

How & What Do We Assess? Assessment of Learning in Nepal

GMR on EFA, Oslo

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Content Outlines

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Traditions of Assessment in Nepal

- *Gurukul* traditions (Sanskrit and Buddhist Teachings) as the Bedrock of Nepal's Assessment System
- Centrality of Teacher – Source of Knowledge and Wisdom
- Deep rooted *habitus* manifested in pedagogical practices
- Focus on memorization, reproduction and learning by heart
- Satisfying the *Guru* and mastery of contents
- Intergenerational transmission of traditional wisdom
- Focus on forms, not on meaning or understanding
- Importation of Modern Education in 1854 – Durbar School (Royal School)
- Concept of Assessments introduced in Law (Education Act and Regulations)
- Introduced in Nepal's Educational Reform Agenda – EFA and Beyond
- Shifts in focus – from rote learning to creativity

Current Practices

- Basic Education: Introduction of Continuous Assessment System (CAS) teacher made portfolios
- Private and Public Schools: Continuing practices of grade-wise yearly examinations
- Level-wise External Examinations in grade 8, grade 10 (SLC) and grades 11/12
- University system follow yearly external exam practices
- Emphasis on textbook led paper-pen testing
- Testing as a tool to discipline students, building pressure on children and parents
- Learning and feedback functions compromised

Current Practices 2

- Assessment: gaps between principles and practices
- CDC Curricula define learning competencies for testing
- OCE conducts SLC examinations
- DoE responsible for delivery – DEOs, School Autonomy
- Legacy of British rule in India – 1835 Macaulay Minutes
- Pass and fail categories, hierarchies created
- Only 50% students succeed in SLC or post SLC Exams
- Nepal's immense diversity: geography, society, economy
- Female teachers' participation less than 40%
- Focus on reproduction, minimizing individual space, pace
- Efforts are being made to change exam oriented mindsets
- SSRP in implementation for change in school practices and culture of learning, move in the right direction

NASA Initiative

- Introduced National Assessment of Student Achievement, NASA in 2010
- NASA assessments aim at grades 3, 5 and 8 on a consecutive one year interval
- Grade 8 NASA 2011 results came out in 2013
- Nepali (49%), Mathematics (43%), and Social Studies (49%)
- Gaps seem to exist between individual students, between urban and rural, private and public, *dalits* and *non-dalits*, Nepali speaking and other language groups
- Girls and boys appear close in learning achievements
- Students performed poorly on high order skills, application
- Grades 3, 5 (2012) assessment reports to be out in 2014
- NASA findings utilized for systemic change and policy revisit
- Critical inputs received for change in teacher management

Assessment Indicators

- Major assessment indicators included –
 - (a) national level equity indicators, i.e. diversity among development regions, ecological zones, sexes, school type, school location, ethnicity
 - (b) process indicators relating to curricular contents and learning
 - (c) sociological indicators i.e. parents' education and occupation, educational materials available at home, etc.
- NASA's emphasis on measuring learning outcomes
- Combinations of knowledge, understanding and applications
- High order skills overshadowed by rote learning
- NASA employs Item Response Theory (IRT), making assessments comparable and connected with previous achievement levels

Nepal, EFA and GMR

- Nepal's NER reached 96% in primary schools
- Gender Parity achieved
- CBE Bill at final stage, Equity Strategy in place
- Community participation and engagement inspiring
- Challenges are - retention, success of girls, *dalits* and marginalized children (children with disability)
- Shifts in focus for Education for All (EFA) Goal Six on Quality and Learning
- EFA GMR 2014: Impetus to quality for all (attention at individual levels)
- Reprioritization of human and non-human capitals – worth of education for child
- EFA/ MDG goals end-line 2015 and Beyond
- GMR message for quality and learning – agenda for reshaping education

Investing More for Children's Learning

- Nepal needs greater partnership for improving quality
- More resource needed for children's learning
- In Nepal per year investment on a child is 200 USD,
- In OCED countries, including Norway, it is 8000 USD
- Funding gaps remain critical for EFA implementation
- Pool funding in SSRP SWAp facing resource crises
- Credible plans and reform agenda remain unfinished
- Benefits of bilateral engagements are crucial for Nepal
- Norway's presence in Ed adds value and shows solidarity
- Worth of Ed pool is to share knowledge, reach people
- Joint efforts needed to sustain gains, accelerate our pace
- Nepal's commitment to EFA is reassuring, DPs support vital

Setting Agenda for Learning

- DoE introduced 2013/14 as year for Learning, starting April 2013 (Nepal Academic Calendar)
- Individual appeal made to all School Principals and SMC Chairs for ensuring students' learning
- Research and innovation for generating knowledge
- Teachers' time on task, engaging children in creativity
- Training and technology to enhance teacher's capability and change their attitudes and behaviours
- Collective wisdom for placing children in the centre – redefining agenda for learning (Sen, combinations)
- EFA GMR 2014 comes with compelling reasons to refocus our priorities for children's learning to ensure our shared future.

Thank You