

## CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT FOR ENHANCEMENT OF QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

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### Continuous Assessment for Enhancement of Quality of Higher Education.

Continuous Assessment is a mechanism whereby the final grading of learner in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of learning systematically takes account of all their performance during a given period of schooling.

Assessment in the cognitive domain is associated with the process of knowledge and understanding. The affective domain applies to characteristics such as attitudes, motives, interests and other personality traits. Assessment in the psychomotor domain involves assessing the learners' ability to use his or her hands.

Airasian (1991) describes continuous assessment as an assessment approach which should depict the full range of sources and methods teacher use together, interpret and synthesize information what learners information that is used to help teachers understand their learners plan and monitor instruction and establish a viable classroom culture.

Baker opinions that continuous assessment should involve a formal assessment of learner affective characteristics and motivation, in which they will need to demonstrate their commitment to task over time, their work-force readiness and their competence in team or group performance contexts.

From above definitions continuous assessment involves-----

- 1) The use of a variety of assessment instruments.
- 2) Assessment of various component of learning.
- 3) Takes place a longer period of time.
- 4) Is more holistic.
- 5) Begins with decision that teacher executes on 1<sup>st</sup> day.
- 6) Terminates with decision that teacher make on learners grading and promotion.

**Why Continuous Assessment.****I) Nature of Assessment.**

Traditional assessment covers much less of portion to be evaluated as against continuous one so Sample Validity is low due to chance factors detrimental to some or beneficial to some. Long term evaluation is less reliable; subjectivity of examiner plays a bigger role because it occurs only once.

**II) Variety**

End term evaluation cannot examine many skills while continuous evaluation covers more skills, hence is more valid. Entire Curriculum is examined. No scope of shortcuts, guides Keys and guess papers.

**II: Benefits of Assessment.**

Continuous internal assessment effect the study habit of students because of constant feedback to student. Continuous internal evaluation is guidance oriented. It plays a vital role in diagnosing and remediating areas of weakness of learners. Better ones can be recruited to next programme, dullard ones can make up deficiency. It encourages more teacher participation and hence they are able to integrate assessment and it results into instructional practice.

**III: Purpose of Assessment.**

Rowntree (1977) suggests the following purpose of assessment.

- 1) Selection
- 2) Maintaining Standards
- 3) Motivation of Students.
- 4) Feedback to Students.
- 5) Feedback to Teachers.
- 6) Preparation to Life.

Purpose 3 and 4 affect learning directly, 5<sup>th</sup> one affects instruction. In one terminal assessment, feedback to students does not serve much to purpose, it is too late and he has already gained or lost at the end. In continuous assessment, if he is going to lose, he gets to know it and he can correct himself. Similarly, during the year assessment of learner can motivated him, if he performs well, can inform to make it up if he does not.

Year end evaluations do not do any good to instruction of teacher which can benefit

student of concerned year. Purpose 1 and 2 are different. Selection to next program or for vocation on the basis of one religious score with Sanctity which year-end assessment confers upon a student is unjustified. Some lose and some benefit impropportionally. There is no time to improve.

Standards as such does not affect learning, it does provide benchmarks which direct teaching, learning process. This objective is also better served by continuous assessment as put against one terminal assessment. Feedback helps to maintain standards better when it is continuous.

#### IV Assessment on a Larger Canvas.

Considering following aspects.

- 1) Accountability
- 2) Preparation for life.
- 3) License to practice a profession.
- 4) Discourage cheating.

#### Accountability:

Assessment reveals where do students stand. System and teacher are accountable to students, parents and society in one way or the other. One terminal assessment, since chance factor plays a big role does not really provide data for accountability. It can defeat the entire exercise, it does not justice to any section, student or teacher or system. Continuous evaluation provides more chance to students and teacher to prove themselves. Accountability criterion stands to benefit with continuous evaluation.

#### Preparation for Life:

Continuing assessment leads to continuing education and continued hard work which is important part of preparation for life. One learns many principles of life-‘hard work is rewarding’, ‘there are no short-cuts’. ‘It is satisfying to do your own work’. Assessment for learning ( Elton, 1987 ) also ratifies this concept.

#### License to Practice a Profession:

In fact, this point overlaps with selection/acquiring a degree certificate. After weighing, continuous assessment obtains a higher score to license a person to practice his profession, as against only one exam. Which could have been performed by way of memory or guess work. Continuous

assessment requires continuous hard work thus ensuring better learning for that profession.

### **Discourage Cheating.**

Chances of a student reaping the benefits of cheating are higher in one, end term evaluation. During continuous assessment, how many times will he cheat? Hence, some evaluations will be truthful and clean.

### **PROBLEMS OF CA**

I. Most problems are associated with teachers:

- (i) Deficient skills in test construction and administration: Variety of aspects to be measured hence varied instruments are required. We find all teachers are not equipped to create all sorts of instruments.
- (ii) Attitude: More work involved in CA, more tests, more marking. A laid back teacher can't do it.
- (iii) Record keeping: Continuous Assessment requires enormous work of record-keeping.
- (iv) Subjectivity/Prejudices: A teacher's prejudice against a student will really mar him since more assessment will damage more.
- (v) Time consuming.
- (vi) Collation: To bring a product/result one has to collate various kinds of information. Teacher requires skill which if she does not possess, it defeats the purpose of CA (Alausa, 2000).
- (vii) Since teachers are examiners, no yardstick to know exact standard of students. A common benchmark is required across a university, state, etc.

### **II. Student Related Problems**

They have to work constantly without wasting time, if they are used to terminal evaluation, it is difficult to introduce it.

### **MAKING CA MEANINGFUL**

Benefits of implementing CA, which are perceived as follows, are tempting to give it a fair chance.

- \* Learners are assessed using different and appropriate assessment methodologies and this provides a more valid assessment of the learner's performance.



- \* Assessment takes place in an authentic context. i.e. the learner is assessed in a realistic situation which is integral to the learning process.
- \* Assessment feeds immediately into the learning process, thus promoting the formative role of assessment.
- \* Judgment of the learner's performance (summative assessment) is carried out by the teacher who works intimately with the learner.
- \* Assessment is ongoing and therefore learners are compelled to work consistently and this contributes to promoting the culture of teaching and learning.

The shortage of resources both human and physical, to effectively monitor and support implementation of CA can prove a serious setback.

Steps which can be taken to make CA meaningful:

- (i) An action plan be chalked out by a teacher or team of teachers w.r.t. various curricular contents when they are to be assessed.
- (ii) A list of traits which need to be examined with various other methods, e.g. questioning skills, punctuality.
- (iii) Standards must be written, made transparent and must be set prior to teaching, learning and assessing.
- (iv) Which type of tests to assess which curricular contents must be spelt out prior to starting, e.g. non-verbal communication will be tested better by enacting rather than theoretically.
- (v) CA will work only if it contributes to the final degree/ diploma. Students rarely, if ever, put their best into work which 'does not count towards the degree' (Elton and Laurillard (1979)). One way to reduce constant pressure of work is not to mark two deadlines. One for practice, one actual. Another is that some assignments are not marked but the basis is pass/fail only.

Implementation of CA requires autonomy for the teacher. An innovative teacher may want to execute a particular assessment differently. Qualitative information needs to be collated differently. If university system is rigid and does not permit that, CA will lose its meaning. We all can devise different methods of CA but constantly guard it against the pitfall, most of all our own attitude of insincerity. Every teacher handles the subject differently hence assessment style is different but one can introduce innovations.

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