

## Assessment Reforms Moving towards Competency Based Evaluation

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### ABSTRACT

Assessment is a continuous process of appraisal of the achievement of aims of education as well as to bring about continuous improvement for making education more meaningful and effective. It guides both the student and the teacher in the selection of learning experience and placement of the student in special groups. The results of assessment procedures are helpful in reporting student's progress to parents. Assessment procedures help you in clarifying for the students what 'you desire them to learn and provide you with concrete information about their progress. Assessment process can be classified into different types like Formative, Summative, Diagnostic and Placement. Another way of classification is Assessment of Learning, Assessment for Learning and Assessment as Learning. Assessment for learning is highly essential for a student to show better performance. In Assessment and Evaluation the word “comprehensive” means evaluation of student consists of both scholastic and co-scholastic areas. Scholastic area includes subject specific area in the cognitive domain like remember, understand, apply, analyse, evaluate, and create. Co-scholastic area comprises affective and psychomotor abilities like life-skills, attitudes, habits, interest, values and co-curricular activities, etc. The journey of student's assessment gone a long way passing through oral testing, written testing, public examination, internal and external assessment, continuous and comprehensive evaluation and competency-based assessment. Attempts to shift from content-based assessment to competency-based assessment are continued. Emphasises on transforming assessment for optimizing learning and development of all students according to NEP 2020. Competency based assessment is a continuous process of assessment, development, and adaptation. Individuals, businesses, and society can confidently navigate the future by adopting this strategy, allowing them to reach their full potential and thrive in a continuously changing world. The principles of Competency based Assessment are Getting support individually, assesses growth and mastery, Measurable competencies that help to build skills for life, Validity, Reliability, Flexibility, Accessibility, Fairness, Timely feedback, Collaboration, Authenticity etc.

**Keywords:** *Assessment, National Education Policy 2020, Competency based assessment, formative assessment, summative assessment, diagnostic assessment, placement assessment, assessment as learning, assessment for learning, assessment of learning, continuous and comprehensive assessment, evaluation*

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**A**ssessment is a continuous process of appraisal of the achievement of aims of education as well as to bring about continuous improvement for making education more meaningful and effective. It guides both the student and the teacher in the selection of learning experience and placement of the student in special groups. The results of evaluation procedures are helpful in reporting student's progress to parents. Assessment procedures help you in clarifying for the students what 'you desire them to learn and provide you with concrete information about their progress. These procedures also, help in identifying areas of learning difficulties, which are useful in providing remedial support to the student. You know that assessment and evaluation are very important tasks in the educational process. Assessment forms an integral part of the total system of education. It is intimately related to educational objectives. It is essential in the never-ending cycle of formulating goals, measuring progress towards goals and determining the new goals. You also, know that evaluation in its broader concept includes examination of academic and non-academic components of education. In assessment you focus on performance of a student in academic subjects only but in evaluation you include all the changes that take place. The term 'assessment' usually refers to the process of allotting a quantitative value to students' achievements. As you already know, all types of achievements cannot be assessed by only a single method. You are to use several tools to assess different kinds of achievement which are technically called 'tools of assessment. Periodic assessment of child's progress is an integral part of the teaching learning process. In order to maintain an honest, motivating, unique and distinct profile of a child, both scholastic and co-scholastic aspects should be given equal weightage. The assessment process can be classified according to the variety of procedures included in it.

### TYPES OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment in the field of education goes far beyond being a mere tool for testing and grading. It has evolved into a multifaceted approach that plays a pivotal role in shaping teaching and learning processes. Depending on the purpose, the assessment is classified as follows:

- i) Formative Assessment
- ii) Summative Assessment
- iii) Diagnostic Assessment
- iv) Placement Assessment

#### Formative Assessment

The purpose of Formative Assessment is to know the progress of students and teachers during the instructional process. It helps teachers and students monitor their progress in teaching-learning process. Any type of strategies and techniques like asking questions, unit test, class test, observations, filling work-sheet, etc. can be used for formative assessment by a teacher. Continuous feedback on students' performance will help them encourage or strengthen their learning process and remove or correct their misconceptions. It is equally important in their success and failure. Based on the assessment a teacher can modify or change their instructional strategy that enhances the performance of the students. Since formative assessments are for improving the teaching- learning process, the results usually are not included in the final grade. Assessment and Evaluation From the above discussion, it is clear that formative assessment is helpful to:

- diagnose and give appropriate remedy;
- provide scope for effective feedback;

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- assure the active involvement of students in their learning;
- improve their teaching on the basis of the assessment results; and
- experiment various teaching-learning styles to determine what and how to teach.

### **Summative Assessment**

Summative assessment is used for assigning grade or certifying student's achievement at the end of the course or a unit. It is designed on the basis of pre-determined learning outcomes and used to check whether the students have achieved the instructional objectives or not. Teachers use different techniques for this purpose. It includes teacher made tests, standardized tests, project reports, oral tests, pen-paper test, performance of students in laboratory and various activities related to a particular subject. A teacher can record all the information from these different sources in a portfolio or some other way to summarize the performance of each student. Summative assessment aims at grade or certifying students' achievement. It also helps to review or improve suitability of instructional objectives and appropriateness of instructional strategies.

### **Diagnostic Assessment**

Diagnostic assessment is concerned with persistent learning difficulties. These difficulties can be in reading, writing, arithmetic or in any other subjects. If a student experiences continuous failure, then teacher should understand that the student is facing learning difficulties. These problems should be analysed and treated at the right time. A detailed and comprehensive diagnostic test can be conducted to locate the area where the student has problems. Various observation techniques also can be used for the support of diagnostic test. Services of educational, psychologists and counsellors will be required for identifying serious learning disabilities. Thus, the primary function of diagnostic assessment is to locate the areas and causes of weaknesses of the students and formulate appropriate remedial actions.

### **Placement Assessment**

It is conducted before teaching-learning activities and assesses learners' existing knowledge and experiences. It helps the teacher design instruction based on the learners' entry behaviour and determine their ability to acquire new knowledge. For example, pre-testing students on basic math skills before starting a new unit to understand their existing knowledge.

Three distinctive assessment methodologies have emerged: Assessment for Learning (AfL), Assessment as Learning (AaL), and Assessment of Learning (AoL).

### **Assessment of Learning (AoL)**

Assessment of Learning (AoL), often referred to as summative assessment, is a culminating evaluation that provides a snapshot of students' achievements and outcomes at a specific point in their educational journey. Unlike formative assessment, which focuses on the learning process, AoL gauges the overall level of mastery a student has achieved by the end of a designated period. It serves as a formal assessment method commonly used for assigning grades, certification, or making judgements about the success of a curriculum.

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### Assessment for Learning (AfL)

Assessment for Learning (AfL), commonly referred to as formative assessment, stands as a dynamic and integral component of modern pedagogy. This approach focuses on gathering real-time insights into students' learning progress to inform instructional strategies and provide timely feedback. AfL fundamentally reimagines assessment as a collaborative process between educators and learners, shifting from a mere evaluation tool to a powerful instrument for enhancing the learning experience.

### Assessment as Learning (AaL)

Assessment as Learning (AaL) heralds a significant paradigm shift in education, reframing the role of assessment from a static evaluation tool to a dynamic catalyst for active learning. This transformative approach positions students as active participants in their own learning journey. At its core, AaL encourages learners to be reflective and metacognitive, fostering the development of skills that enable them to monitor, regulate, and steer their learning processes.

AaL operates on the principle that assessment isn't merely an outcome; it is an integral part of the learning experience itself. This approach focuses not solely on measuring what students have learned but on how they are learning. AaL propels students to take a step back, analyse their learning strategies, and engage in a profound exploration of their cognitive processes.

In **Continuous and Comprehensive Assessment**, the word 'continuous' means the regularity, periodicity in the evaluation process. Students' development is a continuous process and progress on various aspects should be assured from 121 Assessment and Evaluation the beginning and continue through the entire span of academic session. Number of unit tests, formal and informal way of assessment during classroom instruction, regularity of assessment, identification of strengths and weaknesses, diagnosis of learning problems, suggestions of preventive measures and testing and retesting will help teachers and students for self-evaluation. In Assessment and Evaluation, the word "comprehensive" means evaluation of student consists of both scholastic and co-scholastic areas. Scholastic area includes subject specific area in the cognitive domain like remember, understand, apply, analyse, evaluate, and create. Co-scholastic area comprises affective and psychomotor abilities like life-skills, attitudes, habits, interest, values and co-curricular activities, etc. Thus, the scheme emphasizes on holistic learning rather than testing. Evaluation is done for learning enhancement. It made a transformation to produce citizens with good health, appropriate attitude, different practical skills, and with desirable qualities along with academic excellence.

### **ASSESSMENT REFORMS IN NEW EDUCATION POLICY: 2020**

The journey of student's assessment gone a long way passing through oral testing, written testing, public examination, internal and external assessment, continuous and comprehensive evaluation and competency-based assessment. Attempts to shift from content-based assessment to competency-based assessment are continued. Emphasises on transforming assessment for optimizing learning and development of all students with a focus on the following features of Assessment:

- Regular assessment
- formative assessment and competency-based Promoting learning and development of students
- Focuses on 'assessment for learning'

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- Tests higher-order skills (analysis, critical thinking and conceptual clarity etc.)
- Helps entire schooling system in revising continuously teaching learning processes to optimize learning
- Continuous Tracking of Learning Outcome of Each Child Board Examinations to be made more flexible with assessment of essential skills Assessment to focus on core concepts, higher order and foundational skills
- AI based soft wares to help track progress of students to enable the to make optimal career choices
- National Assessment Centre (PARAKH) will bring greater synergy in board examinations conducted by different BoE.
- Self-Assessment & Peer Assessment National Testing Agency (NTA) will work to offer a Common Aptitude Test of high quality to eliminate the need of coaching for these examinations.
- It will include Progress of the Child in Inquiry Based Learning, Quiz, Role play, Group Work, Portfolios etc.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Assessment refers to a variety of tasks by which teachers collect information regarding the performance and achievement of their students (Gronlund, 2006). Researchers emphasized that assessment has two main purposes. One reason is for student learning and the second is for certification, which involves the evaluation of student achievement (Carless, 2015; Norton, Norton, & Shannon, 2013). Authors affirmed that formative and summative assessment fulfill these purposes (Carless 2015; Saifi, Mahmood, Gujjar, & Ali Sha, 2011; Sambell et al., 2013). When assessment is successful, these two functions need to overlap (Carless, 2007).

Formative assessment occurs on a continuous basis throughout the course (Saifi et al., 2011; Sambell et al., 2013). It encourages students to engage in the subject matter, which helps them become familiar with the information they are attempting to learn (Jacoby, Heugh, Bax, & Branford-White, 2014).

For effective formative assessment, active participation of the student and teacher occurs (Jacoby et al., 2014). When students are actively engaged in the activities, it “results in deeper thinking and long-term retention of learned concepts” (McCoy, 2013, p. 146).

Improvements in learners’ performances are achieved through supportive feedback from various assessment tasks (Sambell et al., 2013). Because of its value to learning, formative assessment is considered assessment for learning (Carless, Joughin, & Lui, 2010; Hernández, 2012; McDowell, Wakelin, Montgomery, & King, 2011).

Summative assessment is used for judging student achievement and occurs at the end of a course or phase of instruction (Gronlund, 2006). Gibson and Shaw (2011) say that common methods used for summative assessment include unit tests, exams (midterm, Assessment in higher education, Page 2 182875 – Journal of Instructional Pedagogies semester), and final presentations or projects. However, the timing of these practices makes it difficult to modify student learning.

Therefore, they are used only to determine grades. Because of this, summative assessment is referred to as assessment of learning (Hernández, 2012; McDowell et al., 2011). Still, Carless et al. (2010) noted that summative assessment could be formative and for learning if there is feedback given that helps students learn.

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In higher education, most assessment strategies, such as course assignments, serve both a formative (assessment for learning) and a summative (assessment of learning) function (Hernández, 2012; Taras, 2009).

### COMPETENCY BASED ASSESSMENT

Assessing learner's performance based on some predetermined competency framework is called competency-based assessment. Well-defined competencies and its behavioural indicators are the preliminary condition for this type of assessment. Competency framework is bounded with long-term educational goals and its vision and mission. These competencies should be interpreted and contextualized according to the level of the learners. Let us consider an example of a reality show. In a reality show a minimum group of participants are competing for a period of time to become the winner. All the competitors are selected as per some basic skills. At each level of competition, one or two will be eliminated on the basis of their performance. This will be continued till one becomes winner. Types of Assessment and Evaluation The main advantage of Competency based assessment is that it gives opportunity to each learner to learn new things from experts. Competency based assessment is trying to find out whether a person is able to do a task or group of tasks and how effectively they can do. Thus, it is an ongoing & learning process which includes continuous construction of knowledge and skills, assessment, learning and re-assessment. Competency based assessment aims to prepare students for future citizen. It is an approach to assess an individual's knowledge, skills, abilities, interest based on specific competencies or any job requirements. The Competency Based assessment is deeply integrated into the learning process, allowing continuous feedback and improvement. Rather than waiting until the end of a term for evaluation, students are assessed as they progress, ensuring they fully grasp each competency before moving on. The transition from traditional grading to competency-based evaluation represents a significant change. Traditional grades often provide a snapshot of a student's performance at a particular moment, while competency-based evaluation continuously measures a student's development in specific areas. This shift promotes a deeper understanding and retention of knowledge, aligning with the goals of preparing students for future challenges. The new Education policy also promotes the development of a curriculum that is adaptable and responsive to the needs of students, allowing for a more personalised learning experience. By fostering an environment where assessment is seen as a tool for growth rather than just a measure of achievement, NEP 2020 encourages schools to focus on the holistic development of students.

### ASSESSMENT TYPES FOR CBA

1. Diagnostic assessments
2. Formative assessments
3. Summative assessments
4. Norm referenced assessments
5. Criterion referenced
6. Peer to peer randomized
7. AI based assessments

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8. Self-assessments
9. RPL
10. Game based

### PRINCIPLES OF CBA

1. Equity should set
2. Transparency
3. Getting support individually
4. Assesses growth and mastery
5. Measurable competencies that help to build skills for life
6. Validity
7. Reliability
8. Flexibility
9. Accessibility
10. Fairness
11. Timely feedback
12. Collaboration
13. Authenticity

### ASSESSMENT PROCESS FOR CBA

1. Identifying competencies and LOs
2. Set assessment criteria
3. Select assessment methods
4. Ensure authenticity
5. Provide instructions
6. Blend assessments
7. Feedback and reporting
8. Continuous improvement

### CONCLUSION

An effective, goal-oriented, teaching-learning sequence contains clearly understood objectives, productive classroom activities, and a sufficient amount of feedback to make students aware of the strengths and weaknesses of their performances. Assessment and evaluation are related to

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both instructional objectives and classroom learning activities and are indispensable elements in the learning process. They are useful for gathering data/information needed into various interests. The data can be used to make decision about the content and methods of instruction, to make decisions about classrooms climate, to help communicate what is important, and to assign grades. Among other techniques to do evaluation and assessment. Competency-based assessments are perfectly aligned with the NEP 2020's vision of transforming the Indian education system to prioritise quality and relevance. By focusing on the mastery of skills and practical application of knowledge, these assessments support the development of well-rounded, capable individuals ready to thrive in a globalised world. Competency based assessment is a continuous process of assessment, development, and adaptation. Individuals, businesses, and society can confidently navigate the future by adopting this strategy, allowing them to reach their full potential and thrive in a continuously changing world.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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