CONTINUOUS AND COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: BEYOND ROTE LEARNING

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Globalisation in every sphere of society has important implications for education. We are witnessing increasing commercialization of education. We need to be vigilant about the pressures to commodity schools and the application of market-related concepts to schools and school quality. The increasingly competitive environment into which schools are being drawn and the aspirations of parents place a tremendous burden of stress and anxiety on children, to the detriment of their personal growth and development and thus hamper the joy of learning. As children's metacognitive capabilities develop, they become more aware of their own beliefs and capable of regulating their own learning.

Accordingly, National Curriculum Framework - 2005 (NCF-05) proposing Examination Reforms has stated - *"Indeed, Boards should consider, as a long-term measure, making the Class X examination optional, thus permitting students continuing in the same school (and who do not need a Board certificate) to take an internal school examination instead".*

As a sequel to the above, the Position Paper on `Examination Reforms' by NCERT 2006, says, - *"Indeed, it is our view that the tenth grade exam be made optional forthwith. Tenth-graders who intend continuing in the eleventh grade at the same school and do not need the Board certificate for any immediate purpose, should be free to take a school-conducted exam instead of the Board exam."*

In July 2009, then Union HRD minister Kapil Sibal announced a series of populist school reforms to reduce the burden of academic stress which students are reportedly suffering countrywide. One of them was to replace the periodic and particularly 'sudden death' final examination with continuous and comprehensive evaluation (CCE). This suggestion was accepted with unusual alacrity by the Delhi-based Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) — India's largest national school-leaving examination board which has 14,358 schools affiliated with it. Unsurprisingly the "self-financing", autonomous CBSE is a handmaiden of the HRD ministry with the secretary of the ministry described as the "controlling authority" of the board. Consequently, all 14,000-plus CBSE schools countrywide have been implementing CCE in classes I-X since 2009.

What is Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation?

Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) refers to a system of school-based assessment of students that covers all aspects of students' development.

It is a developmental process of assessment which emphasizes on two fold objectives. Continuity in evaluation and assessment of broad based learning and behavioural outcomes.

CCE Objectives:

According to the CBSE concept note, implementation of this student assessment and evaluation system will:

* Help develop cognitive, psychomotor and affective skills
* Develop students' thinking processes while de-emph-asising memorisation
* Make continuous evaluation an integral part of the teaching-learning process
* Use evaluation data for improving teaching-learning strategies
* Utilise assessment data as a quality control device to raise academic outcomes
* Enable teachers to make student-centric decisions about learners' processes of learning and learning environments
* Transform teaching and learning into a student-centric activity

What should be assessed?

In view of getting a complete image of learning, assessment should focus on the learner's ability to -

* learn and acquire desired skills related to different subject areas;

* acquire a level of achievement in different subject areas in the requisite measure;

* develop child's individual skills, interests, attitudes and motivation;

* understand and lead a healthy and productive life;

* monitor the changes taking place in child's learning, behaviour and progress over time;

* respond to different situations and opportunities, both in and out of school;

* apply what is learned in a variety of environments, circumstances and situations;

* work independently, collaboratively and harmoniously;

* analyze and evaluate;

* beaware of social and environmental issues;

* participate in social and environmental projects and causes;

♦ retain what is learned over a period of time.

Schools of the future will need to develop in their learners the ability to take risks, to be adaptable, to be flexible, to cope with constant change and become lifelong learners. In this context, learners become dynamic leaders with their teachers as enablers.

Keep Stress at Bay

- **Sounds familiar?**
  It is a scene that you've probably experienced yourself or at least heard of, from your friends or relatives. Ever wondered why the neighbour's son, or for that matter, any other child of your age, gets more marks than you do? Some students are good at understanding and learning quickly, while others—the vast majority—depend on rote learning to pass. In India, in one way or the other, this dependence on rote learning has resulted in many students becoming unhappy or dissatisfied, and not really seeing the value of education. They are forced to spend more time memorising concepts without really understanding anything, leaving them with no time for extra-curricular activities. It is no wonder, then, that so many students are plagued with depression, or that there is such a high suicide rate among young students. Schools, which were supposed to function as a foundation for each child's overall development, have now turned into centres of repetitive memorisation. A fundamental transformation is required to get back to the real meaning of education.

- **The change**
  It introduced Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) in the country at the secondary school level. The kind of assessment technique that CCE works on, helps in identifying those constructive traits of the student that are otherwise left unseen. CCE evaluates students' learning progress at regular time intervals based on small portions of content. CCE uses different measures of teaching, founded on learning requirements and the potential of different students. Discontinuing the use of negative comments on the students' performance and actively involving students in the learning process further reduces their stress levels. CCE is also supportive of the abilities of students who are unable to excel academically but can do well in other co-curricular areas. Also, according to the CCE system, teachers need to use various teaching tools including oral, projects, presentations, etc; recognise different learning approaches and capabilities; share assessment norms with the students; agree to peer and self assessment; and give students a chance to improve.

- **How it works**
  The overall performance of students is based on their achievements in the scholastic as well as co-scholastic areas and activities. In the scholastic areas, each academic year is divided into two terms that include the

formative assessment (school-based internal assessment) and summative assessment (question papers supplied by the board and assessment carried out by the school/board)of the students. Co-scholastic areas focus on assessing life skills, which include the thinking, social and emotional skills of the students. Also, they measure the students' attitudes towards teachers, schoolmates, school programmes, the environment and value systems. Other things to be considered are areas like literary and creative skills, scientific and ICT skills, visual and performing arts, and organisational and leadership skills. In the physical and health education field, students will be assessed on activities like sports/indigenous sports, NCC/NSS, scouting and guiding, swimming, gymnastics, yoga, first aid, gardening/ shramdaan, and work education.

- **Are we on the right path**
  Though the purpose of CCE was to make the learning process stress-free, the system did receive its share of criticism in the first year of its implementation. Some of the problems that surfaced were teachers feeling that they needed to put in more effort, and parents of academically superior students feeling disadvantaged because of the grading system. To overcome these problems, a better understanding of CCE is required among the teachers, parents, as well as students. Teachers need to understand that in order to make the new system work, they will have to put in greater efforts to develop their teaching and reach out to students in a meaningful way. Monotonous and mechanical education has to become a thing of the past. It is indeed true that the teachers will find the work more demanding than before, but before long, they will start seeing the benefits of the system, as their students will start improving in all areas of life. As for students and parents, they need to forget about the old days of extreme competition, where schooling meant

Indispensability For a Teacher

- To identify learning difficulties in mastering certain competencies and the intensity of such learning difficulties.
- To improve students' learning through diagnosis of their performance.
- To plan appropriate remedial measures to enable he students who have learning difficulties in mastering the competency.
- To improve or alter instructional strategies to enhance the quality of teaching.
- To decide upon the selecting of various media and materials as a supportive system in mastering the competencies.
- To strengthen evaluation procedure itself.

Some Empirical Studies

In view of the existing evaluation practices prevalent in schools and based on the recommendations of NPE followed by the National curriculum framework for school education, it was considered necessary to develop a scheme of evaluation in order to improve the evaluation system. A school Based Evaluation scheme was conceived at implementing the idea of continuous and comprehensive evaluation in school situation by the unit of Department of Educational Evaluation and measurement, NCERT in Demonstration Multipurpose Schools of all RIEs in 2001. The project aimed at developing students' achievement through continuous assessment, diagnosis and remediation, assessment in co-scholastic areas and personal and social qualities. Monitoring and supervision was another important component of the scheme that aimed at effective implementation of the scheme as well as for providing timely interventions for its smooth functioning. The head teacher and the teachers were expected to assume more responsibility and power to take initiatives to improve evaluation. The scheme also aimed at the involvement of parents in improvement of learners' progress in both scholastic and co-scholastic areas. The scheme had a positive impact on learners, especially in improvement of personal and social qualities. The teachers were found to have improved their evaluation competencies. The teachers of DMS, RIE are continuing the scheme even though the project is completed, which is an indicator of successful impact of the evaluation scheme on parents, teachers and students. Conclusion If we wish to discover the truth about an educational system, we must look into its evaluation procedures. Examinations in their present form are not the real measure of students' potential because they cover only a small fraction of the course content. They do not cover all the evaluation of all abilities. Nor do they provide for the application of multiple evaluation techniques which can assess the cognitive as well as the non-cognitive abilities of learners.

Scenario of evaluation practices in schools certain empirical studies conducted at Regional level in schools (Rao Manjula, 1998; 2001; 2002) (Angadi and Akki 2013) and other studies reported reveal the following:

- Evaluation practices carried out in schools are still conventional in their nature and purposes.
- Continuous assessment in not followed systematically in those schools where teachers are trained in in-service programmes.
- Competencies are not assessed through planned procedures of evaluation.
- Assessment of wrong things or the same range of things too often is carried out. One doesn't get a fair and realistic picture of what students have actually mastered.
- Undue reliance on recall is found, rather than enabling the students to transfer and apply what they have learnt to different concepts and problems.
- Formative feedback is not provided. Learning difficulties are not identified.

- The personal and social qualities are totally ignored due to lack of awareness of what to be evaluated and how to evaluate.
- Remedial instruction is not provided.

Continuous and Comprehensive evaluation facilitates students' effective learning as well as their all round development of personality with its multiple evaluation tools and techniques and corrective measures. It is utmost important to make continuous and comprehensive evaluation as an integral part of teaching and learning process to promote standards of school education.

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