

## **Is Philosophy of Education Still Relevant for Educational Policy and Practice? Case of Horizon Education Trust Schools in South Africa**

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### **Abstract**

Offering a single definition of philosophy of education has been a challenge. Therefore, the discussions in the literature rather focused on negotiating the discipline's borders and issues of inclusion and exclusion (Burbules, 2000) as well as philosophy of education's relevance to practical educational issues (Vokey, 2006). Investigating a philosophy of education in practice can offer valuable insight for these debates.

The Horizon Education Trust (HET) operates a group of independent schools in South Africa. The founders of these schools are inspired by a service-oriented philosophy of education and it is expected that the policies and practices of the schools are infused with a sense of service and related approaches. My interest is on the interplay between a philosophy of education and its practical implementation. In this talk, I will briefly introduce the findings of my research on if and how such a philosophy of education is infused in the

policies and practices at HET schools. I briefly allude to a framework I developed for my analysis and then I present some of the important findings. This research included an analysis of these schools' documents and interviews with some of the teachers and graduates. My findings revealed reasonable resonance among the philosophy of education, policies and practices however not without challenges. My findings revealed some concerns and misalignment between a sense of service, the schools' policies, the perceptions of the teachers and practices.

**Keywords:** philosophy of education, service, educational policy, theory and practice, perception

