

# Difference

and

# Education:



## Considering the role of Philosophy of Education in the 21st Century and beyond

In this talk, I focus on understanding the concept of 'difference' as an educational idea. I argue this notion has shaped the discipline of philosophy of education in the modern era, and has an important role to play in discussions of the future of education and democratic society. First, I discuss how notions of learning from difference emerge in both European and American traditions of education philosophical thinking. I then turn attention to the work of John Dewey to discuss the secularised nature of his concept of difference and show how this is part of his move away from the religious foundations of education and toward a broader inclusive, philosophical foundation centered on human difference as educative. I suggest that Dewey's concept of educational difference places him within the tradition of non-affirmative education, which values the younger generation's critical contributions to societal futures. In closing, I discuss the role of philosophy of education in sustaining the educational notion of difference [bildende Bedeutung on Andersheit], and how this inclusive educational notion is vital for countering divisive political notions of otherness today.

### Time and Location

18<sup>th</sup> June, 2025 5-7 pm.

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is Associate Professor in Philosophy of Education at the University of Edinburgh, and incoming President of the John Dewey Society. Her research focuses on theories of dialogic teaching and transformative learning as part of democratic education. Her scholarship is particularly concerned with understanding the role of teacher listening in building dialogic communities that support learner voice, interthinking and co-agency. She has led teams in STEM education, AI and Humanities to advance the theory and practice of dialogic education, and serves as expert advisor for international projects on educational dialogue, most recently on the project 'Deliberate' (Finland). She is Executive Board member and Teacher Education Coordinator of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain, Editor of IMPACT for the Journal of Philosophy of Education, and Associate Editor of Dewey Studies.