

SCHOOL BASED ASSESSMENT: AS AN INNOVATION IN INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Abstract

Assessment is an inseparable part of the educational process. To bring out the holistic development of the child, the assessment process should focus on both scholastic and co-scholastic areas of development. Assessment includes a full range of procedures used to gather information on students learning and also gives feedback for further improvement. School-based Assessment makes assessment more continuous and comprehensive, enables teachers to know the strengths and weaknesses of learners, and helps teachers to improve their teaching strategies. This theoretical paper explores the significance of school-based assessment in the teaching-learning process. A comprehensive literature review examines the concept of school-based assessment, its features, and its objectives in the education process. The paper also highlights the rationale and benefits of school-based assessment. This paper suggested that proper orientation and training for the appropriate implementation of the assessment system are required and also various workshops, seminars, and training sessions should be regularly organized in the school to acquaint teachers with school-based assessment.

Keywords- *Assessment, School-based assessment, formative assessment, continuous and comprehensive assessment*

Introduction

Assessment is a very powerful weapon that ensures the quality of education. It is a process for obtaining information that is used to decide on students, curriculum, and educational programs (Yidana & Boadu, 2011). Assessment in education is the process of collecting, interpreting, recording, and using information about pupils' responses to an educational task (Boadu, 2015). Assessment is a powerful tool to enhance learning, depending on how it is implemented. It is

used to monitor the quality of the educational process, assess educational policies and programs, certify students' learning performance, and review the educational system (Akinsola,2007). Assessment provides relevant feedback on students' learning outcomes and influences the improvement of the learning. It helps students to be involved in their progress, enables them to monitor their performance, and also provides feedback to their parents (Ghazali,2016). The role of assessment in any educational system is very important because it guides a teacher in choosing learning tasks and approaches to optimize the use of those tasks. Educational assessment includes gathering information to make decisions about learners and also educational policies and programs. There are various ways of collecting information for assessment. Some of these include tests/quizzes, assignments, homework, project, and laboratory work (Yidana,2011).

Concept of School-Based Assessment

Assessment is a procedure used to obtain information about student learning, such as testing and observations of performance (Miller, Linn, and Gronlund,2013). Assessment is the practice of gathering, reviewing, and using information about educational programs systematically to improve student learning and improvement (Yidana & Boadu,2011) The assessment is considered as a systematic basis for making inferences about students' achievements (Boadu,2015). It is also about making judgments, identifying students' strengths and weaknesses, as well as right or wrong for an educational program, and it is more than giving marks/grades, these are also part of the assessment. To ensure the effectiveness of the assessment process, teachers are encouraged to use varied modes and techniques of assessment while focusing on the rationale of the assessment.

School-Based Assessment (SBA) is a holistic assessment system conducted in the school by subject teachers to assess the students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of knowledge. SBA could be summative, performance, formative, authentic, and so on. The main aim of SBA is to provide continuous feedback to both the learners and also teachers concerning the teaching and learning process (Alonge, 2007). The National Education Policy 2020 highlights "TRANSFORMING ASSESSMENT FOR STUDENT DEVELOPMENT" wherein it is envisaged that the purpose of assessment in the culture of our schooling system will shift from one that is summative and primarily tests rote memorization to one that is more regular and formative, is more competency-based, promotes learning and development of our students, and tests higher-order competency, such as analysis, synthesis, conceptual clarity, critical thinking, creative thinking etc.

SBA provides a reliable indicator of student learning, while also contributing feedback for future learning (Brown, 2011). Feedback is a ‘continuous, ongoing, and interactive’ process (Kouritzin & Vizard, 1999) that involves multiple sources (teachers, parents, peers, friends, and so on) and a variety of forms (visual, written, and oral). The different modes of feedback can have a significant impact on the ways students learn, especially if the feedback has connections to different cognitive processes. The introduction of SBA creates a new environment of learning among students. The main purpose of introducing SBA is to improve the validity of assessments among learners. Under the School Assessment model, teachers play a greater role in designing quality assessments that align with the learning outcomes as they are the most suitable people to assess their students and they have a better understanding of the context of the subject matter (Ghazali, 2017). Thus, teachers should develop effective assessment strategies to enhance the learning for students with different abilities (Awoyemi, 2005).

Rationale of School-Based Assessment: The following is the rationale highlighted by Kapambwe (2010), Arumugham (2016) & Williamson (2017).

1. To continuously assess students in a pressure-free environment
2. To reduce dependence on one public examination
3. To improve the reliability of assessment by having more than one assessment by a teacher who is familiar with multiple collections of tests for judgment
4. To reflect the standard and ability of students
5. To foster teaching and learning
6. To enhance learner’s autonomy and independent learning
7. To empower teachers to make part of the assessment mechanism
8. It allows the teachers to give immediate and constructive feedback to students.
9. Promote professional development: it builds teacher assessment skills, which can be transferred to other areas of the curriculum.
10. To remove exam phobia from the students

A framework to improve the quality of the education system to be prepared which would focus on bringing in its ambit school leaders, administrators, teachers, and the whole network of officials at blocks, and clusters. DIETs, CTEs, SCERT, and the Directorates of Education in different States and also UTs.

Features of the School-Based Assessment: Features of the School-Based Assessment are:

- It is a decentralized process where the test paper preparation will be done at the district level for that the training will be given by NCERT and the test will be administered at the school level.
- Non-standardized assessment should be used to delink to the individual learning styles of each learner. Give priority to portfolio, rubric, self, and peer assessment, used in integration with teacher assessment.
- Assessment of social qualities with cognitive competencies will be encouraged.
- A relevant and constructive feedback mechanism will be built allowing the teacher to give immediate and constructive feedback to students.
- School-based Assessment should be monitored at the Cluster, District, State, and National levels.
- Guidelines, handbooks, e-books, videos, and e-learning materials will be developed for the administration of SBA and also shared with the States and UTs.
- School Based Assessment would involve in its framework ‘a whole school approach’ which involves the participation of the community in the learning process. Students’ progress would be discussed with the parents and shared with the SMCs and suggestions would be sought.

In implementing the SBA, the emphasis will be on on-site mentoring by the Cluster Resource Centre Coordinator (CRCC). The CRCCs would support the teachers regularly. Teachers should be encouraged to take part in quality circles within the clusters. In light of these changes, the teachers must understand the **salient features of the SBA**, which are:

- Integrate teaching-learning and assessment
- Child-centred and activity-based pedagogy
- Focus on competency development of learner rather than content memorization
- Promotes higher-order thinking skills
- Enhancing the scope of assessment by way of including self-assessment, peer-assessment besides teacher assessment
- Non-threatening, stress-free, and enhanced participation/interaction
- Focus on assessment of learning/ for learning and as learning rather than evaluation of results.
- Enhancing self-confidence among children

Objectives of School-Based Assessment

- The School Based Assessment has three main objectives: i) Assessment of learning (informs parents and societies about the school and students' curriculum-related ability); ii) Assessment for learning (enables teachers to determine steps to improve students' learning experience); and iii) Assessment as learning (allows students to control and self-assess their learning) (Gronlund, and Linn,2013).
- In School-based assessment, formative and summative assessments can be integrated through the teaching and learning process, which can be achieved by using various modes of assessment such as portfolios, assignments, projects, and written tests (Davison,2010).
- The implementation of School Based Assessment is organized in that way to encourage self-empowering learning among students (Ministry of Malaysia,2012). Another important aspect of the school-based assessment model is that it apportions teachers' teaching strategies into three main components: teaching, learning, and assessment which complement each other to achieve optimum outcomes.
- There is a link between School- Based Assessment and continuous assessment, which is a type of assessment where the evaluation process is implemented from time to time, involving certain activities to measure the content of the lessons learned by students (Williamson,2017).
- The present assessment system has provided the opportunity to assess and reassess the learner and give proper feedback to the students during the academic session because continuous assessment and feedback improve students' learning. (Mufeed,2018)
- The workload on teachers has increased but they are willing to carry this workload because they realize that it is important to understand the skills, interests, problems, abilities, difficulties, and views of the learners.
- The present system of assessment in schools is also helpful for students well; according to them, it enhances their higher-order thinking skills such as creative thinking, reflective thinking, and critical thinking.
- Assessment in the school context includes information about students learning. These procedures are paper-pencil tests, observation, rating scales, and checklists, this variety of procedures is used to gather information about students' learning achievement.
- School-based Comprehensive assessment System should be established to minimize stress on students, make the evaluation process more comprehensive continuous and,

provide scope to the teacher for innovative and creative teaching, provide a tool for diagnosis and remedial plan of action, and produce learners with greater skills and competencies. (National Curriculum Framework, 2005).

- The purpose of the school-based assessment is to empower teachers to improve the levels of learning of the students. It is a type of decentralized test where the relevant feedback mechanism will be inbuilt allowing the teacher to give immediate and constructive feedback to students.

Need and importance of School-based assessment

- School-based assessment, integrating teaching, learning, and assessment, creates a child-friendly environment of assessment involving students, teachers, and parents for improving performance by providing constructive feedback.
- It is a formative assessment technique and its purpose is not to record and report the results of the students by replacing summative assessment but to empower the school and the teacher. It uses different assessment strategies that connect teaching, learning, and assessment to real-life situations and provides a better way to assess and feedback on activities, presentations, surveys, demonstrations, role plays, project works, assignments, etc. in such a way that the learner never feel that her/his performance is being assessed.
- School Based Assessment also increases the consistency of assessment where multiple forms of assessment can be used rather than depending on only one examination as well as to provide more reliable evidence of a picture of students; abilities. In addition, applying SBA emphasizes student-centered learning as well as reduces the examination pressure.
- The SBA system is used to capture and recognize student's achievements in the school system. In this assessment, teachers are given a greater responsibility to design quality assessments that align with the learning outcomes as they are the most suitable people to assess their students.
- This provides scope for teachers to continuously monitor their students and to give constructive feedback to improve students' learning abilities. In this assessment process, teachers can use various forms of assessment such as assignments, open-book tests, explorations, presentations, group activities, concept maps, projects, seminars, quizzes, portfolios, and role plays, (National Institute of Education, 1997).

- School-based assessment helps teachers find out what students are learning and how they are learning (Sidhu, Sarjit & Chan, 2011)
- The inclusion of School-Based Assessment in the education process means that teachers have to accept formative assessment as an innovative way of assessing students' performance and their role is no longer merely as teachers to teach but also as ongoing assessors (Hegender, 2010).
- Teachers' understanding plays an important role in the implementation process and there exists a significant relationship between teachers' understanding and their classroom teaching and learning practices (Popham,2011). Teachers have to know that the foundation of school-based is all students are capable of achieving the learning objectives.
- Teachers also need to know the importance of continuous feedback so that each student has a chance to improve his/her performance. SBA is more on curriculum change. It is an innovative and new way of teaching and learning. In School Based Assessment system, teachers need to use a variety of methods and techniques in teaching. (Arumugham,2016).
- School-Based Assessment is an assessment of a holistic assessment of the cognitive (intellectual), affective (emotional and spiritual), and psychomotor (physical) aspects of knowledge. School-Based Assessment is aimed to improve the quality of assessment and evaluation in the existing education system.
- Among the goals of School Based Assessment is to get an overview of the performance of a student in learning, assess the activities carried out during the teaching and learning processes, continuous information about teaching and learning as well plan and repair the teaching and learning process (Ojo & Gbinigie, 2009).
- According to Abdullah et. Al. (2015) while performing the assessment, teachers are changing teaching strategies and focus to improve the achievement of students, if there are still disciples who have not reached the level that has been set. Assessment is not a test but a process (Popham,2008).
- This assessment is a process for teachers and students to acquire greater knowledge which is just absorbed and reproduced during the examination. This also reflects the teacher's work in various ways before pupils are assessed to get good performance. Among the regular practices in the assessment of teachers is to evaluate what students have mastered to give feedback to them. This practice is one of the best assessment

practices recommended in the study by Popham (2008), and it provides feedback to help students improve their learning.

Benefits of school-based assessment

Benefits of school-based assessment Many experts outline the benefits of using SBA.

- The Ministry of Education (2007) indicated that SBA reduces teachers' workload on assessment by sixty-four percent.
- School-based assessment makes assessment more continuous and comprehensive, enables teachers to know the strengths and weaknesses of learners, helps teachers to improve their teaching methodology, and provides immediate feedback to the students for further improvement. (Popham, 2008)
- It gives us the platform to use a broad range of assessment techniques to assess our students. The teacher may use tests, quizzes, class exercises, and projects.
- It helps to know the students well, those who are very good and those who are weak in the study. After the assessment, the teacher should give feedback. It also makes the students to be serious about their studies (Popham, 2008).
- The present school-based assessment system has reduced rote memorization, students are satisfied with the grading system of evaluation, it gives satisfactory results and the formative assessment reduces fear of examination among them. (Hegender, 2010).
- Teachers are using easier methods to assess students who increase their self-confidence; students feel that the teachers assess them precisely because teachers can find students' strengths and weaknesses well with the help of the currently implemented assessment system in the schools (Mufeed,2018).
- Peer assessment is another bright aspect of the current assessment system; students felt that getting feedback from peers is easier than getting feedback from teachers, parents, principals, etc. (Hegender, 2010).
- Students are more open to their peers than to teachers and their parents and they grow more cohesive relationships among peers with the help of this assessment. (Mufeed,2018).
- Hence, teachers must take benefit of this opportunity to continuously provide constructive feedback and monitor the academic achievements and abilities of their students. (Brown,2001). Quizzes, questioning sessions, short essay writing, home assignments, and role-play can be used to assess students' performance. (Davison,2010).

The drawbacks of the present assessment system are that current school-based assessment practices reduce the examination fear from students and students are not taking examinations so seriously, students are also not making sincere efforts to study the contents and solve problems. Proper orientation and adequate training for the appropriate implementation of the assessment system are required; also suggested that various workshops, seminars, symposiums, and training programs should be regularly organized on the school campus to keep teachers updated. (Mufeed,2018).

Conclusion

It was realized from the above analysis that School Based Assessment plays a vital role in the teaching-learning process. It enhances the efficiency of instructional strategies, makes assessment more regular and comprehensive, also provides feedback to improve instructional strategies, standardizes the assessment practices, provides teachers with proper guidelines for constructing assessment items, provides guidance in grading assessment tasks, motivates students to learn at their own pace, and prepares students for external examination. It also requires active participation and involvement of students with give priority on learning rather than marking and grading. The stakeholders such as School Management Committees and Parent and Teachers' Association should collaborate with school authorities to ensure the effectiveness of school-based assessment.

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