



Educational concepts in the Upaniṣads for twenty first centuries education

Ven Sravasthipura Shanthasiri Thero

Department of Languages, Cultural Studies and Performing Arts, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,
University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Nugegoda, Sri Lanka

Abstract

According to the grammatical etymology, the basic meaning of the *Upaniṣad* is to sit close. It also means offerings, the hidden, the secret. The definition of trustworthy or secretive study is more in line with the basic meaning of use. The turning point in Eastern thought was the emergence of the *Upaniṣads*. The *Upaniṣads* teach the Vedic Aryan, who was thankful for environmental and natural phenomena out of fear and amazement, to become accustomed to rational thought and to seek the truth. The *Upaniṣads*, the 'product of the highest human wisdom' that guided human thought to explore phenomena logically and analytically, is the world's oldest surviving tradition of study. What were the educational concepts, learning, and teaching methods and techniques used by the *Upaniṣad* teachers? This study is based on that research problem. Accordingly, the purpose of this is to investigate such concepts used in *Upaniṣad* education in conjunction with the educational concepts put forward by modern educators. Out of hundreds of *Upaniṣads*, only ten major *Upaniṣads*, unequivocally accepted by critics as the oldest works, were selected as the limit of study. The methodology of the study was to refer to the primary and secondary sources. Accordingly, the basic method used for data collection was the examination of relevant *Upaniṣads*, scholarly writings, publications, and inquiries. Consolidated data analysis was performed using qualitative data analysis methods. It can be observed that many of the educational concepts and learning-teaching methods put forward by modern educators are simply used by the *Upaniṣad* teachers in imparting knowledge to their students and that even the roots of modern concepts extend to the *Upaniṣad* teachings. The findings and suggestions of this research also present some examples that can be taken from the *Upaniṣads* to modern educational conditions regarding teacher-student relationships, moral thinking, discipline, facilities, and technological tools.

Keywords: educational concepts, teaching techniques, teacher-student relations, moral thinking, discipline

Introduction

This research paper, which provides a series of scholarly papers discussing the educational aims, goals, and objectives of the 21st century, examines the *Upaniṣad* educational tradition, a unique educational tradition that existed in India about three thousand years ago. The present is built on the base of traditions of the past. The roots or origins of some modern concepts are evident in those ancient traditions. Some traditional values have lost in modernity. The main purpose of this research paper is to explore such roots and values that have guided the moderns in the *Upaniṣad* educational tradition.

This document begins with a brief introduction to the *Upaniṣads* and education, and the second half discusses the educational concepts, techniques, and skills that have existed in that tradition and at some points, have also tried to compare them with pedagogical goals of the 21st century.

Upaniṣad

The basic meaning of the word "Upaniṣad" which the etymologists describe as *upa + ni + ṣad* is "to sit close". "The suffix *ni* is used here to mean under, below." Winternitz refutes Oldenburg's view that "the word *Upaniṣad* also means *Upasana* or offerings." He argues that the idea of "secret teaching" or "faithful or secret lesson" in which the student sits close to the teacher is more in line with the basic meaning. He goes on to confirm his view that the Indians use the *Upaniṣads* as a synonym for mysticism and mystery."

Śaṅkara, who translated the basic ten *Upaniṣads*, likes to mean "destroying innate ignorance" and "leading to Brahman".

*"upaṇīya tamātmānaṁ brahmāpāstadvaṁ yataḥ
nihatya vidyāṁ tajaṁ ca tasmād upaṇiṣadbhavēt"*

Various interpretations of the *Upaniṣads* have been made in this way, but the general opinion is that the scholars who inquire about it are unanimous. That is, 'The revolutionary turning point in Eastern thought was the emergence of the *Upaniṣads*'. Schopenhauer declares it differently, as "the product of the highest human

wisdom." The Upaniṣads show that the Vedic man, who was worshiping, offering, and chanting thanks to the objects and events out of fear of not being able to understand the environment and natural phenomena, became accustomed to rational thought and truth-seeking.

Some Vedic people, who were sacrificing their time, labor, and resources for the physical development of pleasing God by sacrificing *Yāgahōma*, gradually realized that complete satisfaction could not be achieved by worldly development alone. Some of them concentrated on personalized environmental gods, another was focused on the most complete spiritual healing, as well as of lasting healing. Thus, the Upaniṣads can be introduced as a result of directing one's thinking analytically on the phenomena which frightened and intrigued him.

Authors

The accompanying texts Brahmana, Aranyaka, and Upaniṣads have been written for the *Chaturveda* in the order in which the Samhita, Brahmana, Aranyaka, and Upaniṣads are listed. The term 'Vedanta' is also used for the Upaniṣads as the Upaniṣads appear at the end of the series. Therefore, the Upaniṣads may be understood by the general reader as another series of books written by the second generation of Vedic clergymen that elaborate on the contents of the Vedas. Although the Brahmin clergy have the honor of composing the books Sanhita (Veda) Brahmana, Aranyaka, they are not the only ones to have the honor of that.

It appears as the last chapter of some Brahmanical and Aranyaka texts, but often contains contradictory views as well as sharp criticisms of the Vedic concepts in the Upaniṣads. According to those matters, the authors of the Upaniṣads could not be only Vedic priests.

"As the Brahmins spent their time on the barren sacrificial science, the people of the rest of the castes were engaged in those great questions which are so sharply described by the Upaniṣads." Winternitz's statement gives us an idea of the authors of these. Inquiry into the Upaniṣads reveals that the Kshatriyas and other castes, who were rejected Vedic Yagahoma and were engaged in the pursuit of truth and spiritual liberation, originated Upaniṣads. References to Upaniṣad, kings such as 'Pratardhana'(kauṣītakī upaniṣad xxi.5) 'Chitra' (kauṣītakī upaniṣad i.i) 'Vidisadhipathi Janaka' (Shatapatha xi), 'Kashi Deshadhipathi Ajatashatha' (Bruhadaranyaka), 'Aikshvaka' (-Bruhad), 'Ashvapati Kaikei' (Chandogya), and many others like Santkumara have been contributed to developing Upaniṣads.

The Upaniṣads themselves contain information about women and those of illegitimate or Born into a lower caste and their contributions. The Upaniṣads of Brihadaranyaka, which presents news about Vachaknu's daughter - Gargi, and Yagnavalkya's wife Maitreya, reveal information about the contribution of women. The story of 'Raikwa' and 'Satyakama Jabala' in the Chandogya Upaniṣad Reflects the contribution of those who are born into a lower caste.

even the Brahmin teachers learned the Upaniṣads from the Kshatriyas or people like Raikwa who are born into a lower caste such as appear in Upaniṣads. "Balakigargaya Ajatashatru Conversation, Aruni's learning, about the life after death from King Chitra, Janaśruti, a wealthy man, marries his daughter to a lower caste Raikwa and asking him to teach him wisdom" These prove the above point. Mahidāsa aitareya, Śāṅḍilya, Jaivalī, Uddālaka, Varuṇa, Nārada, Yāñavalkya etc are also referred to as Upaniṣad teachers.

The Chronology

It is not possible to say for sure when the Upaniṣads were written. It can be said that some of these belong to the pre-Buddha era. There are various theories about the chronology of the Upaniṣads and their connection with Buddhism, but it is safe to say that Siddhartha, a prince who studied contemporary arts and all craftsmanship, developed Buddhism by associating the Upaniṣad's truth-seeking.

"The Upaniṣads also provided the root seeds for Buddhism". Among the scholars, Radhakrishna and Bloomfield are leading scholars who make this point. The chronology of the oldest Upaniṣads is extremely difficult. Of the one hundred and eight Upaniṣads that appear, "there are thirteen Upaniṣads which are the principal and the most prestigious. Those thirteen which were formed between 1000-300 BC are also divided into 03 eras." Patriarch Olivelle gives the following chronology for the original Upaniṣads.

- The first two Upaniṣads are Brihadaranyaka and Chandogya. They are edited text, and some sources are older than others. Both works are pre-Buddhist; They date back to can belong to the 7th-6th century BC.
- The earliest three prose-Upaniṣads come from the Taittiriya, Athareya, and Kaushitaki. All of these are probably pre-Buddhist and date back to can be assigned to 6th to 5th centuries BC.
- Kena is the oldest verse Upaniṣad and followed by the four named Kata, Isha, Svetasvatara and Mundaka. All these Upaniṣads may have been written around the years before Christ.
- The praśna and māṇḍukya Upaniṣads cannot be older than the year of Christ.

According to traditional beliefs, the link between the Vedic scriptures and the Upaniṣads is as follows.

Link to Vedic texts and Upaniṣads			
<i>Samhitā (vēda)</i>	<i>Brāhmaṇa</i>	<i>Aranyaka</i>	<i>Upaniṣad</i>
<i>Rg</i>	<i>Aitareya</i>	<i>Aitareya</i>	<i>Aitareya</i>
	<i>Kauṣītakī</i>	<i>Kauṣītakī</i>	<i>Kauṣītakī</i>
<i>Sāma</i>	<i>Pañcaviṃsā</i>		<i>Chāndōgya</i>

		<i>Chāndōgya</i>		
		<i>Talavakāra</i>	<i>Kēna</i>	
<i>Yajur</i>	<i>Kṛṣṇa</i>	<i>Taittirīya</i>	<i>Taittirīya</i>	<i>Taittirīya</i>
				<i>Maitrāyaṇīya</i>
				<i>Kaṭha</i>
			<i>Śvētāśvatara</i>	
	<i>Śukla</i>	<i>Śatapatha</i>	<i>Bṛhat</i>	<i>Bṛhadāranyaka</i>
				<i>Iṣā</i>
<i>Atharvan</i>		<i>Gōpatha</i>		<i>Muṇḍaka</i>
				<i>Praśna</i>
				<i>Māṇḍukya</i>

At the beginning of the Upaniṣads, in the utmost secrecy, the Vanaprastha sages taught only their most trusted disciple or son. It is because of this method of study that terms such as rahasyam, guhyam, parammaguhyam, guhyatamam were used synonymously with the Upaniṣads. Criticism of Vedic Sacrifice yaga-Homa, Criticism of those divine concepts Hence the possible social opposition or It may have been influenced by the idea that teaching new philosophical concepts to an immature intellect was futile. When we study the Upaniṣads, the great thinkers inquire deeply into the world, deviating from the Vedic path aimed at worldly development, we can see how one enters a path of enlightenment aimed at spiritual liberation.

The man who was composing hymns to the personalized gods and making sacrificial offerings, In the Upaniṣads era, began to direct his mind to philosophical concepts such as Atman, Brahman, Karma, and reincarnation. The roots of even the most advanced philosophical concepts such as Cosmology, Epistemology, psychology, metaphysics, and moral thought can be found in the Upaniṣads.

Education (*Adhyāpana*)

Adhyāpana is a borrowed word from The Sanskrit Language, currently used in Sri Lanka As a corresponded Sinhala word in English “education”. *Educere* is the Latin root of education. Its basic meaning was to train or lead out. After a change of the meaning around the fifteenth century, the verb *educere* was transformed to the verb educate, and it became “education” as a noun was formed by adding a suffix to it.

According to modern educators, education is the process of facilitating learning or the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, values, morals, beliefs, and practices. ... Education can take place in formal or informal settings and any experience that has a formal impact on how one thinks, feels or acts can be considered as education.

In Sanskrit language *Adhyāpana* ‘अध्यापन’ means teaching. (अध्यापनम् *Adhyāpanam* [इ-णिच्-भावे-ल्युट्] Teaching, instructing, lecturing, especially on sacred knowledge) Monier-Williams says that the words here occur as अध्+आपन. When teaching is *Adhyāpana*, the teacher is called the *Adhyāpaka*.

The famous word for Learning in Sanskrit is *Adhyayana*. अध्ययनम् *Adhyayanam* [इ-ल्युट्] Learning, study, reading The word '*Adhyayana*' is formed by adding the prefix Adhi to Ayana (-the journey) which is a present participle form of the root √ī. It makes the meaning of a journey to an upside or higher level.

As an apprentice in the field of higher education and as an educator (-*Adyāpaka*) of the Sanskrit language, one of the ideas that came to mind when inquired deeply about the word *Adyāpana* (education) was ironic.

In the Upaniṣad era, terms such as *Adhyāpana* (pedagogy) *adhyāpaka* (educator) were used in a negative sense (negative connotation). “‘*Jhāyaka*’ is the special word in the Pali Language that refers to the wise or who think deeply about life. The Sanskrit word of that is *dhyāyaka*. The meanings of 'deep thinking' and 'meditation' are common to the Pali root √jhā as well as the Sanskrit root √dhyā.” This can be seen in some grammatical works such as *dhāturūpamañjarī* (√ध्-चिन्तायाम्, भ्वादि, पर, अनिट्, ध्यायति) *sāyaṇavyākhyāyata dhātu sūcī* and *śabdastomamahānidhi* as the root '*dhyāai*'. According to that, deep thinking is *dhyāna* (meditation). The deep thinker, philosopher is the *dhyāyaka* (meditator). The one who inspires others to meditate is *dhyāpaka*. If these words turn into negative meanings or according to the corresponding negativity, not thinking deeply is *adhyāna* and the person who acts in such a way is called an *adhyāyaka* (educator). It becomes an *adhyāpaka* (educator), when in the sense of motivating someone else to do it, and *Adhyāpaka*'s (educator's) job or duty is *adhyāpana* (teaching). "Education (*adhyāpana*) was born out of non-meditators (*adhyāyakas*) or educators who did not think deeply about life."

There are several other fine examples from Buddhist literature that illustrate this negative connotation. According to the *Dhammapada*, a person who studies the Dharma without trying to spiritual liberation himself is like a herdsman of other's cattle. According to the *Aggagna Sutta*,

Those who left the houses and meditated in the forest were called *Dhyayakas*. Some of those who were disappointed by the process returned to the village and engaged in the book work, the villagers at the time referred to them as *Adhyayakas* (non-meditators). "At that time, it was accepted that a certain pedagogy (not meditating) was inferior, but now it is accepted as superior." Thus, education, which was once a negative term, has become a word with a better meaning due to a change in its meaning. Creating a group of meditative scholars

(*Dhyayakas*) who think deeply about life, society, and the environment should be a special goal of current education.

Educational Concepts and Teaching-learning methods in Upaniṣad.

Even if the spiritual teaching written in Upaniṣad is treated as an evolution of pre-Buddhist beliefs based on various Vedic deities, indeed Upaniṣad is a stream of knowledge and a Philosophy gone beyond religious thinking that expands our knowledge and wisdom. As we carefully observe the trends and strategies of the Education system, followed in the 21st century, there we can see many lessons and patterns in Upaniṣad that can be adopted to uplift modern education. Here the educational concept of Triple H, (3H – Head, Heart, and Hand) introduced by Mahatma Gandhi comes into mind; it is a well-known fact that Mahatma Gandhi expanded his knowledge and vision on Education, reading the teachings of Upaniṣad. The vision or teachings of Upaniṣad are so alluring that inspire both teacher and the pupil not only on training, learning, knowledge, and wisdom but also on social ethics. So, from now on, this document will continue to explore the purpose of Upaniṣad education, the philosophy of education, the curriculum, the learning methods, the teacher-student relationship, the discipline, and the moral concepts of such value.


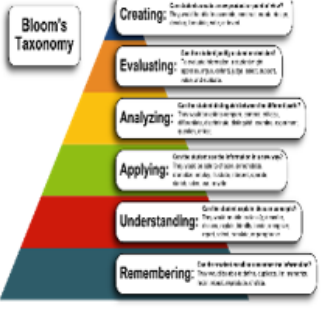
The Goal of the Upaniṣad Education

Upaniṣad can be defined as the oldest Teaching in the world which was based on one's Spiritual development. Upaniṣad can be defined as one of the oldest and greatest teachings in the world. Its goal was spiritual development. Apart from that, personal and social development was also expected through moral teachings.

“Asato mā satgamaya tamaso mā jyōtirgamaya mṛtyormā’ mṛtaṅgamaya”

The above Upaniṣad stanza briefs the ultimate goal or whole purpose of Education taught in Upaniṣad. Its Meaning is to ‘step into good or enlighten and going away from all kinds of evil or sin’. The utility of this statement can be understood in its simplest sense by anyone who inquiries into the path of salvation (moksha) as well as a seeker of worldly ethics.

Table 1

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Śravaṇa-Listening ▪ Manana-Thinkig ▪ Nididhyāsana-Digesting 		
---	--	---

When carefully reviewing the teaching methods in Upaniṣad Education, we can observe some modern and optimum methods which are also used by present educationists. Sometimes the basic educational objectives stated by modern educators are stated in the Upaniṣads in a broader sense than they are used today. There were Listening, Thinking, and digesting or processing as elementary techniques. Listening is to add or collect knowledge; in ancient times our ancestors listened to those who preached or read. literary works were not that era. Listening was based on the conceptual knowledge gained from the environment, teachers, or associates. Next comes Thinking or Concentration; then only one can digest or process that knowledge into himself. This process of digesting can be defined as profound or repeated meditation that creates skills and abilities which we come upon in educational activities. In Upaniṣad teaching, this has been highlighted as the making new knowledge or opening of new thinking and new concepts there we can see one's Spiritual Development and Mental Stability.

The three elementary Teachings of Listening, Concentration and Digesting can be explained in other words as Data Collecting, Processing and Output.

The Vision of Education

Every teacher should have a confidence in the skills of his students; as Upaniṣad defines, every creature has a particle of cleverness coming from 'Paramathma', who was said to be the Īsvara. (That spirit, smaller or tiny than the tiniest and bigger than the biggest can be found in one's heart.) However, the teacher should have the ability to identify that capacity of his student that can be varied from person to person due to the personal and socio-environmental differences. Though every man has the same eyes and same ears: whose capabilities are not equal. (Unequal in the quickness of their spirit are friends endowed alike with eyes and hearing. Some look like tanks that reach the mouth or shoulder, others look like pools of water fit to bathe in)

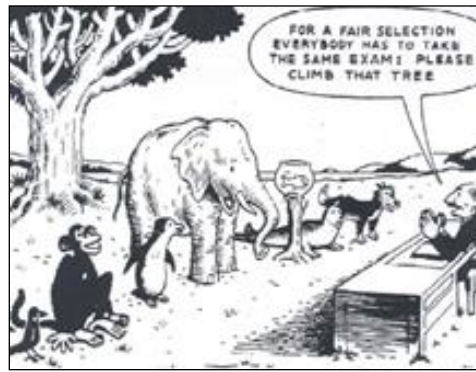


Fig 1

Introduction of Common subjects and syllabuses to the whole students have created various problems, which have been identified as a weakness or defect of modern Education, for those proper solutions can be found in Upaniṣad Teaching. It is highly acclaimed that Upaniṣad Teacher has a good understanding of his pupils' individuality; accordingly, he could have identified the student's skills and creative abilities. So, they could give their students a proper education. This is proved by the above statements. Personal Development has a prominent place in Upaniṣad Education.

Personality Development

The whole philosophy of Upaniṣad Education seems to be based on Personal Development. Man, created from a live-particle of Maha-Brahma should strive to gain or go back to the spell of Maha-Brahma, for that he has to control his body and speech that develops his thinking; Students were also given the same instruction.

Three basic teachings can be seen in 'Chāndōgya Upaniṣad' on mental and bodily control that helps a person to develop his personality. In academic training, it is often repeated on what to follow and what are to be given up. "The whole life of a frank and honest person reflects morals and ethics. He rewards Honesty, Generosity and Compassion to the world". Those are the qualities of a Upaniṣad pupil as it is shown in Chāndōgya Upaniṣad'. (*Atha yatapo danamarajawamahimsa satyawacanamiti ta asya daksina*) *Uththistatha jagratha prapya waran nibodatha* This is a statement of motivation made by a Upaniṣad guru to a group of students. This text, which contains the voice of a general who commanded his to the soldiers, guides students toward their goals by cultivating courage, pride, and personality, is a fine illustration of the Upaniṣads on personality development. This is how a teacher inspired his students to achieve their aim for that personal development is essential.

At one point a guru as a positive theorist of modern age who tries to wake up a sleeping giant inside, once a Upaniṣad teacher instructs his pupils,

*Aṅguṣṭhamātraḥ puruṣōntarātmā sadā janānām hṛdayē sanniviṣṭhaḥ
tam svāccharīrāt pravṛhēnmuñjādīvēṣikām dhairyēna'*

(Spirituality or piety of a person placed in his heart to the size of his thumb should be taken out courageously from his body which is pure and precise like Nectar) Likewise many other views and teachings related to personal development can be seen in various parts of Upaniṣad.

Soft-Skill Development

Soft skills' is a concept that has received particular attention from educators discussing educational trends in the 21st century. "The terms people skills, interpersonal skills, social skills, and assignable skills are used to describe these types of skills. " "Soft-skills are a good sign of one's personality that show his close association with society and his environment." Through that he learns unity, cooperation, teamwork, and his responsibilities. Also, he learns how to make proper decisions at the right time. Upaniṣad Scholars who tried to develop the inner qualities of their students paid special attention for their soft skills. In the present, even if special attention has been paid to develop soft-skills of students, in Upaniṣad Education, priority has been given to develop soft-skills where both teachers and students. For example, number one and number two in the above mentioned modern soft skills list are communication skills and modesty. By handing over his philosophy to the students, the ancient Upaniṣad teachers hoped to take it to the masses; Is to communicate. Some Upaniṣad teachers and students made the most of this communication ability by going from place to place, holding discussions, debates, and conferences.

Gautama Buddha which some commentators cite as the culmination of the Upaniṣads advised to his first disciples "This best dharma, which is for the good of this world and the hereafter, is to communicate to the people with maximum productivity." This is a good example that proves what a prominent place and priority had been given in Upaniṣad Education to develop communication skills. As well, Upaniṣad teachers always expected courtesy and politeness from their pupils. They attributed much to develop leadership qualities, unity, and teamwork among their students. Not only that, arguments, debates, and discussions were organized for students to solve their questions.

Education for All

Upaniṣad Education was given free of charge. Later, even if discussion went on regarding teachers, no charges or fees were imposed, but a reward like a 'bundle of fire-wood' was taken to the teacher.

*'tadvignānārtham sa gurumēvādhigacchēt
samiṭpāṇiḥ śrōtriyam brahmaniṣṭam'*

Even at pre-Vedic age, the maintenance of students was a responsibility of the teacher. As well, the Upaniṣad Education was provided for all, free of charge. At Vedic age, the caste system was so strong in India; the society had been divided into different groups, where education had been banned for low casted like the Sudra community, but no such restrictions during the era of Upaniṣad.

The story of *Raikwa* which we read in Chaandogy Upaniṣad and *Satyakāma Jabala* prove the participation of those who were low by birth and social status into Upaniṣad activities. In Hindu society, women had lost their right to go to a school, but at the time of Upaniṣad, women had gone for education; this is proved by the stories of '*Yangnya Kalya*' in their dialogue between *Maithrei* the husband and wife, as well by *Chachakku's* daughter, *Garhi*. But this education for women was not compulsory; as a result, the participation was minimal and opportunities were limited, perhaps due to the political situation and personal needs. *Visnusherma* (the author of *Pancha Thanthra*), *Narayan Sharma* (the author of *Hithopadesha*) and *Bhartruhari* (the author of *Neethi Shathaka*) reveal; then there was a belief in the society, it was the responsibility of parents to give their children a proper education, unless they become the enemies of the society.

The Syllabus/Curricula

Upaniṣad Teaching helps a person to expand his spiritual knowledge. But it has not strongly denied teaching anything on Worldly matters. Upaniṣad syllabus is full of subject matters related to religious liberation, Self-control. That also leads to personal, social, and ethical development. The term 'science' has been added to all these subjects; the word *Vidya* (Science) and *Veda* both are generated from the of $\sqrt{\text{vid}}$. The discussion of *Sanathkumara* and *Narda* seen in Chaandogy Upaniṣad is a good example to identify the Upaniṣad syllabus.

'Having come to Sanathkumara, Narada says, 'Teach me'. Then Sanathkumara asks Narada to declare what so far, he had learnt? Sanathkumara further says, then only he could teach Narada, all what he had learnt. "*Adhihi, bhagavah, iti, hopasasada sanatkumararam naradah, tam hovaca: yad-vettha tena mopasida, tatas-ta urdhvam vaksyamiti, sa hovaca.*" (The *Chāndōgya Upaniṣad VII.1.1*) In this conversation, (Narada was a Brahmin Scholar while Sanathkumara belongs to Saksthriys caste for that our attention should be fallen in). The answer given by Narada shows us the superiority of Upaniṣad Syllabus. "*Rgvedam, bhagavah, adhyemi, yajurvedam, samavedam, atharvedam caturtham, itihasa-puranam pancamam, vedanam vedam, pitryam, rasim, daivam, nidhim, vakovakyam, ekayanam, devavidyam, brahma-vidyam, bhuta-vidyam, ksatra-vidyam, naksatra-vidyam, sarpadevajana-vidyam, etat, bhagavah adhyemi*" (The *Chāndōgya Upaniṣad VII.1.2*)

There are mentioned 28 various subjects, such as rg, yajur, sāma, atharva vedas, History, Purana, Grammar, the science how to keep happy elders, Mathematics, Geometry, Treasure science, Logic, Ethics, Politics, Astronomy, Astrology, Theology, Kalpa, Nirukta, Chandas, Physics, field science, snake science, etc., and the fine arts such as music and dance.

Hear our attention goes to Another dialogue seen in Chāndōgya Upaniṣad; the conversation between father and son; Uddlaka Aruneya – Swethakehu reveals information about subject matters come in Upaniṣad syllabus.

Apart from this, some clusters of scholar's present information on twenty-eight other disciplines taught in the Upaniṣads, such as the science of goodness, science of The Athma, and fire science.

Learning forms and teaching techniques in the Upaniṣads

As we carefully observe the above-mentioned subject matters, we can identify the superb educational methods followed by Upaniṣad teachers to educate the community of students and to achieve their objectives. It is evident that Upaniṣad Education was based on 4 basic elements, which are.

Ācāryapāda - Learning from the teachers.

Svādhyāya - learning by oneself. (Self-Learning)

Sabrahmacārya - Learning from those who learn together. Learning from other co-students.

kālakrama -Timeline - Learning from lifelong experience. (Long life learn)

In these 4 fundamentals, Self-Learning had been given a priority and prominent place; one had to do self-learning to reach the highest level of knowledge, for that teacher sometimes, inspired the student. At the basic level or in the primary stage, teachers used various methods to educate the students.

When discussing the educational models and forms that can and should be followed concerning 21st century higher education, 'Lectures, seminars, workshops, case studies, simulations, classroom teaching, project, and problem-based teaching, person supervision, group supervision, key classes, role Extensive documentation such as fieldwork, laboratory work, project orientation teaching, textbook studies, case planning, group work, placement and fieldwork, work experience, field study, project-based teaching in research environments, clinical/institutional training skills Will be found. In this modern age, Science and Technology have given the Teacher many other gadgets for his use; without all that, when compared to past conditions Upaniṣad teachers seem to have simply used the above-mentioned forms and models to educate their students.

As we focus our attention at New Teaching methods, there we find 14 new techniques introduced by National Institute of Education, Among them ‘negotiation method, group method, disclosure method, Roleplay system, Step method, Project method, Sports system, The theory of Intelligence turbulence, Problem-solving method, Electronic Media Teaching Methodology, Questioning, Simulation, Demonstration method 'etc..., At a search (browsing) done in Internet, a list 87 Teaching Methods could be found. When those were compared with the methods used by Upaniṣad Teachers, it is evident; the following popular techniques had been used by Upaniṣad Teachers to educate their students.

- Lecture method
- Conversations
- Discussions
- Step method
- Puzzle system
- Question method
- Diagnosis method
- Use of teaching aids / Audio visual learning aids.
- Use of illustrations
- Field study
- Case study

As we carefully study the techniques used by Upaniṣad Teachers, those are much similar to the techniques which came into use in the recent past; still our teachers use them in the classroom.

Lecturers or the technique of Lecturing can be named as a successful method of Teaching; it seems so popular both in the past and present. The tradition of Lecturing has a long history since ancient times Lecturers gave knowledge and wisdom to people. The Lecturer or Preacher spoke before people or students; those who listened to him enlightened their thinking and wisdom. Careful study of Upaniṣad shows us, the teachers of that era have widely used ‘Lecturer’ as a popular mode of Teaching. No more resources wanted to conduct a Lecture, listening expanded the knowledge of Listener. In ancient times books and writing rare and not so popular; people used to listen to the preaching done by the Educated. Those who were well-listened, were highlighted in the society as educated. The usual practice of Lecturing is to provide knowledge to the students by making a ‘Lecture’ when they flock before him. Many examples and instances can be found in Upaniṣad on ‘Lecturing’; in ‘*Bṛuhadarannayka Upaniṣad*’ we can see, *Yāknawalkya* was making a long lecture to his beloved wife *Maitṛee* and at the final part of *Sanathkumara – Narada* dialogue, the learned scholar *Sanathkumara* clarifies *Narada* on How to step into Light from Darkness.

Debates and Discussions were often used in Upaniṣad Education to educate students. The nature or mode of above method is to open an Argument or debate between two parties bearing different views. If not, that debate can take place between teacher and students. The debate taken place between *Sanathkumara-Narada*, the debate taken place between the king *Ajātaśatru* and *Gārgya* Arguments can be taken as examples. The debate between *Ajātaśatru-Gārgya* develops into a hot argument. Likewise, In the same way, the scholarly dialogue between *Yāgnavalkya*, *Aśvala*, *Ārtabhāga*, *Uṣasta*, *Kahōla*, *Uddaka*, and *Janaka* the king of *Videha*, etc., with takes the form of a conference.

The method of ‘Steps’ can be introduced as an educational technique used by Educationists to teach long and difficult courses; this ‘step method’ has been used by Upaniṣad teachers in the same way. It is a good example that ‘*Brahmawāda* or the Brahmins’ seen in *Chāndōgya Upaniṣad* had been taught through ‘Step Method’. The study of Brahman is the Goal of Upaniṣad education. The teacher, *Gautama*, tells *Satyakāma*, who has gone to learn about it, to take four hundred cows to the forest. After few years and the end of the forest life, *Satyakāma* learns Brahmanism in four stages, step by step, from four teachers such as a great man or a great bull (*ṛṣabha*), fire (*Agni*), a Swan (*hamsa*), and a Madhu bird (*madgu pakṣi*).

Satyakāma’s advent into jungle retreat is similar to a student’s arrival for field work where he learns by himself. *Jean Jack Ruso (EMILE)* was a well-known educationist, lived in Europe in the 18th century who brought the concept of learning from the environment. The story of *Satyakāma* reveals us, same method was used 2500 years ago in India by Upaniṣad teachers.

Another successful method is to use Puzzles and Riddles to educate students, such instances can be seen in Upaniṣad Education. *Indra* and *Virochana* come to *Prajāpathi* to learn about ‘Soul’ where *Prājapathi* gives them confused or mumbled answers. *Virochana* gets satisfied with the surface meaning and leaves the teacher, but *Indra* becomes more curious and inquisitive who stands with the teacher and learns about the Art or Science of Soul.

Apart from that, the technique of ‘Question and Answer’ can be seen as a prominent part of Upaniṣad Education, we come upon a good example of that in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, the discussion taken place between *Yāknawalkya* and *Gārgi* goes on to the format of ‘Question and Answer’. Here *Gārgi* was *Vachaknu*’s daughter. She comes to the famous Upaniṣad teacher *Yāknawalkya* and asks questions and learns about ‘*Brahma Athma*’ The argument between *Janaka* and *Yāknawalkya* is also taking the format of Question and Answer.

When reviewed carefully Upaniṣad Education reveals us educational aids, Equipment’s, Pictures, Figures and Comparisons had been used by Upaniṣad Teachers to educate pupils. The story of *Uddālaka Āruneya* and

Śvĕtakĕtu seen in *Chāndōgya Upaniṣad* takes our attention into such an instance. *Uddālaka* teaches his son *Śvĕtakĕtu* on *Āthma and Brahma* with the help of a Banyan Seed and chunks of salt which are thrown into water. A Huge Banyan tree is enclosed in a tiny Banyan Seed likewise there is a 'Soul' in every individual. When a chunk of salt is thrown into water, the salty taste is spread all over water. Likewise, *Brahma* has spread his influence all over the universe. It looks like a common feature in Upaniṣad Education, frequently they had used visuals and comparisons to educate their pupils. The comparison or visual of Beehive, the comparisons and visuals of Trees, the visuals and comparisons of Rivers and Saltwater, the comparison of Blind-folded men seen in *Chāndōgya Upaniṣad* can be highlighted as good examples.

In our modern Education System, Students are interviewed and sent for a Verbal Test to check whether they are qualified to go for Higher Education. Even in the Upaniṣad Education System, Upaniṣad Teachers have followed similar practice; there are many other examples to prove this. Such an event can be seen at the argument taken place between *Nachikethas and Yama*; under the instructions of his father *Gōtama*, *Nacikētas* goes to *Mṛtyu lōka* (hell or UnderWorld) to meet *Yama* where, in regard to a delay made by *Yama*, *Nacikētas* questions him, with the influence restored on him by *Yama*. Answers were given for the first two questions. But *Yama* does not give a direct answer for the third question. *Yama* tries to ascertain whether his student *Nacikētas* has gained enough spiritual development to receive that knowledge; then only *Yama* taught him other lessons.

“Anyacchērayōnyadutaiva prēyastē ubhē nānārthē puruṣaṁ sinītaḥ”

(“The good things are other. The delicious things are another. The wise man does or selects good things, not delicious things.”)

Thus, it expresses something about the relaxed intellect of a person and the level of refinement of the spirit. So is the *Brain Power* of a person who has developed *Spiritual Discipline*. Above examples prove us that Upaniṣad Education has followed Advanced and Innovative Teaching Methods.

Teacher – Student Relationship

Though 'Self-Learning' had been given a prominent place in Upaniṣad Education, the Teacher too had a major role to play. Recent concepts of 'Guru Purnima and Guru Manthra' prove to us the glory of Upaniṣad Teacher. According to it, the Teacher has been compared to the 'Thri Murthi of Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshwara' and even for 'Parama Brahma' It was the highest tribute paid to a Teacher in Upaniṣad Education. As explained by *Āthman and Brahman*, Students cannot go for their goal without the guidance of a teacher. Then it was a Teacher-Centered Education System. Pupil comes to the Teacher's residence and becomes a member of his family where he helps at household work while doing his education. Thereby a close relationship is built between Teacher and the Pupil, and the process of that Education looks like a journey going hand in hand. In *Rāmāyaṇa*, we read as follows,

“Śīlavṛddhair gnānavṛddhair vayōvṛddhaiśca sajjanaih
kathayannāsta vai nityamastrayōgyāntarēṣvapa”

The above statement reveals us a little information about Education in ancient Hindu Society; the contemporary Teachers have been named as 'well-disciplined' 'Well-Educated' 'Well-versed' and as the 'most compassionate'. It was expected that a Well-Qualified Teacher should have the above Characteristics. It was the sign of a good student, who should listen to his teacher. It was only for the most reliable students, Upaniṣad Teachers taught about 'Soul' and 'Brahma' because they thought, it could be harmful to society, if that knowledge went into unsuitable people.

One Sanskrit Stanza says that 'a teacher should not teach for those who did not board at Teachers residence for one year, and as well for those who do not wish to be a Teacher. (*Aitarēya*)

It further says, for those who are not so reliable, for those who did not become a son and even for those who did not become at least a Pupil, should not be given that Education. (*Śvĕtāśvatara*)

These texts confirm the above idea. When the student stays with the teacher and wins his confidence, the teacher generously imparts knowledge to his truth-seeking student without holding any *guru-muṣṭi*. he does not retain any, within him. From then onwards, the two, student and teacher walk together on a journey in the search for the ultimate truth and ultimate wisdom, with mutual understanding and sharing knowledge. “Saha nāvavatu saha nau bhunaktu saha vīryaṁ karavāvahai tējasvī nāvadhītamastu mā vidviśāvahai”

'May he safeguard both of us! May he feed us two! We are determined to strive! May we be able to realize and practice all that we learn! may There will not be hatred between us!'

“The above lines should be adopted by both pupils and teachers, as their motto. Upaniṣad teachers and students learn subject matters and about life, living under one roof. The teacher did not expect any profit or fee while his wife became a mother to all winning their love and confidence.”

Samgacchadhvam samvadadhvam sam vō manānsi jānatām

This is another great statement about this matter, which is found in Vedic books. it means “Please let us walk together. Please we speak together. Please think with one mind” The above facts prove us the splendor of relationship, the teachers and students had in that era.

They can find some information on how students had paid their tribute to the teachers, at the time of Upaniṣad Education. It is only a simple Prize or Honor with practical value, not of price or grain given as tribute. In *Chāndōgya Upaniṣad*, there is a story of *Indra and Virochana* who come to *Prājapati* to study about *Āthman*. This can be taken as an example. Both of them take bundles of firewood as a reward to their teacher. Hence *Prājapati* comes to know that *Indra and Virochana* have arrived at him as students. It was treated as a symbol to approach a teacher taking some firewood, thereby one could request permission for studentship. *Satyakāma Jabala* goes to *Gauthama* to study *Brahma Vidya* where *Gauthama* tells *Satyakāma Jabala* to come there and take some firewood. This is a good example of how to become a pupil. After becoming a pupil, he had to attend household work; the student had to assist the lady at home who was treated as Mother of all.

There are some other examples that *Satyakāma* took milking cows to the jungle who belonged to his teacher. *Upakosala*, who stayed 12 years with *Satyakāma* attended to all household work during his stay there. Both *Indra and Virochana* stayed with *Prājapati* and during their stay, they assisted her at household work. The story of *Upakosala* shows us how that lady at home was treated and respected as ‘Mother of All’ and in return, *Satyakāma*’s beloved wife offered *Upakosala* tasty food. But he refused her good food and said, ‘Mother, ‘My heart is so pure that I am not fond of tasty food’. Thus, he could win the heart and confidence of his teacher, who taught him all what he had known.

Now we come to a beautiful dialogue.

Gauthama – Dear Son, your face beams like who has known the whole truth of great *Braham*. Who taught you that art?

Satyakāma – Dear Teacher, By other creatures, not by humans. But I hope you will teach me the same. As I heard, the wisdom given by teachers can bring Greatness to a person.

Hearing those words, the teacher taught him, all that he had known. Such incidents show us the sublime nature of relationship between a teacher and a student. Though they had a ‘father-son relationship’ both had freedom to show each other’s weaknesses. A meaningful Sanskrit stanza can be seen in a collected consultative Poetry series called *Vyāsakāra*.

“*Śatrōrapi guṇāvācyā - dōṣā vācyā gurōrapi
pakṣapātād bhavet pāpam - dōṣādōṣā guṇāgunāh*”

This stanza says, the student should not only show the weakness of his teacher; also, he has a right or permission to do so. (This recalls us the calling for feedback report after every lecturer given or end of semester in Higher Educational Institutions)

Pupil Discipline

Those parties of Teachers and Students who engaged in Upaniṣad Education are to achieve their Spiritual Freedom. It is proved by the following Sanskrit Stanza.

“*Asato mā satgamaya tamaso mā jyōtirgamaya mṛtyormā ’mṛtaṅgamaya*”

When carefully study about Upaniṣad Education, we can findout, those students who are determined to walk from Evil to Good and from the darkness of ignorance to the Light of Wisdom; need not to be kept under certain Laws, Rules and Regulations. At the The first Abhisambodhi period, Buddhist Doctrine was disciplined by *Ōvāda pātīmokkha* (-Only advising). Likewise, Upaniṣad Students were disciplined by Ethical Thinking.

A glimpse of Pupil Discipline in that time can be gained from the Taittirīya Upaniṣad proclamation established in that era, which says “Speak only the truth. Do your duty and Learn Vedic lessons without delay. Respect you people. Be truthful. Be just and generous. Respect for those who are great, treat your mother as if she is a Goddesses. Treat you father as if he is a God. Even for strangers to treat him as a God. Do what is right. Do not others.

This is not a command, or some rules and regulations imposed on students. A reminder to continue Education and to develop good morals; both should go together, hand in hand. Such ethical thinking can be seen in various parts of Upaniṣad.

“*Yathākārī yathācārī bhavati. puṇyah puṇyēna karmanā pāpah pāpnā*” Above verse reminds us ‘Do what is good, then you reap good results. In *Bṛhadāranyaka upaniṣad* we read one other guidance, it is announced as an instruction to humans, Gods, and other beings (*Sura, Nara, Asura*)

“*damyatē datta dayaddhvam*”

For the Spiritual Development of Students, the above Teaching is very helpful; any student who follows that golden lesson needs not to follow any other disciplinary rules. Self-control, Generosity, and Compassion should be kept so close to one’s heart, and accordingly if one could shape up his life: he need not follow any other precepts. In the present Education System, which we treat as the best and most advanced, we sometimes come

upon unruly Teachers and Students whose code of conduct proves us the quality and greatness rules followed by Upaniṣad Students those are suitable even for the present. The Ethical guidelines followed by Upaniṣad Students have eternal value.

No argument there, the above-mentioned facts prove us Upaniṣad Education System was a great Teaching Concept full of unique Teaching techniques, Strategies and patterns which could not only bound Teachers and students, but it could also produce countless Upaniṣad Scholars to the world.

References

1. Abēpāla, Rōlaṇḍ. samakālīna adhyāpana saṅkalpa, sāra prakāśana, koṭṭāva, 2018.
2. Aitarēya āraṇyaka, Sanskritdocuments.org,
3. Apte, v.s. Sanskrit English Dictionary, Delhi.
4. *Brhadāraṇyaka upaniṣad*, Sanskritdocuments.org,
5. <https://antilogicalism.com/2017/07/05/schopenhauer/>
6. https://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/app/apte_query.py?qs=%E0%A4%85%E0%A4%A7%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%AF%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%AA%E0%A4%A8&matchtype=default
7. Revised and enlarged edition of Prin. V. S. Apte's The practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary. (uchicago.edu)
8. [https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ724880#:~:text=Craft%20\(1984\)%20noted%20that%20there,%20C%22%20meaning%20to%20lead%20out.](https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ724880#:~:text=Craft%20(1984)%20noted%20that%20there,%20C%22%20meaning%20to%20lead%20out.)
9. <https://onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/complete-list-teaching-methods/>
10. <https://pil.gu.se/english/resources/writing-syllabus/form-of-teaching>
11. <https://tipitaka.lk/dn-3-4,Sūtraṭṭhaka, dīghanikāya, pāthikavagga, 4. aggañña sūtraya.>
12. <https://tipitaka.lk/kn-dhp-1, Sūtraṭṭhaka, khuddhaka nikāya, dhammapadapāḷi, yamaka vagga, 19.>
13. <https://www.divaina.com/2011/02/28/mano06.html>
14. https://www.google.com/search?q=education+meaning+and+definition&rlz=1C1CHBD_enLK907LK907&oq=education+meaning+and+&aqs=chrome.0.0l2j69i57j0l7.47483j1j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8
15. https://www.google.com/search?q=education+meaning+and+definition&rlz=1C1CHBD_enLK907LK907&oq=education+meaning+and+&aqs=chrome.0.0l2j69i57j0l7.47483j1j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8
16. https://www.mkgandhi.org/articles/g_edu.htm
17. <https://www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-koeln.de/scans/MWScan/2020/web/webtc2/index.php>
18. Kauśītakī, Sanskritdocuments.org,
19. Kekulawala, Sumanalal, Kaṭhōpaniṣadaya, Gunasena, 1961.
20. Monier Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary, 1899, (2).
21. Muṇḍakōpaniṣad, Sanskritdocuments.org,
22. Oxford Advanced American Dictionary at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com
23. Radhakrishnan, s. Indian Philosophy, Educational Publications, Colombo, 2013, 1.
24. Rāmāyāna Srimad Valmiki Ramayanam. (Original) Ed. Ramayana Data Scholar. Gorakhpur, 1963.
25. Ranasinghe, Saman Chandra. kaviyē maraṇaya, Editor publication, Coḷombo, 2017.
26. Ranasinghe, Saman Chandra. Vāesidiya dahara, kaviyē maraṇaya, Editor publication, Coḷombo, 2017.
27. Ranasinghe, Saman Chandra, Arthanadi, Colombo, 2003.
28. Ranasinghe, Samanchandra. At the foot of the mountain, Indian past education is revealed in the Ramayana. Author Publications, Colombo, 2006.
29. Ranasinghe; Saman Chandra. Krishnamurti and Indian philosophy, Nugegoda, 1998.
30. Ranasinghe; Saman Chandra: Tears and Other Articles, Author Publications, Nugegoda, 2015.
31. Rg vēda,
32. Rg vēda, (Isha Basya)
33. Śabdastōma mahānidhi. Kolkata, Bhattacharya, Jivananda, 1893.
34. Sastri AL. Dhaturupa Manjari, Palghat, 1960.
35. Sāyaṇavyākhyāyata dhātu sūcī.
36. Seelarthana Thero, Meepitiye. “Upaniṣads Teacher-Student Relationship and Current Education” Academic Code of Buddhist Studies Philosophy Studies, ed. Hasantha Vasana Samarasinghe, Surasa Publications, Colombo, 2014.
37. Senanayake GSB. Sanskrit Literature, Gunasena, Colombo, 1960.
38. Senanayake GSB. Sanskrit Literature, Gunasena, Colombo, 1960.
39. Shabdastoma Mahanidhi. Kolkata, Bhattacharya, Jivananda, 1893.
40. Special methods of teaching, National Institute of Education, Maharagama. Reprint 2018.
41. Śvētāśvatara, Sanskritdocuments.org,
42. The Chāndōgya Upaniṣad Sanskritdocuments.org,
43. The Chāndōgya Upaniṣad with original text, edit: Swāmi Sarvananda, Madras, 1956.
44. The Hymns of the Rigveda, Translated by Ralph T. H. Griffith, 2nd edition, Kotagiri (Nilgiri) 1896.
45. The principal upanishads, S.Radhakrishnan, London, 1953.
46. Thilakasiri J. Vedic Literature, Godage, Colombo, 1988.
47. Upaniṣad, Seneviratne CAD. Gunasena, Colombo, 1961.

48. Vidyas from the Upaniṣads, by Swami Sivananda.
https://www.sivanandaonline.org/public_html/?cmd=displaysection§ion_id=759
49. Vinayapiṭaka, mahāvaggapāli, mahākhandhaka, dutiya bhāṇavāraṃ, māarakathā. <https://tipitaka.lk/vp-mv>
50. Vyasakara, Sanskritdocuments.org,
51. Weerasinghe SGM. Upaniṣad Philosophy, Godage, Colombo, 1992.
52. Winternitz M. History of Indian Literature, Board of Educational Publications, Colombo, 1967, (1).