

DEMOCRATISATION OF TEACHING AND LEARNING: A TOOL FOR THE PRACTICALISATION OF THE TUNING APPROACH IN HIGHER EDUCATION?

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INTRODUCTION



- The Tuning approach emphasises on student –centred methodological approach to teaching and learning.
- It focuses on the fact that students’ voices should be heard both in planning curriculum , lesson plans and the ways they are engaged in the teaching and learning processes.

INTRODUCTION, cont.

- Teachers need to create a culture that operates on the principles of equality and functions as interactive and evolving whole (Lesnick and Cook-Sather, 2010)
- Democratisation of teaching and learning in higher Education advocates equal opportunity in the classroom
- An enabling environment that allows for equal access to appropriate learning tools.

- Croxon(2013), believes that , democratisation of teaching and learning process allows for the equalisation of student –teacher roles in influencing the nature, creation and transmission of knowledge
- The 21st century teaching and learning process is faced with a paradigm shift from teacher-centred to student-centred approach.

- Botswana's National Education Policy of 1977, Education for kagisano (Social Harmony)
- The principles of :Unity; Development ; Democracy and Self-Reliance.
- Democratisation of teaching and learning allows for decentralisation of teaching and learning processes and creates an opportunity for bottom-up control of educational practices

Research Objectives



- This paper examines the practicalisation of the principle of democracy in teaching and learning at higher education level in Botswana
- It aims to find out if higher education students are involved in planning the curriculum
- To determine the extent of democratic activities in the teaching and learning processes in Botswana

Research Questions



- The following research questions were addressed:
- Is the learning –outcome approach applied in lesson planning?
- How engaged are the students in the teaching and learning process?
- Are students involved in planning curriculum?

Democratisation of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education?



- Democracy allows people to participate in decisions that affect their lives in political ,community, social and economic affairs. For democratic principles to be made functional , individuals must have ample information to make wise choices and decisions , which should be respected and taken into account by decision makers at all levels of governance(Botswana, 1977)

- Democratisation of teaching and learning in higher education can take place through the amplification of students' voices ,
- creating an open and cordial space for teaching and learning;
- working in partnership with students, faculty and teaching staff;
- dialogue between students and their teachers;

- Empowerment of students in different facets of learning;
- Being involved in curriculum development and engaging students in actual teaching and learning(Cook-Sather, 2012; Healy and Harrington,2014)
- Gardebo&Wiggberg (2013) posit that ,students are ‘university’s unspent resource’.

- Democratisation of teaching and learning equips students with the power , authority and courage to co-create knowledge, learning at the higher education institution(NUS, 2012)
- Drawing from Dunne &Zandstra(2011), there is a very crucial difference between an institution that listens to students and responds accordingly,

- And an institution that gives students the opportunity to explore and discover areas they deem significant and needed solutions which will manifest in required and desirable changes
- Democratic relationship in teaching and learning involves creating an enabling environment where students and teachers are involved in setting the priorities ,content and direction for learning

- Democratisation of teaching and learning in higher education empowers students and gives them that sense of belonging and worth, that they are useful in the process of learning
- Engagement outcomes for students lead to enhanced confidence, motivation and enthusiasm in learning.

Challenges of Democratising Teaching and Learning



- In dialogue, one listens and respects other people's views (Ayer, 2004). How possible is it to allow students participate freely in class, partner with teachers in the design and planning of curriculum, being involved in assessment design and marking?
- Critics believe that students are neither disciplinary nor pedagogical experts, so, how feasible will it be partnering with them?

The Tuning Approach To Teaching And Learning



- The Tuning methodology lays emphasis on the development of competencies in higher education students
- Through the learning-outcomes approach to teaching and learning , students become the centre of the instructional process
- Tuning methodology is based on desirable learning outcomes and not on minimum requirement

- Tuning is basically a change of paradigm in higher education teaching and learning , where learning has shifted from staff oriented to student –centred teaching and learning(Wagenaar, 2008).
- The burning issue is—How democratic is our teaching and learning environment?

The Study



- Context—Gaborone , the capital city of Botswana
- The university of Botswana and Botho University
- Participants were purposefully selected from the faculties of Education of both universities
- Qualitative approach was used

- Six lecturers from each university making it a total of twelve lecturers
- Ten final year students from the faculties of education of each university were purposefully selected
- According to Cresswell(2007), ten participants would be ideal for a qualitative study.

Major Findings



- The findings of the study addressed the three research questions used for data collection:
 1. Use of learning-outcomes approach for lesson planning by university lecturers
- Lecturers are aware of the learning – outcomes approach and Bloom’s Taxonomy of educational objectives

- 2. Students' engagement in the teaching and learning processes-
- Botho university engages students through the use of technology, students are provided with tablets to engage with lecturers and fellow students, use of blackboard, face-to-face through group discussions in class and class room presentations, e.t.c

- The university of Botswana uses more of the face-to-face contact sessions. Students are engaged through class work activities , group discussions ,questions and answers forums ,tutorial, group and individual presentations in class. The use of technology such as moodule to post assignments and announcements to students.

- The use of student feedback in both universities shows engagement and democracy
- Is student feedback enough to judge the actual performance of lecturers?

- 3. Are students involved in planning curriculum?
- Both lecturers and students interviewed in both institutions admitted that students are not involved in planning curriculum
- Democratisation of teaching and learning in higher education cannot be fully implemented without an element of students' voices in curriculum planning.

Conclusion



- The main objective of this study was to find out if democratisation of teaching and learning could serve as a useful tool in practicalising the Tuning approach in higher education institutions in Botswana
- Findings from the study indicate that , there are democratic elements in the teaching and learning processes as evidenced by:

- 1. The use of learning –outcomes approach in lesson planning by lecturers
- 2. Various ways students are engaged in the teaching and learning environment
- 3. However, the study revealed that , students are not directly involved in planning the learning.
- More is needed in the area of students' voices in curriculum planning and workload.

THANK YOU!