

Locating Pedagogy in Higher Education - Critical Reflections as a Pedagogue

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Abstract

This research paper presents critical reflections on the role of pedagogy in higher education, as observed, visioned and articulated by a pedagogue. Drawing on personal experiences, theoretical frameworks, recent trends and the principles of NEP 2020, the paper seeks to explore the dynamics related to the pedagogical practice in the context of higher education. An attempt is made to situate pedagogy within a broader educational milieu and investigate its implications for student learning and development. The paper also offers insights into the challenges and opportunities of pedagogical engagement in higher education. The pedagogue reflects on teaching philosophy, instructional strategies and learning needs, highlighting the dynamic and context-specific nature of pedagogy.

Keywords: *Pedagogy, Higher Education, Students, Teachers, NEP 2020*

Introduction

One necessary element which reverberates throughout the teaching-learning or transactional processes is the *pedagogy* employed by the educators. In simple terms, Pedagogy is the science and art of teaching; it enables the students to understand the subject thoroughly and helps them apply or use the learning in their daily lives. Many people mix the terms education and pedagogy, but there lies a difference between the two. To discover the differences we may delve into the views of the sociologist Emile Durkheim. His opinions regarding the relationship between theory and practice rely on how he defines the terms *pedagogic* and education. He made a clear distinction between the two in terms of usage, viewing education as always referring to the active process of educating the young as well as the impact that parents and instructors have over their offspring. It is quite otherwise with *pedagogies*-this consists not of actions but of theories, and is a reflection upon education, that is, methodical thought applied to the education process. It is thus suitable to translate *la pedagogie* as the theory that highlights the essence of education (Ottaway, 1968).

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Pedagogy has been defined as an evolving endeavour informed by theories, beliefs and dialogue that is realised in the daily communications and interplay between learners and teachers in the actual environment. Pedagogy encompasses more than just assembling methods and approaches, setting up a classroom, creating inquiries, and creating explanations. It is influenced by certain ways of thinking about learning, learners, and the kinds of information and results that are important (Moon, 2008).

The teaching beliefs of the educator shape the pedagogy and involve their understanding of the content, the classroom dynamics and different learning styles. It is important to help teachers understand the best ways to transact a lesson and achieve students' learning outcomes. It gives them insights into how students learn differently when different topics are covered, and how teachers must mould their teaching methods to suit their needs and make it age-appropriate, relevant and engaging. The pedagogy would thereby improve the quality of education of the learners. As educators, our pedagogical practices are informed by a complex interplay of personal beliefs, institutional contexts, and disciplinary norms.

Therefore, the thrust of making a classroom transaction meaningful lies in the pedagogy being adopted. It is also significant to note here that the boundaries of pedagogy are not fixed as it keeps evolving with the changing needs and times depending on the advancement in educational theory and practice demands.

With the erasing of the boundaries between disciplines and in realising the need to adopt a multidisciplinary education approach it is significant to realise that the knowledge of pedagogy is essential not only for the school teachers or teacher educators but for 'all teachers'. This is to corroborate that "all students" have an interesting and fulfilling learning experience. This ensures a stimulating and engaging learning experience for 'all students'. As educators, it becomes our responsibility to be aware of and make use of the most appropriate teaching methods and approaches which are best suited for the learning outcomes to be achieved.

In this paper, I have tried to unfold my understanding of *Pedagogy* and also try to present my vision of Higher Education institutions' interplay with Pedagogy.

Exploring the Notion of Pedagogy

Simply put, Pedagogy is the theory and practice of education, encompassing various methods, approaches, and strategies for teaching and learning. It is a process by which

teachers conduct their classes, both in theory and practice. Students need to have meaningful classroom relationships to build on prior learning, so, Pedagogy aids in having effective classroom transactions. As the Pedagogy is shaped by teachers' insights and philosophies that involve their understanding of classroom culture and different learning styles, therefore it is inevitable to say that it can also be understood as a relationship between their personal beliefs, culture and educational discourse.

If we try to delve into the Western history of Pedagogy, our attention goes to ancient civilizations such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome which can help us in tracing the early forms of pedagogy and most importantly the term pedagogy. In these societies, education was often reserved for the elite and focused on topics like literature, mathematics, philosophy, and physical education. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle laid the foundations for Western Educational Thought with their emphasis on critical thinking and the pursuit of knowledge.

In ancient Greece, pedagogy was deeply intertwined with the philosophical and cultural values of the time. Education was highly valued and considered essential for the development of citizens who could actively participate in civic life, contribute to the community, and pursue personal excellence. Teaching as a profession was first established in ancient Greece, when it was seen as an artistic endeavour. 'Education and school attendance were things that only the wealthiest parents could afford for their children' (Knowles, 1980).

The function of the Educator was seen as the most crucial and critical in the learning process since they fostered priceless knowledge and wisdom in the children.

However, the history unfolds the fact that trained educators weren't the first pedagogues who imparted education to children. The affluent employed personal human resources who were often 'slaves' and they used to take children to school. They were experienced and wise having general knowledge and understanding which they used through their own experience and educated the children they were taking to school. This is how the word pedagogue came to the force. It is described as the 'leader of children' as they guided the students academically as well as morally.

The term 'Pedagogy' is derived from French and Latin adaptations of the Greek [nata, nato (boy) + aywyoa (leader)], which means a man having oversight of a child, or an attendant leading a boy to school! Leading modern writers have been inspired by the term's limits to create more inclusive names for adult education, like "andragogy" (Knowles, 1980).

In the 5th and 4th centuries BCE, sophists and philosophers played significant roles in shaping educational practices in ancient Greece. Sophists were itinerant teachers who offered instruction in rhetoric, logic, and ethics to young men aspiring to participate in political life. Philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle engaged in philosophical dialogue and debate, emphasizing the pursuit of truth, wisdom, and virtue through critical inquiry and self-reflection (Knowles, 1980).

The concept of *paideia* encompassed the holistic education of young citizens, focusing on their intellectual, moral, and physical development. Paideia involved a broad and balanced curriculum that included subjects such as literature, poetry, music, mathematics, physical education, and philosophy. The goal of paideia was to cultivate well-rounded individuals who possessed a deep understanding of human nature, ethics, and the principles of democracy.

Formal education in ancient Greece was primarily conducted in private schools, known as “academies” and “gymnasia”, as well as in public settings such as temples, marketplaces, and theatres. These institutions provided instruction to boys from affluent families, with a curriculum tailored to prepare them for citizenship and leadership roles in society.

The Pedagogical methods in ancient Greece varied depending on the teacher's philosophical orientation and the educational goals of the teacher or the curriculum. In early childhood education, the family and the state played a role where pedagogical methods such as storytelling and music were employed. Later on, the method of Socratic dialogue was used this method involves the teacher asking probing questions to stimulate critical thinking and self-discovery in students. The Greek philosopher Plato's Academy emphasized the study of mathematics and philosophy through dialectical reasoning and contemplation. Aristotle's Lyceum focused on empirical observation, classification, and analysis as methods of inquiry (Drever, 1912).

The teachers in ancient Greece held a revered position in society and were respected as mentors, guides, and moral exemplars. They were expected to spread knowledge, cultivate virtues, and instil a sense of civic responsibility in their students. Teachers often formed close relationships with their pupils, providing individualized instruction and mentorship tailored to each student's needs and aspirations.

Central to Greek pedagogy was the cultivation of ethical character and moral virtues such as courage, temperance, justice, and wisdom. Teachers incorporated moral philosophy, literature, and historical examples into the curriculum to impart ethical principles and inspire students to lead virtuous lives (Drever, 1912).

The educational principles and pedagogical methods developed in ancient Greece have had a lasting influence on Western educational thought and practice. The emphasis on dialogue, questioning, critical thinking, intellectual inquiry, and the pursuit of excellence remains central to contemporary educational ideals. Additionally, the concept of *paideia* continues to inspire efforts to provide students with a comprehensive and well-rounded education that prepares them for active participation in democratic society.

In Europe during the Middle Ages, monasteries and cathedral schools were the main places where education was offered (Gutek, 1994). The curriculum focused on theology, reading and writing Latin, scriptures and classical texts. During this period a characteristically medieval method of processing these ideas developed which was called scholasticism. As a system of thought, Scholasticism had several defining features but at its centre, it was a methodology that involved a process of question and answer, disputation, and developing arguments to answer questions in the search for truth (Putman, 2018).

The Renaissance (14th-17th century) brought about a renewed interest in classical learning and human-centred education. Humanist educators advocated for a broad and practical education that emphasized the development of the individual's intellectual and moral faculties (Black, 2001). This time was marked by stress on ancient literature and history and it was believed that reading the classics would lead to the inculcation of morals. This was the time when it was realised that human emotions, the surroundings and other social groups also play a significant role in learning and overall development.

The Enlightenment era (late 17th and 18th centuries) witnessed the rise of secular education and the spread of ideas promoting reason, science, and individual rights. Educational philosophers and reformers such as John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau emphasized the importance of education in shaping society and nurturing the potential of each child.

The Industrial Revolution (18th century) led to the expansion of public education systems aimed at meeting the needs of industrial societies. Compulsory schooling laws were enacted in many countries, and the curriculum increasingly emphasized literacy, numeracy, and vocational skills (Beno, 2019). With the advancement of machinery, it was realised that these skills are needed for self-sustenance and later on for making use of and developing machinery.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, progressive educators like John Dewey, Maria Montessori, and Rudolf Steiner advocated for child-centred approaches to education. They

emphasized hands-on learning, experiential activities, and the development of critical thinking skills.

The aftermath of World War II saw further expansion of education systems worldwide, with a focus on access to education for all children regardless of socio-economic background. Educational theories such as behaviourism, cognitivism, and constructivism emerged, influencing teaching methods and curriculum design.

Now looking at the contemporary trends i.e. in recent decades, there has been a growing emphasis on educational quality, equity, diversity, and inclusion. In the age of Connectivism-New, new technologies have also transformed pedagogy, enabling personalized learning, online education, and innovative teaching approaches. It is realised that now the vast array of tangible and symbolic tools and technologies that humanity has created to make sense of and influence the world in which we live must be creatively taken into account in pedagogy. (Moon, 2008).

Throughout history, pedagogy has evolved in response to social, cultural, economic, and technological changes and it has changed with the changing worldviews, times and needs. Despite the diversity of educational philosophies and practices, the central goal of pedagogy remains the same which is to facilitate learning.

Pedagogy in Ancient Indian Tradition

The term 'Pedagogy' has its origins outside the Indian Soil but, the Pedagogy in Indian tradition, much like in other ancient civilizations, was deeply rooted in the cultural, philosophical, and spiritual values of the society. Education in India was seen as essential for personal growth, social cohesion, and spiritual enlightenment. One of the key educational systems was the Gurukul system, where students lived with their teacher (guru) in a residential school. The relationship between the guru and shishya (student), known as Guru-Shishya Parampara, was based on respect, devotion, and trust. The guru not only provided academic knowledge but also moral guidance and life skills.

The curriculum in Gurukuls included scriptures, philosophy, languages, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, yoga, and the arts, focusing on holistic development. Education was largely oral, with students memorizing and reciting verses under their guru's guidance. Ancient Indian education also covered various sciences like Ayurveda (medicine), Jyotish (astronomy), Arthashastra (economics and politics), and Natyashastra (performing arts), along with Vedic and philosophical studies, promoting a well-rounded education.

This holistic approach aimed to foster both intellectual and spiritual growth, reflecting the importance of education in shaping individuals and society.

The NEP 2020 has also highlighted the richness of Ancient Indian Knowledge and Indian Culture. As per the NEP 2020-

The rich heritage of the ancient; eternal Indian knowledge and thought has been a guiding light for the Policy. It is well elaborated in the policy document that in Indian philosophy and thought, the pursuit of knowledge (Jnan), wisdom (Pragyaa), and truth (Satya) has traditionally been seen as the ultimate human objective. In ancient India, the goal of education was not only to prepare students for life in the outside world or for life after school but also for full self-realization and emancipation. Remarkable ancient Indian universities like Takshashila, Nalanda, Vikramshila, and Vallabhi hosted researchers and students from many nations and backgrounds while also setting the bar for transdisciplinary teaching and research.

Great thinkers like Chanakya, Panini, Patanjali, Nagarjuna, Madhava, Gautama, Pingala, Sankardev, Maitreyi, Gargi, Thiruvalluvar, Susruta, Aryabhata, Varahamihira, Bhaskaracharya, Brahmagupta, Chakrapani Datta, and many more emerged from the Indian educational system and made significant contributions to the field of mathematics, astronomy, metallurgy, medical science and surgery, civil engineering, architecture, shipbuilding and navigation, yoga, fine arts, chess, and more. India's philosophy and culture have had a significant global impact. These rich legacies to world heritage must not only be nurtured and preserved for posterity but also researched, enhanced, and put to new uses through our education system. -NEP 2020

As a pedagogue and a learner who has read the vital NEP document thoroughly, has internalised its vision and mission and takes pride in its intellectual richness. I believe that the significant stance of promotion of a rich Indian cultural legacy as expounded by the policy, also lies in and outside the classroom, where with the help of pedagogy, both the teacher and students co-construct knowledge and take part in the journey of meaning-making.

Indian pedagogy has traditionally focused on developing individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also morally and spiritually conscious, capable of contributing positively to society. Mahatma Gandhi emphasized the importance of holistic education, integrating the head, heart, and hand. His educational philosophy promoted self-sufficiency through vocational training, moral and spiritual development, and the importance of learning by doing

rather than rote memorization. Gandhi's vision extended education beyond the classroom, encouraging a balance between academic learning and practical life skills.

The British colonial period introduced Western-style education systems that gradually replaced traditional Indian education. However, post-independence India made efforts to revive and integrate elements of its traditional pedagogy into modern education, particularly in moral and value-based learning. The Radhakrishnan Commission (1948–49), also known as the University Education Commission, played a pivotal role in improving higher education in India. It advocated for a liberal curriculum that combined Indian and Western educational traditions, promoting national integration, critical thinking, and intellectual curiosity. The commission also emphasized the need for professional teacher training and innovative pedagogical methods.

The Kothari Commission (1964–66) underscored the role of education in shaping India's destiny, advocating for child-centred learning and activity-based teaching. It emphasized flexible learning spaces, individual needs, and diverse learning styles, aiming to modernize and democratize the education system to meet the demands of a changing world.

Throughout India's history, educationists like Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, and Sri Aurobindo have contributed philosophies that continue to influence modern education. Their ideas promoted the belief that national progress is intrinsically linked to education. In recent decades, with globalization, Indian classrooms have adopted global pedagogical trends. Despite these changes, efforts remain strong to preserve India's rich cultural traditions in education, ensuring a balance between modern innovations and historical values.

In this evolving landscape, the fusion of traditional Indian principles with global trends continues to shape the future of Indian education.

Unraveling the Need for Pedagogy

The need for pedagogy arises from the fundamental human desire for learning and growth, and strengthening the system of education. Pedagogy provides structured and systematic approaches to teaching and learning, enabling educators and learners to effectively construct knowledge, facilitate understanding, and promote skill development among learners. Pedagogy also helps in planning the classroom transaction effectively thereby achieving

learning outcomes. It recognizes that learners have diverse needs, interests, and learning styles. It offers strategies for educators to accommodate these differences, providing personalized and inclusive learning experiences for all students. With effective pedagogy, a wide difference may be seen in students motivation, interest and the learning outcomes. It leads to Promoting Active Engagement of students with the course material through discussions, problem-solving activities, hands-on experiences, and collaborative projects. This fosters deeper comprehension and retention of concepts.

Teachers can learn the most effective practices for a suitable learning environment with the help of pedagogy. Knowing how various pupils absorb information and learn is helpful for the teachers because it allows them to modify their teachings to meet the diverse learners' needs.

Pedagogy gives them insights into how students learn differently in different subjects so that they can conduct lessons to suit these needs and thereby aim to improve the quality of education for students. The teachers in higher education must develop an in-depth understanding of the pedagogical nuances that would facilitate the active engagement of all learners and generate the possibility of an environment that is conducive to learning at all stages. The need for collaborative practices and shared platforms is necessitated due to diversity among learners in the classroom (ILL,2022).

What causes dynamism in Pedagogical trends?

The changing paradigms or worldviews shape pedagogy. When behaviourism was dominant it influenced both how educators teach and how students learn. The teachers took centre stage in the classroom dissemination of information was done and students' behaviour was controlled with activities led by the teacher. The need to make students active and not passive, and nurture the quality of inquiry, problem-solving and critical thinking skills arose with the humanistic and constructivist worldviews.

With the development of humanistic psychology and constructivism in the 19th century there grew a need for applications of Engaged Pedagogy throughout, reinforcing why moving beyond behavioural-based teaching is not only warranted, but necessary to improve student engagement, performance, and experiences in higher education (Jackson & White, 2020). Similarly, with the growth of neo-Marxist traditions and the growth of critical theory, it was realised that classroom pedagogy should be embedded in the principles of equality, critical thinking, reflection, questioning, dialogue and discussion.

An educator is not bound to use any fixed type of pedagogy as no fixed pedagogy is sacrosanct. Then the question that arises in one's mind is how to know what kind of pedagogy may be effective in the classroom transaction. This answer is also more philosophical than theoretical as pedagogy is dependent on the educator's teaching style, the lesson plan and objectives, the concept to be taught and the needs and motivation of the learner. An educator may also employ a mix of several forms of pedagogical methods to teach one lesson. The types of pedagogies are also an evolving concept as they develop with the changing needs and time. One way of grouping pedagogy may be putting them into Traditional/conventional pedagogy and Modern Pedagogy. The Traditional Pedagogy is backed by the behaviouristic tradition and it typically involves a teacher-centred method where the teacher imparts knowledge to students through lectures, drills, and structured exercises. Modern pedagogy is backed by the cognitivist, humanistic and constructivist traditions. Here the teacher and the learner both are involved in the process of knowledge creation. The humanistic pedagogy gives importance to human values and emotions. It is social as it is aimed towards the social development, awareness, and well-being of the learners. Constructivist Pedagogy is based on the theory that learners construct their understanding and knowledge of the world through observations, experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. Teachers act as facilitators, guiding students through inquiry-based learning activities.

I believe that current educators should not keep their knowledge of pedagogy limited and explore the various strands of pedagogy that exist and keep on emerging from time to time. It is also important to note that pedagogy is intrinsic to education, be it at primary, secondary or higher education levels.

At the Higher education level, Pedagogy can be defined as the theory and practice of teaching and learning in colleges, universities, and other secondary institutions. It encompasses a wide range of approaches, strategies, and methods aimed at facilitating the intellectual, personal, and professional development of students at the tertiary level.

The significance of innovative pedagogical approaches in higher education is envisaged under NEP 2020. The policy places a strong emphasis on the holistic development of the students, which calls for the use of cutting-edge pedagogy, experiential learning, art-integrated learning, flipped classrooms, and other new pedagogical techniques. Higher Education is linked with the economic and social progress of a Nation. To improve the Gross Enrolment Ratio of students pursuing higher education, the education system needs to attract

the students towards itself. The NEP 2020 mission is also to improve the GER from 27% to 50% by 2035.

To make Higher Education Pedagogy suited for today's time, there must be a commitment to fostering active, engaged, and lifelong learners prepared to succeed in an increasingly complex and dynamic world.

It must encompass the following attributes-

Student-Centred Learning: Higher education pedagogy should focus on student-centred learning, encouraging active learner participation through inquiry-based and collaborative approaches.

- **Active Learning:** Active engagement strategies like discussions, case studies, and hands-on activities help students apply theoretical concepts to real-world situations.
- **Experiential Learning:** Experiential learning opportunities such as internships and research projects bridge classroom learning with practical applications.
- **Technology-enhanced pedagogy:** It includes digital tools and blended learning approaches to improve the teaching-learning experience.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** Pedagogical approaches should promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, accommodating diverse learning needs and creating supportive environments.
- **Interdisciplinary and Integrative Learning:** Interdisciplinary teaching fosters integrative learning by connecting knowledge across disciplines and promoting collaborative projects.
- **Assessment for Learning:** Assessment practices should emphasize learning through formative and summative assessments, feedback, and reflective thinking.
- **Professional Development for Educators:** Continuous professional development through training and peer mentoring supports educators in implementing innovative pedagogical strategies.

Some of the pedagogies taken from the vast array of pedagogies which may be used for fostering active, analytical and engaged higher education learners are -

Peeragogy, Andragogy, and Heutagogy are three different pedagogies each based on aspects of self-directed and collaborative learning.

Andragogy is the theory and practice of adult education, developed by Malcolm Knowles (1913–1997), focuses on the unique learning needs of adults, emphasizing self-direction, experience, utility, and problem-solving skills.

Malcolm Knowles in his seminal work on Andragogy titled '*The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species*' (1973). emphasizes the importance of self-directed learning, the role of experience in adult learning, and the need for educators to adapt their teaching methods to accommodate the diverse needs and motivations of adult learners.

Peeragogy is a collaborative, learner-driven approach where peers co-create and share knowledge, provide feedback, and support each other's learning. It can occur in classrooms, online, or informal environments, emphasizing reflection and peer engagement. An example is students working together on a project, sharing reflections, and giving feedback.

Heutagogy, coined by Stewart Hase and Chris Kenyon, is a theory of self-determined learning where learners take full control of their learning process. It focuses on developing autonomous, self-directed learners who continuously improve and adapt to the modern world. Heutagogy fosters lifelong learning, with learners independently seeking knowledge and self-motivating to enhance their skills.

Culturally responsive pedagogy involves adapting teaching methods to address the cultural diversity of students, ensuring equal representation and appreciation of all cultures in the classroom. It considers students' socio-cultural backgrounds in the learning process. Culturally responsive teachers believe that culture deeply influences the way children learn (Stoicovy, 2002). Julia T. Shaw's work on "Culturally Responsive, Relevant, and Sustaining Pedagogies" highlights the importance of integrating culturally responsive teaching practices into education. This approach values students' cultural contexts, fostering inclusive environments where they feel supported. To sustain these practices, educators need ongoing professional development, collaboration, and reflection. Addressing power dynamics and building positive relationships with students, families, and communities are key to creating equitable educational systems (Shaw, 2022).

Critical Pedagogy, developed by Paulo Freire and expanded by Henry Giroux, is an educational philosophy aimed at fostering student awareness of freedom, power dynamics, and the ability to effect change. It emphasizes critical thinking, self-reflection, and transforming students from passive recipients to active constructors of knowledge. This approach opposes unequal power relations in education and seeks to use education as a tool for social change. Critical Pedagogy advocates for dialogue, critique, and practice in the

classroom, encouraging students to question and reflect on what they learn. Teachers should model principles of liberty, equality, and justice, relate content to students' socio-cultural contexts. Another significant point is to maintain a democratic classroom environment in the class; the teacher should not encourage discrimination in any form and should also take note of individual differences while teaching (Arora, 2015).

Best pedagogical practices focus on innovative teaching methods that make learning meaningful and engaging. These practices enhance problem-solving skills, creativity, social and emotional development, motivation, and community engagement. “Toy-based or game-based pedagogy” uses educational toys and games to make learning interactive and enjoyable, improving comprehension and knowledge retention. This approach can be applied to students of all ages, not just young children, and virtual educational games can further enhance engagement in the digital era.

Sports-based pedagogy- This pedagogy integrates sports and physical activities into teaching and learning processes. It encompasses using sports-related contexts, activities, and principles to achieve educational goals across various subjects and disciplines. Sports-based pedagogy can be applied at different levels of education, from early childhood to higher education, and across a wide range of subjects.

Drama and Art and Music-based pedagogy- This integrates educational practices with the transformative power of creativity and expression. With the integration of drama, theatre, visual arts, music, dance, and storytelling into learning experiences, optimum student engagement is achieved. With drama and art, students explore complex concepts, historical events, and social issues while honing critical thinking, communication, self-expression, and collaboration skills. These creative processes not only foster personal growth and self-expression but also cultural awareness and social understanding. This pedagogy may also act as a potent force in reducing students’ stress and making the learning environment interesting and lively.

Experiential Pedagogy- It is based on the work of famous educational psychologist David Kolb who stated that Experience is the source of learning and development. Experiential learning pedagogy focuses on learning through direct experience and hands-on activities. In this students engage in observations, collaborative learning, practical experiences, real-world tasks, experiments, simulations, or fieldwork to deepen learners understanding of concepts and establish a connection between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

The NEP 2020 has categorically specified in all stages, that experiential learning will be adopted, including hands-on learning, arts-integrated and sports-integrated education, and story-telling-based pedagogy, among others, as standard pedagogy within each subject, and with explorations of relations among different subjects.

Problem-Based Learning and Inquiry-Based Pedagogy- In Problem-Based Learning, students learn through solving complex, real-world problems. They work in groups to identify issues, conduct research, and propose solutions, often integrating multiple disciplines. Inquiry-based pedagogy encourages students to ask questions, investigate topics of interest, and seek answers through research and experimentation. This leads to honing of problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

Inclusive Pedagogy- This pedagogy is based on the principle of inclusion and it recognizes that students have diverse learning needs, interests, and abilities. It advocates that teachers should adjust instruction as per the needs of the students, pay attention to individual differences and incorporate various learning activities, materials, and assessments to pay attention to individual needs and differences.

Technology-Enhanced Pedagogy- This pedagogy Integrates technology tools and resources into teaching and learning processes to enhance engagement, collaboration, and access to information. Flipped Classroom, Digital stories, games, quizzes and use of educational software are included in this.

Democratic Pedagogy –The works of significant educationists such as John Dewey, Paulo Freire, Giroux, bell hooks and Amy Gutman may be used to build on the concept of Democratic Pedagogy. This pedagogy mainly prioritizes democratic principles, practices, and values in teaching and learning. It emphasizes the development of democratic citizens who are informed, engaged, and capable of participating in a democratic society to bring about positive change.

bell hooks, the renowned author, feminist, and cultural critic, wrote a pivotal book titled "Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom" in the year 1994. In this work, she brought to light the principles and ideas associated with engaged pedagogy and the transformative potential of education. She highlights the importance of engagement through dialogue, critical thinking, and empowerment in the classroom. She urges for an educational practice that challenges traditional power dynamics, encourages students to question dominant ideologies and narratives, and promotes social justice and equity (hooks, 1994).

Amy Gutmann, an American political philosopher, has written extensively on democracy and education. In her book "Democratic Education in the Year 1987," Gutmann explores the relationship between democracy and education, arguing for schools to be sites of democratic practice where students learn to engage with diverse perspectives and participate in democratic decision-making (Gutmann,1987).Democratic Pedagogy is thereby based on Democratic Participation, Inclusion, Equality and Justice.

In my work 'A Democratic classroom', I have also tried to consolidate my experiences as an educator in understanding, nurturing and applying a democratic classroom pedagogy which takes care of students' and teachers' autonomy, mutual trust and respect and justice and equality.

Constitutional Values as Pedagogies- The Constitutional values such as liberty, equality, justice, fraternity, and human rights—are vital for promoting democracy and can serve as a foundational framework for pedagogy. Integrating these values into education fosters a sense of responsibility, civic engagement, critical thinking, and citizenship among learners. Educators must model these values and create a democratic classroom environment. For example, when teaching about gender neutrality and equality, teachers should incorporate relevant tasks, discussions, and sensitive language that nurture these values both overtly and covertly.

Subaltern pedagogy- It is an educational approach that aims to pay attention to the voices, experiences, and perspectives of marginalized or subaltern groups within society. The term "subaltern" originates from post-colonial theory and refers to groups of people who are socially, politically, and economically marginalized, often oppressed or silenced by dominant power structures. Subaltern pedagogy aims to promote social justice and challenge traditional educational practices that may perpetuate inequality and exclusion by privileging certain perspectives over others. Instead, it emphasizes the importance of recognizing and valuing the knowledge, histories, and cultures of subaltern groups. This approach acknowledges that individuals from marginalized communities possess unique insights and understandings that are essential for a comprehensive and inclusive education. Subaltern pedagogy aims to empower learners from marginalized backgrounds by validating their experiences and providing opportunities for them to share their knowledge and contribute to the learning process. It emphasizes the agency of learners in shaping their own educational experiences.

Open Pedagogy- This is based on cooperation, openness, and transparency. Open pedagogy encourages students to be not just dependent on the teachers to attain knowledge on the

contrary they are ready to actively participate in the creation and sharing of knowledge. Open pedagogy promotes the use of Open educational resources (OER), which are publicly available and openly licenced content that anyone can use, adapt, and distribute (Kanwar,2011). This pedagogy encourages self-learning it seeks to expand educational opportunities, encourage innovation and creativity, and strengthen students' digital literacy and critical thinking abilities. Among the leading proponents of open pedagogy is David Wiley who is a prominent member of the open education movement and an academic from the United States. Wiley has made a significant contribution to the field by promoting the use of open pedagogy and open educational resources (OER) as ways to expand educational opportunities, encourage teamwork, and support creative teaching and learning approaches. In addition to writing multiple publications and giving speeches on the subject, he has been active in several efforts that support the use and development of open educational resources. Wiley's contributions have had a major impact on the development of open pedagogy as an educational idea and methodology.

Public Pedagogy- Henry Giroux an American Educationist is one of the prominent proponents of public pedagogy who is well known for his work in critical pedagogy, cultural studies, and critical theory. He has written extensively on the role of education in society, particularly focusing on how education aligns with politics, culture, and power dynamics. Giroux's work often emphasizes the importance of understanding how education operates beyond formal schooling institutions and how social groups, cultural artefacts, political groups, media, and popular culture contribute to the shaping of public consciousness and social identities. Public Pedagogy entails the practices, processes, situations and spaces of learning and socialization that occur both within and beyond the realm of formal educational institutions. In other words, Public pedagogy is based on how education and learning occur outside of formal educational institutions, such as schools and universities, and within the broader public sphere. It examines the role of media, advertising, entertainment, and other forms of popular culture in shaping public perceptions and attitudes. Public pedagogy also encompasses critical analyses of power dynamics, social inequalities, and hegemonic structures that influence educational processes and outcomes in society.

These pedagogical approaches can be combined or adapted based on educational goals, student needs, and contextual factors to create effective learning experiences.

How Intense Is Teachers' Understanding of Pedagogy?

To address this pertinent question I am again taking a closer look at NEP 2020, which has a learner-centric approach and heavily relies on teachers to carry it forward. The policy allows educators greater autonomy to select pedagogical aspects, enabling them to plan and organise their teaching-learning process in ways that best suit the needs of the students.

However, the teacher's comprehension of the various pedagogical approaches is necessary for the meaningful exercise of this autonomy and flexibility.

It would not be right if I present a generalised point of view regarding higher education teachers' understanding of Pedagogy and its diversity. But it would also not be wrong if I present my observations based on my classroom transactions and my own experiences. I would like to probe into the question - what should be done to improve teachers' understanding of pedagogy and bring pedagogy into action?

Some of the steps which could be adopted to improve the understanding and application of pedagogy in the classroom, in my understanding as a pedagogue with over 27 years of experience in teaching in higher education are- firstly, to encourage Interdisciplinarity and embrace multidisciplinary and holistic education in higher education institution. 'The NEP 2020 promotes erasing the boundaries between disciplines so that proper knowledge construction can take place. It states that there should be no hard separations between sciences and arts, between curricular and co-curricular activities, between vocational and academic streams, etc. to eliminate harmful hierarchies among different streams and areas of learning.' Keeping this view in mind we must take steps to do away with the notion that pedagogy is a realm of only the teacher preparation courses. Making Pedagogy an intrinsic part of Master/Doctoral courses in all degrees of higher education will help future educators and will surely make a difference in the quality of higher education.

Secondly, giving adequate flexibility and autonomy to the teachers and the learners, so that they can choose their pedagogies as per their interest and the lesson to be taught and learnt. The interests of the students should be taken into account while planning for the pedagogies to be adopted and students should also be involved in the creation of teaching-learning resources which are to be used in the teaching-learning process. Student engagement at the very basic level of classroom processes will make students more intellectually and emotionally attached to the concepts taught. This will check the unequal power relations in the classroom and students will feel more responsible and more motivated to learn.

Thirdly, bring about changes in Curricula and Pedagogy as per the changing needs of stakeholders. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the realisation came in very strongly that to sustain the education system in challenging times we must change the pedagogy and make it more suitable for the learners. So, non-conventional but effective pedagogies in the digital era must be used and teachers must be willing to learn and stay updated. 'Open Educational Resources, Web 2.0 (blog, podcast etc.), Flipped learning designs, Digital storytelling, Creating e-portfolio, Blended Learning Designs, Assistive technology and Universal Design for Learning Challenges in using digital learning tools, ethics and digital learning and Development of online communities to nurture the idea of sharing ideas and collaboration through innovative instructional designs at higher education level'(ILLL, 2022) are some of the areas with which educators must be well versed.

Fourthly, adopting a Democratic Pedagogy which entails the promotion of democratic values and democratic living, a sense of pride for the nation and active and conscious citizenship,

'The NEP 2020 envisages that our schools' curricula and pedagogy should foster in students a strong feeling of respect for the Constitutional values and Fundamental Duties, a sense of national identity, and an understanding of one's roles and responsibilities in a changing world. Teaching professionals should be well-versed in the principles of this important policy and should also internalise it. The Policy's vision is to instil in students a deep-rooted pride in being Indian, not only in thought but also in spirit, intellect, and deeds. It also aims to develop knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions that support responsible commitment to human rights, sustainable development and living, and global well-being, thereby reflecting a truly global citizen' (NEP, 2020).

Fifthly, Diverse pedagogies should be adopted taking into consideration the learner's needs and interests. The usage of Public pedagogy platforms which are based on innovation and flexibility such as media, theatre, cinema, advertisements, blogging and other social media platforms may be done for expression, sharing, collaborating and independent learning. It also provides teachers with ongoing opportunities to collaboratively explore best practices in critical pedagogy and culturally responsive pedagogy. The Institute of Life Long Learning, University of Delhi, in its publication titled 'Course Manual on Pedagogical Imperatives for Capacity Building in Higher Education', has highlighted that pedagogical processes define the possibilities of creating equitable learning opportunities for each student in the class. The higher education scenarios manifest a complex matrix of multi-ability (including high ability)

intersecting across various visible or invisible physiological and neurological states of being. The pedagogical approaches need to evolve to address the learning styles of students with differential abilities and learning curves. The issue of access is well addressed through multiple provisions at the entry-level. The resource creation in the form of teaching-learning resources and assistive devices is also gaining momentum (ILLL, 2022).

Sixthly, Make in-service and pre-service teachers sound in the knowledge of pedagogy, this could be done with a component of compulsory Induction of teachers after recruitment, Continuous Professional Development, Teachers Self- Assessment and reflective exercises like maintaining a teaching-learning journal on pedagogy and enhancing the motivation of teachers.

I would conclude my thoughts and ideas with a message that now we need to move ahead from Ideation to Implementation, and from preaching to practice. As educators, we already have a path shown to us by National Education Policy 2020 so it is our turn to follow it and do justice to our teaching.

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