

## **OPEN BOOK EXAMINATION IN TEACHER EDUCATION**

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### **Abstract**

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An "open book examination" is one in which examinees are allowed to consult their class notes, textbooks, and other approved material while answering questions. This practice is not uncommon in law examinations, but in other subjects, it is mostly unheard of. Radical and puzzling though the idea may sound to those who are used to conventional examinations, it is ideally suited to teaching programmes that especially aim at developing the skills of critical and creative thinking. Generally open book exams usually come in two forms: (1) Traditional sit-down / limited-time exams, with varying degrees of access to resources and references and (2) Take home exams—open book exams you do at home. Question(s) are handed out, answers are attempted without help from others, and the exam is returned within a specified period of time (often the next day). While conducting these types of exam we need book, notes, reading, referencing material and textbooks. This paper defines open book examination with its curriculum and various abilities required while teaching in an open book environment and ways out and misconceptions about open book examination.



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### **Introduction:**

Not many diversions are open to exam invigilators once the first flurry of activity in the exam hall is over and the stunned silence has taken hold. One of the more surreptitious pastimes is to pick up a question paper from another examiner's pile of spares and retire to a quiet corner to see what kind of questions other people ask. This is often interesting, but it is usually quite difficult to appreciate what exactly is being expected of the examinee. Read by an outsider, most exam questions look like they are placing greatest demand on the student to recall knowledge. In the case of exam papers we ourselves have set, however, this is a charge we would probably want to deny. Many lectures would argue that their questions are not memory-driven but depend on higher abilities such as analysis, problem-solving and the application of knowledge. Sparkes ~ has challenged this contention, arguing that 'the examinations academics set can often be dealt with successfully mainly by the exercise of only memory and well-practised skills - that is, by adopting a 'surface' approach to learning'. Whatever we might claim, it seems likely that recall plays an important part in conventional exams. How many of us would care to sit a typical exam in our own subject, with only

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minimal preparation? We would want some time, maybe a lot of time, to familiarise ourselves with basic knowledge in the area to be assessed. However, given access to books, notes, course material or whatever is necessary to remind us of key principles, we should be competent to address any question in our own discipline. If we could not do this, then there is something wrong. This is after all what we would expect to do in professional practice. An engineer who does not check facts but relies completely on memory would not be behaving professionally. The same would apply to a biochemist making up a buffer or planning an experiment with a restriction enzyme.

Teacher education system plays a crucial role in structuring present system and shaping the future of a nation. It has been rightly said that the quality of education and the development aspects in all sectors of a country depends much upon the quality of its teachers. Even, the best formulated educational policies and plans can succeed, if translated properly into practice and it can be transacted by the teachers working at the base of educational system. This has been repeatedly emphasized from time to time by different educational thinkers and by most of the educational Commissions and Committees. Teacher education institutions are responsible for supplying good quality teachers to the educational system of the country. The quality of training imparted to the teachers would determine their ability to handle the new challenges of the future. Thus, quality training of teachers in the teacher education institutions is quite important in the present context. It will help them to impart quality schooling and to improve the standard of education. Teachers contribute prominently in improving the quality of human life in every society. Their task becomes difficult and demanding in the present context of multiple internal and external forces impinging on society. Communities would demand education that would be relevant to them and would also be in consonance with the national ethos and nationalistic priority. A professional teacher will have to acquire competence to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the educational system at secondary stage, perceive changes that are imminent and inevitable and develop a mental make up to utilize appropriately the available conditions, situations, resources and changes for the benefit of learners and society. Future teacher education programmes should be shaped in this line to meet the need of the society at local, national and global level. Centrality of teacher education will have to shift from training colleges/ institutions to schools and society. So teacher education programmes have to be modified in its contents, practices, values, objectives and norms to meet the present challenges.

A good teacher preparation programme is characterized by intensive interaction between the students, teacher educators and children. It needs intensive face to face programmes added with sound and logical theoretical and pedagogical background, which can be only achieved with a 2 years duration programme. Many new concepts are being implemented in the school education system like, constructivist approach of teaching, continuous and comprehensive evaluation etc. of which few are related to the teaching learning, few are related to environment building and few are related to evaluation reforms. All these reforms are meant to improve the quality of school education. One of such reform is Open Book Examination (OBE) which must have designed to improve the quality of teaching learning and evaluation system of the school. Recently CBSE, New Delhi implemented Open Book Examination in the year 2014-2015 for the board examination of standard X and XII though it is only 10 marks in all subjects. Likewise, educational thinkers and planners at central and state level are trying to focus on this educational reform at school level and it may be likely that within a few years most of the boards of examination may accept this following Open Book Examination the path followed by CBSE to develop higher order thinking skill in the students. Questions in the Open Book Examination will be different from the traditional examination, like answer of the questions will not be directly available in book; questions will be of more subjective with higher cognitive and affective domain and to answer those questions teachers have to manage students differently. It could be only possible in an atmosphere of teaching learning which could help learners to attempt an open book examination effectively. To achieve this teacher's role is very important. And teacher requires special abilities to carry on with teaching learning and evaluation using open book strategies. But there is no emphasizes on open book examination in the present B.Ed curriculum. The present paper is trying to explain some of the requirements for pupil teacher of 2020+ to enhance the abilities to manage open book examination and suggested few measures.

### **Definition of open book**

An examination based on this practice, of having reference information available for consultation, is classified as open book. Students are permitted to use course notes, handouts or text books during the examination. This does not eliminate the need for memory, but it allows an examiner to shift the balance more towards the so-called higher mental abilities. Open book examinations have been tried by the writer in two undergraduate courses. One is a

final year class and the other is in first year (involving two other lecturers). Apart from the open book aspect, the examination procedure is quite conventional in the sense that students are 'put to the test, alone and unaided and within a fixed time period. Although this procedure is artificial relative to real-life problem-solving, it is justified because it ensures that output in the examination is based on individual student performance and that all students face common examination conditions. Open book exams in engineering are quite common in some quarters. Two engineering students from StrathClyde who studied for a semester at the Technische Hochschule Darmstadt found out by accident on the morning of a thermodynamics exam that they were expected to bring their own copies of the extensive printed notes. This arrangement is so normal there that special instructions are only given for exams where imported material is not allowed.

### **Open Book Examination**

Open Book Examination is an alternative form of examination in which examinees are allowed to consult their class notes, text book and other approved material while answering examination questions. Though this practice is common in law examinations, it is mostly unheard in other subjects. Radical and puzzling through the idea may sound to those who are used to conventional examination; it is ideally suited to teaching programmes that especially aim at developing the skills of critical and creative thinking. Open book examination is meant for real life application of bookish and classroom knowledge using critical and creative thinking. (Mohan, 1997)

In general, we consider teaching as the "dissemination of knowledge" giving prime importance to the *information content* of a subject. In this process teacher's role is viewed as facilitating the transfer of information from the textbook to the students' minds. What the student is expected to do is to understand this information, retain it, and retrieve it during the tests and examinations. This type of tests and examinations test how much information the students have been able to store in their minds. In order to cope with this demand, students memorize the information those are in the class notes and textbooks, and transfer it to answer books during the examination. So success of a student depends on the quantity of information s/he memorized, and reproduced during examinations.

In a traditional closed book examination, the student first copies the information from the textbook to his memory, and then copies the same information on the answer book. In this traditional close book or no book evaluation system the atmosphere of teaching and learning

is also designed to match the close book examination. Students are oriented in this process how to attempt a traditional close book examination. This intermediate stage of memorization is what Open Book Environment attempt to eliminate. Given the availability of textbooks in the examination room, and leading a teaching learning atmosphere not only related to text books, teachers will not ask questions that require the mere transfer of information from the textbook to the examination answer book.

### **Need of curriculum for Open Book Examination in the B.Ed programme 2020+**

In an open book environment, teaching is not transferring information from the library or text books to the students' minds. Rather, true teaching is that teaching students how to learn i.e. teaching should equip students with the ability to acquire knowledge, to modify existing knowledge on the basis of new experience, to build new knowledge, and to apply available knowledge to solve problem and make intelligent decisions which is coinciding with some of the aspect of constructivist learning environment. According to this view, the main focus of teaching is the acquiring of skills, modifying and creating knowledge that is of processing information, rather than the information content itself. In this approach, the focus shifts from rote learning to the development of certain mental faculties which needs an environment to think about any content, analyse and synthesize it and will decide the application of the content knowledge in a suitable logical manner realizing the environment around him. It could be possible if there is a suitable curriculum for the trainees to create a suitable environment for Open Book examination and this can be possible through B.Ed training.

### **Various abilities required while teaching in an open book environment:**

Teacher requires special abilities to carry on with teaching learning and evaluation using open book strategies. The present paper is trying to explain some of these abilities for open book examination and suggested few measures.

**Ability to create Open Book Environment Where students learn in a joyful environment:** In an open book environment there is a need of this component where the teachers would know about the open book examination and open book environment, their features, their merits and demerits, how will it help them to overcome their problems, how will it help them for future etc. These components will help to create the environment of the class for a joyful teaching learning environment and help them to adhere the open book examination and open book environment by teachers.

**To use constructivist approach of teaching:** The constructivist theory which plays an important role in the field of education recently. It is an epistemology, learning meaning making theory based on the thought process involved in learning. Constructivism views learning as a process in which a learner actively constructs or builds new ideas on concepts based upon current knowledge. In other words, “learning involves constructing one’s own experience. Knowledge is acquired through involvement with content instead of imitation or repetition” (Kroll & Laboskey, 1996). This learning process is supported by two broad principles: first, knowledge is not passively received, but actively constructed by the learner, and second, learners generate understanding when they relate prior knowledge to present experiences (Wheatley, 1991). Teachers have the ability to introduce this approach properly in classroom for teaching in Open Book Environment.

**Ability to use of technology and multimedia approach in teaching learning:** Though its capacities for storing, disseminating and processing information, ICT allows educationally attractive activities to be implemented. These activities can be done inside the classroom or, using the Internet, outside the classroom: at home, at a company...in fact anywhere. They also help establish new partnerships and roles (e.g., the group, the outsider, the community) and provide these new roles with the means to communicate. Many benefits (Wagner, 1997) can be expected concerning participation, feedback, knowledge retention and development, student evaluation supports, students’ self-regulation, motivation, negotiated understanding and term building.

**Involving students in co-operative Learning:** Co-operative learning is an educational approach to teaching and learning that involves groups of learners working together to solve a problem, complete a task, or create a product. Thus, in a cooperative learning setting, learners have the opportunity to converse with peers, present and defend ideas, exchange diverse beliefs question other conceptual frameworks and are actively engaged.

**Ability to construct Cognitive mapping/concept mapping skills:** Concept mapping is seen as a useful tool for helping students learn about the structure of knowledge and the process of knowledge production or Meta knowledge. A graphical way of organizing thoughts and showing how concepts are related or differentiate. In contrast to students who learn by rote, students who employ meaningful learning are expected to retain knowledge over an extensive time span and find new related learning progressively easier. The processes can include Concept Mapping one’s own knowledge, working with another to co-create a Concept Map,

some other format into concept Maps. Teacher are expected to find out the possible concept mapping in the concept and accordingly can use. Mind Mapping is a useful techniques that helps teachers and students learn more effectively, improves the way they records information, and support and enhances creative problem solving.

**Developing Decision making skills in students:** According to Marom et al. (1991), “Decision making skill is the process of choosing what to do by considering the possible consequences of different choices”. In other words, the body of knowledge concern with making selection from a range of alternative possible action is known as Decision Making Skill. At time of using Decision Making skill, an individual needs to use critical thinking skill. Decision making process is a dynamic process because decisions are often interrelated and interdependent. The Decision making process has certain steps which an individual has to follow at the time of taking decision.

**Implementing Problem-based learning:** Problem based learning is an instructional method that challenges students to ‘learn to learn’, working cooperatively in groups to seek solutions to real-world problems. These problems are used to engage students’ curiosity and initiate learning the subject matter. Problem-based learning prepares students to think critically and analytically and find and used appropriate learning resources. It is an instructional strategy which promotes active learning.

**Ability to emerge answers of every question getting from the class:** Teacher has to analyzing each and every answer (may be seems as wrong) of students in terms of its environment and background and providing hints and clues to the students on the basis of which students may modify their answer. It will help to create a democratic environment and leads the learners towards autonomy which will help the learner to think more.

**Having hand on experience:** Teacher have the ability to engage learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values through hand on experience like games, simulations, role plays, stories in classrooms etc.

**Use of innovative approaches in teaching learning:**

**Seminar conduction:** Seminars have been conceived of in the present content as creative ways of enhancing academic work in schools and colleges in a manner that has traditionally not been thought of. The seminar method is a system which consists of a large variety of components or aspects that go into its mating. The teacher should view the relevance of seminars from these aspects and try to tap its resources for the classroom.

**Prepare students for meta-cognition / Meta thinking:** Teacher has the ability to prepare students for meta-cognition refers to higher order thinking that involves active control over the thinking processes involved in learning. It is thinking about thinking and learning. Meta-cognitive skills are important not only in school, but throughout life.

**Ability to prepare cognitive questions for cognitive lesson Plan:** Teachers have to prepare cognitive questions from contents. These cognitive questions help the student for group discussion in a cognitive Lesson Plan. It helps the students to develop their higher order thinking skills and decision making skills.

**Ability to prepare Question paper & Evaluation of answers sheets:** Question preparation for an Open Book Examination is not a simple task. Teachers have to frame questions in a way where there is no answer come out from the book directly. Questions are on the basis of problem solving, critical & cognitive thinking skills and practical based. So teachers have to prepared question paper very seriously. Competence to do evaluation of the students activities at different steps of their work, to help them in their learning and to prepare them for the final evaluation. After the examination the teachers have a big job that is the evaluation of answer sheet, because all the answer of the questions is different from student to student. All the answers are differently because the different thinking skill of the student. So the teacher has to evaluate answer very carefully in different angle (Jana, 2014).

## **WAYS OUT**

There is an immediate need to find the ways out for the development of a curriculum for an Open Book Environment. These are few ways out discussed in this paper as follow.

### **Planning in the new curriculum for creating a learning environment for OBE**

In the teacher education 2015+ have to plans purposeful programs on OBE consider student development and learning in an open Book Environment by the help of the apex body or Government agencies. Communicate effectively with students, develops positive relationships with students, establishes clear and achievable expectations for students and encourages positive student behavior. Knows and uses a wide range of teaching approaches, designs teaching programs to motivate and engage students, structures learning tasks effectively, demonstrates flexibility and responsiveness.

### **Develop Cognitive Lesson Planning for OBE**

Our practice in teacher education is still based on limited 'lesson plans' aimed at achieving measurable 'behaviours'. In this view the teacher trainees and children are akin to creatures



that can be trained mechanically with the help of few skills and competencies. There is a need to make the future teachers autonomous and creative rather than programming them. There is a need for a pragmatic and need based practice teaching. We need cognitive and spontaneous lesson planning which can allow the teachers to on the spot thinking and finding a way out to manage and tackle the dynamic classes. Internship programme should be made a compulsory component of B.Ed. programme of all the universities with some Cognitive Lesson Planning for OBE.

### **Develop Proper Attitude of the trainees towards Teaching in OBE**

Teacher's attitude is a very important factor for the development of the teaching learning process. Open Book Examination is a new concept in Indian curriculum. For Open Book Examination Open Book Environment (OBEn) is necessary. OBEn helps students to acquire knowledge, to modify existing knowledge on the basis of new experience, to build new knowledge, and to apply available knowledge to solve problem and make intelligent decisions. The focus here is to develop certain higher level mental faculties among students. So any positive changes can be implemented in schools when trainee's teachers have a positive attitude towards teaching.

### **Preparing trainees as per advancements in ICT**

ICT integration in schools is needed in order to accomplish many objectives and improve the quality of lessons in all subject areas. ICT increasingly pervades various aspects of our daily lives like work, business, teaching, learning, leisure and health. Since ICT leads all processes based on information, every individual in a society should become technology competent. The integration of information and communication technologies can help revitalize teachers and students. This can help to improve and develop the quality of education by providing curricular support in difficult subject areas. According to Zhao and Cziko (2001) three conditions are necessary for teachers to introduce ICT into their classrooms: Teachers should believe in the effectiveness of technology, teachers should believe that the use of technology will not cause any disturbances, and finally teachers should believe that they have control over technology. So the ICT Integration is necessary for the trainees in the teacher education programme.

**Conduct Seminars and Workshops on OBE:** In the time of two years training programme, Seminars, Conferences and workshops can be organised by the department with education

and educational research to come out with new methodologies for the development of the teaching methods and technique for the Open Book Examination.

**Orientation programme for the trainees to improve their competency in teaching:**

Orientation programme is very necessary for trainee's to prepare for an Open Book Environment. Give proper information related to Open Book Examination & Open Book Environment is necessary for the trainees. For that teacher orientation programme is necessary.

**Developing various skills:** The programme should also focus on developing various skills in the trainees like decision making skill, collaborative learning skill, cognitive mapping, Communication skills, Counselling skills, Listening skill, Management, planning and administrative skills, Social skills, Skill of using computers, Leadership skills, Interpersonal skills, Skill of initiation, Time management skill etc.

**Misconceptions about open book exams**

**1) Open Book exams are a breeze**

Open Book exams are not an easy option. Answering the questions well requires more than just copying information straight from texts. For example, having access to a textbook can stop you from giving a wrong answer if you can't remember a fact or formula, but just getting that fact correct won't get you good marks. In Open Book exams, it's how you locate, apply and use the information that is important.

**2) You don't have to study**

Probably the biggest misconception about Open Book exams is that there is no need to study anything. However, you should study just as you would for any other exam. Having books and notes to refer to might mean you don't have to memorise as much information, but you still need to be able to apply it effectively.

This means you must fully understand and be familiar with the content and materials of your course so you can find and use the appropriate information. In Open Book exams, you need to quickly find the relevant information in the resources you have. If you don't study you won't be able to—you won't know where it is.

**3) You can just copy straight from the book!**

You can't copy chunks of text directly from textbooks or notes. This is plagiarism. In Open Book exams, the resource materials are made available to you, so you are expected to do more than just reproduce them. You must be able to find, interpret and apply the information

in your sources to the exam questions. You usually need to reference as well, just as you would for any other assignment.

#### **4) The more materials the better!**

Don't get carried away and overload with materials and resources in the exam. Only take what you need. Stacks of books won't necessarily guarantee your performance, and you won't have time for extensive reading. Too many materials can end up distracting you and crowding up your work space. Carefully select your materials and organise them for quick reference.

#### **Conclusion**

A good teacher preparation programme is characterized by intensive interaction between the students, teacher educators and children. It needs intensive face to face programmes added with sound and logical theoretical and pedagogical background, which can be only achieved with a long duration programme. Teachers have the competence for a critical analysis of documents of their subject (journals, magazines, books, radio, TV, etc.). Teachers have the ability to identification of epistemological (and didactical) obstacles, to define new strategies of teaching focused on these obstacles and building of didactical situations adapted to learning. The development of the professional competency of a teacher is incomplete unless it follows such types of professional ethics or code of conduct. In the present competitive world we cannot escape. The public demands accountability. Quality is the tool which gives us the competitive edge. It is time to act before it is too late. Steps have to be taken in the right direction for the higher order thinking skill in the teacher education programme for Open Book Examination. Let us all join hands in this direction.

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