

PRACTICES OF TEACHERS' IN IMPLEMENTING CONTINUOUS AND COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION-AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

Vanita Chopra and Ranjana Bhatia

The present study reports on the practices adopted by the secondary school teachers of English in implementing the Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) scheme of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), India which has to be implemented as part of its national assessment policy. The study is delimited to observing the formative assessment practices adopted by the English teachers in enhancing the four language skills along with using variety of tools and techniques as directed by Central Board of Secondary Education in the Teacher's Manual. This study was conducted on a group of twenty teachers chosen purposively from twenty schools (ten central government and ten private). The major findings reveal that almost all teachers use multiple activities for assessing the listening, speaking and writing skills of the students. Reading still remains a neglected skill in the classroom owing to lack of awareness among teachers to use innovative strategies for enabling them to enhance their reading habit with comprehension. In addition, teachers also make use of multiple criteria to assess the above skills along with assessing sub-skills for the same. It was also found that teachers use multiple forms of record maintenance and assessment for assessing the gifted students in the class. With regard to remediation and enrichment for the students less than 50% of the teachers' prefer not to use multiple strategies for remediation and enrichment.

KEYWORDS: Classroom Practices, Formative Assessment, Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation, CBSE.

Vanita Chopra 
Assistant Professor, Gargi College, Delhi University
Email: chopravanita1981@gmail.com

Ranjana Bhatia
Principal Amity Institute of Education, Saket
Email: ranjubhatia@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

The need for examination reform is not a recent phenomenon, but the tremors of it were also felt in the pre-Independence era wherein various commissions Indian University Commission (1902), University Education Commission (Radhakrishnan Commission) 1948-49, Secondary Education Commission (Mudaliar Commission) 1952-53, National Education Commission (Kothari Commission), 1964-66, National Education Policy, 1986, Narasimha Rao Committee-1986, National Curriculum Framework 2005, and Section 29 of the (Right to Education) RTE Act, 2009 suggested various recommendations by stressing the need for examination reforms.

The Central Board of Secondary Education introduced the scheme of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) in its schools in a phased manner. In the year 2000, the Board implemented the concept of an independent Certificate of School-based evaluation to be awarded by the school to all students who passed class X CBSE examination. This certificate was awarded in addition to the Board's regular certificate which carried a footnote that a certificate of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation is also being issued by the school and should be studied for judging the total personality of the student. A recommended format with detailed guidelines was prepared and circulated to schools for adoption by the CBSE. As a next step, in 2004, Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation was implemented in primary classes from grades I to V. As a follow up, the Board decided to extend the CCE scheme to classes VI to VIII in 2006. The Board also introduced the continuous and comprehensive evaluation at the secondary level in October 2009 for class IX students and further extended the scheme for class X students as well.

Thus, the CCE scheme aims to position the teacher back at the forefront of the evaluation system and use descriptive feedback mechanism for the improvement of the entire teaching learning process. The method places an emphasis on the use of a variety of tools and techniques for evaluation and not just a paper-pencil test. This evaluation is carried out frequently, over a long period of time and hence is expected to provide more reliable evidence and caters to the diverse needs of the learners' in the classroom context.

SCENARIO OF EVALUATION PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS

Certain empirical studies conducted at regional level in schools (Rao, Manjula, 1998; 2001; 2002) and other studies have revealed the following:

- Evaluation practices carried out in schools are still conventional in their nature and purposes.
- After getting orientation the teachers are not yet conducting continuous comprehensive evaluation in actual classroom situation.

- Competencies are not assessed through planned procedures of evaluation.
- Due to certain factors, sometimes the evaluator is biased and he/she is unable to find out on which competency the student has mastery.
- Remedial instruction is not provided.
- Formative feedback is not provided and learning difficulties are not identified.
- The personal and social qualities are totally ignored due to lack of the knowledge of the evaluator on what to be evaluated and how to evaluate.
- Undue reliance on recall is found rather than enabling the students to transfer and apply what they have learnt from different concepts and problems.

However, rarely studies have been undertaken in relation to finding out the practices of English Language teachers in implementing the CCE scheme at secondary level.

NEED OF THE STUDY

Continuous and comprehensive evaluation fundamentally aims at bringing a paradigm shift from examination to effective pedagogy, which subsumes assessment into the instructional process itself. While the pedagogy has to be constructive, it is desirable to design a teaching-learning process where the student and the teacher actively construct knowledge and apply it in situations. Thus, a fertile and robust education needs to be nourished through student involvement, enhanced and enriched learning experiences and unobtrusive techniques of assessment. The role and dignity of teachers in this function needs to be strengthened and underlined. The significance of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation lies not only as an end in itself but also as a means to achieve the end. It provides the teacher with ample degrees of freedom to design and implement instruction and its assessment procedures. Teachers have to work in this new paradigm by way of preparing lesson plans, designing formative activities and evolving teaching-learning materials.

Considering the laudable efforts made by the Central Board of Secondary Education, the implementation of the scheme and its desired success, how useful and practicable it may be, depends upon the sincerity and ability of its implementers. The organization of the teaching-learning process including the evaluation of the teaching-learning outcomes is the responsibility and accountability of the teachers, teaching in these schools.

Teachers are instrumental in implementing these policies in the classroom. Further it has to be ensured that the scheme of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation is implemented in its true spirit or it will become yet another

product or fad. We need immense teacher support for this. The teachers have to be prepared, and also motivated to do justice to this thoughtfully planned system of evaluation. They have to be exposed to not only the theoretical aspect of this scheme but armed with all tools and techniques on how to implement the system effectively to yield the best results.

It is in this context that the ensuing presentation of the study, which focuses on the Practices of the Secondary English teachers in implementing Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation, is attempted.

KEY TERMS USED

Practices

In the present study refer to ways of conducting formative assessment by English language teachers in the manner prescribed by CBSE or as per the guidelines given in the teachers' manual.

Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation

According to CBSE, Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) refers to a system of school based evaluation of students that covers all aspects of students' development. In the study, the investigator will attempt to study the formative assessment practices of English language teachers only.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study has been conducted with the following objective:

To study the English language teachers' practices in conducting formative assessment as per CBSE guidelines.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

SAMPLE

Twenty Trained Graduate Teachers (TGT's), 10 from Kendriya Vidyalayas and 10 from Private schools were selected for the study. One teacher from each school was purposively selected to be the part of the sample. The Schools were chosen from five districts of New Delhi in order to provide an unbiased test for the assessment system.

TOOL USED

Classroom Observation as a technique was used and was recorded through self constructed checklist consisting of eighteen items in total pertaining to various components like tools and techniques for assessing the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, sub-skills of language skills, criteria for assessing the language skills, tools for doing formative assessment, different forms of maintain records, means of providing feedback to the students,

assessing gifted and slow learners, and remedial measures for students.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data was analysed using descriptive statistics. Frequency and percentage analysis was computed for independent items supported by qualitative analysis

Table1

Classroom Activities for Formative Assessment in Listening Skills.

S.No.	Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Listening to an audio clip	3	15%
2.	Listening to the text (prose/poetry) read by the student	19	95%
3.	Listening to the text (prose/poetry) read by the teacher	20	100%
4.	Any other	18	90%
	TOTAL	20	100

It can be inferred from Table 1 that all the teachers' preferred reading the text themselves followed by asking questions to be answered by the students' in order to enable the students' to develop their listening skills. They all considered it as a common practice to make the students first listen to the text leading to comprehension. However, under the CCE scheme it is desired that teachers make use of a variety of interesting activities to engage students in listening tasks involving comprehension. This implies teachers are still conditioned to use one particular activity against the use of numerous constructivist activities available to them for self-learning and self-assessment.

Table 2

Classroom Activities for Formative Assessment in Speaking Skills.

S.No	Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Discussion	16	80%
2.	Debate	1	5%
3.	Extempore	0	0%
4.	Role play	3	15%
5.	Dramatization	1	5%
6.	Narrating and discussing stories and anecdotes	1	5%
7.	Riddles	0	0%
8.	Pair dialogue	2	10%
9.	Mini presentation	2	10%
10.	Interpreting pictures/sketches/cartoons	0	0%
11.	Reciting poems	2	10%
12.	Any other	7	35%
	TOTAL	20	100

From the data in Table 2, it can be seen that a large majority of teachers' conducted discussion as an activity to enable students' to develop speaking skills. Discussion was generally used as a pre-reading activity by teachers to provide opportunities to students to activate their relevant schema and link it with new knowledge given in different genres of literature. The CCE scheme also encourages teachers to make use of different pre-reading activities for linking the previous knowledge or experience with the knowledge embedded within the text.

Table 3

Classroom Activities for Formative Assessment in Reading skills.

S.No	Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Reading of prescribed supplementary prose	17	85%
2.	Classroom usage of flash cards	1	5%
3.	Reading newspapers (article reading) followed up by comprehension question	3	15%
4.	Reading magazines	1	5%
5.	Reading unseen passages	13	65%
6.	Any other	17	85%
	TOTAL	20	100

From Table 3, it can be inferred that a large majority of teachers' use supplementary prose as prescribed in the syllabus along with reading the prescribed text itself for enabling the students' to develop good reading habits. The CCE scheme in addition to the course textbooks has also recommended some well-known works of fiction to develop good reading habits among students. Teachers also motivate students to read the text themselves to inculcate the habit of self-reading. They demand training in conducting interesting and engaging activities with respect to reading for students.

Table 4

Classroom Activities for Formative Assessment in Writing Skills.

S.No	Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Story writing	0	0%
2.	Letter writing	3	15%
3.	Diary writing	2	10%
4.	Article writing	0	0%
5.	Poetry writing	2	10%
6.	Speech writing	0	0%
7.	Debate writing	1	5%
8.	Worksheet	16	80%
9.	Writing script for plays	0	0%
10.	Any other	17	85%
	TOTAL	20	100

From Table 4, it can be interpreted that large majority of teachers' use other activities, assignments and projects, dialogue writing, paragraph writing, pair dialogue, autobiographical note, KWL chart, quick write, and complete the diagram to enable students to develop their writing skills. Out of any other activities also, teachers use assignment and projects maximum with the students to enhance their problem solving and critical thinking skills. The CCE scheme envisages writing as a process centered approach wherein students should be made aware regarding purpose, forms and audience. It demands variety in writing tasks to enable students to use writing as a tool for learning.

Table 5**Assessment of Sub-Skills Under Listening Skills.**

S.No	Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Listening for specific information	14	70%
2.	Listening for general understanding	15	75%
3.	Listening for key word	1	5%
4.	Predictive listening	4	20%
5.	Inferential listening	3	15%
6.	Any other	0	0%
	TOTAL	20	100

It can seen from Table 5 that majority of the teachers' consider listening for general understanding as a sub-skill for assessment under listening skills. Listening skills itself comprises a number of sub-skills which also needs to be assessed. Teachers while conducting activities also pre-determine the sub-skills for assessment, but usually give importance to general understanding. They demand more training for conducting assessment in other areas.

Results from Table 6 show that large majority of teachers' consider speaking clearly using appropriate word stress, sentence stress, pause and intonation patterns as a sub-skill for assessment under speaking skills. They regard these important for assessing speaking skills for which they conduct different types of activities. More than the content/ personal expression, they focus on the pronunciation and articulation by providing varied opportunities to the students.

Table 6**Assessment of Sub-Skills Under Speaking Skills.**

S.No	Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Speaking clearly using appropriate word stress, sentence stress, pause and intonation patterns	17	85%
2.	Narrating incidents and events, real or imaginary in a logical sequence	9	45%
3.	Presenting oral reports or summaries; making announcements clearly and confidently	2	10%
4.	Expressing and arguing a point of view clearly and effectively	15	75%
5.	Taking active part in group discussions, showing ability to express agreement or disagreement	14	70%
6.	Summarizing ideas, eliciting the views of others, and presenting own ideas	5	25%
7.	Expressing and responding to personal feelings, opinions and attitudes	9	45%
8.	Participating in spontaneous spoken discourse in familiar social situations	1	5%
9.	Any other	1	5%
	TOTAL	20	100

Data presented in Table 7 reveals that all the teachers consider identifying the main points of a text as a sub-skill for assessment under reading skills. They mainly regard local coherence to be a major factor influencing comprehension, remembering, and learning as against global coherence. For making the students comprehend the overall meaning of the text along with other sub-skills, teachers require frequent training sessions.

Table 7**Assessment of Sub-Skills Under Reading Skills.**

S.No.	Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Reading silently at varying speeds in relation to the purpose of reading	7	35%
2.	Adopting different strategies for diverse types of texts, both literary and non-literary	1	5%
3.	Recognizing the structure of a text	1	5%
4.	Identifying the main points of a text	20	100%
5.	Understanding relations between different parts of a text through cohesion devices	3	15%
6.	Anticipating and predicting what will come next	15	75%
7.	Interpreting the meaning of unfamiliar lexical items in a given context	3	15%
8.	Analysing, interpreting, inferring the ideas in the text	8	40%
9.	Selecting and extracting from text information required for a specific purpose	1	5%
10.	Retrieving information	11	55%
11.	Synthesizing information from a range of reference material using study skills such as skimming and scanning	1	5%
12.	Interpreting text by relating them to other material on the same theme	1	5%
13.	Reading extensively on their own for pleasure	7	35%
14.	Any other	0	0%
	TOTAL	20	100

From Table 8, it can be interpreted that large majority of teachers' kept into consideration expressing the theoretical meaning as a sub-skill for assessment under writing skills. They are largely interested in getting the efferent response from the students as compared to arousing the aesthetic stance on part of the students'. Writing tasks are usually focused with respect to the text studies rather than going beyond the text.

Table 8
Assessment of Sub-Skills Under Writing Skills.

S.No	Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Focusing on form: handwriting, spelling and punctuation	3	15%
2.	Expressing grammatical association at the sentence level	3	15%
3.	Expressing association between parts of a written text through cohesive devices	2	10%
4.	Using discourse markers in written discourse	1	5%
5.	Expressing the communicative purpose of written sentences	4	20%
6.	Expressing information or knowledge in writing	18	90%
7.	Expressing the theoretical meaning	19	95%
8.	Planning and organizing written ideas/information in expository language	1	5%
	TOTAL	20	100

Table 9
Criteria/Parameters for Assessing Listening Skills.

S.No	Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Attentiveness	18	90%
2.	Comprehension	16	80%
3.	Expression	4	20%
4.	Coherence	14	70%
5.	Retrieval	4	20%
6.	Memory	16	80%
7.	Any other	1	5%
	TOTAL	20	100

Results in Table 9 show that large majority of teachers' consider attentiveness as the criteria /parameter for assessing listening skills. They regard it as a key criteria/parameter on the basis of which every task/activity is assessed. Teachers are of the view, that until and unless students are attentive, how would they get to know that they have understood the listening tasks/activities.

Table 10**Criteria/Parameters for Assessing Speaking Skills.**

S.No	Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Pronunciation	15	75%
2.	Fluency	17	85%
3.	Coherence	10	50%
4.	Vocabulary and grammar	17	85%
5.	Any other	5	25%
	TOTAL	20	100

From Table 10, it can be interpreted that large majority of teachers' consider fluency, vocabulary and grammar as the criteria /parameter for assessing speaking skills. They have regarded these three as the basis for assessing activities/tasks pertaining to speaking skills. For them, form is more important than content, which might become a hurdle for student's free expression in the absence of authentic assessment.

Table 11**Criteria/Parameters for Assessing Reading Skills.**

S.No	Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Decoding the language	5	25%
2.	Reading for gaining specific information	14	70%
3.	Reading with comprehension	16	80%
4.	Reading for critical thinking	5	25%
5.	Any other	3	15%
	TOTAL	20	100

Table 11 shows that most of the teachers' consider reading with comprehension as the criteria/parameter for assessing reading skills. Comprehension is considered to be a very critical criteria/parameter for enabling students to consider reading as a constructive and multidimensional process. They assign special place for testing comprehension of the students by arousing both efferent and aesthetic stance.

Table 12
Criteria/ Parameters for Assessing Writing Skills.

S.No	Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Form	17	85%
2.	Content	16	80%
3.	Coherence	6	30%
4.	Organization of thought	11	55%
5.	Legibility	8	40%
6.	Any other	5	25%
	TOTAL	20	100

Results in Table 12 reveal that a large majority of teachers' made use of form as a criteria/parameter for assessing writing skill. Form as a criteria includes, spelling, punctuation and grammatically correct sentences. They focus on form for assessing variety of writing tasks neglecting content which might prove to be a hurdle in personal expression on part of the students'. Both form and content need a balanced approach for enabling the students to explore variety of language functions.

Table 13
Tools for Formative Assessment.

S.No	Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Portfolio	8	40%
2.	Rating scale	10	50%
3.	Anecdotal and cumulative record	7	35%
4.	Observation schedule	7	35%
5.	Tests and inventories	10	50%
6.	Any other	10	50%
	TOTAL	20	100

It can be inferred from Table 13 that most of the teachers' consider rating scale, tests & inventories, crosswords, puzzles, games, homework, assignment, project, debate, poster making, extempore, role play, poem recitation and audio-video recording as tools for formative assessment. The CCE scheme has directed the teachers to use variety of tools for assessing varied abilities of the students', but still teachers' are not aware regarding the purpose of different tools and are also not clear regarding the difference between tools and techniques. They demand orientation programme for making effective use of tools and techniques in the classroom.

Table 14
Different Forms of Maintaining Records for Formative Assessment.

S.No	Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Portfolio	13	65%
2.	Individual student assessment form	17	85%
3.	Result register	15	75%
4.	Cumulative marks register	9	45%
5.	Practical work register	12	60%
6.	Different sample work of learners	19	95%
7.	Answer scripts	7	35%
8.	Any other	4	20%
	TOTAL	20	100

From Table 14, it can be interpreted that a large majority of teachers' consider different sample work of learners' as a form of maintaining records for assessment. They consider it worthwhile to maintain records of sample work of learners' to know the actual progress made by them. Also, it gives feedback to the teachers with respect to the design of activities and self assessment on part of the students'.

Table 15
Feedback of Formative Assessment.

S.No	Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Individual	19	95%
2.	Group	6	30%
3.	To the whole class	2	10%
4.	Informing parents	14	70%
5.	Involving other teachers	3	15%
6.	Any other	0	0%
	TOTAL	20	100

It can be inferred from Table 15 that a large majority of teachers' prefer giving individual feedback to the students' in relation to formative assessment. The CCE scheme considers feedback to be imperative for motivating learners to do much better, and at the same time teachers also get an opportunity to review their techniques/strategies used in the classroom and keeping the track of progress made by the students. They also agree that it is quite difficult to provide feedback in group or consulting other teachers since it becomes time consuming with respect to the conduct of activity along with syllabus completion.

Table 16
Assessment of Gifted Students.

S.No	Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Special assignment including library work	17	85%
2.	Providing leadership role in group activities	14	70%
3.	Providing enrichment activities	9	45%
4.	Providing opportunities as peer teachers	11	55%
5.	Any other	1	5%
	TOTAL	20	100

From the data given in Table 16, it can be seen that large majority of teachers' provide special assignment including library work for assessing gifted students. They feel it is important to make the students use library for making presentations, referring other informative materials, reading newspapers etc. to keep them engaged in productive tasks and motivating them for self, peer, and group learning.

Table 17
Assessment of Slow Learners.

S.No	Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Peer tutoring	19	95%
2.	Special assignment	10	50%
3.	Co-operative learning	4	20%
4.	Collaborative learning	0	0%
5.	Remedial classes	6	30%
6.	Any other	3	15%
	TOTAL	20	100

It can be inferred from Table 17 that a large majority of teachers' consider peer tutoring as an appropriate techniques for assessing slow learners. They are of the view that students learn more from each other by forming mixed ability groups. They tend to design such tasks/activities for students which would encourage interaction, sharing, and learning from each other. The CCE scheme suggests that in such cases teachers should play the role of a true facilitator.

Table 18**Program of Remediation and Enrichment for the Students.**

S.No	Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Using assessment to diagnose the problem areas	10	50%
2.	Developing remediation to help students improve	4	20%
3.	Computer -based remedial strategies	2	10%
4.	Special activities, tasks and other enrichment materials to address the needs of bright children	7	35%
5.	Any other	0	0%
	TOTAL	20	100

From Table 18, it can be seen that most of the teachers' use assessment to diagnose the problem areas for remediation and enrichment of students'. The CCE scheme considers assessment to be the best medium to probe the strengths and weaknesses of the students in diverse areas and then providing them remedial teaching for the same. They also agree that it is quite difficult to find time for this, but they still make an effort to help the student as and when the need arises. They tend to design and make use of alternative assessment strategies.

On the basis of the above interpretations, it can be concluded that there are seven items, first one pertains to Classroom activities carried out by the teacher for formative assessment in listening skills wherein all teachers' conduct multiple activities. Second, which pertains to assessment of sub-skills under listening skills wherein all teachers' make use of multiple sub-skills, third one pertains to criteria used by the teacher for listening skills wherein all teachers' use multiple criteria/parameters. The fourth item pertains to assessment of sub-skills under speaking skills wherein all teachers' use multiple criteria/parameters; the fifth one pertains to assessment of sub-skills under writing skills wherein all teachers' use multiple criteria/parameters. The sixth item is concerned with different forms of maintaining records for formative assessment wherein all teachers' use multiple forms of record maintenance, and the seventh one pertains to assessment of intelligent/gifted students wherein all teachers' use multiple modes of assessment. Whereas there is one item, which pertains to program of remediation and enrichment for the students, wherein less than 50% of the teachers' prefer not using multiple strategies for remediation and enrichment.

CONCLUSIONS

The present scenario of evaluation practices in schools demand collaboration

among various stakeholders of education like school management, teachers, parents and community for the effective implementation of CCE scheme. Some of the practical suggestions are as follows:

- The learners should be classified according to their capability.
- Enhanced infrastructure amenities should be provided.
- Formative Assessment needs to be taken up in discussion with all subject teachers so that projects of all subjects are not prearranged at the same time
- Integrated projects may be given where subjects are interlinked. Subject teachers should plan and develop the projects and assess it together. Schools should ensure that assessment is more transparent, futuristic and provides more scope for association among learners, teachers and parents.
- It is vital to conduct weekly tests, remedial classes and topic wise examinations in the schools for continuous assessment of the child in diverse areas.
- Parent teacher associations should be organized on a regular basis to provide feedback of the students' to their respective parents.
- Project work may be given in groups and they need to complete in school hours under the direct supervision of the teacher.
- Schools should allow freedom and personal space to the teachers through interactive classroom and engaging students in exploring, experimenting and experiential learning.
- More orientation programmes and workshops should be organized for the teachers for making them aware regarding the use of various tools and techniques in formative assessment.
- Self-evaluation by teachers through reflective journals needs to be encouraged.
- Self-learning and other study skills should be encouraged through in-class activities.
- Sessions for parents on CCE should be organised; handouts can be given to parents and students; details of CCE can be mentioned in the schools calendar/Diary/syllabus booklet etc. by the school.
- Slow learners/low achievers form a significant bulk in a school situation that is to be taken care off. In absence of the trained teacher their performance will becomes lower which is a matter of great concern and needs immediate attention.

Integration of evaluation with the process of teaching and learning is the need of the hour, which will help diagnose the weaknesses and deficiencies in education. This sounds to be on the top most priority and a good enough reason for applying the continuous and comprehensive evaluation. But no educational scheme can succeed unless the teachers are adequately prepared and trained for executing it and have faith in its worth. They should try their best to implement continuous and comprehensive evaluation

wholeheartedly with a missionary zeal. It will ultimately help us in moving from prosaic and clichéd approach of evaluation to a more progressive and trendy approach as envisaged under the CCE scheme.

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