



Teaching-learning and Assessment in the Classrooms: Reflections from National Achievement Survey: 2017

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Abstract:

NCERT conducted ever largest National Achievement Survey (NAS-2017) in key curricular areas at Classes III, V and VIII on 13th November, 2017 across 701 districts on sample basis. Data were collected from 1,20,000 schools, 2,20,000 teachers and 22 lakh children. Achievement test and questionnaires were administered on one single day across country. The test instruments of present NAS are competency based and linked to learning outcomes developed by NCERT. In the year 2017, the union government amended Rule 23(2) under the Right to Education (RTE) Act making it compulsory for all state governments to codify expected levels of learning which students in Classes I to VIII should achieve in different subjects. Through achievement test, data on learning outcomes were collected. Three questionnaires namely, pupil, teacher and school questionnaires were administered and data on background variables which are affecting the learning outcomes of children were collected. Post NAS Workshops for sharing District Report Cards (DRCs) & State Learning Reports (SLRs). to prepare district-wise differential education action plan to improve the performance of children were organized by respective State Council of Educational Research & Training (SCERT) and State Institute of Education (SIE) in collaboration with NCERT in 20 states during September, 2018 to March 2019. The present paper ponders light on how teachers assess children in the classroom based on evidences from NAS-2017 results in ten randomly selected Indian States/UTs i.e. Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Tripura, Andaman, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Nagaland and Telangana at the elementary stage.

Keywords: *Learning outcome, portfolio, student self assessment and self learning.*

1. Introduction

Assessment is an integral part of teaching-learning process. The primary purpose of teaching-learning process is to improve student's learning and develop expected skills class-wise and subject-wise. To ensure that teaching-learning process is productive and reliable, teachers need to adopt methods that are fair, transparent and equitable for all students, that is, they need to support all students including students with disabilities. Researchers have shown that different learners learn differently. Self assessment and self learning is one of those methods. Students' participation in making rubrics on self assessment is must. Until or unless students understand the criteria they are to be assessed in a task, they will not be able to assess themselves and improve upon. Research demonstrates that student achievement and motivation for learning increase when teachers integrate continuous formative assessments throughout instruction to provide high quality feedback to students (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Gardner, 2006; Hattie, 2016).. Research also demonstrates that student anxiety heightens and achievement gaps widen when teachers prioritize summative assessments and provide little descriptive feedback to

students (McDonald, 2001; Von Der Embse, Barterian, & Segool, 2013).. However, while previous research has identified the impact of teachers' assessment literacy (i.e., their capacity to negotiate assessment knowledge and skills in the context of their classroom teaching). on students and their learning Brown, 2004; Remesal, 2011; (DeLuca et al., 2018a DeLuca, Chapman-Chin, La- Pointe-McEwan, 2018a; Willis, Adie, & Klenowski, 2013; Wolf, Bixby, Glenn, & Gardner, 1991), few studies have explored why teachers approach assessment in particular ways. Classroom assessment has become a cornerstone in today's standards-based systems of education (Brookhart, 2011; Popham, 2013; Stobart, 2008).Recent policy developments throughout the United States, Canada, Europe and elsewhere, have emphasised classroom teachers' continuous integration of student assessments throughout instruction to support student learning (Birenbaum et al., 2015; DeLuca, 2012; Popham, 2004, 2013). These policies are predicated on research arguing the benefits of assessment-based teaching on student achievement (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Gardner, 2006; Taras, 2007), metacognitive abilities (Earl, 2003) motivation and positive self-perception (Harlen, 2006), and enhanced teacher instruction (Harrison, 2005; Lee & Wiliam, 2005; Willis, 2010).

2. The Context

In NAS 2017, students were assessed in Reading; Mathematics and Environmental studies in Classes III and V and in Class VIII, students were assessed in Reading, Mathematics, Science and Social Science. As part of the effective test design, two test forms in each of the classes were developed. In Class III, test forms 31 and 32, Class V test form 51 and 52 and in Class VIII test form 81 and 82 were developed to accommodate more measurement points. While each of the test forms for classes III and V consisted of 45 questions each; Class VIII test forms consisted of 60 questions each. Every question on each form assesses student's attainment of learning outcomes (LO). The present NAS generated detailed report at the district level on the percentage of students achieving these learning outcomes. Within a subject tested e.g. language, a District Report Card (DRC). shows the district's performance on all LOs tested for a subject, across both the forms. DRCs give in detail the performance of the Districts in the different Learning Outcomes (LOs). This is helping the districts to develop evidence based action plans for improving the learning levels of students. The learning outcome oriented assessment is not only helping in shifting the focus of student learning from content to competencies. It is also helping the teachers to divert their teaching-learning in the desired manner and make responsible and alert for ensuring quality education of other stakeholders especially the parents/guardians, School Management Committee (SMC) members, community and the state functionaries. The learning outcomes defined explicitly are helping to guide and ensure the responsibility and accountability of different stakeholders. Besides State Learning Report (SLR) highlights the low and high performing Learning Outcomes subject wise and class wise including background variables which affect the learning of students in a state.

3. Reflections from NAS 2017 Results

State Learning Report (SLR) highlights the low and high performing Learning Outcomes subject wise and class wise in a state. Besides it presents participation of teachers, students and schools, average achievement by classes and subjects, distribution of students' achievement by classes and subjects and performance by gender, school location, school management and social groups in government and government aided schools. It also ponders light on what children say about schools, what teachers responded, how teachers assess children in the classroom, what teachers say about parent's involvement and what the Head teacher responded including average performance of the district, performance of the state in Learning Outcomes. The results on how teachers assess children in the classroom are shown in the given table 1:

Table 1: How do teachers assess children in the classroom?

Student self assessment

State	Never State (in%)	For some lessons (in %)	Almost every lesson (in %)
Uttar Pradesh	13	48	39
Jammu and Kashmir	12	53	35
Tripura	10	56	34
Andaman	04	64	32
Chhattisgarh	06	47	47
Gujarat	04	29	67
Andhra Pradesh	04	33	63
Bihar	08	48	44
Nagaland	12	65	23
Telangana	04	34	62

Source: State Learning Reports of the above mentioned states available on NCERT www.ncert.nic.in

It is reflected from the above table that 8% teachers of 10 states said that they never used self assessment, 48% used it for some lessons and 44% teacher used for almost every lesson. But how they assess students using student self assessment method in the classroom, how children assess themselves and do self learning, it is not clear from the survey findings. Whether students participated in the process of making rubric on self assessment or teacher herself prepared and used it. The process which is very crucial is not reflected from the survey findings.

4. Suggestions for NAS 2020

Self assessment is important method which can be used for improving the learning levels of students if it is used involving students in making of rubric on student self assessment so that students may be aware of the criteria on which they are to be assessed, they will prepare themselves and self learn accordingly and thereby it will improve the learning levels of students. The rubric on student self assessment may differ from subject to subject and type of questions. If essay type question is asked in History, rubric for student self assessment may differ from Geography as the criteria for the self assessment may differ subject wise. Questions in SLR may be asked related with the process of the self-assessment, and then only we will be able to get the idea about how the teachers are using student self-assessment method in the classroom to improve the learning levels of the students.

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