

WORKSHOP ON CCE – A THOUGHT

Mahuya



There has been a paradigm shift in the way we look at assessments today. The older system (traditional examination system) of assessment and evaluation was mainly based on paper-pencil tests and a lot of importance was given to rote learning and memorization. It focused only on measuring the knowledge and understanding level of the child. Marks and ranks which were awarded, pointed out the learning level reached by the child at the end of a semester and his / her position with respect to other peers in his / her class. There was no scope for remediation. It gave least importance to the development of skills and higher mental abilities of the child as well as his overall personal development. The progress of learning made by the child, over a period of time, was never evaluated. All of this created a lot of anxiety, stress, frustration and even humiliation amongst children as well as their parents. Such examination system is a misfit for the 21st century knowledge-based society which wanted children to become innovative problem solvers. Hence there was an urgent need to replace the old system.

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) introduced a new scheme of evaluation in 2009, termed as Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation, or in short CCE. This is a school-based evaluation system integrated with the teaching learning process. It believes that assessment should not be seen as a one-time activity outside teaching-learning but should be in continuum and built into the teaching-learning practice. This new scheme of evaluation also looks at the holistic development of the child (comprehensive) and therefore it covers both the scholastic (subject

specific) and co-scholastic (life skills, attitudes, values and co curricular) aspects. Both these aspects of the evaluation process will be assessed through Formative and Summative Assessments. Instead of giving marks and rank, grading system and percentile rank were recommended.

So what does this new system of evaluation demand from the teacher?

It is obvious that the teacher's role and responsibility has increased significantly. The teacher is no longer a person who merely imparts knowledge to the child. The teacher now needs to understand the child in a holistic manner – observe the child in both formal and informal situations and maintain a daily observation record of the child's behavior in an unbiased way. The teacher - while teaching - needs to identify the learning difficulties faced by the child, make necessary interventions and give timely feedback about the child's progress to his/her parents so that corrective and remedial measures can be carried out and the child can reach the expected standards.

Learning styles differ from one child to another. In order to cater to every need of the child, the teacher needs to develop variety of tools and techniques to carry out assessment. For each of the activities, the teacher has to develop descriptive indicators to assess the child's performance.

As per CCE recommendation of giving grades and percentile ranks, the teachers' workload of making the report card entry has now become an exhaustive and time consuming process.

Are teachers equipped to carry out the new evaluation system?

Considering the high student-teacher ratio in most of the schools in India this is quite a challenging task for them. Moreover, the majority of teachers (when they were in school as students themselves) were taught by the traditional rote-based manner and are conditioned to evaluate the child's performance only through paper-pencil test. Now they are being asked to assess the child holistically and that too through multiple tools and techniques of which they have minimal or no exposure.

While having informal conversations with teachers on CCE-training, one thing that has surfaced prominently is their stress. Reading about the new scheme in manuals is one thing, but implementing the same in the class requires a lot of hand-holding in the initial stages. The teachers therefore look at trainings and workshops on CCE as some form of "messiah". My understanding is that the majority of teachers face problems when it comes to planning activities for formative assessment. They are also not very clear about the indicators.

The following is a suggested roadmap showing the process involved in carrying out formative assessment.

The first step is to choose a concept to be taught in the class – for example the teacher has chosen the topic 'animal kingdom'.

Next, is to identify the learning outcomes of the chosen concept. Taking the same concept as mentioned above, the following can be the expected learning outcome:

After completing the suggested activity, the students will be able to –

- list the names of animals and birds
- identify different birds and animals from a given description
- classify the animals into different types (birds, reptiles, insects and mammals)

- develop a basic knowledge of the habitat of each animal
- develop the skill to inquire
- present their findings through a journal
- work in groups

Based on the learning outcome, the teacher needs to devise an assessment strategy (activity) for the concept. The skills and competencies that the teacher wants to develop in the child should form the basis for choosing the activity. Taking the same example - in order to teach about animal kingdom the teacher planned a field trip to the zoo. Before the trip, the students were asked to prepare a list of questions for interviewing the zoo keeper. After the trip, based on the information gathered, the students in groups had to prepare a journal and present their findings to the larger group.

In order to assess the various attributes in the child (both scholastic and co-scholastic), the teacher needs to develop the descriptive indicators.

One of the characteristics of an indicator is that they should be observable and measurable. For example we can never have an indicator measuring the 'understanding' of the child. The reason for this is while teaching a concept if the teacher wants to find out whether the children have understood the lesson and asks 'have you understood?' the child may say 'yes' even if he / she has not understood (or misunderstood) the concept. Therefore the teacher should devise various ways to check the understanding like asking the child to 'explain' or 'deduce' or 'to represent the concept taught diagrammatically' and if the child can do this it means he/ she has understood. Similarly, for co-scholastic indicator, it is prudent not to have an indicator saying 'the child displays leadership qualities'. We need to elaborate the word 'leadership' by having indicators like 'takes initiative', 'listens to others', 'makes decision' etc.

It is easy to write the indicators if they are connected to the objectives or learning outcome of the chosen activity. An example is shown in the table given below:

LEARNING OUTCOME/ OBJECTIVE	DESCRIPTIVE INDICATORS
Describe the physical characteristics of the animals found in their surrounding	The child is able to identify the animals in their surrounding based on their physical description The child is able to draw a picture / sketch of the animal described
Classify the different types of animals (mammals, amphibians, reptiles, insects and birds)	The child is able to group animals according to their types
Develop a basic knowledge about the habitat of the different animals	The child can match the habitat of the animals from a set of flashcards showing animals and their habitat
Develops an understanding of the food of the animals	The child is able to draw the food chain
Prepare questionnaire for the interview	The child is (a) able to identify relevant questions for inquiry (b) confident in asking questions to the interviewee
Preparing the journal	The child (a) is able to organize the information collected in a sequenced manner (b) displays creativity / sincerity in writing the journal
Working in groups	The child (a) Works with ease with other members of the group (b) Listens to others (c) Takes initiative in group work (d) Helps others in need (e) Displays sensitivity to his/ her peers

After arriving at the descriptive indicators, the teacher needs to classify them into scholastic and co-scholastic, which will help the teacher arrive at a holistic assessment of the child.

The above example shows how the teacher has integrated assessment into teaching – learning process.

Formative assessment can be done in many ways – through role play, quiz, debate, project work etc. Depending on the content and the objective, the teacher has to choose the activity and develop either indicators or check list or rubrics for assessment.

In Conclusion

The success of CCE depends on the teacher as they play the leading role in implementing the same in the classrooms. In each of the training workshops - along with developing their perspective on CCE - there should be practical sessions on aspects like (a) how to plan activities and assess the

child, (b) develop indicators, document and maintain records, (c) build parameters for making checklists, rubrics, converting grades into marks, calculating percentiles and so on

As one workshop is not enough, it is necessary to plan for a series of workshops with teachers and trainers need to demonstrate the practical aspects of (not only the theory behind) the CCE methodologies to the teachers from Day 1 – for better appreciation and understanding.

The first one (or two) workshops should emphasise on the practical aspects – along with the theory of building perspective – where trainers need to do some hand-holding to enable teachers to get the required exposure on the applicability of CCE methodologies

The next workshops – when teachers are reasonably conversant with CCE guidelines – need to focus on their readiness on their doing the activities that were taught. In these sessions,

trainers need to play the role of facilitators / guides.

These days the stress on teachers has increased considerably as they are expected to follow the new CCE regulations for appropriate adoption in

their respective schools. It is prudent to assume that teachers – when they come for training - would appreciate being appraised of the relevant techniques – with examples – that are easily deployable in their day to day working life.

***Mahuya** joined Azim Premji Foundation in December 2009 as a subject specialist (geography) in the Academics and Pedagogy Team. She is currently part of the Learner Assessment team at the Institute of Assessment and Accreditation Team of the Foundation. Prior to joining the Foundation, she worked as a teacher at the secondary and higher secondary levels in various ICSE, WBHS, SSLC and IGCSE schools in Bangalore and Kolkata. She can be contacted at mahuya@azimpremjifoundation.org*