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Green pedagogies, rhizomatic possibilities, and praxis: An introduction

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Why green pedagogies?

The thematic dimensions of this special issue were founded on the monograph *Green academia* that I published in 2022. The monograph centered on the different praxis of eco-friendly education systems through various case studies across India, Bhutan, Kenya, New Zealand, South Africa, and other parts of the world (Dey, 2022). Through various lectures, conversations, coffee-table interactions, and social media engagements, the monograph generated multiple appreciations and criticisms, which provoked me to create conversations and debates within a more formal space. This, eventually, ideated the special issue titled "Green pedagogies: Ecology, green education, and the classroom." Despite several scholarships for eco-friendly education systems, there is a massive reluctance to engage with practical concerns and transformations, limiting the scholarships to superficial realms of social media shoutouts, vague promises, classroom theorizations, decorative policy books, and laboratory experiments. This reluctance bothers many of us across the planet because, on many occasions, we are unsure how to convert theories into praxis, or we encounter irreparable gaps between theories and praxis. Without addressing the gaps, it is impossible to locate the initiation points of crises, which are complex, multilayered, cobwebbed, and intersectional.

To explain further, the necessity of practicing green pedagogies stems from issues like unsystematic waste accumulation and disposal, cultural hierarchies, techno-fetishisms, exploitative political propaganda, racialization, and various other intertwined factors that operate in a symbiotic fashion (Dey, 2025; also see Rudolph et al., 2024). To counter such symbiotic challenges, rhizomatic resistance needs to be generated through co-building and co-sharing green or eco-centered pedagogical practices within different dynamics of experience like Indigenous knowledge experiences, English language teaching, graphic narratives, global citizenship education, Artificial Intelligence, primary education systems, higher education institutions, nonwestern ontologies, learners' attitudes towards green education, and curricular transformations. This special issue consists of eleven articles, and they highlight the necessity of practicing green pedagogies in rhizomatic and intersectional ways so that they can be applied within our habitual knowledge production systems within academic institutions and beyond. Just like the roots, sub-roots, branches, sub-branches, stems, and sub-stems of plants, green pedagogies invite us to redesign the teaching-learning practices in such ways that the human-more-than-human social, cultural, emotional, and intellectual assemblages (Harway, 2016) are not understood as 'extraordinary' and 'spectacular,' but as natural processes of existential symbiosis (Karpouzou & Zampaki, 2023).

How to apply?

The articles propose multiple pathways for applying green pedagogies in diverse geopolitical and ecological contexts. In the article "Graphic narratives as pedagogical tools," Anandita Saraswat and Aratrika Das argue how the high NCERT (National Council of Education Research and Training) science textbooks in India assess the entrenchment of extractive pedagogies in the curricula and build upon the notions of Indigenizing and decolonizing the Indian academia. The article also proposes that through graphic narratives, science textbooks should be diversified, and instead of exclusively concentrating on mainstream discourses, the ecological narratives of Indigenous communities, such as the Gonds and others, need to be included.

The necessity of acknowledging the intertwined and rhizomatic characteristics of the Indigenous communities and natural environment is further grounded in Ankita Rathour's article "Intertwined natures," where she brings three diverse perspectives – Hindi film Sherni, Atlanta's Cop City Project, and the genocide against Palestine to explore the decolonial possibilities of curating environmentally-sound anti-war classrooms within the tech-centered academic spaces. Through diverse pedagogical possibilities, Ankita discusses how green mindfulness can be generated within the tech-dominated classrooms of Western academic institutions.

Aman Verma and Arzuman Ara's article "Greening pedagogy" continues the discussion on green pedagogies and environmental consciousness. They discuss how

English language teaching (ELT) is not simply about learning the technicalities, aesthetics, and literariness of the English language but also about generating ecological consciousness. The article discusses how English studies can be taught through eco-pedagogical principles in higher education institutions in India by adopting eco-centered analytical and discursive approaches.

The process of developing intertwined, rhizomatic, eco-pedagogical knowledge-making systems should not be restricted to curriculums and classrooms but should be imbibed within daily life existential spaces as well. For that, as Arthur William highlights, teachers need to be sensible and sensitive environmental educators as well. In the article "Teachers as environmental educators," Arthur explores the perceptions and practices of green pedagogies by teachers in fostering green pedagogies amongst students across educational institutions in Asia, Africa, and Europe. The research was conducted through an interpretivist research approach, as part of which Arthur investigated how educators recognize the necessity of integrating sustainability into curriculums and actively employ innovative methods, such as project-based learning and outdoor exploration, to engage students.

Chantal Noa Forbes, in her article "Theorizing nonwestern ontologies towards a pedagogy of animist practice," invites us to reflect on the theories and methodologies of green pedagogies within animist practices of Indigenous communities. Chantal explores the roles that non-western ontologies play in developing pedagogies that center on animist praxis as a valid and necessary approach to problematizing environmental challenges in the environmental sciences and humanities. In the article, Chantal also highlights that this transdisciplinary pedagogical approach continues to suggest that the challenge of the Anthropocene is an ontological challenge arising from more-than-human planetary knowledge systems rooted in the substance ontology of Euro-Cartesian metaphysics.

The practice of nonwestern ontologies generates a possible rhizomatic pedagogical turn through hands-on experiential learning in schools and higher education institutions, as elaborated by Chitra Sadagopan and Chitra Krishnan in their article "Realisation of Gross National Happiness-inspired green education in Bhutan." Centered on Thakur S. Powdyel's My green school (2014) and its practical implementation in the local schools of Bhutan, the article outlines how holistic development in modern education requires an integrated understanding beyond the explicit meaning of green, which primarily denotes nature and the environment. Through various practical examples, the authors unfold the eight dimensions of green school, denoted by the term 'Sherig Mandala,' which is designed in a concentric sense and holds a critical significance in the eco-centered pedagogical practices in Bhutan within educational institutions and beyond.

The article "Exploring green pedagogy for eco-centric praxis-based learning in higher education" by Adriana Lozjanin, Gitanjaly Chhabra, and Noosha Mehdian, with respect to their personal teaching-learning experiences in higher education institutions talks about a systems-based approach to eco-pedagogy and the greening of curriculums. The authors outline the possible ways to improve the quality and the delivery of education responses to the climate crisis by integrating project-based and learner-centered experiential learning, reflective/critical learning, problem-based, and collaborative learning pedagogies to empower learners to become agents of change and contribute effectively to a more sustainable future.

In "School children's attitude towards green education," Jitendra Garai invites us to understand green pedagogies not only in higher education sectors but at the more grassroots level, like primary and secondary schools. Rooted in the eastern Indian state of West Bengal, this article explores the attitudes of school children towards green education (GE) by examining environmental utilization (UT) and preservation (PR). This work aimed to test the validity and reliability of the Revised 2-MEV Scale of Johnson & Manoli (2010) in the Indian context. The analytical frameworks in this article reveal gaps, raise awareness of environmental concerns, and contribute to the subject by establishing a sound foundation for future research and policy development.

Ritu Pareek further explores the ways of challenging capitalistic curricula and pedagogies in India through the effective implementation of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) in English curriculums in the local language medium schools and comparing them with schools that are affiliated with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). Ritu's study employs the content analysis method to explore the representation of IKS in English textbooks prescribed by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and the Rajasthan Board of Secondary Education (RBSE). Her findings reveal significant discrepancies in the extent and depth of IKS incorporation between the two boards, with CBSE textbooks demonstrating limited engagement compared to the more localized emphasis in RBSE curriculums.

The rapid evolution and implementation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within teaching-learning methods have generated multiple levels of confusion, appreciation, and criticism. On the one side, within certain aspects of teaching and learning, like the usage of digital technologies and designing innovative and self-sufficient pedagogies; on the other, humans are becoming overdependent on digital applications, and the originality of human creations is becoming deeply compromised. In the context of eco-centric pedagogies, Soumya Sankar Ghosh flagged these concerns in the article "Building bridges to sustainable education." In this article, Soumya investigates the infrastructures needed to effectively deploy eco-centric pedagogy in various educational environments, focusing on the transformational impact of AI. This research used a mixed-methods approach, incorporating case studies from different geographical regions, to analyze the interaction between infrastructure, curriculum design, instructional practices, and community engagement. The study examines the essential elements of educational infrastructure that facilitate eco-centric teaching methods and assesses the capacity of AI to improve these endeavors.

The issue is impactfully wrapped up with Thomas Kral's "The #TeachSDG movement and global citizenship education," which discusses the methods through which global citizenship education (GCE) is interpreted and understood by the #TeachSDGs movement, an online transnational, cross-level group of educators dedicated to disseminating the UN Global Goals (SDGs) through pedagogical resources. Drawing on Andreotti's (2014) soft-to-critical GCE framework, the study deploys thematic and critical discourse analysis to assess the #TeachSDGs movement's blogs, social media posts, and lesson materials.

The discussions and propositions in these articles are a few of the many eco-centric curricular and pedagogical possibilities that can be applied worldwide within the daily modes of knowledge production. This special issue makes an effort to generate collective and collaborative spaces for such discussions and practices. Enough ideas, policies, and assurances have been theorized, textualized, institutionalized, and jargonized. It is time to convert them into action.

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