

## **Empowering Teachers: Overcoming Challenges & Strategies for Holistic Assessment of Learners**

**PROF.V.VINAY KRISHNA**

**Associate Professor  
Christ College, Bhopal**

### **Abstract**

Teachers might use a diverse strategy that goes beyond typical testing to evaluate students' overall growth. It includes self-evaluation, project-based learning, learning through group activities, etc. In the current situation, a teacher's duties include more than just leading lessons and supervising exams; instead, they also serve as managers, event planners, counsellors, and, most significantly, documentation experts. This study is based on the types and levels of challenges faced by teachers, their strategies for overcoming such challenges, their involvement in Capacity Building Programmes and their assessment strategies for the holistic development of students. The researcher collected data from 115 teachers through a self-prepared questionnaire. Findings show that extra documentation is major challenge teachers are facing but with the collaborative efforts they are trying to make the assessment techniques effective for holistic development of students.

**Keywords:** Challenges, Professional Development, Holistic Assessment Strategies

---

### **Introduction**

Whether in schools or in higher education institutions, assessment is a crucial part of the teaching and learning process at all educational levels. Assessment is done for several reasons, including figuring out a student's level of academic success, identifying their academic areas of strength and weakness, and meeting entrance requirements for a university program.

A thorough grasp of a young student's learning preferences, strengths, and circumstances is necessary for a holistic approach to education. To get this insight, it makes use of holistic evaluations. (Singh et al., 2019)

To promote and foster the development of a compassionate perspective of the world, the holistic education idea takes into account teaching the full person in addition to fundamental academics and curriculum. The futures of kids can be shaped by teachers through comprehensive evaluations, learning, and other teaching techniques. In a partially integrated learning structure, educators try to satisfy the social, ethical, and intellectual requirements of their students using this holistic approach. Reflection on one's activities and their potential effects on the local and global society is a skill that is taught to students. (*Holistic Development and Assessment in Early Childhood Education*, n.d.)

### **Holistic Development meaning and aspects**

One of the movement's founders, Ron Miller (1992), believes that holistic education should not be viewed as a specific approach or methodology but rather as a paradigm—a collection of fundamental presumptions and guidelines that may be used in a variety of contexts.

Holistic education frequently makes the claims that it wants to: 1) educate the whole child (all of the child), 2) educate the student as a whole (not an assembly of parts), and 3) see the child as part of a whole

(society, humanity, the environment, some spiritual whole, constitutional values practioner and promoter etc.) from which it is not meaningful to extract the student.

### **Importance of Holistic Development**

For students to fully participate in all aspects of the curriculum, it is important to ensure that their physical and mental capabilities are improved. Children must be given the chance to identify and develop their strengths to the fullest extent possible, as well as to hone their weaker capabilities (Mcilroy, 2022).

Teachers can develop their audio-visual perception, linguistic awareness and competence, fine motor skills, listening and reacting abilities, focus and attention towards work, and more through the teaching-learning process. Only with the aid of social, physical, mental, and intellectual factors can academic talent be developed. To control one's emotions and safeguard them, one must develop social-emotional abilities. They should appropriately and positively express their emotions. To the best of their ability, youngsters must be given the chance to identify their strengths and develop them, as well as to hone their weaker capabilities. (Channawar, 2023)

The focus of assessment in early years at the school or class level is often on observing and documenting children's behavior, interactions, participation in activities, and changes in naturalistic settings. It may involve a combination of formal and informal assessment methods, such as observations, checklists, portfolios, anecdotal records, and interviewing parents.

The emphasis is on gathering comprehensive and holistic information about a child's development, progress, and learning experiences. It also leads to identifying areas where a child may require additional support, and educators to make informed decisions to provide appropriate learning experiences and adjust their teaching strategies. (*Holistic Development and Assessment in Early Childhood Education*, n.d.)

### **Challenges faced by teachers**

Whether it is school or HEIs, the implementation of NEP2020, SQAAC, NAAC, and similar processes, on the one hand, is helping to enhance the quality of the institution and the teacher itself, on the other hand, has created some hurdles in the form of extra paperwork, multidimensional work, etc. As a result of which the assessment strategy which needs to be modified to meet the demand for holistic development, is still in its initial stage of modification.

The major challenges faced by teachers are :

- Diverse learning needs,
- Change of attitude and learning style in the post-covid phase
- Technological skills & Lack of funds and resources
- Institutional and colleagues' support & Lack of collaboration with different stakeholders
- Lack of interest
- Lack of training and professional development effective opportunities/events etc

So, to meet the requirement of well-designed strategies/approaches for ensuring the holistic development of students, assessment needs to be redesigned.(Swaran Singh et al., 2019).

Holistic development can only be assured through 360-degree assessment techniques which involve self-assessment, peer assessment, etc. (Andrade, 2019)

### **Assessment Skills and Continuous Professional Development of Teachers**

According to national professional standards for teachers - To evaluate each teacher's effectiveness and each student's academic development in a multidisciplinary setting, new evaluation approaches will be required. Instead of mechanical instruction and rote learning, these techniques will emphasize 21st-century skills and child-led learning.

### **Need of the study**

In the age of technological advancement, changes in policies, and ever-evolving knowledge landscapes, the importance of continuous learning, professional development, and collaboration can not be overstated. Change at its initial stage brings more challenges than opportunities. On one hand, NEP2020 implementation and NCF2023 pre-draft, created a well-structured framework for improving the quality of the education system, while on the other hand, there are some challenges also ahead for teachers in assessing the holistic development of learner. This study is focused on identifying challenges faced by teachers, their assessment strategies & participation in professional development program.

### **Objectives of the study**

1. To identify the challenging areas experienced by the teachers.
2. To identify the types of assessment techniques (other than FA and SA) used by the teachers for assessing students' overall development.
3. To study the influence of the level of educational institute (College or School) on teachers' involvement in practicing and promoting constitutional values.
4. To study the influence of participation of teachers in Professional Development on their assessment strategies.
5. To study the influence of the level of challenges faced by the teachers on their assessment strategies.

### **Hypothesis**

- The researcher framed null hypotheses for the study.

### **Research Design**

The research is descriptive and data is collected through a random sampling technique. The sample size of the study is 115 teachers including 61 school teachers and 54 teachers belonging to Higher Education Institutions. Data analysis is done by using both descriptive and inferential statistics approaches.

For collecting the data, the researcher distributed self self-prepared questionnaire through Google form and collected a good number of responses through face to mode. The questionnaire is divided into three main domains viz. Challenges faced by teachers, their participation in professional development programs, professional attitude, and their assessment strategies. A few interviews were also conducted regarding unique assessment techniques adopted for assessing holistic development.

### Data analysis and interpretation

Analysis of data is done by descriptive as well as inferential statistics. The chi-square test is applied to study the influence of one variable on another.

**Objective 1:** To identify the challenging areas experienced by the teachers.

**Table 1:** The challenging areas experienced by the teachers

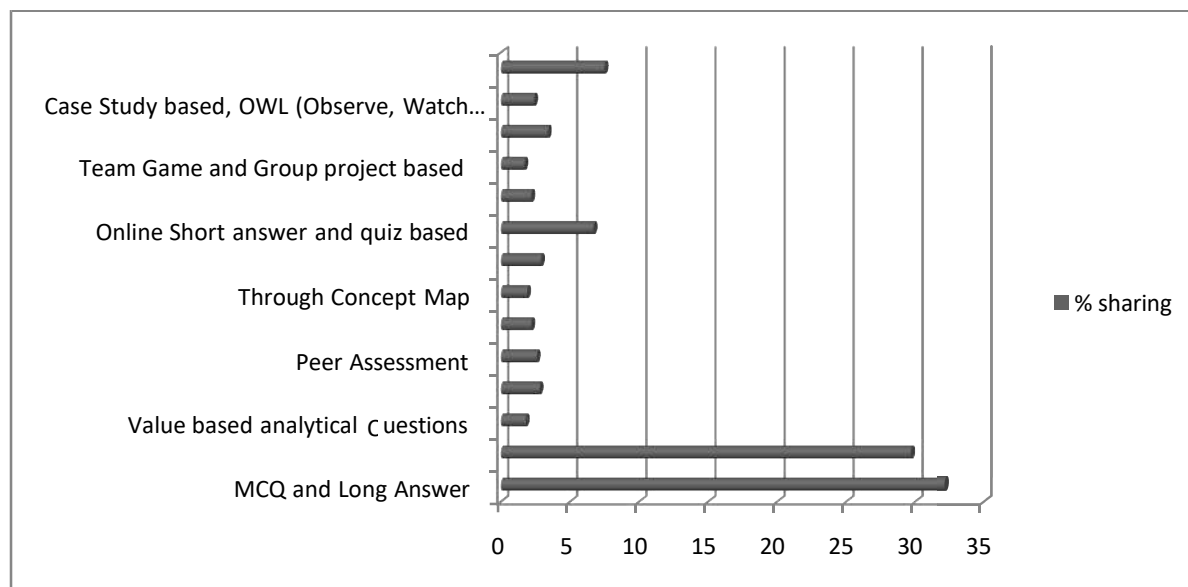
Area	Percentage Response Representing Challenges (SA + Agree)
Endless Paperwork	60 percent
Frequent changes in policies	60 percent
Change in learning style and attitude of learners in the COVID phase	53.9 percent
Lack of sufficient funds and Resources	81.8 percent
Digital and technological skills	13.1 percent
Institutional Support for developing and enhancing professional skills	68.7 Percent

From the above table 1, it can be concluded that except for digital and technological skills, the other areas of the mentioned challenges are noticeably the areas to be concerned about because of extra responsibility in the form of overloaded paperwork, stress because of frequent changes in policies at a national and local level, lack of sufficient funds and resources and, lack of motivation from institution are the major challenges faced by the teachers.

In a research conducted on tertiary-level teachers regarding challenges faced and their innovative teaching practices, a significant difference was found among teachers regarding organizational challenges and issues in seeking innovation in teaching teaching-learning process. Mean differences show that organizational monitoring systems and teachers' process training are the challenges and issues faced by teachers. It was recommended that an Organizational Monitoring System and 360-degree assessment mechanism for students as well as teachers be established.(Rehman et al., 2022)

**Objective 2 :** To identify the types of assessment (other than FA and SA) used by the teachers for assessing students' overall development.

Fig. 1: Types of assessment techniques (other than FA and SA) used by the teachers for assessing students' overall development



Above fig. 1 clearly shows that for assessing the development (other than academic) of the student, more than 60 percent of the teachers rely on MCQ, short answer type, and Long answer type items, which focus more on academics than other aspects viz. social development, spiritual development, Physical development, emotional development, etc. Very few teachers are practicing mixed assessment methods including peer assessment, projects based on real-life situations, group tasks, values-based analytical questions, etc. The cognitive, Social, Socio-emotional, and spiritual development, of the learner can be assessed through social interaction, collaboration with others, respect for constitutional values and culture, etc.

As per the NEP2020, the assessment of a learner should be done by collaborative and collective efforts. (*Transforming the System of Assessment- Holistic Progress Card 15sept 2021.Pdf*, n.d.).

**Hypothesis:** There is no significant influence of the level of educational institute (College or School) on teachers' involvement in practicing and promoting constitutional values.

**Table 2:** Chi-square table, the influence of the level of the educational institute (College/School) on teachers' involvement in practicing and promoting constitutional values

Level of Educational institute	Aware of such values	Practicing Such values	Encourage my Students & colleagues to practice Such values	Collab. & Promote the Importance Of practicing Const. values	Chi Sq. val	Sig.
College	8	3	23	20	10.75	S**
School	3	7	14	37		
Total	11	10	37	57		

S\*\*- Significant at 0.01 level

Table 2 reveals that Chi-square values obtained is 10.75 which is significant at 0.01 level and  $df = 3$ . Thus, the hypothesis ‘There is no significant influence of level of educational institute (College or School) on teachers’ involvement in practicing and promoting constitutional values’, is rejected.

Residual analysis shows that the maximum contribution for the chi-square value is of the last 2\*2 cells, thus showing the maximum contribution of these cells in the chi-square value. College and school teachers differ significantly as far as encouraging and promoting constitutional values among colleagues, students, and community members, is concerned. In the case of collaborating and promoting constitutional values, school teachers are found to be better than college teachers and this might be because the school education system has to organize so many events – cultural, sports, academic, and non-academic, through which students learn collaboration, group dynamics, respect for others, environmental awareness and concern.

**Hypothesis:** There is no significant influence of the participation of teachers in Professional Development Programs on their assessment strategies.

**Table 3 :** Chi-square table, influence of participation of teachers in Professional Development Programs on their assessment strategies.

Influence of reason for participating in CBPs on grading/assessment strategies		In_grading				Chi Square
		I understand the imp. of assess. and rubrics	I create rubrics to assess students	I ask questions, organize discussions, team game, quizzes etc	I use traditional and digital platforms for 360 degree assessment	
Institution has asked to participate	Count	2	2	5	14	6.14 NS
	Adjusted	.0	-1.2	1.8	-.2	
	Residual					
Colleagues forced me to attend CBP	Count	2	4	1	13	
	Adjusted	.2	.3	-1.0	.2	
	Residual					
Always looking to improve my teaching	Count	1	3	3	15	
	Adjusted	-.8	-.5	.4	.6	
	Residual					
Analyse CBPs and apply maximum in my CR	Count	5	11	4	30	
	Adjusted	.4	1.1	-1.0	-.5	
	Residual					
Total	Count	10	20	13	72	

Chi-square value is 6.14, NS

Table 3 reveals that the Chi-square value obtained is 6.14, which is not significant at the 0.05 level. Thus, the hypothesis 'There is no significant influence of participation of teachers in Professional Development Programs on their assessment strategies', is retained. Residual analysis indicates that – those teachers who have analyzed their need for improvement can identify the relevant CBP for updating and upgrading themselves and thus they participate in such an event wholeheartedly. As a result of which, their assessment strategies show variety for assessing the holistic development of learners.

**Hypothesis:** There is no significant influence of the level of challenges faced by the teachers on their assessment strategies.

**Table 4:** Chi-square values, influence of the level of challenges faced by the teachers on their assessment strategies.

	In_grading				Chi Square & Sig.
	I understand the imp. of assess. and rubrics	I create rubrics to assess students	I ask questions, organize discussions, team game, quizzes etc	I use traditional and digital platforms for 360 degree assessment	
Not able to deal with Challenges	4	9	4	4	15.18 NS
Challenges are dealt with the help of others	4	5	4	30	
Challen I am able to ge manage such challenges	4	8	0	17	
Such challenges actually gives opportunity to learn something new	0	2	5	15	
Total	10	20	13	72	

Table 4 reveals that the chi-square value obtained is 15.18 which is not significant at 0.05 level. Thus, the hypothesis 'There is no significant influence of the level of challenges faced by the teachers on their assessment strategies', is retained. There is no influence of the way the teachers handle the challenges, on the assessment strategies adopted by the teachers.

The residual analysis indicates – the teachers who are overcoming these challenges either with the help of others or those who are considering these challenges as an opportunity to grow, are

using discussions, team games, quizzes, live projects, digital tools, peer assessment and similar assessment techniques for assessing holistic development of learners.

### **Major findings of the study**

After analyzing the data, the researcher identified the major findings as given below:

- Because of the introduction of many quality enhancement initiatives, the paper work for the teachers has increased enormously.
- The teachers of both schools and HEIs are keen to be a part of innovative and holistic assessment processes but because of a lack of resources and sufficient funding (especially private institutes), they are not able to actively contribute,
- It has been noticed that lack of information sharing and lack of motivation for the teachers from the management is a bigger challenge than lack of resources and funds.
- As far as the holistic development of the student is concerned, most of the teachers are aware of the holistic development concept. However, their assessment techniques for holistic development still rely more on traditional approaches such as MCQ, Long Answer type, Short answer type questions, etc.
- A satisfying number of teachers were found to be practicing innovative assessment techniques such as OWL (Observe Watch Learn), Dream your learned content, Life base project assessment, peer tutoring and assessment, and in some cases interview your partner.
- It was also found that- those teachers who took advice from the experts and colleagues, were able to overcome the above-mentioned challenges. Rather they found it as an opportunity for their skill development.
- Collaborating with colleagues, parents, and parents, the teachers were more creative and productive in preparing rubrics for assessing holistic development.
- When teachers attend CBPs based on their needs and interests, they apply whatever relevant they learn, in their classroom. It includes inclusive teaching and assessment practices and collaboration with colleagues and students, for better teaching-learning processes and holistic assessment strategies.

### **Conclusion and suggestions**

Despite the difficulties they encounter, teachers continually work to evaluate their pupils' overall growth. Teachers may make sure that the assessment tactics they use are in line with



the requirements of their students by making the most of their limited resources, efficiently managing their time, individualizing assessment procedures, pursuing professional development, and encouraging student participation.

Project-based evaluations are one useful recommendation for measuring holistic development. These tests provide students the chance to put their knowledge and abilities to use in actual situations, encouraging creativity, teamwork, and critical thinking. Teachers can evaluate students' social and emotional intelligence, communication skills, and leadership potential through projects.

Utilising portfolios is a wonderful additional strategy. Teachers may have fruitful discussions regarding students' strengths and areas for development by routinely examining portfolios with them.

Self-assessment techniques can also be used to motivate students to consider their growth. They get the ability to control their learning process and enhance their metacognitive abilities as a result. Teachers might give out checklists or rubrics that direct pupils to assess their development in light of certain standards.

Finally, instructors must provide a welcoming classroom atmosphere that promotes holistic development. This entails giving students the chance to participate in open dialogues, increasing inclusion and diversity awareness through group projects or discussions, and supporting student voice and choice in learning activities.

## References

- Andrade, H. L. (2019). A Critical Review of Research on Student Self-Assessment. *Frontiers in Education*, 4. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/feduc.2019.00087>
- Channawar, S. (2023). *Conceptual Framework for Holistic Development :NEP 2020*. 82, 22–27.

*Holistic development and assessment in early childhood education: A comprehensive*

*perspective.* (n.d.). Issuu. Retrieved August 15, 2023, from

[https://issuu.com/wiprofoundation/docs/samuhik\\_pahal\\_vol\\_3\\_issue\\_9/s/28414854](https://issuu.com/wiprofoundation/docs/samuhik_pahal_vol_3_issue_9/s/28414854)

Rehman, M., Ullah, O., & Ateeq, A. (2022). *Quest For Pursuing Innovation In Teaching Learning Process At Tertiary Level: Challenges And Issues Faced By Teachers.* 6, 272–278.

Singh, C. K. S., Ong, E. T., & Singh, T. S. M. (2019). Redesigning Assessment for Holistic Learning. *The Journal of Social Sciences Research*, 53, 620.

Swaran Singh, C., Ong, E., & Masa Singh, T. S. (2019). Redesigning Assessment for Holistic Learning. *The Journal of Social Sciences Research*, 620–625.

<https://doi.org/10.32861/jssr.53.620.625>

*Transforming the System of Assessment- Holistic Progress Card 15sept 2021.pdf.* (n.d.).

Retrieved August 27, 2023, from

<https://www.education.gov.in/shikshakparv/docs/Transforming%20the%20System%20of%20Assessment-%20Holistic%20Progress%20Card%2015sept%202021.pdf>