience, imagination and classroom learning to write engaging pieces. Student feedback also suggested that these short writing sessions helped them immensely to write a final feature article as part of their graded assessment.

In the field of Writing Studies, the call to 'go public' came more than two decades ago. Peter Mortesen, in his landmark College Composition and Communication (CCC) article in 1998 said: "In our journals and at our conferences, one finds repeated again and again the assertion that our work—our teaching, researching, and theorising—can clarify and even improve the prospects of literacy in democratic culture. If we really believe this, we must acknowledge our obligation to air that work in the most expansive, inclusive forums possible. . . We must go public. And we can." The freewriting sessions aimed to build confidence in students that "we can" and have largely succeeded. However, the challenge of finding good, relevant prompts continues.

References

- Brande, D. (1934). *Becoming a writer*. Harcourt, Brace and Company.
- Mortensen, Peter (1998). "Going Public." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 50, no. 2

Azim Premji University
Bengaluru | Bhopal | Ranchi

Website: azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in **Facebook:** [/azimpremjiuniversity](https://www.facebook.com/azimpremjiuniversity)
YouTube: [@azimpremjiuniversity](https://www.youtube.com/@azimpremjiuniversity) **Instagram:** [@azimpremjiuniv](https://www.instagram.com/azimpremjiuniv) **X:** [@azimpremjiuniv](https://twitter.com/azimpremjiuniv)
Address: Survey No. 66, Burugunte Village, Bikkannahalli Main Road, Bengaluru – 562125 Karnataka