

Testing with Strategies – Fostering an Open Book Examination

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Abstract

The facilitating academic situation is a vital factor determining the destiny of our nation in the continuously increasing knowledge zone of the world. Many countries are reviewing and reforming their educational systems and preparing to make changes in order to meet the needs of the economic and manpower demands of the 21st century. The most important step in this direction is to improve the quality of education. We should also think seriously about the existing educational policies of our country to evaluate its efficacy to ensure that India remains ahead in the knowledge sector which has been growing exponentially in recent years.

Now, it is strong need of time to reforms and formulates new pioneering policies and strategies in the educational system of the country to sustain in present global context. In this regards open book exams is one of the finest plan, policy and realistic, innovative option. Open book exams assist students to show their knowledge and understanding in a subject as well as demonstrate their ability other than simply recall of information, to secure a more peaceful, flourishing, successful and greener future.

Key Words: Open book exams; educational system; globalization; policies; strategies; sustain.

Introduction:

Education is an enduring process of continuous learning and adaptation taking place in and outside schools. It is any act, action or experience that has an influential effect on the intelligence, personality and physical aptitude of human being. In its scientific sense, education is the process by which society intentionally transmits its accumulated information, knowledge, skills, values, morals and ethics from one generation to another (Bala,2011). It is growth-producing and contributes in our ability to become good human beings and good citizens.

Once Nelson Mandela said that “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” Education constitutes the pedestal of all multidimensional socio-economic development of the country. In present context, every country needs skilled human capital for enhancing the growth and development of the country. The challenges of creating skilled

manpower through quality education for developing countries are different from developed countries. Globalization has many positive effects and creates lot of opportunities in the areas which lead to increase competition for better future. As India moves towards being a world economic power, in spite of the economic retard, the low standards of education, raise a real fear about the means through which India will manage to sustain this growth without developing its human capital (2003).

The investment in human capital, through quality education, holds the key to comprehensive development in the rising Indian economy. The education system, in spite of its significant achievements in the last 60 years, is still defective by some deficiencies both at the elementary and higher levels, which restrain the country from becoming a knowledge society in the world. Converting India into a knowledge society shall require inter alia, expansion, excellence and inclusion in education by formulating new pioneering policies and strategies Mitra, 2010.

Aims and Objectives of Education : According to Nel (2007), education without clear cut aims is like a rudderless ship. Here are some aims and objectives of a good educational system-

- 1. Individual Development :** Education enables a human being to attain the greatest possible harmony both internal and external for the fullest possible development of human potentialities which makes individual – physically, mentally, spritually self- confident and self dependent for success in life.
- 2. Social and National Development :** In social view, education should produce effective individuals in the sense that they realize their responsibilities towards the society which is equally important because an individual lives in society and has his obligations towards his nation. There is a realisation in recent studies that, the present education system divorced from the real social content and social goals.

Changing Scenario and Strategies to Sustain:

To achieve various aims and objectives of education in present changing scenario of globalization, Indian educational system should also adjust itself with these changes. Change can be seen as evolutionary and vibrant with a

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highlighting on continuous learning and adaptation. Now the real challenge is for educational institute to adopt these changing strategies by maintaining internal stability while moving ahead. This challenge may be able to meet through education by focusing on changing policies and strategies where education is considered as the single most important resource for organizational renewal.

According to Silins and Mulford (2002), various educational institutes may function as a key organization in order to continue good performance and build capability in every student to manage these changes where education is becoming gradually borderless. Therefore, the educational system of the country right from the beginning continues to worry even today to receive far more attention. Hence, it is a strong need of time to reform the educational system of the country for better sustainability in present global scenario.

In this arena for better prospective and outcome, all students, teachers, administrators, parents, government and social bodies should come together to discuss new visionary, creative and imaginative policies and strategies for sustainable and adequately improved education. There are many options and alternatives. Some educational bodies are really trying hard to formulate new visionary policies by reforming their examination pattern by introducing open book examination system in their syllabi.

In recent development and decision, the most-discussed plan of Central Board for Secondary Education (CBSE, 2013) of introducing open book examination system is finally coming to force from March 2014 exams. According to a recent circular issued by CBSE, the major concern behind the new system and strategy is to include analytical, theoretical and imaginary skills, by moving away from the old form of memorization.

Open Book Examination

An "open book examination" is written examination during which examinees are allowed to consult their class notes, textbooks and other approved material while answering questions for analysis, conclusion, opinion and judgment rather than memorization.

It is mostly unusual, uncommon; puzzling and odd idea to those who are familiar with conventional examinations. It is ideally suitable to teaching programmes that especially aim for developing the skills of critical and creative thinking for better human capital which is the need of developing countries like India in present emerging and promising globalised educational

sector.

Need of 'Open Book Exams

Beside just rote-learning, traditional exams education is supposed to equip with intellectual abilities and skills to snatch better opportunities in the future for survival. At higher level, simply memorizing and reproducing information is not enough. Open book exams test ability to quickly find relevant information and then to understand, think critically, analyze and apply. With the current examination system, most students practice a habit of memorization. The open book system will provide a new route of learning to the students. This new system and strategy makes a powerful difference in students' educational lives. It holds the key to unlocking the hidden students' potential which is needed to secure a more peaceful, prosperous and greener future (Mitra, 2010).

This will help to boost quality education which will furnish and empower future generations with the ever changing skills and competencies needed to achieve sustainable development. This pattern also helps students to develop the intellectual, personal and social resources that will possibly make them to contribute as dynamic citizens and human, and to flourish as individuals in a diverse and changing society. In present scenario, India has witnessed big boom. In order to sustain this trend, and to ensure that India does not throw away this key advantage, it is essential that we continue to produce a vital group of highly skilled manpower at an accelerated tempo. To achieve this goal a broad view of learning outcomes with new vision and strategy is needed strongly to ensure the dream of superpower country in the present global context.

Myths about Open Book Exams

Northedge (1990) highlighted following myths about open book exams:

1. Generally it is considered that these exams are so easy and hence it is underestimated. Answering the questions will require more analytical and critical views than just copying information straight from the texts.
2. Probably the biggest misconception about these exams is that there is no need to study anything. If students had not studied, they won't be able to find relevant information, where it is. It means open book exams need more careful study to find the required relevant information from the vast resources.
3. Students can't copy the text directly from textbooks or notes. In open book exams, the resource materials are made available and

expected to do more than just copy them. Students must be able to find, interpret and apply the information from the sources.

4. Students have a tendency to take too many materials and resources into the exam with them. Heaps of books do not guarantee the performance, and also students won't have time for extensive analysis. Few carefully selected materials are important than plenty of useless books.

Psycho-physiological View

Singh, et. al. (2012) and Aggarwal and Marshal (2001) concluded that several studies have agreed that examination has been considered as one of the most acute stressors and create harmful effects as performance in examinations generally has future consequences on student's career. In some students pressure of examinations and its deadlines can lead to stress, hypertension, anxiety, depression, negative emotional state and psychological phobia. In these circumstances, students attracted towards unfair means and other malpractices may damage student personally as well as complete educational system and society permanently (NCERT, 2006). These all consequences can be well managed with the help of open book exams strategy. It also helps to remove much of the fear and emotional block encountered among students during examination, while at the same time, it emphasizes practical problems and analysis. It also elevates confidence in the students for better performance to cope their ability under pressure in a fixed time period.

Advantages of Open book Examination

- 1 It tests students' ability of thinking and understanding rather than memorizing.
- 2 There is less need for memorization in open-book examinations.
- 3 Open book examinations found that the reference book was helpful during the examination.
- 4 Reduce stress and encourage students to self-monitor their own learning if it is properly implemented.
- 5 It could be the most effective way to improve our entire educational system and make it future oriented.
- 6 The teaching may be more compatible with open-book examinations.
- 7 Dealing with unfair means and mass copying cases and other malpractices can also be controlled which may spoil entire educational system.

Conclusions

Now time is to move towards general argument

in goodwill of rising, expanding access for good quality higher education with better, imaginative, fruitful strategies and policies for favorable outcome. Examinations are considered as the weakest bond of the education system. Hence, there has been an increasing demand for improving the examination system. Among the various suggestions, open book examination has emerged as a realistic option.

It should be remembered that examinations are artificial situations created for the convenience of the system and not for the individual learner. Due to their artificiality, time-bound and 'one shot' nature, it is not surprising that exams in their current form will induce anxiety and psychological stress. Recent studies and reports prove that it enforces students towards committing injury due to depression in exam period. So, all students, teachers, administrators, parents, government and social bodies need to come together to discuss this new approach for better sustainability in present changing circumstances.

Hence, innovative open book examination system is a better option, plan, policy and strategy to motivate and perform successfully in the present era of knowledge, science and technology in vast changing global context. Further studies and research are also needed in this area to judge the prospective and to explore effectiveness of open book exams system as a good strategy and policy to become a developed country.

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