

Transforming the System of Assessment: Holistic Progress Card

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Introduction

Transformation of assessment for holistic student development is one of the key concerns of National Education Policy, 2020. The policy advocates for shift in assessment practices from rote memorization skills to regular and formative, competency-based assessment wherein more emphasis is given on promotion of learning and usage of testing higher order skills. One of the important recommendations of NEP, 2020 is restructuring of students' progress card. Para 4.35 of NEP, recommends that the progress card of all students for school-based assessment, which is communicated by schools to parents, need to be completely redesigned. The progress card will be a holistic, 360-degree, multidimensional report that reflects in great detail the progress as well as the uniqueness of each learner in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. It will include self-assessment and peer-assessment, and progress of the child in project-based and inquiry-based learning, quizzes, role-play, group work, portfolios, etc., along with teacher assessment. As part of the Shikshak Parv, the webinar on "Transforming the System of Assessment: Holistic Progress Card" was organized on 15 September 2020.

Session Highlights

The chairperson of the webinar, Shri Manoj Ahuja, Chairperson, CBSE gave his introductory remarks. He stated that assessment plays an important role in determining the kind of education we provide to our children, it regulates the classroom pedagogy, the way learning happens in our classrooms, and determines incentives for students and teachers. Highlighting the shift in assessment proposed in the NEP, 2020, he said that we need to have assessment moving away from rote memorization or top-down learning approach practices towards more joyful and participative assessment, for both students and teachers. He quoted para 4.35 of the NEP, 2020 and encouraged the viewers to reflect on the content.

Shri Ahuja elaborated on the concept of Holistic Progress Card (HPC) and its importance. According to him, the present system of assessment reflects only on the cognitive abilities of the child. Thus, other domains like affective and psychomotor aspects need to be reflected in the HPC. A teacher needs to assess the child without comparing the performance with other children in the classroom, should be non-judgmental and provide development feedback for the child's holistic growth. He reiterated that assessment must recognize the uniqueness of each child. He explained that HPC will be a collaborative effort wherein several stakeholders like parents, children, peer and teachers will be involved. In order to understand the expanded uniqueness of the child several stakeholders need to be involved for continuous exchange of ideas for its effective implementation. He remarked that we need to provide feedback to students in a positive way so that it can be beneficial for their proper progression.

Shri Ahuja further stated that it is a challenging task to transform the idea of HPC into practical reality, which is acceptable to all the stakeholders. He was optimistic that with the help of deliberations and from the enriching experiences of the teachers, HPC can be made a reality. He briefed the viewers about CBSE initiatives on HPC and shared that CBSE had developed a template that will undergo pilot testing and will be rolled out soon in CBSE affiliated schools. He then invited the co-chair of the webinar Dr. Kutty Krishnan, State Project Director, Samagra Shiksha, Kerala to give his opening remarks.

Dr. Krishnan discussed the aim of assessment as stated in the NEP, 2020 and the place of HPC in the phase of transformation of assessment scenario. He emphasized that assessment has to move away from rote memorization and from summative to formative. The assessment must be competency-based to promote learning and development of students. There is a need to provide more emphasis on higher order skills such as critical thinking and problem solving. He further stated that the aim of assessment is to get a clear idea of each child's learning, the way they are performing in different domains. He highlighted that the purpose of assessment is seeking authentic feedback, in the form of gathering comprehensive data on learning. He suggested that from this data schools can generate comprehensive reports to provide differentiated intervention to individual students and to the groups. Having information in all domains i.e. cognitive, affective and psychomotor, the HPC will provide true reflection of the learning progress of the

child. He added that HPC will include all social, cultural and academic aspects of the child's learning. This detailed analysis will not only identify gaps, but also provide assistance in identifying multiple dimensions of the institution such as engagement of students and teachers, dropout rate etc. Such engagement will enhance the sense of appreciation and happiness to the child.

Dr. Krishnan further, raised an important issue, and warned that the process of record keeping and documentation should not bring excessive pressure on teacher and student otherwise it may not yield desired results. The HPC should be considered as dynamic tool rather than a static display of performance. At the end of his remarks, he shared the practice of organizing *Kalolsavam* conducted for elementary classes (Grade I TO VII) in the state of Kerala. Here, in the last week of the academic year the students display their talent in varied areas and the attainment in several skills of learning for their holistic development.

Dr. Praggya Singh, Joint Secretary, CBSE as the presenter of the webinar elaborated on the theoretical foundation of Holistic Progress Card based on the recommendations of NEP, 2020. She also highlighted the practical aspects based on the assessment framework (template of HPC) designed by the collective efforts of various organizations like UNICEF, NCERT and several experts working in the area of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) for NIPUN Bharat initiative of Government of India. She highlighted the NEP mandate and process of assessment, especially the design of 360-degree multi-dimensional HPC and AI-based software to track the progress of the child's learning.

Dr. Singh defined HPC as a pedagogical tool to enable society to participate in a student's development and progress. She further stated that HPC is a process through which both the teachers and parents will equally participate for the student's achievement of competencies. While presenting arguments in favour of HPC she stated that this provides holistic progress of the child wherein grades and marks provide a limited one-sided picture of the assessment. She said that performance is never static and it has to be measured over a period, as done in HPC. She highlighted that HPC will provide feedback for the student, insights regarding the learner's

areas of interest as well as scope for improvements and track the progress of all round development of the learner.

Dr. Singh highlighted that HPC includes multiple forms of assessment tools having varying and flexible formats i.e., objective to descriptive visual, or any other format to assess all aspects of development in totality. She delineated the features of HPC, including participatory and learner centric approaches, inclusiveness, build on the principles of self-awareness and self-esteem, goal setting, flexibility, inter-disciplinarily and tracking of attaining competencies. She also shared the proposed structure of HPC, which has three sections namely, developmental goals and competencies, parent's feedback and portfolio (that will have accounts of child's progress in all activities to ascertain holistic development of the child). She further described the suggestive exemplar HPC based on the NIPUN Bharat Guidelines prepared for classes Pre-school to Grade 3 and jointly developed by the efforts of UNICEF, NCERT and FLN experts. She mentioned that the developed framework of HPC will be soon tried out in CBSE affiliated schools. Thereafter, schools may adopt / adapt this template as per their requirement, context, locality and priorities. She concluded her presentation by showcasing the cover page of the HPC, which provides opportunity to a child to reflect on himself/herself.

The first speaker of the webinar was Dr. Anju Kauwr Chazot, Founder and Director, Mahatma Gandhi International School, Ahmedabad. She made her presentation on "Co-creative experiential learning" which was based on her school's experiences and narratives. She initiated her presentation on HPC and its components by bringing in the concept of "*Ahimsa* in assessment". She shared her concern that across the globe, report card is linked with fear as they tend to carry negative feedback, where mistakes are punitive. She quoted Gandhi ji that "freedom is not worth having, if it does not include the freedom to make mistakes". She emphasized that joyful learning in classrooms includes assessment being joyful as well. Through illustrations, she beautifully captured the idea of working with hand and technology and thus focused on the diverse activities performed by the students for better learning. Using the analogy of a '*thali*' with diverse food for better health, she explained the importance of diverse assessment tasks with different preparations like poster making, quiz, board games, creative writing and role plays etc. for promoting holistic development.

Dr. Chazot discussed how interdisciplinary assessment can be carried out through real life projects. She shared the example where class 5 students were given an interdisciplinary project on creating an eco-friendly calendar on trees of India. Students had to project stories of trees, their medicinal properties and their importance in our lives. She narrated how several activities like collecting leaves, making handmade paper and printing, making manure out of collected leaves, packaging and marketing etc. were carried out for holistic development of the children. She explained the way several competencies can be assessed in different domains of learning through such interdisciplinary projects and the way these findings can be incorporated into the HPC.

Dr. Chazot narrated many instances wherein students got the opportunity to learn through experiences and self-reflection. One such example was given where the well-being of students was attained through art therapy and students were engaged in painting a tree to represent their 'Self'. They worked on the sub-conscious processes, self-reflection about aspirations, challenges and the shadow side of themselves. To mention a few other activities, there was reference to embodied learning (showing the life cycle of a tree through their bodies), calendar mathematics to enhance logical and numerical abilities in the formative process, designing of a brochure for fieldtrip, conduct of eco-friendly field trip, and as an art task (to create a final artwork of a leaf using embroidery and getting the opportunity to closely study the different venations in leaves). She described the manner in which art integrated learning can bring meaningful, joyful learning amongst children. She explained that the best part of this activity was formulation of a criteria to assess the brochure, which was co-constructed with students.

Dr. Chazot described the components of innovative HPC developed for her school where there was sufficient scope for self, peer and teacher's reflection on assessment, project summary, subject competencies covered under the project, tasks and feedback and finally component of initiator's synthesis. She also provided glimpses of some of the activities carried out during the COVID-19 period. Students were engaged in activities like mask making and they got ample opportunities to study their body and parts of their face, and worked with parents and family members. These activities ultimately lead to the adoption of diverse assessment practices and reporting criteria and are very significant components of HPC.

The next speaker Dr. Vasanti Thyagarajan, Founder of Sisya School, Hosur, Tamil Nadu highlighted several perspectives of Holistic Progress Card (HPC) from the practitioner's perspective. Describing several essential features of HPC, she said that there needs to be clarity of purpose of designing HPC; it must be based on supportive reflective practices and user-friendly data. For up scaling, it needs to be supported by guidelines for several stakeholders. She highlighted that HPC should be based on three 'Cs, namely, Collaboration, Choice and Cooperation. Based on the sample of HPC developed in her school, she elaborated on four major domains of HPC with examples that included: (i) Academic Initiated Development Experience (A.I.D.E) covering domain of scholastic and co-scholastic, (ii) Collaborative Initiative Development Experience (C.I.D.E) which includes cultural environmental and social pursuits etc., (iii) Wellness Initiative Development Experience (W.I.D.E) which includes physical fitness, diets, games and sports, yoga and meditation and, (iv) Self-Initiative Development Experience (S.I.D.E) covering domains like hobbies, job shadowing, careers and skills.

Dr. Thyagrajan stated that multidimensional assessment through the stakeholders like students, peer, teachers and family members need to be authentic in nature and supportive, predictive and decisive for the child. She also illustrated a graphic to capture the longitudinal assessment of children over the years in different domains, which is easy to use for teachers, even without high end-technology. She further described the process of development of HPC that includes six stages namely, design of card inputs from all stakeholders, orientation on how to gather evidences for inputs, collating inputs as evidences for entry into the HPC, preparation of the HPC, reflection/discussion on target and review of timelines and working on targets within timelines. She provided several examples related to plantation drive, street plays and community service to capture several aspects of an individual's personality. She elaborated how through these activities students were able to reflect on their strengths and limitations, which ultimately were part of HPC for seeking direction and for better learning. She emphasized the role of reflective practice in assessment and stated that reflection is an integral part of the learning process. These reflections also need to be part of the portfolio. She described several steps for management of portfolio and assessment of portfolio which is an important component of HPC.

The chairperson complimented the speaker for her presentation and highlighted some other aspects related to HPC. He reiterated the need and importance of HPC. He said it should not be

taken simply as one of the recommendations of NEP, 2020 or an instruction from the government but all the stakeholders must seek clarity about HPC.

The third speaker of the webinar Shri Pravinder Kumar, Principal, GSSSB School, NCT of Delhi provided the teacher's viewpoint on HPC. He started his presentation with a thought-provoking question that "*what are we teaching to our students?*" He stated that we are teaching our students to perform well in the exams and it is evident that the current assessment practices are not covering all the domains of learning. He said that the purpose of assessment is to improve the quality and evaluation helps to judge the quality. He highlighted the initiatives taken by Government of Delhi with respect to assessment practices aligned to the NEP, 2020. These initiatives include learning outcome aligned syllabus, learning outcomes based profiles of all the students, initiative of mentor teachers, capacity building of teachers as coordinators, national and international capacity building programmes for teachers and principals, initiatives of assessment unit, dedicated academic repository, mission *buniyaad* to strengthen National Mission for Foundational Literacy and Numeracy amongst students, dedicated primary branch for capacity building , academic support and coordination with primary teachers and initiatives of Happiness and *Deshbhakti* Curriculum.

Shri Kumar stressed upon several components of HPC which should be based on anecdotal record, learner's profile, portfolios and e-portfolios, observation records (written /audio or video). He focused on triangulation of data gathered by various stakeholders from time to time to give conclusive evidence to check stage readiness of a child and use of Learner Management System in generating HPC.

Question & Answer Session

In the question-answer session the chairperson, Shri Ahuja posed a question to the practitioners who had designed and rolled out HPC in their schools. He asked that if the practice of HPC has to be scaled up then what strategies need to be adopted. Dr. Chazot responded that in order to scale up HPC, there is a need to move away from textbooks as the only source of learning. There

have to be two to three activities in a year that are interdisciplinary in nature and project based. The activities must be set in the local context so that students are exposed to local issues like water crises, garbage disposal or simply writing an RTI and provide opportunities to search for solutions to these issues. She emphasized that in this manner problem solving can become learning, which in turn empowers students. According to her, competencies should be mapped around such projects. Children should be assessed through some given well-designed criteria.

In response to the question, Dr. Thyagarajan opined that in order to scale up the practice there is need to involve all the stakeholders for decision making. She emphasized that a complete orientation of the stakeholders is required for making the practice more credible and successful. Highlighting the process, she stated that all the teachers should clear the design first. Secondly, it has to be started small on pilot basis. She added that then there will be a departure from marks to remarks. Remarks have to be credible and acceptable to all and they should move from confusion to clarity.

Responding to the question on what is the main obstacle in implementing the innovative practice in schools and the way to overcome this obstacle, Shri Kumar stated that it is the mindset of stakeholders which he considers as a major obstacle. As a step in the right direction, in the last few years there has been an attempt to change the mindset of teachers by orienting them and by enhancing their capacity building.

Concluding Remarks

The chairperson, Shri Ahuja thanked all the speakers for their enriching presentations. He highlighted that there are several schools in the country already working in this direction. He stated that education system in our country is very huge and complex. Moreover, there are many interrelated factors involved in the proper roll out of HPC. He reiterated that thus there is a need to involve all the stakeholders so that they can interact with each other to know more about HPC, not in an instructional manner but in a way that will be useful for our students and empower them. He remarked that many good ideas came out of the discussion from the present webinar such as like *Ahimsa* in assessment and three Cs of assessment - compassion, collaboration and choice.

Shri Ahuja further stated that HPC will not serve the purpose of transforming the system of assessment alone; it has to align with the pedagogy. He reiterated the speakers' suggestions in this direction, such as interdisciplinary projects, connecting learning with real life, removing the binary of curricular and extra-curricular and linking learning with the competencies. He cautioned that the HPC should not be made as bureaucratic structure for mere collection of data. If assessment is not done in a desired manner, then it may lead to negative implications as stakeholders will be merely collecting assessment data for evidences and this may defeat the very purpose of assessment.

The Chairperson explained that when we are designing HPC it has to be done slowly and in a comprehensive manner involving all stakeholders. Pilot testing will provide us enriching experiences and with that, we must come out with the best strategy. He emphasized that the best indicator will be when schools will start demanding HPC. He ended his concluding remarks by saying that design and roll out of HPC is one of the major strategies mandated in the NEP, 2020 for transformation of assessment and this will be attained by working in a collaborative and collective manner.