THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION
SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN: A VIEW FROM AFRICA

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The 2015 Conference of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain (PESGB) was held from Thursday 26th to Sunday 29th March at the New College, Oxford. I was sponsored by the PESGB to attend the conference as a representative of the Philosophy of Education Network in Ghana, having had my paper accepted by the organisers of the conference. The PESGB paid the conference fee as well as my travel expenses from and back to Ghana.

First of all, I would like to thank the PESGB for giving me the opportunity to attend the conference. It was a very interesting event, which gave me the privilege to discuss many issues regarding philosophy of education and its role in teaching and learning. The conference was attended by researchers, lecturers, students, practitioners, teachers, principals, policy makers, advisors, managers and consultants from all over the world. Conference delegates were able to attend sessions highlighting the latest research and practices in philosophy of education around the conference themes with many sessions allowing time and space for questions and discussion. All the sessions I attended were valuable as they explored ideas from different perspectives, therefore collectively giving a holistic view of learners and their needs, strengths and uniqueness.

As a teacher educator, the conference provided a very enriching experience for me not only because it was well attended by teacher educators from many parts of the world, but because the sessions on the philosophies underpinning teacher education were awesome! Indeed, these sessions reminded me of why I was doing the things I had been doing all along and also allowed me to step out of the ‘box’ and think differently.

I really enjoyed the keynote presentations in the Holywell Music Room. Specifically, the “Ends of Education” presented by Catherine Elgin, “Education and the Outdoors” presented by Bob Davis and the “Uncoercive Rearrangements of Desire” by Gayatri Spivak were mesmerising. The Respondents at these presentations were also great as they clarified issues which appeared somewhat unclear in the main presentations.

Furthermore, gaining access to the full papers before the conference was a huge plus. This made it possible to have insights into the various authors’ perspectives on the issues they raised in their respective presentations. Since I returned from the conference, my PhD students have benefitted immensely from the discussions some of these papers have generated. Also, the conference provided opportunity for conversation and networking throughout the day during the meal breaks. The delegates I had the chance to interact with participated with such infectious enthusiasm and this undoubtedly contributed to making the PESGB @ 50 Conference an excellent forum.

On the whole, I found the conference relevant as, in addition to influencing my perspective on the impact of philosophy of education on teacher education, it provided an invaluable starting point for the future development of the Philosophy of Education Network in Ghana.