



Emerging Challenges before Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation: From a Teacher's Point of View

Pankaj Tiwari



After the announcement of demonetisation we saw the Reserve Bank of India changing the rules and directives on a continuous basis. Whatever the view taken by others on this, as a teacher in a school I could very well understand it. For the achievement of some specific goals, if I move ahead, and after some time feel that I need to change the old directives for achieving my goals, I immediately bring about the required changes. Then, observing the reactions of children, till the time the goal is reached, the children in the class and I continuously accept the changes required for that purpose. When I talk to colleagues, however, I feel that some of them believe that once given instructions should be followed to the last letter. They believe that they will set the goals and also show the way, for that is what they had done as students.

While talking to colleagues and their students, it comes out that there are two types of teachers around me. First are the ones who believe in first completing a lesson and then getting the students to memorise answers to questions at the end of the lesson in the traditional way. In arithmetic, such teachers take the students straight to the exercises and write the answers to some questions on the board even as they advise the students to memorise some formulae. The second type of teacher is the one who, as the discussion in the lesson moves ahead, prepares new questions in the class and presents new challenges for the children. If the challenge is a bit too tough for them, some examples of a similar kind (which may also be called 'hints') are presented before them and the dialogue moves forward. In the case of mathematics, such teachers move ahead from the daily life experiences, increase the confidence of children by giving very simple examples and then present the challenges in such a way that the children achieve their goal and yet don't even realise that they have done so.

While working on a mathematical concepts in school we often see that teachers who teach the subject pay more attention to questions likely to come in the examination question paper and advise the students to repeatedly prepare those select

questions and memorise the answers. In a few schools in Madhya Pradesh, a pilot project is being conducted on Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation. While talking to the Maths Teachers of these schools on a continuous basis, here are some points that have come to the fore.

In these schools, while working on a particular concept in Maths, the students took many examples that could not be called mathematical questions but they brought to light the uneasiness in their minds with relation to it. A teacher related that in Class III, there was a long discussion amongst the children the previous day on the topic of measurement of length. The next day an electrician had come to the class to install a ceiling fan and was to draw a wire from the electric board on the wall up to the fan in the ceiling. The children drew an outline of an obtuse angle on the room's floor and measured it with a scale and when this was discussed with the electrician, he was found to have liked this method of measurement. The children were happy to learn that in order to measure the length of the wire connecting the fan to the electric board, they did not have to take measurements between the two with the help of a ladder. As the children did this, their teachers were observing how some of the children were devising their own methods for the correct measurement and the rest of them were discussing the difficulties and problems involved. Some of them were drawing a line of the floor with the help of a chalk and supposing it to be the wire and some were measuring it with a wooden scale and calculating the required length of the wire. Two students suggested that a wire be placed on the line from one end to the other. This turned out to be a very interesting activity based on the discussion about measurement the previous day.

What happened in the class is a good example of some of the characteristics of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation, such as – preparing an environment for actual learning, evaluation of the ability to use subject-related knowledge in situations of daily life when required, and developing an understanding of the related concept even as one enjoys the process along with one's fellow-students.

During this process the teachers were constantly observing and thinking about how they could bring about positive changes in the nature of teaching in this class related to the concept of measurement. During assessment and evaluation through traditional methods, we usually see that marks are given to students in monthly tests on the basis of some select questions. This can be compared to a situation of children having been made to sit on the steps of a ladder on the basis of marks obtained by them. In the Grade system of evaluation one child would not be sitting on each step of the ladder, but we can consider them sitting on the steps of a staircase in a house, 2-4 children on a step, others on a step above or below them. In the CCE scheme of things, we see them as standing at different places on the ground and like players on a football-ground, changing their place constantly and in this process of change, a child is at times ahead and at others behind but whatever work all of them do, they are improving their understanding even as they take joy in it. This includes an environment that is free from rote-learning and fear. The atmosphere is joyous and a strengthening of understanding is inherent in the process.

In almost all the developed countries of the world, CCE is considered to be the best pattern for the complete development of a child's personality. In this, instead of putting all emphasis on the textbook, adequate attention is paid to an evaluation of all aspects of the development of the child's personality. There is a need for teachers to work very minutely in this. They need to be free of prejudices or pre-conceived notions, should have a positive approach, dedication to children and they have to be professionals interested in teaching. Even though a lot of emphasis is being placed on CCE at present, the mentality of the teachers supposed to transform it into a reality, however, does not seem to be one of accepting it very easily. There is, of course, a lack of commitment on the part of teachers but equally responsible for the

state of affairs today is the department that has not arranged comprehensive yet compact trainings of teachers. The teacher has been left alone after the bringing in of the wonderful pattern of CCE.

I believe that physical changes are visible immediately but changes at the level of the mental state are visible only after a long period of time. We show ourselves to be modern by having a smart phone but when a cat crosses our way, we start thinking about so many superstitious things and stop in our tracks. Similarly, a CCE Module – a modern concept - was given to the teachers, a few things were talked about in this context and it was thought that they will be able to do it all. The teachers too thought themselves to be updated but the implementers have not been able to mentally prepare themselves for this. Teachers will first have to be prepared psychologically to take the path of laying emphasis on learning and understanding rather than rote. For this right from those involved in policy-framing to implementing agencies and the institutions that provide academic support to teachers, will have to be prepared.

Some difficulties have also come to the fore after our continuous dialogue with teachers in schools implementing CCE. It is very important to discuss these issues. Visitors from outside, for instance, pass comments about the inadequate implementation of CCE and this upsets the teacher in the class. On observing the teacher sitting in a group with the children and talking to them or students writing on the blackboard, the visitors blame the teacher for being careless and the comments registered by them on the Inspection Register become a basis for those who come as visitors or for observation later. The observers who are somewhat liberal also give suggestions only in accordance with traditional methods of teaching and try to accord greater significance to external evaluation – because they do not have an adequate enough understanding of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation.

Pankaj is a Mathematics teacher at Government Urdu Higher Secondary School, Seoni, Madhya Pradesh. He has been working in the field of school education for the last two decades. Pankaj is associated with Rajya Shiksha Kendra (SCERT) Madhya Pradesh, where he contributes in writing and editing textbooks, training modules, evaluation system, material for activity-based learning and teaching-learning material. The government of Madhya Pradesh awarded him State level "Acharya Samman". Pankaj is one of the key members of the State resource group and associated with NCERT as a subject expert for developing training modules and short-term courses for mathematics teachers. He enjoys doing mathematics, organizing metric melas, working with children and playing football. Pankaj is a state level football referee and was a national level gymnastic player. He may be contacted at ptiwari740@gmail.com