



## **EXAMINATION REFORMS: PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT AS A TOOL OF PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

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### **Abstract**

*Our entire education system is centered on examinations. In the present Evaluation system we conduct the examination and give marks and ranks to students. Student's knowledge is often limited to memorization and reproducing the same in the examinations. Each student has its own innate talents which are not recognized; instead their capability in writing examination is being tested. It is restricted to only by – rote memory. The present day examinations are only testing the memory power of the students. The examination should be designed in such way that they should measure the higher order skills of learning, like analysis synthesis and problem solving.*

*The examinations are mechanical in nature so it is a work of correcting and posting of the marks routinely. There is no scope for diagnostic and remedial teaching. This type of testing is not able to know how far a student is lagging behind. These Examinations are not helping the teacher in assessing the all-round development of the student. The all round development means to develop co-curricular, social, personal qualities and health status. It is also not helping in testing their level of competency.*

*However, in constructive teaching, the process of gaining knowledge is viewed as being just as important as the product. Thus, assessment as per constructivism is based not only on tests, but also on observation of the student, the student's work, and the student's points of view. Portfolio assessment is one of the best methods of evaluation which is very popular forms of performance evaluation. The teachers will use it for understanding the learners learning ability and he will truly understand their students. The students are the products of significant instructional activity so the portfolios reflect contextualized learning and complex thinking skills. The decisions for constructing items for portfolio should be based on the purpose of the portfolio. If we take a right decision for item construction so it will prevent for becoming simply a folder of student work. Portfolio exists to make sense of students' work, to communicate about their work, and to relate the work to a larger context. They may be intended to motivate students, to promote learning through reflections and self-assessment, and to be used in evaluations of student's thinking and writing process.*

**Keywords:** *Examination, Evaluation, Portfolio, Constructivist Assessment*



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### **Introduction**

Our education system is universally criticized because it is examination centered rather than learning centered and there is lot of gap in examination process. Present examination system is criticized by the educationist for not keeping pace with the demand of the outside world. It is not scientific and comprehensive because it is not considering the practical skills required

for good adjustment and for its traditional methods of measurements. Government of India appoints many committees and commissions to address inherent problems of the examination system but due to our conventional thinking nothing fruitful has resulted in this direction.

The Examination reform has not been take place due to almost consistent consideration by various Committees' and Commissions which was appointed by the Government of India from time to time. The justification for examination reforms arises from academic considerations. Examinations along with teaching and learning, in fact, constitute the trinity of functions in the educational process. Examinations over the years have tended to be an instrument for testing memory. Learning has become a rather mechanic process of acquiring skills and teaching has been largely of coaching for examinations. There is intimate relationship between examinations and standards of teaching and learning. If we improve the examination system the other aspect will improve automatically and vice versa. Therefore, the examination reform is the need of the hour so we should make it an instrument of good education.

The Indian University Commission (1902) observed that the teaching in Indian education stood subordinated to examinations and not examination to teaching. The Hartog Committee (1929) deprecated academic bias of examinations at the school level, geared as they were to the needs of majority who died not have access to the University system and were to enter life. Similar criticism was voiced by the Sargent Plan 1944. The Radhakrishnan commission (1948) pointed out that examination reform was a matter of very high priority in education reforms as a whole. The Mudaliar Commission (1952-53) made elaborate recommendations on examination reforms and called for reduction in the number of external examinations, conduct of objective tests, assessment of attainments of the students through a proper system of school records, weightage for in-school tests, symbolic rather than numerical marking for purpose of evaluation and grading etc. The Education Commission (1664-66) considered the question of examination reform at all stages of education and called for evaluation being constructed as a means to assess learner development on an objective basis. The CABE Committee on Examination Reform (1970) also made wide ranging recommendations. The National Policy on Education, 1986, envisaged evaluation as a continuous process so that the student would be helped to improve his level of achievement, as distinct from certification of the quality his performance at a given moment for improvement of quality of education. Specifically, it called for removal of subjectivity in examinations, de-emphasis of

memorization, continuous and comprehensive internal evaluation of scholastic and non-scholastic achievement of students, improvement in the conduct of examinations introduction of concomitant changes in instructional material and methodology, introduction of the semester system from the secondary stage in a phased manner and use of grades in the place of marks. The Programme of Action (POA) suggested several specific short-term and long-term measures for carrying out examination reform at the school level as well at the university level.

### **Reforms proposed in the examination system**

- Evaluation should be very comprehensive which should not be limited to examinations alone. Exams should include different types of academic activities such as student's displays, projects, seminar; hours spend in library, participation in symposium, collection of information and preparation of reports.
- The examination should be designed in such a way which reduces fear, stress to the student.
- Evaluation should be continuous and comprehensive. It should be based on understanding of the students and it should discourage the rote memory.
- The evaluation should develop the attitude among the students for construction of knowledge along with the teaching.
- The assessment should be based on day to day activities- Attending Library, Class room discussion, attendance, book issue from library.
- The examination should not be restricted/limited to writing but extended to assessment tools like observations. It should not only be teacher-based but also on peer groups and parents.
- The day to day teaching learning process depends on the exercise of the children. The teacher should make ensured student's participation in this teaching-learning process. The student's knowledge, level of understanding and their power of application skills should be assessed. Therefore the teachers can record this information in their teachers' diaries and manuals.
- The learning, evaluation and objectives are the most important part of education so they should have well co-ordination among each other. Students note books, their written exhibits and all their other objects should be treated as assessment tools. For self-evaluation of students, quality remarks check- list should be utilized. It is not

possible to test all the teaching items taught in the classroom. But only some important items must be checked comprehensively at random. After evaluation action plan should be prepared for improvement of the students.

### **Constructivist Assessment**

Traditionally, assessment in the classrooms is based on testing. In this style, it is important for the students to produce the correct answers. However, in constructivist teaching, the process of gaining knowledge is viewed as being just as important as the product. Thus, assessment is based not only on tests, but also on observation of the student, the student's work, and the student's points of view. Some assessment strategies include:

- Oral discussions: The teacher presents students with a "focus" questions and allows an open discussion on the topic.
- KWL (H) Chart (What we **know**, what we **want** to know, what we have **learned**, **how** we know it): This is a good assessment technique as it shows the teacher the progress of the student throughout the course of study.
- Mind Mapping: In this activity students will understand the topic, after it he will list down and categorize the concepts and ideas related to the topic.
- Hands on activities: This activity encourages the student to manipulate their environments or a particular learning tool. The Teachers can use a checklist and observation to assess student success with the particular material.
- Portfolio assessment is one of the most popular forms of performance evaluation. Portfolios are usually files or folders that contain collections of a students work, compiled over time. In first stage they were asked to do the some work in the areas of art and writing. The draft was prepared and revision will be done by the students, where works are in progress. The final products will be typically included to show the student progress. The use of it in other discipline such as mathematics and science. The teacher should track student's progress through portfolio assessments. Through portfolio assessment teacher will following a student's successes rather than failure.

Well designed portfolios contain work key on instructions tasks, thereby representing student accomplishment on significant curriculum goals. The teachers gain an opportunity to truly understand what their students are leaning. As products of significant instructional activities, portfolios reflect contextualized learning and complex thinking skills, not simply routine, low level cognitive activity. The questions or items should be included according to the need and

requirement and purpose of the portfolio, it should not be folder of students work. Portfolios exist to make sense of student's work, to communicate about their work, and to relate the work to a larger context. They may be intended to motivate students, to promote learning through reflection and self-assessment, and to be used in evaluations of student's thinking and writing processes. The content of portfolios should be prepared in such a way that can meet the specific needs of the student or subject area. The content or the subject matter in a portfolio should be organized from general to specific or in chronological order. This is facilitated by dating every component of the folder. The portfolio can further be organized by curriculum area or category of development.

Portfolios can be evaluated in two general ways, depending of the intended use of the scores. The most common way of evaluation is a criterion-based evaluation. Student progress is compared to a standard of performance consists with the teacher's curriculum, regardless of other student's performances. In second portfolio evaluation technique, teacher measures the individual student progress over a period of time. In this period of time teacher make an assessment of changes in student's skills or knowledge.

There are several techniques which can be used to access a portfolio. Either portfolio evaluation method can be put into operation by using rubrics (guidelines for scoring which state all of the dimensions being assessed). The rubric may be holistic and produce a single score, or it may be analytic and produce several scores to allow for evaluation of distinctive skills and knowledge. Holistic grading, often used with portfolio assessment, is based on an overall impression of the performance; the rater (evaluator) matches his or her impression with a point scale, generally focusing on specific aspects of the performance.

Either it is used holistically or analytically, the criteria of good scoring will clarify instructional goals for teachers and students, enhance fairness by informing students of exactly how they will be assessed, and help teachers to be accurate and unbiased in scoring. In portfolio evaluation teacher may include peer group and teacher conferencing as well as peer evaluation. Some teachers require that their students evaluate their conferencing as well as peer evaluation. Some teachers require that their students evaluate their own work as they compile their portfolios as a form of reflection and self monitoring.

There are, of course, some problems associated with portfolio assessment. One of the difficulties involves large scale assessment. Portfolios can be very time consuming and costly to evaluate, especially when compared to scan-able tests. Further, the reliability of the scoring

is an issue. In this type of evaluation a question arises that the students will get the same grade although the performance of the students evaluated by the different teachers and evaluated at two different point of time. It is well known fact that any form of assessment has some or other form of bias.

**Various solutions for the issues of fairness and reliability are suggested.**

- I. Some researches has found that using a small range of possible scores or grades (e.g. A,B,C,D and F) Or four point scale produce more reliable results than using a large range of scores (e.g. a 100 point scale) when evaluating performances. Also, some teachers incorporate holistic grading to evaluate their students. When based on predetermined criteria in this manner, reliability is increased.
- II. Another method of increasing fairness in portfolio assessment involves the use of multiple raters. Having another qualified teacher rate the portfolios helps to ensure that the initial scores given reflect the competence of the work.
- III. A third method for testing the reliability of the scoring is to re-score the portfolio after a set period of time, perhaps a few months, to compare the two sets of marks for consistency.

Bias, as previous noted, is also an issue of concern with the development and grading of portfolio tasks. To remove or minimize the bias, portfolio tasks can be discussed with maximum teachers who belong from different cultural, socio-economic backgrounds. It will be the responsibility of the teachers to follow the students who belong from their own background and assess their performance and reassess the fairness if significant differences are found.

The expectations for portfolio assessment are great. This type of assessment requires lot of time to develop, implement, and score portfolios. The teacher will need a lot of time for implementing it, if it will be implemented the teacher will get the positive consequences for both learning and teaching. Research has shown that such assessments can lead to increases in student skills, achievement, and motivation to learn.

**Conclusion**

Our entire education system is centered on examinations. Evaluation means the process of judging the quality, importance, value of something. Student's knowledge is often limited to by rote memorization and reproducing the same in the examinations. The innate talents are

not recognized; instead their capability in writing examination is being tested. It is restricted to only by-hearting/rote memory. The tests are taken under this examinations system emphasis has been given on testing of memory power of students. It is not testing and measuring the higher level of knowledge, understanding, analysis synthesis and problem solving.

The examinations are mechanic Correcting and posting marks is done routinely. The remedial teaching is one of the important tools for improving the quality of teaching and learning but in the present type of evaluation system there is no scope for remedial teaching. The present Examination is not helping in assessing the all-round development of the student. However, in constructive teaching, the process of gaining knowledge is viewed as being just as important as the product. Thus, assessment as per constructive is based not on tests, but also on observation of the students, the student's work and the student's pints of view. Portfolio assessment is one of the most popular firms of performances evaluation.

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