CONCLUSION
CONCLUSION

Our thesis statement predicates that an educational program must focus on full-development of the *anthropos*. Landing a job, acquiring wealth or gaining in knowledge, important as these pursuits are, cannot constitute its *telos*. Education has been strongly influenced by idealism starting with the *khandogya-upanishad* in ancient India and Plato in ancient Greece. We traced the roots of this paradigm, identified distortions and furnished arguments to adopt an alternative view—the ACME or Anthropo-Centered Model of Education. Some of the philosophical influences and their transition from a partial view to a comprehensive one are depicted in Figure 4.

![Figure 4](image-url)

*Figure 4.* A depiction of the philosophical transition from a partial anthropological focus to a more comprehensive one through ACME.
A wrong start can lead to serious problems affecting policy, content and methods of education. A simile may be drawn to the measurement of length—millimeters of error, when projected to interstellar dimensions, can lead to kilometers of divergence. In advancing our case, we strongly endorse the view of the African educational researchers, Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2002, p. 228), who said: “[D]evelopment of the individual is the ultimate goal of all education.” This implies that education should proceed *ad intra* for internal harmony within the person. In addition, we are sympathetic to the *ad extra*, which according to Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, calls for harmony of the individual with all creation. However, in our thesis, we set boundaries around the individual, and leave it to others to pursue the *ad extra*, which is beyond the scope of our research.

Several flawed models can be observed in practice: some schools are purely academically oriented—they are extremely uni-dimensional; some are given to indoctrination of a certain political philosophy; some indoctrinate religious dogma; some are focused on technology only; some train for tradable skills only. We submit that all of these models are deficient because they address only partial aspects of education and do not meet the noble goal of ‘making the human person.’

We proposed the Anthropo-Centered Model of Education or the ACME, depicted in Figure 5.

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An Anthropo-Centered Model of Education, ACME

The Cognitive Dimension (Intellect)
Part of the mind that is ordained to the truth. Assesses, Evaluates, Rationalizes, Calculates, Compares, Extracts meaning from reality

The Affective Dimension
The symbolic heart is center of emotions and constellation of relatively lasting beliefs. Also considered the sensible, responsible center of personality, the core of the person where the mind and the body meet.

The Conative Dimension (Will)
Provides appetite for things Intellectual. In consonance with the intellect, takes decisions, motivates action, displays commitment and exercises authority.

The Embodied Dimension
The complex web of entities in the organism that promotes harmony within and enacts what it is to be human.

The Spiritual Dimension (Conscience/Soul)
Spirit is the capacity for transcendence. Helps relate with God, neighbor, nature and self. Deals effectively with the reality of suffering and is open to the mystery of the 'more than'.

Figure 5 (Figure 2 repeated): A depiction of the Anthropo-Centered Model of Education, ACME. Each block of text above shows a particular dimension of the anthropos and its functions. Improper or inadequate development of any of the five dimensions makes for an ill-formed person.
i. INTEGRATION IN ACME

We have argued since the very first chapter that education should not be a mere intellectual exercise. More often than not, however, the mind is severed from the physical organs of activity (Dewey, 2009, p. 117). The former is thought to be purely intellectual or cognitive, while the latter is an irrelevant, intruding physical factor (Dewey, 2009, p. 117). This penchant for the intellectual is criticized by Dewey, “Only in education, never in the life of the farmer, sailor, merchant, physician or laboratory experimenter, does knowledge mean primarily a store of information aloof from doing” (Dewey, 2009, p. 153).

The work of the muscles of the eyes, the vocal apparatus, the ears and the hand are not simply conduits through which information reaches the mind (Dewey, 2009, p. 118). All these anthropological entities play non-trivial roles in the student’s attentive participation in the classroom. They have an organic function in learning. When reading a book, for instance, the senses help read with expression and extract meaning in a ‘living process’ rather than function simply as pipes or inlets to convey textual material into the mind. These sense organs need to be exercised and conditioned to work expertly in intimacy with the mind to complete an epistemic activity, like reading. The connections are very intricate—learning is an altogether organic process. Similar arguments legitimizing the body are put forth by Rousseau, Nietzsche, Merleau-Ponty and De Mello. We posit that learning is made as much with the body as with the mind!

That said, the mind cannot be passed by. The process of intellection, according to Scholastic philosophy (Section 7.3 & Figure 3),
plays a key role in extracting meaning and birthing knowledge. The five anthropological dimensions of ACME have the following attributes: they are not mutually exclusive, but are jointly exhaustive (comprehensive); they are internal faculties, related at the boundaries, complementary to each other, and are observable in human behavior as they work in context. Also, their energies are fungible. They are identified as the cognitive, the affective, the conative, the embodied and the spiritual. Their integration may be articulated as follows:

Among the five dimensions in ACME, it is the transcendent or the spiritual dimension that makes integration possible. The anthropos pierces the envelop of functional oblivion, in which s/he is caught up unawares. Transcendence thus makes the anthropos open to the ‘more than’. There is always a tendency for these other dimensions to be trapped in fixation and claim a dominant, overarching power for themselves. At the same time, each dimension deserves respect. Each of them is instrumental in concretizing the transcendent aspiration of the self. The pre-eminent gain of the transcendent life is that through openness, the anthropos humbly seeks the will of God to find his/her way in world. New avenues are opened out. Another important gain in this openness is restoration of relationships that the anthropos is involved with. Finally, it helps living the authentic life. Self-expression according to one’s deep convictions and living the true life is a challenge for the anthropos because that quest sometimes strains relationships. It is the transcendent dimension, by being open to the ‘more than’, that restores those relationships. The spirit cannot be reduced to a basic functional unit with religious preoccupation only, but in being open, it is able to face and deal
with all aspects of life, lending reinforcement and dynamism to the *anthropos*.

**ii. WORKING OF ACME**

In the educational context, the different dimensions in ACME work as follows. The major steps are depicted in Figure 6.

*Figure 6: A depiction of the various stages in the Working of ACME.*
First, a problem has to be felt (Dewey, Hickman & Alexander, 1998, p. 386) before it can be addressed rationally. This would mean that to do anything substantial in an epistemic situation, the problem must hold an emotional consequence for the student. Only a consequence, imagined and confronted would get the student adequately interested and involved to find a solution. Far from removing emotion from reason, the two are intimately intertwined. Affect and rationality work together as will be seen in the following example. A legal process admits only facts and evidence in the argument. The final verdict is a rational decision supported and verifiable empirically and substantiated by provisions of the law. This out and out rational act, however, gives rise to a welling up of emotions the moment the verdict is pronounced.

Second, the student must admit ignorance before the problem. Admission of ignorance is a prerequisite for knowledge (Scolnicov, 1988, p. 17). Socrates, in his elenchus, would constantly profess not to know in the attempt to bring his interlocutor to the realization of ignorance. The quest for the truth begins with the admission of ignorance!

Third, the student develops a dynamic and flexible aim. No aim is set in stone but a tentative direction is arrived at (Dewey, 2009, pp. 87-88). Data is gathered from the environment through the senses. One then proceeds with a spirit of openness and adventure. Aims may need to be revised as new data reaches the intellect.

Fourth, the intellect is engaged in a dialectic process. A dialectic always proceeds through ideas (Scolnicov, 1988, p. 92) and has competing view points. These thinking processes can be gone through within (Scolnicov, 1988, p. 67) the individual or in dialog with another.
We depart from Socrates and say that the dialectic process should not proceed *ad hominem* (Scolnicov, 1988, p. 33), but with great intellectual hospitality (Dewey, 2009, p. 144). Also, all deep thinking occurs when one is well-rested—the anthropologic entity of the body has to be healthy for any meaningful, high energy dialectic to take place. It occurs in the twilight zone between ‘knowing absolutely’ and ‘not knowing at all’. It involves an inquiring, hunting, searching attitude, rather than one of mastery and possession (Dewey, 2009, p. 239) of the truth. It is marked by expenditure of intellectual energy evident through a body sapped of its strength. In the Socratic dialectic, the interlocutor is brought to a road fork; an interrogation by an expert and answering by a novice is carried out till knowledge of the truth is reached. In the Hegelian dialectic, a synthesis is sought to be derived through a thesis and an antithesis. In the Scholastic dialectic, we work with the dual aspects, perceptual data (matter/object) and conceptual data (mind/subject) (Peterson, 2001, pp. 40-42) to ultimately make an ‘inferential leap into reality’. Whatever the tool employed, the dialectic process helps to sharply contrast the alternatives, an important step in ACME, as shown in Figure 6. At the end of this thoroughly rational process, the *anthropos* has a fair idea about the reasonableness of one of the alternatives, although s/he is not absolutely certain.

Knowledge may be ‘encyclopedic’ or ‘synoptic’. The focus in the former is ‘learning up everything about everything’, the student becomes a repository of knowledge, a registering apparatus, whereas, the latter equips the student to ‘learn to learn’. Encyclopedic knowledge is characterized by desire for novelty but leads to peripheral acquaintance
and mere emotional satisfaction in coincidences. Synoptic knowledge (Scolnicov, 1988, p. 49), on the contrary, is penetrative with multiple inter-connections and rich with meaning. However, it is limited in breadth with lesser number of facts. It is of a general character, non-specific to subject matter, therefore, flexible in times of change and universally applicable.

Encyclopedic and Synoptic knowledge are both shown in the 2 by 2 matrix in Figure 7. Extensive knowledge is encyclopedic and is rich in facts. It is the intellectual apprehension of the facts about reality. Deep intensive knowledge of the interrelations among entities is wisdom. Knowledge brought into dialog with human experience, processed and digested results in wisdom. In today’s world of knowledge explosion, it is impractical to seek encyclopedic knowledge. ACME gravitates towards synoptic knowledge, although it does not totally overlook encyclopedic knowledge. That is because ACME inclines towards creating specialist-generalists, who look for the whole synoptically, while at the same time finding context encyclopedically. A good example is that of a practicing architect, discussed in Section 3.2.2, ‘Loss of Sight of the Whole’. The anthropos sees the whole picture, consisting of both the macro and micro issues governing a situation.
Figure 7: A 2 by 2 matrix indicating the relationship between facts and their connections. ACME predicates a balance between the two.

At this stage, the student must go through an iteration. Once again, ignorance is admitted and new data is collected. S/he returns to the aims propounded and reconvenes them to fit the new situation.

Fifth, all alternatives are taken before God, and the anthropos waits in prayer for a reasonable period. The anthropos has no preference or bias at this stage—s/he is open to all alternatives confabulated upon, one of which will be confirmed by God.
Sixth, one looks for coincidences that bring one of the alternatives into sharp relief. The coincidence can come through a cycle of dates or through an emphatic Word of God from Holy Scripture (be it of any religion) endorsing that alternative. During the course of prayer, the soul is seized by the alternative favored by God and it experiences a deep and stable peace, whereas, the thought of other alternatives causes confusion and disturbance. Plato, paraphrased by Nettleship, said: “Truth is the birth which allays the travail of the soul” (Nettleship, 1935, p. 26). In other words, truth is characterized by peace.

The spiritual dimension is often underestimated but students sometimes suffer spiritual illnesses, which are neither physiologically assessable nor psychiatrically treatable. Laziness, disinterestedness in life, no cause to die for, avoidance of responsibilities, are all spiritual afflictions for which there are no medical remedies. Neatly laid-out logical arguments also fail on most occasions. Only divine intervention can bring a cure. Such students need something more—the capacity for transcendence (Emmons, 2000, p. 3). Advanced stages of transcendence will make the student ‘rich in nothingness’ (Mathulla, 2016c, p. 15). S/he is living in the world but is not of the world. Any feeling of gloom or disappointment will fade away before the intensity of spiritual joy.

Considering steps four, five and six above, we have ‘triple correlation’ indicating the truth: (a) the anthropos’ preference for one of the confabulated alternatives; (b) coincidence of dates or emphatic impact of Holy Scripture; and (c) experience of deep interior peace. The right decision is thus identified.
Seventh, the will has to be exercised, which is a complex phenomenon. It may be conceptualized by the three extremities shown in the vertices of the triangle in Figure 8.

![The Authentic Will formed with Conative Age](image)

*Figure 8:* A depiction of the characteristics of the authentic will, which is dynamic, flexible and transcendent. It is formed through conative maturity.

They are willfulness (overpowering, controlling, distorting reality), will-lessness (total lack of engagement), and willingness (total acquiescence). Somewhere around the centroid of the triangle resides, the ‘authentic will’, which is a modulation of the three extremities. The authentic will goes into concretion, or ‘the will is made perfect’. It has flexure and dynamism. Taking the cue from Heidegger, Adrian Van Kaam calls such a person an authentic person, who is totally open to reality in all its fullness and variety, to face it and affirm it without pre-
judgment or a lack of engagement, but to collect all spontaneous moods, feelings and inclinations of the life situation and respond to it in a free manner (Van Kaam, 1983a, pp. 66-70, 166-174). The student achieves congruence by aligning decisions with beliefs (See Section 6.1, Drawing from the Constellation of Stable Beliefs), and validates Shakespeare’s evocative call, “To thine own self be true.”

Finally, knowing that the decision has been considered diligently, the whole person is convinced of the course of action, has affirmed the will and labors passionately to implement it in the socio-historical, spatio-temporal context. The body, the complex psychosomatic organism, is an ontologically non-excludable entity and enacts what it is to be human. When a project has got to be completed, the whole person gets into the act. Characterized by extra-ordinary energy, the well-developed dimensions make it a sublime one.

iii. AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Possible areas for further research could be:

i. Empirical validation of ACME and its working.

ii. Creation of pedagogic exercises and study material to develop each dimension of the anthropos.

iii. Investigation into biases (geographical or cultural), if any, due to over-emphasis of individual dimensions of the anthropos.
PROSPECTUS OF CORNERSTONE ENVIRONMENT FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Cornerstone Environment for Human Development

things to know, things to do, person to be
Dear Parent:

Greetings and a warm welcome to the Cornerstone way of learning and growing! Cornerstone offers scholarly traditions and efficient management in a modern campus to provide the very best to your child as s/he makes life’s all important journey from toddler to becoming an authentic person. All human faculties: the corporeal, the cognitive, the conative, the affective and the spiritual are fully employed in deep engagement of the world. Through exercises in life-oriented learning, the Cornerstone student gradually acquires important competences and develops into a world citizen. Taking each moment as a gift from God, to be lived passionately, the student is always ready for the next adventure.

We realize that this is an intricate, challenging task and approach it through the following guiding vision: Cornerstone offers a developmental environment and a program of education that is universal and integrated along all dimensions of knowing, doing and being human. Ours is a labor of love that looks up to each child with great possibilities. May the years here be the best years of childhood.

Paul Mathulla, ME, PhD
Founder-Chairman, Cornerstone Environment for Human Development
Cornerstone Environment for Human Development

*things to know, things to do, person to be*

Cornerstone offers an educational program international in outlook, scholarly in preparation, and passionate about the full-flowering of the child, who will go on to become a world citizen in the 21st Century. Its foundations were laid in a doctoral research in educational philosophy and it is an outworking of that endeavor. Keeping abreast of the cutting-edge and through its deep study, Cornerstone finds new ways of imparting education.

Referring to the dogmatic way of life in his time, the English philosopher, John Stuart Mill affirmed that most schools are better adapted to make disciples than inquirers. Also, we have Socrates, who said: “an unexamined life is not worth living” and that “education is care of the soul”. Only constant inquiry can bring about improvement of the soul. Schools then have an important role to play. According to the influential educational philosopher, John Dewey, schools should reproduce situations of life by presenting opportunities for learning and growing. In that sense, they are not institutions where mere thoughts are gained but are organic environments for comprehensive human development. They are to present real problems and create genuine situations of learning, which the learner should face as a ‘human being’, not as a ‘pupil’. The latter degenerates into artificiality. They have a much broader mandate of preparing the *anthropos* for deep engagement with the world than merely ‘knowing’. To exhaust all avenues of development therefore, we need to focus on all three modes in life itself: ‘knowing’, ‘doing’ and ‘being’. The child is not a passive recipient of predigested knowledge but is a partaker of the learning process, who makes
active interchange with his/her environment, and in the process, learns. Learning, in this active sense, is an absorbing adventure, understood as follows:

First, it is an *epistemic adventure* proceeding from the unknown to the known. The student is guided on to ‘play’ with ideas imbibed and problems grappled with, to make his/her own very personal epistemic journey of discovery, unique and rich in the context of his/her own peculiar situation. A healthy understanding of one’s own abilities and limitations grounds the student and enables him/her to internalize the truths of science and philosophy, the rules of economics and social comportment and the formative message of the arts. Epistemically, the student is not merely an accumulator of factual knowledge, which would make him/her a mere repository, a registering apparatus. Or worse still, a superficial knower of things, with a scattered, random approach, but s/he is a person with penetrative insight, constantly deciphering meaning. S/he has mastered the skill of ‘learning to learn’. To that end, the Cornerstone way of teaching and learning is eminently philosophical, with a strong emphasis on methods of reasoning. Between the two extreme situations of knowing completely and not knowing at all, there exists the twilight zone of inquiry. This presents the realm of tentative results. One sets out with a measure of uncertainty and the momentum to unlock a mystery. Tentative would mean trying out, feeling one’s way through. The student exercises all human faculties, but primarily employs the cognitive. This is essentially ‘learning by knowing’.

Second, the student is on an *experiential expedition* whereby s/he experiences the uncertainties of the material world, in socio-historical context subject to the constraints of being bound by time. S/he orchestrates
it all to accomplish concrete goals. Project work is the primary mode of engagement here. John Dewey calls it, ‘learning by doing’. The student, in learning, becomes a teacher, and the teacher, in teaching, becomes a learner. Together, they savor the joy of accomplishment, of serving, of having delivered on responsibilities, of having contributed and made a difference, and of having crossed milestones. Aims are dynamic, flexible and always revisable in the light of new information. To accomplish things in such an environment, the faculties of the corporeal, the affective and the conative are employed and the student learns to labor passionately toward his/her goals.

And finally, it is an appropriative journey to respond to a dream planted in one’s heart, to imagine a unique role for oneself under the sun, to mature in that dream through sustained commitment, and to courageously live it out. In doing so, the student becomes the person s/he wants to be. Since the dream may be realized only far into the future, there is necessarily the element of the unknown and therefore, humility is required. That’s where one has to become a transcendent person of faith. Through exercise of faith, the student gains the capacity for transcendence and reaches where s/he had envisioned reaching.

Cornerstone is run by a management with a 35-year track record in elementary and higher education. A community of educators with a commitment to its mission, work with one mind and heart in its well-designed campus for the child to blossom into his or her fullness – the toddler who enters its portals in the formative years gets a strong foundation with well-developed human faculties. Knowing, doing and being, in their proper balance manifest as ‘knowledge wealth’, the ‘ability to get the job done’ and the ‘capacity for transcendence’ in the student, who goes on to
become an authentic person, truly and totally free! S/he meets problems rooted in reality, deeply engages the world and makes it a better place.

Here is a brief outline of the program.

A UNIVERSAL EDUCATION

Cornerstone education is universal in its epistemic appeal – it respects all points of view that appeal to the knowing mind – “let noble thoughts come to us from all directions,” says the Rg Veda, i.e., the mind be free to explore, synthesize, debate, discover and get convinced. However, ideas have consequences, and not all are acceptable – they must stand the scrutiny of the reasoning, peace-loving mind. John Milton, the seventeenth century poet, wrote, “I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and un-breathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary.” How can we know the truth, he asked, unless there is a “free and open encounter” between all ideas? “Give me liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties” – that freedom is important and implicit in Cornerstone’s universal education.

The dimension of reason is a special gift of humankind. From Greek antiquity to our own times, the lovers of wisdom, the philosophers have cultivated it. The philosopher, David Hume asserts that all things must ultimately be brought before the ‘tribunal of human reason.’ It is universally applicable and serves as a basic means of understanding the world – one of education’s foremost tasks is to nourish the early life of the mind in the young learner so that decisions are reasoned out.
We can begin with Socrates, who teaches the ideal disposition in learning – acknowledging one’s ignorance before a new idea and being open and humble before the topic. Intellectual humility helps ‘submit to the subject’, which in turn, helps engaging with it. Beginning from ignorance, Socrates went wherever sound argument took him; his only caveat was that he would apply reason to what he heard. ‘Reasoning things out’ while actively working to get to the bottom of the truth is the hallmark of the seeker – an important implication is that one does not approach the topic as a specialist, who has great ‘acquired knowledge through a process of accumulation,’ but as a philosopher, who is accustomed to ‘finding wisdom through the process of reasoning.’ To equip him or her with this capacity, the learner at Cornerstone is given a sound foundation in the methods of finding the truth – scientific truths are discovered through observation and experiment, historical truths through records and artifacts, logical and mathematical truths through abstract reasoning. The Socratic Method of interrogation and discussion, the Inductive and Deductive Methods of reasoning, the Empirical Method and the Experiential Method and Dialectic Elenchus are some of the methods used at Cornerstone. They culminate in forming authentic convictions in the growing child.

To summarize, Cornerstone’s universal education fosters clarity of thought in the student by training him or her to use the tools of reasoning with freedom of conscience – Socratic humility helps embark from the ideal starting point; Miltonian freedom helps proceed in an original, unencumbered way; and the tools of reasoning help pursue the truth. Among various teaching strategies, Cornerstone orchestrates specially
designed classes where these principles are operative and the classroom is alive with activity, expectation and engagement, as participants seek wisdom through the process of reasoning.

AN INTEGRATED EDUCATION

Deep pondering will show that reality does not present itself in neatly packaged, discrete entities. It is rather a complex dynamic of often competing, conflicting strands of knowledge areas that confront one another and happen to coexist together. Dewey advocated the co-mingling of ideas from different disciplines and having an integrated approach to education. He envisioned a blending of theoretical and practical subjects, as well as drawing parallels from the humanities to be applied in the sciences and vice-versa. Dewey calls this association between disciplines, ‘Cross-Fertilization’.

Cornerstone does not believe in imparting knowledge in discrete packets, where subjects are ‘water-tight compartments.’ Instead, seemingly disparate, disconnected applications and principles from diverse subjects are interwoven to yield insights that are life-touching, comprehensive and real for the student. So, history is not far removed from language, and mathematics is linked to sports, while technology has a bearing on economic policy. It is the integrated view to learning that comes to the proper aid of the individual - Cornerstone’s educational model is designed on this approach and enables the child look at life holistically. It aims at equipping the child with an integrated view of life rather than pursuing the mastery of particular subjects. The student is thus
able to grapple with problems rooted in reality and bring all his or her knowledge to bear on the question at issue.

THE VIRTUES

Even a cursory assessment of the world around us, should alert us to the completely wrong set of values it espouses – from indulgence to hedonism, self-righteousness to bigotry, aggression to domination, consumerism to environmental degradation, promiscuity to nihilism, wanton self-promotion to apathy of the desperately underprivileged, each of these negative values confronts the child when s/he is yet unformed, and influences his or her. The Plato scholar, R. L. Nettleship had said: “A gifted soul in corrupt society is like a seed planted in strange soil; it grows crooked and unlike itself, loses its proper virtue, and sinks at last to the level of its surroundings”. Cornerstone takes these wrong values, egged on as they are by the media and popular culture, as serious threats to the young impressionable mind; and its schooling program takes the initiative to inculcate an alternate set of values – those that beget virtues – faith, hope, love, temperance, fortitude, patience, and humility among others.

Students are taught the importance of sharing, celebration and consolation. It is not numbers, but the authenticity of the virtue and its degree that matters. Schooled in these virtues, the student grows up as a fully mature human being, finding meaning and ready to take up his or her station in life.

Virtues are nurtured at Cornerstone through its teaching, policies, programs and ambience, all of which help moral formation of the student,
besides his or her education. Modeling, discipline, internalization and comportment are the basic ideas at work.

It is important to add that Cornerstone is a unique centre of learning: although it practices a Christian philosophy of education, drawing its essence from the gospels, it educes the good in all great religions of the world without letting it degenerate into the ‘opium of the masses’ as Karl Marx had put it. The common good and order of society guide its social policy. The student is taught to live the authentically virtuous life while being part of a plural society, at peace with people from all faiths and value systems.

All great religious dispensations in history have produced absolutely stunning physical and intellectual edifices, rich in distinctive style. Just as architecture has variously flourished under different religious orders, valid ideas about God also are to be found in the teachings of different religions, each with their distinctive flavor and appeal. Students must be open to learning from their rich stock of knowledge and deep spirituality, which constitute the ‘ray of truth’ in each religion, and must be introduced to these without indoctrination. That way, they will receive seeds of knowledge that will help them mature into people with a universal spirit, truly open to God and all humanity. They will be able to see and appreciate the good in people who do not share their faith but most definitely share their humanness.

THE TODDLER

An assessment of child education at nursery level betrays a book-intensive and memory-based learning culture – the competitive,
homework oriented academic life ensures that even the pre-nursery child is drilled in the alphabet, something expected only of the 4 year old, who enters the Higher Montessori or the upper KG. Child psychologists say that learning during infancy should never be a burden for the child. Learning at this stage should comprise happiness and enthusiasm and be life-oriented and experiential in nature. Instead of stringent means to teach the toddler the content in books, the emphasis at Cornerstone is on play and laughter, story-telling and friendship, imitation and drawing, singing and speaking, listening and observing the realities of life, of people, the trees, the earth, the streams, the birds. Love, brotherhood, forgiveness, humility, respect, cooperation, obedience are behaviors that the child is taught through situations and experiences rather than through books. Inculcation of these noble traits rather than driving to learn up the alphabet is Cornerstone’s primary focus at the Montessori stage.

AN AUTHENTIC PERSON

Cornerstone nourishes all faculties of the child to give him or her a healthful and fulfilling life, but considers it important to educate the conscience – that’s where freedom of the heart and spirit are generated, and imaginative energies are harnessed. The child is encouraged to take decisions altruistically, truthfully and nobly - to take the hard road and narrow gate that leads to life, and hence form a delicate conscience. The student is also trained to own an authentic will, which is totally open to reality, to face it and affirm it without prejudgment or a lack of engagement, but to collect all spontaneous moods, feelings and inclinations of the life situation and respond to it in a free manner. Consistent with an
authentic will over an extended period, such decisions make the ‘true person,’ who matures to the point of forgiving, being merciful to the adversary and winning him or her over as a friend.

Such a person is strong and free – free from ignorance, prejudice and guilt; free in thought, word and deed, uplifted with high ideals and ennobling possibilities; and strong, because a clear conscience and a mind at peace impel him or her toward great things. The child reaches a high degree of emotional-spiritual maturity that enhances his or her ability to aspire, persevere, discern and understand himself or herself better. Needless to say, this developmental path is open to everyone regardless of social rank, parental wealth or personal ability.

The child’s social development makes him or her eager to act with love, and enables him or her to recognize the importance of others, to whom s/he makes and honors his or her commitments. S/he gradually acquires the habit of dependability, and finds and takes the hard road of responsibility. Social development gives him or her the ability to share, support, befriend, play and work in teams. Games and dining therefore are important occasions for socialization.

Yehuda Baruch observes that we are persons if we can relate with people. Similarly, Immanuel Kant would call for dignity and autonomy as important values to be accorded to persons, and Jean-Paul Sartre would emphasize the freedom to choose as persons. Through its carefully nurtured environment, the Cornerstone student is led towards becoming an authentic person with these values instilled in them.
LOGO, MOTTO AND INSPIRATION

Cornerstone is particularly concerned about the whole person and hence the various faculties, viz., the body, the soul, the heart, the conscience, the mind, the spirit and the will are educated, gradually transforming the child into an authentic person. It guards against intellectual hedonism that can easily get carried away through the vanity that knowledge can generate. Instead, Cornerstone fundamentally uses agapic love to nurture the child, especially interiorly – that explains its motto, scientia inflat caritas aedificat, which is Latin for ‘knowledge puffs up, but love builds up’ (1Cor 8:1). The logo shows a perfect square at the bottom left corner of the logo representing the cornerstone. There are twelve other stones variously shaped that are all supported by the cornerstone. Together they represent the foundation of Christ and his apostles (Eph 2:20). Above the structure of stones stands the tree of life (Rev 22:2) with its twelve different fruits in the different seasons and with roots deep in Christ and his apostles. It expresses that we too can be fruitful as the tree of life if we are similarly deeply rooted in Christ and his apostles. The logo also stands for structure and dynamism represented by the stones and the tree respectively.

THE PASSIONATE LEARNER

Being an elementary school operating in the formative years, Cornerstone equips the child for life in general, where real problems are faced and solved, rather than orienting him or her for a particular profession, as the educational philosopher, Jean Jacques Rousseau
teaches. This includes a strong focus on the ability to reason and some degree of proficiency in all the multiple intelligences – linguistic, logical, musical, spatial, naturalistic, kinesthetic and personal intelligences.

However, Cornerstone also believes that each child is born with unique blessings, which open the door to the opportunities and challenges of the world. In the later years of school life, the child will face the moment of truth – to discover his or her natural talents based on any of the multiple intelligences. This calls for some degree of specialization. The idea is to have a minimum program for life skills of a general nature, and thereafter specialize on the basis of innate blessings. The child will find it enjoyable and meaningful to build on its blessings, and do that at its own pace.

Cornerstone helps transfigure these blessings into sustainable abilities through disciplined and focused appraisal, encouragement and opportunity, and enables him or her to find a way of life by aligning his or her goals with blessings.

Responding thus helps the individual come into his or her elements, engage the world deeply and flourish as a passionate learner – not as the average researcher, but as a ground-breaking researcher, not as the average artist, but a soul-stirring artist, not as the average writer, but a deeply moving writer or the average engineer, but one with creative engineering solutions – that’s where lasting satisfaction and fulfillment lie. Economic security for such people is a natural corollary of their way of life.
STAYING FIT FOR LIFE

Games are encouraged not only for the joy in them, but also for inculcating sportsmanship and team-spirit. More than excelling in sports however, the emphasis is on developing an interest and a personal system for ‘staying fit for life’ so that the habit of exercise remains with the student long after s/he has left school. Cornerstone insists on a minimum regimen of callisthenic exercises before classes begin everyday to vitalize the bio-chemical system and release endorphins in the brain, which produce a refreshed mind, ideal to get into the lessons of the day. At a very early age, the child learns that staying fit goes beyond games and calisthenics, accentuating personal hygiene and a healthful diet.

A FRIEND OF NATURE

Cornerstone education helps the child discover his or her links to nature and appreciate the enormous potency of natural processes. S/he learns how intimately the biosphere, organic cultivation, natural waste disposal, and action of micro-organisms are intertwined in nature and how s/he can gain from its splendid harmony. A vital and distinguishing part of Cornerstone education is therefore the vocation of growing up in tune with nature. Rousseau maintains that children should read the book of nature well.

A piece of land in the campus is allotted to teams who work the land, tend the plants and cultivate local produce and flora through organic farming – the child gets to know the growing seasons, natural fertilizers, the recycling of organic waste for useful energy and about its own role in the wonder that is nature.
Cornerstone has its campus at Kodegehalli in Bangalore, a 2-acre plot. All systems interacting with the environment are organically connected – it is an energy-efficient campus. Environment-friendly solar thermal and photovoltaic technologies are alternative sources of energy.

Through real-life interaction with the Cornerstone environment, the child participates in the burning issues of the world, like food sufficiency, pollution control, energy conservation and balance in nature; s/he understands how an intelligent and mutually beneficial association is possible with nature and how it can become a lifelong friend.

A WORLD CITIZEN

Medical evidence confirms that when a child is born, the peculiar circumstances of the mother’s pregnancy, i.e., her physiological and psychological status, affect the child in complex ways to determine its overall health and mirth. Add to that the social forces that program the child through categories of caste, creed, religion and other divisive notions after birth, and we can have a child with a lot going against him or her. Their true identity, which is ‘child of God’ and ‘citizen of the world’ is obscured. The child has to be nurtured with care and emancipated, which includes giving him or her the right kind of education - an education that frees his or her energies and restores him or her to the rightful place as citizen of the world. Cornerstone realizes that this is possible only by giving the child a wide vision, one that encompasses the whole world. The student has to be de-programmed from a being a solipsistic individual to a world citizen. The world is therefore the extended classroom at Cornerstone. The child is called to understand
important global trends – the Kyoto Protocol and the Human Development Report, which are macro-level initiatives, for instance, have implications for day-to-day decisions – like what automobiles to drive, what medical technologies to embrace, what competencies to develop etc. Cornerstone is conscious of the ever changing macrocosm and grooms the child as a person who can operate as a world citizen with universal aspirations that transcend boundaries of religion, class, gender and nation.

The Stoics of Greece, who developed the idea of kosmopolites, or world citizen argue that each of us dwells, in effect, in two communities – the local community of our birth, and the community of human argument and aspiration that “is truly great and truly common.” It is the latter community that is most fundamentally the source of our moral and social obligations, affirms Martha Nussbaum. Even the great poet-philosopher, Rabindranath Tagore is of the opinion that with respect to fundamental moral values such as justice and goodwill, we should regard all human beings as our fellow citizens.

Awareness of the cultural differences of the peoples of India and the world gives a rich and complex understanding of humanity. As world citizens, students at Cornerstone get to see the beauty and interest of a life that is open to the whole world and develop a keen sense of belonging to the worldwide human fraternity, as well as to their own native roots.

Cornerstone develops a world citizen, a universal personality, totally open to all humanity, with no biases, no prejudices and no ‘socially-programmed old baggage’. Two aspects of daily life, however, predispose us to the opposite end—of being solipsistic personalities—bigoted by religion and language, besides professional and social status.
THE TEACHER, A MATURE LEARNER

Cornerstone understands that delivering value in keeping with its philosophy of education is an intricate, challenging task that takes great skill and patient labor, including preparing lessons, animating the classroom and completing assessments. The poet, Ralph Waldo Emerson, articulates that the teacher ought to enable the student to pursue his interests responsibly, that the teacher should not play the parent and should respect the student and also the self. Cornerstone teachers are handpicked for their commitment to the teaching profession and are developed over many years of patient nurturing in its philosophy of education. Cornerstone covenants that teachers are to teach with honesty, acknowledging that they do not have all the answers, but are also on the path of learning, albeit at a more mature stage. A close scrutiny of the quality, content and program of lessons is undertaken on a continual basis by a quality assurance team. The Cornerstone learning community is like a beehive of activity, where it is hard at work and buzzing with life.

THE HOME AND THE SCHOOL

Particularly relevant to education is the mother’s availability to the child, so richly portrayed in the Indian home. Parents are encouraged to take a leaf from the traditional Indian home where the mother is there for the child, who returns after a tired day at school. Careful observation of families reveals that other things being equal, families with mothers at home, actively involved with the child’s developmental needs, produce a well-adjusted individual with better overall health and mirth. Fathers also have profound influence in accelerating the learning of the child.
An educational program like Cornerstone’s can only succeed if all stakeholders understand each other and work together. So Cornerstone integrates backward into the home – the home is where the child first experiences love and security, the basic prerequisites for learning. Support from the home front is crucial, and a strong partnership is wrought with the parent. Parents are role models and early influencers for the child. Parents are also the first teachers, and are called upon to spend meaningful time with their children, getting involved both in work and play. Childhood requires patient nurturing, and both parent and teacher are to jointly take up the great calling of developing the child.

THE BEST YEARS OF CHILDHOOD

To summarize, Cornerstone’s educational program is universal and integrated. It is driven by the mission to develop the child as an authentic person, at rights with oneself, with others, with nature and with one’s maker. S/he deeply engages the world and flourishes as a passionate learner, a friend of nature and world citizen. The authentic person matures cognitively, affectively, conatively, spiritually and corporeally, making each moment a sacrament. This way, s/he looks forward to life confidently and is always ready for the next adventure. All endowments of the school, home and the individual come together in resounding confluence to make the years at Cornerstone the best years of childhood!

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Cornerstone offers a developmental environment and a program of education that is universal and integrated along all dimensions of knowing, doing and being human.

“We are born weak, we need strength; helpless, we need aid; foolish, we need reason. All that we lack at birth, all that we need, when we come to man’s estate is the gift of education.”

- Jean Jacques Rousseau

Cornerstone Environment for Human Development
consecrated to the holy name of Jesus