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Understanding CCE in the Context of RTE-2009

Professor Manju Jain*

Overview

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act-2009 (RTE Act-2009), implemented since April 2010, has made elementary education a Fundamental Right to all children in the age group of six to fourteen years. Chapter V of the Act on Curriculum and Completion of Elementary Education under Section 29 (1) (h) provides for Comprehensive and Continuous Evaluation of child's understanding of knowledge and his or her ability to apply the same. In view of this, various efforts have been made by states and UTs to develop CCE materials and evolve strategies for its implementation. The analysis of materials developed in this area by states and UTs and the field experiences suggested that teachers are facing problems in the understanding and implementation of CCE in classrooms. Different kinds of prescriptive formats have been developed for teachers to record the progress of children. As a result of this, teachers are engaged more in compiling the data for CCE during the teaching-learning time. The reporting procedures have also been found to be mechanical and cumbersome exercise for teachers. Apart from this, there are misconceptions related to various terms such as a continuous, comprehensive, evaluation, assessment, formative and summative assessment, which created confusion in the system and practitioners are interpreting CCE in their own way.

It is an admitted fact that teaching and learning must go hand in hand. For seeking the best results, the progress of learners needs to be observed objectively and regularly with appropriate academic support coming from all the stakeholders. It would be pertinent to mention that the RTE forbids any public examination until Class VIII and 'no detention' policy has to continue. It must be clear at this juncture that while implementing non-detention policy, it should not lead to

* *Professor*, Department of Elementary Education, NCERT, New Delhi-110016

no teaching-learning in schools. On the contrary, CCE can play as a powerful instrument in respecting the intent of RTE on the one hand and ensuring learning of children on the other, as the 'assessment for learning' would provide for necessary and timely corrective measures. CCE focuses on child's progress with her/his own performance over time. There is no need to compare the performance of two or more children. This will help children grow at their own pace with conceptual clarity and proper understanding.

In order to understand the CCE in right perspective, we need to know the

- Purpose of CCE
- Conceptual understanding about CCE
- Process of implementation of CCE

Purpose of CCE

We need to understand the primary purpose of assessment and evaluation. The first purpose is to improve student's learning. Information gathered through assessment during teaching-learning, helps teachers to determine students' strengths and learning gaps in different subject areas. With this process, the information also serves to guide teachers in adapting curriculum and teaching-learning approaches/ methods to suit students' needs in assessing the overall effectiveness of programmes and classroom practices. This is another major purpose of assessment and evaluation process. Thus, assessment is the process of gathering information from a variety of sources (including assignments, day-to-day observations, conversations, demonstrations, projects, process of finding out as to what extent changes have taken place in the development and learning among performances, tests, etc.) that accurately reflect how well a student is achieving the curricular expectations in a subject. Therefore, assessment needs to be used as a means of gathering evidences to meet the requirements of evaluation. It does not speak of final judgment but a process through which comparisons among various sets of observations are made. Normally evaluation implied passing on judgement on one or two aspects and it did not cover various dimensions of learning. It has to be based on reliable and valid evidences so as to arrive at precise formulations. Good evaluation is one which provides a near complete picture of one's accomplishments and is based on multiple sources and multiple centres.

Conceptual understanding about CCE

Broadly, the term 'Continuous and Comprehensive' means that evaluation should be treated as an integral part of teaching-learning process rather than as an event which follows the completion of teaching the syllabus. The new paradigm shift suggests that a child's learning and development cannot be viewed in terms of a rigidly defined class-structure, nor can it be fitted into an annual cycle of evaluation

and promotion. The RTE Act represents the legal approval of this thinking as the Act prohibits stagnation of children and requires that a child can join the school at any point in the year.

- Continuous assessment' is an in-built continuous component of teaching-learning process. The prime purpose of using assessment along with teaching-learning is to improve the process of transaction. Teacher also learns from students' responses that what changes are required in teaching-learning process. This will be done by interacting with students, asking questions, observing their classwork. When teacher is interacting or teaching-learning is going on, she/he collects a wide range of data so that they can help the learner with the learning process. She/he prepares assessment tasks that help her/him understand what students know or can do already and use the insights that come from the process to design the next steps in the teaching-learning process. To do this, teacher uses multiple ways, that is, observation,worksheets, questioning in class, student-teacher interaction or whatever mechanism is likely to get data that would be useful for her/his for further planning and teaching. This data is not designed to make comparative judgements among the students but to highlight students' strengths and learning gaps and provide them with feedback that will further improve their learning. It helps teachers to provide timely feedback to scaffold next step for learning. The above data is a formative data (assessment for learning) and that guide teachers to further improve children's learning. This data is not for reporting purpose in the report card. Such data are for teacher's own record to further plan the teaching-learning process in the light of this data. The examples of various curricular areas given in the exemplar material would help in understanding how assessment for learning can be used as an in-built part of teaching-learning process.

During the teaching-learning process, teachers should also provide regular opportunities for peer learning, self-assessment and reflection during the process of assessment for learning. It should also provide opportunities and space to students to critically assess/reflect and analyse their own work during teaching-learning process. Opportunities may be provided to students to assess and reflect on peer and group work. It is not expected that students will be able to assess themselves accurately during early grades at this stage, it is important to develop the habit of reflection and critically reviewing one's own work. The teachers need to be patient in this process. Students may be encouraged to assess themselves many times during the process of learning. After identifying their strengths and gaps in learning, they

can themselves plan and make efforts to look for the suitable resources to seek further knowledge in order to address the gaps to enhance their learning. Thus, in CCE, 'continuous' refers to the fact that the teaching-learning should be continuously guided by the child's response and her/his participation in classroom activities. In other words, assessment should be seen as a process whereby the teacher learns about the child in order to be able to teach better.

- The other 'C' in CCE is 'Comprehensiveness' of the assessment and evaluation process of the child's progress. Comprehensive component is getting a sense of 'holistic' development of child's progress. Progress cannot be done in a segregated manner, that is, cognitive aspects, personal social qualities, etc. Here one must understand that, during the teaching-learning process, teacher creates learning conditions such as asking/probing questions, peer group interaction/discussions, providing enriching material, opportunities for sharing learning experiences. With these processes, children would reflect, discuss, listen to others' responses and generate knowledge. These interactions are usually going on in the classroom, (lesson/chapter-wise) for each subject area. This teaching-learning episode of one topic/chapter of a subject may take 7-8 periods depending on the nature of the

subject and the stage (Primary/Upper-primary). After completion of 'theme'/chapter, teacher is expected to know the learning levels of children. This could be assessed or judged as per the nature of textual material. For example, in EVS, the topic plant's diversity in the surrounding, children have learnt size of plants, shapes and colours of leaves, colour and texture of trunks. teacher now would like to know whether they have learnt as she/he expected based on lesson's expectation. For that she/he has broadly identified the objectives of the lesson and spelt out learning indicators. She/he will design activities based on expected learning. These activities will be of varied nature it could be grouping of leaves by doing an activity or drawing of leaves of various shapes, or description of leaves etc. These questions/activities she would assess and that data would be one kind of summative data of a unit/lesson. Such assessment of data must be recorded by the teacher. Likewise in one quarter, she/he would cover 7-8 lessons/topics and in this manner she/he would have substantial data covering varied aspects of child behaviour. It would provide data when child was working in group situation, doing paper-pencil test, drawing pictures, picture reading, oral expression, composing poem/song, etc. These data would give the 'comprehensive'

picture of child's learning and development. The assessment of this data, in one quarter, teacher would easily make out whether a —

- child is sdoing activities/tests/oral work as per the expectation of that level/class (you can keep these children as 'A' group);
- child is doing well but need some support to reach the expected level (you can keep these children as 'B' group of learning);
- child needs lot of support (you can keep children as 'C' group children) from adults and peer for the expected learning.

Thus, while reporting the child's progress in the report card, one should write the remarks, which would communicate what are the strengths of a child. These could be given subject-wise along with other personal-social qualities that you have observed during one quarter in different learning situations.

The reporting should also communicate the learning gaps for further improving the learning. This is a 'Comprehensive Evaluation' of child's progress. We have seen that this evaluation is based on valid and reliable assessment data. Here, we would like to tell from this package is that there should not be lengthy formats for recording the data by the teacher. We should give freedom to our teachers to keep record of such data. Portfolio is one of the important sources of compiling such data.

Process of CCE Implementation

What is observed across all schools is that during assessment the most commonly used methods are those developed by teachers themselves. Among these are paper-pencil tasks, written and oral tests, questions on pictures, simulated activities and conversations with children. Small class tests are used by most teachers as a quick and easy way of assessing the learning progress of children. These are generally conducted at the end of a unit/month. No doubt these are useful but they need to be used carefully. The kind of questions and items used should, as far as possible, not have pre-determined answers but be worded in ways so that children have space to generate and express individual thoughts and ideas in a variety of ways. Test items that promote thinking, creativity, analysis rather than only recall-based questions need to be included. Simply, items which provide the scope for a variety of responses from children should be included. In order to follow CCE as an in-built part, the following steps need to be followed by the teachers:

Step 1: Collecting Information and Evidence through Different Sources and Methods

Step 2: Recording of Information

Step 3: Making Sense of the Information Collected

Step 4: Reporting and Communicating Feedback on Assessment

Step 1: Collecting Information and Evidence through Different Sources and Methods

We know that every child learns differently and that learning does not take place only in schools. In that case we need to do two things while assessing children:

- firstly, to collect information from a *variety of sources*
- secondly, to use different *ways of assessment* in order to know and understand whether each child is actually learning while going through a variety of experiences, activities and learning tasks.

Sources of Information/feedback: Since assessment is part of the teaching-learning process, children themselves can and also need to play an important role in assessing their own learning and progress. Teachers can help children assess themselves by enabling them to develop a better understanding of what is required of them through experiences designed to involve them in critically looking at their own work and performance. The picture/profile of a child's progress will be more complete if teachers interact with and involve other persons such as:

- parents
- child's friends/peer group
- other teachers
- community members/elders

Methods of Assessment: There is a wide choice of methods or *tools and* techniques. These could be: observation assignments, projects, portfolios, anecdotal records, written tests, etc. Let us now consider why different methods need to be used? This is because:

- learning in different subject areas and aspects of development need to be assessed;
- children need to be given an opportunity as they may respond better to one method as compared to another;
- each method contributes in its own way to the teacher's understanding of children's learning;
- no single assessment tool or method is capable of providing information about a child's progress and learning in different areas of development.

There could be four basic methods of organising assessments, namely:

1. *Individual assessment* which focuses on each child while she/he is doing an individual activity or task and on its accomplishments?

2. *Group assessment* which focuses on the learning and progress of a group of children working on a task together with the objective of completing it? This method of organisation is found to be more useful in order to assess social skills, cooperative learning and other value-related dimensions of a child's behaviour.

3. *Peer assessment* refers to children assessing each other. This can be conducted in pairs or in groups.

4. *Self-assessment* refers to the child's own assessment of her/his learning and progress.

Step 2: Recording of Information

In schools across the country, the most common form of recording is through the use of report cards. Most report cards carry information either in the form of marks or grades obtained by children in tests/examinations on quarterly basis. The crucial question that arises is what can be done to improve the process of recording. If the central purpose of continuous assessment is to find out the child's level of learning in a particular subject then it becomes necessary to make and record observations of the child while she/he is on the task or involved in an activity.

Classroom interaction provides a wide range of opportunities to make observations of a child's behaviour and learning. As you are aware some of the observations are made on a daily basis in an informal manner while teaching-learning is going on. Day-to-day observations are easily forgotten if not recorded. Still others are planned observations of children on activities given to them. This type of observation is planned with a purpose and is thus more formal in nature.

To provide a more complete picture of the child's learning and progress, the scope needs to be widened. Recording needs to include records of observations and comments on children's performance on assignments, ratings of what children do and how they behave and anecdotes or incidents of children's behaviour towards others.

Portfolio as a Record of a Child's Work

Portfolio is a collection of a child's work or activities. This may include projects, assignments, exercises, activities, written and oral tests, drawings and collection of materials, album preparation and other artifacts. This may be carried out over a period of time. Self-assessment of the child which involves reflection on the work done plays an important role in improving one's own interest, involvement and performance. The teacher also assesses the different types of activities carried out by the children and draws a profile of a child from the progress made by the child over a period of time. Work done by a child over the year can be compiled in a folder or in any suitable manner. Teachers can make innovative use of the walls of their classroom. With the help of children, they can paste newspapers on the walls and also make pockets on it. Every child can choose a pocket and write her name on it and slip her/his work in the pocket. This becomes her/his portfolio. As the school year progresses, the collection in the portfolio increases. These could be:

• Written work – worksheets, samples of creative writing, tests, papers, letter written by a child, reports of out-of school activities, etc.

> Portfolios should not contain only the best work but all kinds of work, to show the progress of a child over a entire period in respective classes. Such a collection shows the teachers and parents what the child has accomplished and various abilities of a child. It is a very useful tool for reporting of each child. At the end of every term, the teacher can study each child's portfolio and give specific and useful feedback to parents. The portfolio often helps parents to know more about their child-abilities and interests they may not have observed at home and helps them discuss these with the teacher.

- Art work – drawings (favourite flower, animals' fruit, etc.) of her/his choice, sample activities given by teacher.

- Craft work – like paper folding, paper cutting, greeting cards prepared by child.

- List of story books read by the child titled 'Books which I have read.'

- Collection of various things by a child such as leaves, pebbles, feathers, stamps, newspaper cuttings, etc.

- Diary entries by children, communicating their feelings and understanding in a fearless way.

- Self-assessment sheets on her/his own observations as also remarks in which she/he express what problems she/he still face.

Step 3: Making Sense of the Information Collected

Once information has been recorded, the third important aspect or the next step is using the available evidence to arrive at an understanding of what has been collected and recorded. What this results in is drawing conclusions about how a child is learning and progressing. This is necessary in order to understand 'where the child is' and 'what needs to be done to help the child'. All this will help teachers to reflect on their teaching practices, classroom management, and use of materials amongst other pedagogic aspects and improve on the same for the benefit of the learner. Proper interpretation would require identification of indicators to facilitate the process.

Indicators: A Frame of Reference

In order to make the analysis of observation subject-wise criteria needs to be evolved for this a set of indicators have been developed jointly by NCERT and MHRD. These need to be worked by teachers and draw substantively from the objectives of learning for the subject area as framed in the syllabus of NCERT at the primary level based on the NCF-2005. At the primary level, indicators have been developed for Hindi, English, Maths, EVS and Health and Physical Education, while at the upper primary stages these have been developed for Science and Mathematics subjects. These are given in the Source Books, developed by the NCERT.

Indicators should help in a number of ways by:

- focusing and understanding children's learning better on a continuum.
- providing a reference point for teachers' parents, children and others to understand the progress of every child in a simple way.
- providing a framework for feedback, monitoring and reporting progress about the child.

Step 4: Reporting and Communicating Feedback on Assessment

Generally across all schools information on assessment of a child's learning and progress is conveyed to both the child and parents through a Report Card. This is supposed to present a picture of a child's performance in different subjects in the form of marks/grades generally, based on tests/examinations conducted periodically in a school year.

There is no doubt that the assessments made by teachers and the records they keep are done so as to help them understand how much children have learnt, improve their teaching-learning processes and provide more meaningful learning opportunities/experiences to further enhance the learning of each child. In order to achieve the above, reporting needs to become more communicative, constructive and user-friendly. This would be possible if teachers reflect on what information they have with them

through their daily experiences and vis-à-vis the indicators in a specified area of learning.

(i) Reflection by the Teacher

Teacher's reflection will help in preparing the progress map, viz. a cumulative report that provides a clear picture of a child's progress over a given period of time. Only then can they meaningfully guide children's learning in the future and help them to progress from a lower level of understanding and skill acquisition to higher and more complex levels of learning. It will also help identify what is that the child finds difficult and address the gaps . It is through this feedback that changes can be made in the teaching-learning process.

Once the feedback is generated, the critical question that needs to be

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Report: Mapping the Progress of the child by

- assigning grades A,B,C in the subject areas. These grades will indicate the range within which the child's learning and performance lies in the three performance bands or levels.

    i.   Progress of learning as per expectation of that class.

    ii. Child is doing well but need support to reach the expected level.

    iii. Child needs lot of support

- using a collection of illustrations of a child's work to help

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> - understand at what level of learning she/he is.
> - providing qualitative statements about what and how the child is learning along with grades.
> - providing examples of the kind of work that has been done by the child.
> - highlighting the strengths and also those aspects requiring further improvement.

addressed is what a report that is made by the school-teacher should contain. It should provide a profile of the child's progress over a specified period of time. How can a child's progress be described? Let us consider how this can be done and what information needs to be included.

On preparing a report the teacher needs to communicate and share the feedback with the child and parents. This aspect is important and needs to be done carefully and in a constructive and positive manner.

(ii) Communicating Feedback on Assessment: Sharing with the Child

On a daily basis most teachers do provide informal feedback to the child while she/he is involved in a task/activity. Children also correct and improve themselves while observing the teacher or other children or while working in pairs or groups. The teacher needs to

- discuss with each child her/his work, what has been done well, not so well and what needs improvement.
- discuss with the child what kind of help the child needs.
- encourage the child to visit/see her/his portfolio and compare it with the present work with what was done before.
- share positive constructive comments while the child is working or on the work already done.
- encourage children to match her/his self-assessment with that of peers and teachers.

(iii) Sharing Child's Progress with Parents

Parents are likely to be the most interested in knowing how their child is 'doing' in school, what she/he has learnt, how is their child performing and what is the progress of their child over a given period of time. More often than not, teachers feel they have communicated effectively through comments made to parents such as 'can do better', 'good', 'poor', 'needs to put in more effort'. For a parent what do these statements mean? Do such statements provide any clear information of what their child can do or has learnt, etc. As a concerned and responsible teacher in order to enrich the feedback being communicated, it is suggested that feedback needs to be in simple and easily understood language on:

- What the child can do, is trying to do and finds difficult.
- What does a child like or not like to do.
- Qualitative statements and with samples of the child's work.
- How the child has learnt (processes) and where did she/he face difficulty.
- Whether she/he could complete the activity and his/her performance while doing so.

- Sharing the child's work with parents, to help indicate areas of success and improvement.
- Talking on aspects such as co-operation, responsibility, sensitivity towards others, interests, etc. with both the child and parents.
- Discuss with parents (a) how they can help, (b) what they have observed at home about the child.