

Open Pedagogy For Enrichment and Transformation

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Abstract

Open Pedagogy has been advocated by many educators and philosophers. The principles of open pedagogy are not yet implemented in our educational institutions in full measure. The paper explains the meaning of open pedagogy in detail, and also expresses a different point of view about open pedagogy. Educational institutions must be able to adopt the principles and techniques of open pedagogy to develop the minds of their students and help them grow in full measure. Growth involves the participation of students in the teaching- learning process. Open pedagogy shifts the role to learners as co-creators of knowledge, promoting full freedom to teachers and students to dissolve the boundaries of the prescribed curriculum and break free into a world of learning with no strings attached. Open pedagogy also stresses on give and take principle, while focusing on the use of open educational resources. This paper will be beneficial to teachers, students and administrators to check their practices and also implement the suggestions for open pedagogy. The author hopes to communicate the principles of open pedagogy, especially for teacher education institutions. The paper also provides how OERs can be integrated into the teaching-learning situation keeping in mind David Wiley's 'OER enabled pedagogy'. The paper can be of great significance to policymakers and those involved in the examination and syllabus framing.

Keywords: Open Pedagogy, OER, Academic freedom, Experiential learning, Differential treatment

Introduction

David Wiley states that open pedagogy is the set of teaching-learning practices in the context of free access and having the 4R permissions (reuse, revise, remix and redistribute) which are the characteristics of the open educational resource. David Wiley while encouraging the use of OERs propagates the use of 'OER enabled pedagogy'. Open Pedagogy is not a new idea, in 1979 Canadian Claude Paquette defined three principles of open pedagogy: autonomy and interdependence, freedom and responsibility, democracy and participation. In 1970 Paulo Freire in his book "Pedagogy of the



Oppressed' condemns the 'Banking Model of Education' and firmly confirms that learners must be co-creators of knowledge and the teacher-student relationship must be friendly to facilitate this. OpenPedagogy according to many would be a praxis that engages free discussion and use of learning materials, technology, issues in education and society where much focus is given on freedom of thought and expression.

The situation in our classrooms today is very restrictive where students are taught the concepts in the prescribed curriculum and also restricted from answering beyond the syllabus. The examination system also is restricted to one format and all students adhere to all the rules and regulations imposed in the restrictive environment created to answer the questions. Students are thus not allowed to exercise their academic freedom, as they are perceived as “receivers” rather than “creators” of knowledge. Teachers also consider themselves as recipients of the given curriculum and most often stick to the boundaries determined by the prescribed curriculum. Open pedagogy will break these imaginary boundaries that restrict the teachers and students.

The word "Open" refers to pedagogy that is freely developed, accessible and also adapted for learning. Educational institutions are still to adopt this pedagogy in full measure. There are several ways that this integration can be made in the routine process. The entire philosophy of 'Open Pedagogy' requires a transformation in the mindset of administrators and teachers. First of all the "I teach" thought must be removed from the minds of the teachers to "We learn" thought. In classrooms, the hierarchy of learning must be demolished to a "collaborative learning" mode, in which the teachers and students learn together. This is the *first pedestal* of open pedagogy.

Open pedagogy is ensuring students' and teachers' academic freedom. In a study conducted by Sebastian, V.: Academic Freedom, Accountability and Professionalism in Higher Education, perceptions of academic freedom teachers in general and professional education were compared. The findings reveal that teachers in general education, aided institutions and those belonging to education courses have a high perception of academic freedom. Academic freedom is an important ingredient of open pedagogy. There are many ways that teachers can infuse principles of open pedagogy through academic freedom into their teaching practices. Openness with substantial academic freedom for teachers and students must be a part of the institutional culture



also in all the activities.

The learning environment created by the teachers must be free and democratic. All pupils must experience the freedom to ask questions, deliberate on issues that they consider as important related to the topic and also bring in some new information related to the topic. This friendly atmosphere of giving and receiving can bring in more learning and retention which will boost the learning benchmark. The daily interactions must be open and unrestricted all the time. Teachers must break free from the prescribed curriculum, do not stick to the basics and feel free to experiment on related concepts of academic and social relevance. This would satisfy the component of enrichment in open pedagogy. The students who are recipients of open pedagogy must be able to appreciate the knowledge gained.

The teacher-student interaction and classroom assignments are the main factors in which open pedagogical principles can be implemented. The students must possess a high academic motivation to think, explore, solve problems, develop situations, engage in projects and conduct programs independently. Teachers must assume a supportive role in all these activities with facilitating resources and academic help wherever required. This is the transformation required in the open pedagogy, where the traditional roles of teachers are demolished, and new roles are adopted. Being students in higher education, they must develop qualities of self-regulated learning practices. In an open pedagogy the only criterion of excellence is “creativity”, a question asked to oneself is ‘How creative were you in a project?’. Students must unleash their creative potential with no strings tied.

Benjamin Bloom and his associates presented the two dimensions: the cognitive process dimensions and the knowledge dimensions. Open pedagogy refers to the higher levels of learning experiences in the cognitive processes that are – Analyzing, Evaluating and Creating. The knowledge dimension: Factual, Conceptual, Procedural and Metacognitive must be considered by teachers to provide different learning experiences and help the students capture their higher mental abilities. The learning experiences planned for the students in open pedagogy must take a drastic change. It must include – Problem formulation, Case study designing, Graphic representations, Correlating with real-world situations, non-contextual situational learning. These are breakthrough learning experiences that open pedagogy would propose for students, where students are



no longer recipients but developers and co-creators of knowledge itself. They do not have to take what is given to them but have a choice of how they want to view content. The constructivist approach developed by Jean Piaget highlighted the adaptive function of the mind to help the students think differently and think critically.

The assignments given in schools and colleges are designed by the teachers and given to the students to test their knowledge and skills. These assignments become uninteresting to most students, and they do it for the sake of doing. Open pedagogy refers to assignments much connected to the students' own lives and their world. The assignments must give them a chance to explore their world and understand it better. Most of the assignments are done by students, marked by the teacher and shelved for eternity in the storage provided in institutions. Assignments must be designed such that there is growth in knowledge and awareness of concepts as well as of the real world. This will lead to a transfer of learning in students. Assignments are a resource; they must be shared with the students so that there is a multiplier effect on all students. According to David Wiley, teachers must not aim at 'Disposable assignment' but must have all features of open educational resources. Assignments must therefore be empowering which students are not complaining about but are excited to engage in. The students could join up into a group and club the assignments into a project activity, thus making the assignments are mini-projects that can lead to new findings. These modified projects can then be shared as 'Open educational resources.

Open pedagogy involves the preparation of teachers and students towards its principles. The resources used in open pedagogy are open educational resources. Hegarty (2015) describes eight attributes of open pedagogy: using participatory technologies, fostering openness and trust, focusing on innovation and creativity, sharing ideas and resources, building a connected community, learning must be learner-generated, engaging in reflective practice, conducting peer reviews on work. DeRosa and Robison (2017) while explaining open pedagogy stated that students must be engaged with the content, they must be in touch with the open educational resources. There should not be a gap between learners and the educational content that they are dealing with. Teachers must facilitate to remove this gap that learners are experiencing by engaging in a more hands-on activity and free questioning and different modes of interaction. The feelings of being bound and restricted are not the characteristics of open pedagogy.



One way in which educational institutions can promote the creative cognitive style of thinking is to seriously look at open educational resources as a practice. There are three levels in which educational institutions can integrate open educational resources in their daily curriculum – Adoption, Curation and Development of open educational resources (OERs). Teachers must adopt certain OERs as a part of their teaching process, references given to the students must be OERs, which will help them understand the meaning and usefulness of OERs in the teaching-learning process. The knowledge of creative commons licenses must be mandatory in all educational institutions which can be used for OERs depending upon the author's free will on distributing the OER.

The following diagram summarizes the essence of open pedagogy which shows the features of open pedagogy for transformation and enrichment.

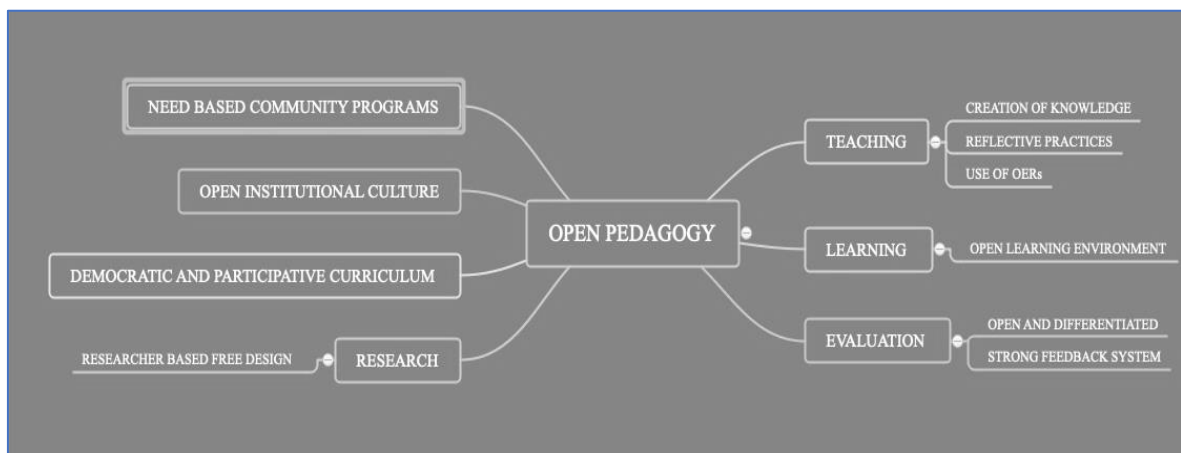


Figure 1. Open Pedagogy in Educational Institutions

Educational institutions are places where students must experience their full growth-cognitive, affective and psychomotor. Teachers can do much if they adopt open pedagogical principles in their teaching, learning and evaluation. Evaluation of students' performance is mostly perceived to be in the hands of teachers and people who don't know the child. Open pedagogy promulgates an open evaluation system. Students can be provided with a cafeteria approach in evaluation where they can choose their evaluation methods, abiding by the criteria of that mode of evaluation. Most of the time the evaluation is always written in nature with the teachers expecting the same answers from all. Differential treatment to teaching, learning and evaluation can have a tremendous effect on students' perception of themselves and their intrinsic motivation levels. Our educational institutions require a total revamp of what they think and do, if open

pedagogy is adopted it will lead to open individuals in thought and the society can be much harmonious. It will foster respect for each individual and also care and appreciation for each person, with no domination of ideas and imposition of common rules for all. Open pedagogy removes the standardization that is existing as a rigid factor in our educational institutions, which looks beneficial only for the teacher and educational administrators. The voice of the learner is lost in standard rules, prescribed syllabus and preplanned examination system. Paulo Freire highlights the culture of silence and ignorance that exists in our educational institutions which would be diminished under open pedagogy. The shift from recipients to creators, from voiceless to communicative would be a big shift in open pedagogy. The outcome of open pedagogy must be in the reflection of the stakeholders stating the extent of openness experienced by each one of them. This will lead to student and teacher enrichment and transform the entire education system leading to changes in society.

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