
UNIT 9 ASSESSING LEARNING IN EVS



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9.0 INTRODUCTION

Assessment is a vital part of a student's learning environment in school. Assessment can be a cause of much happiness or distress for a child and her parents. A teacher needs to assess students regularly to check and report on their progress and make decisions about further teaching. Therefore it is important that a teacher adopts a responsible and sensitive approach towards assessment. You have already learnt about assessment in general, in Course 3, Block 4. In this unit you shall learn of many concerns such as 'what, why and how' of



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Assessment in EVS. Along with the approach assessment of learning in EVS, you will also know about various tools and techniques used in assessing learning in EVS.

9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

On completion of this unit, you will be able to

- state the purpose of assessing learning in the context of EVS.
- illustrate the use of Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) in EVS
- explain the importance of different types of assessment—formal and informal, and formative and summative assessment
- list features of effective Assessment practices
- practice/use the different modes of ‘learning-centred’ approaches to assessment.

9.2 HOW IS ASSESSMENT RELATED TO OBJECTIVES OF TEACHING-LEARNING OF EVS?

EVS objectives aim at creating a close bond between student and her surroundings. Assessment in EVS must serve as an appropriate aid in the creation of this bond.

Assessment is the process of gathering, interpreting, recording and using information about a learner’s responses to an educational task. Educational tasks or learning experiences are based on some educational objectives. For example, when a teacher observes his students engaged in watering plants in the premises, joyfully and regularly, he is assessing their learning with reference to specific objective/s of EVS (associated with ‘attitude and values’).

9.3 WHY DO WE NEED TO ASSESS STUDENT’S LEARNING?

Some of the purposes served by assessment are:

- Enable quantitative and qualitative understanding of the progress of learning among the students
- Diagnose the gaps in realising objectives of EVS and take necessary measures.
- Provide feedback to students about their progress and Motivate and guide students in further learning



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Check Your Progress-1

Recall the kind of assessment practice/ approach that you used in the EVS earlier.

How did you use this assessment to fulfil each of the three points mentioned above? Write the answer below.

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9.3.1 Diagnostic and Guidance Purpose of Assessment

Assessment helps the teacher to diagnose problem areas in teaching-learning, which may include misconceptions, lack of comprehension or gaps in learning. This is one of the purposes of assessment but not the end. A good assessment process must go beyond diagnosis to remedy. This means that once you, as a teacher, facilitator and co-learner, have diagnosed strong and weak areas of learning among your students, your effort should now be towards guiding each student in his/her further learning. Accurate diagnosis provides guidance to the teacher about the necessary remediation. Thus guidance is the second important purpose of assessment

A good teacher uses assessment for both diagnostic and guidance purposes. She takes immediate corrective action following assessment so that learning continues; becomes effective and efficient.

Check your progress-2

Think of one EVS objective related to the theme 'Family and Friends' for your class. Recall any one assessment carried out by you on this theme? Did you notice any learning gaps or misconception? How did you use the feedback obtained from assessment to guide your further teaching?

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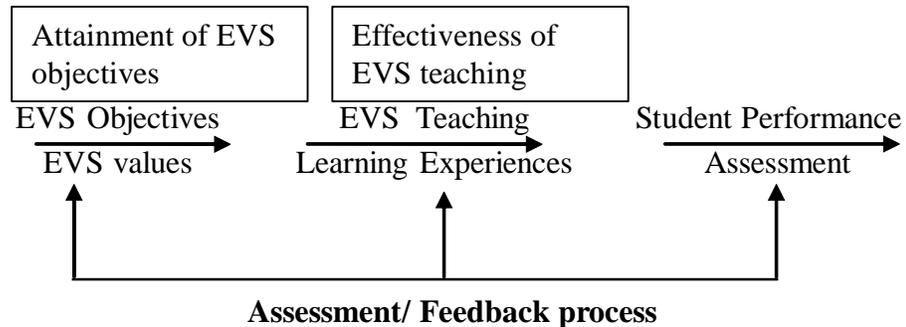
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9.3.2 Assessment tells about Teaching too

We get feedback on students' learning through assessment. We come to know which EVS learning objective has been achieved and to what extent. Assessment also tells us about how a teacher has taught. See the following diagram. Do you see that the feedback throws light not only on student's performance, but also on EVS objectives as well as the learning experiences provided through teaching?



9.4 CONTINUOUS AND COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION

Learning is a continuous process, so should be the 'assessment of learning'. Assessment helps the teacher diagnose gaps and difficulties in learning. If these are addressed as soon as they are noticed, the flow of learning can continue making the Learning process efficient and effective. Classroom assessment should be geared for accomplishing this job for every pupil. Thus good assessment process should be continuous.

I Wish the new teacher makes EVS learning as easy as riding a bicycle



Yes! I also hope so. It will be very interesting today

Yes! I also hope so. It will be very interesting today

I Wish the new teacher makes EVS learning as easy as riding a bicycle



Fig.-Two girls riding a bicycle to the school expecting to meet the new EVS teacher

As you may recall from Block 1 that EVS is a composite area of study. EVS learning therefore follows the holistic approach to learning. Teaching-learning of EVS is about encouraging analytical skills, critical thinking abilities among children. It is also a process to support positive attitude and clarify values. The process aims to develop a child into a citizen who is compassionate and sensitive towards diversity in environment—natural as well as social.

Assessment of learning in EVS therefore demands that the assessment process is comprehensive. Assessment should be carried out by self, peers, teacher, parents or occasionally by other school staff. This helps to create a holistic picture of the child's development.

The learners need to use head, hand and heart to attain the EVS objectives. Thus, the teacher should provide opportunities to the learners to use all the five senses, logical thinking, creative thinking as well as to develop and express their feelings. Consequently the assessment should be based on learning taking place through all the five senses, logical thinking, imagination and the feelings.



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The teacher may use oral, written and performance modes to assess child's learning. She will need to sometimes assess each child individually, but at other times assess groups or assess the whole class together. The teacher should not overemphasise any one form of assessment, be it written or oral or activity based. Such diverse and balanced assessment makes assessment comprehensive.

Let us take example of the theme 'Food'. The comprehensive assessment can include the following-

1. Group discussion on food consumed by animals
2. Match the food item with its taste
3. Identify the food items through smell only
4. Identify fruits and vegetables by touch only
5. Hear the kinds of sound made while eating different food items, e.g. crisp and soft
6. Arranging food items in a plate that look pleasing to the eye
7. Trying out variations in making curd from milk
8. Name a food item that you enjoy eating from your own lunch box and another one, from your friend's lunch box
9. List the food items enjoyed by your friends and family members

In keeping with the The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE),2009 CCE means: students will be evaluated on a round –the-year basis instead of being tested in through a year-end only exam. Giving every child an opportunity to experience success and enjoy learning. Look for variety of abilities that a child is good at and also help the child by supporting her/him to fill the gaps in learning through many and varied informal assessments. (Refer to the section on CCE you studied earlier in course 3, **Unit 13 & 16**)

For bringing CCE into practice, the teacher needs to be aware of what makes good assessment.

9.5 TYPES OF ASSESSMENT: FORMAL AND INFORMAL

Let us look at the following examples:

- A teacher is correcting a student's written response about a bird's behaviour.
- The same teacher is now listening to a conversation between two students where one of them is describing the birds that he observed at his uncle's farm.



The above examples illustrate different types of assessment being used by a teacher—formal and informal; respectively. Planned assessments like oral and written tests generally come under formal assessment. During formal assessment, children are informed that they are being assessed. Informal assessments are carried out in natural, informal settings and children are generally not told that they are being assessed. Observing children in the class, playground, during a visit; looking for noticeable behaviour of children and recording it, are some types of informal assessments.

Both formal and informal assessments help teacher to understand the student's progress. Irrespective of the type of assessment, it is important for the teacher to be aware of the EVS objectives and values underlying the process of assessment.

9.5.1 Assessment : Formative and Summative

Let us consider two sample assessments based on the EVS objective of 'realising the close connection between all living creatures'. This also relates to the value of being sensitive towards different living beings.

- I) A teacher was on an outdoor visit with her students. A week before that, she in her class, had discussed about roles played by insects in nature. During the visit, she saw a boy of her class smashing a bee. She talked to him and found that he was scared of bees. She once again reminded him of how bees help in pollination. Later, she also organised drama in the class to give a message that all living beings have a right to live just as we do.

This **timely assessment** provided the essential feedback to teacher about a gap in the boy's learning. This is an example of **formative** assessment.

The teacher takes immediate remedial action for removing obstacles in learning. Formative assessment thus helps the teacher diagnose impediments to learning and help the teacher take a corrective action then and there.

- II) This instance is about a chapter-end test in an EVS class. The teacher asked a question, written to understand how well the students have understood the close relationship between humans, plants, insects and other animals. Besides the written test the teacher also organised group discussion which helped her in summative assessment.

This assessment of students' performance, at the end of teaching the EVS theme of 'Our Family and Friends', helped the teacher to know exactly the number and names of students who lacked the understanding of this important EVS concept, attitude and value. This **summative assessment** helped the teacher to diagnose major gaps in the students' knowledge and understanding. The teacher found that out of the forty students, while all have understood the importance of close relation among the family members; fourteen have not been able to understand



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relationship between humans and other creatures. On realising this, the teacher arranged a talk by a nature enthusiast for her students.

Check Your Progress-3

How will the student's learning in the above mentioned scenario be affected if (a) the teacher did not conduct the summative assessment? (b) The teacher did not interpret the result to realise students' understanding and the gaps in it? How would learning be affected if the corrective action was not taken at all, and if not taken immediately?

Both kinds of assessment—formative and summative—are essential and play important roles in helping teacher understand students' progress and facilitates learning in the class.

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9.6 WHAT MAKES AN ASSESSMENT GOOD?

When do we say that an assessment process has been good one? We can say that an assessment will be good and effective only when the assessment has been valid, reliable, fair and flexible. These are the four important features of good assessment.

- Valid assessment is the one which is relevant to the EVS objectives and also to the learning experiences provided. It addresses the essential skills and knowledge and dimensions of competency, as well as more importantly values.
- Reliable assessment produces consistent outcomes when applied by different teachers in a range of contexts. Objective assessment like 'match the pairs' is likely to be more reliable than subjective assessment such as essay writing.
- Fair assessment does not disadvantage any student and takes into account the personality and preferences of every student being assessed.
- Flexible assessment tools and processes make an assessment suit/ relevant in a range of teaching learning contexts.



Further a good assessment process must be aimed at critiquing the learning and not the learner. It should also focus on the teaching-learning process as well, and not on the outcome only. Thus a good assessment process should be learning centred.

9.7 LEARNING-CENTERED ASSESSMENT

Till now we have been talking of assessment being ‘learning centered’ in various ways. It means that a teacher needs to use assessment with the focus on learning. To bring it into practice, the teacher can use various modes of assessment. You already know of oral, written and performance modes. Some other modes of assessment can be

- self assessment
- peer assessment
- cumulative anecdotal records
- assessment through projects
- extent and quality of participation

9.7.1 Self Assessment and Peer Assessment

There are different modes of assessing what a child has learned. Occasionally the child himself/herself and his/her peers need to assess the learning, and the teacher should make it an important part of the learning process. Mathew Sir asked every child to describe an animal or bird that they have actually observed, during a class presentation. After that he asked each child to list two good things and one aspect that needed improvement in their own presentation. This was a form of self assessment. For different topics, he continued the self assessment every week for a month and asked the children to notice gradual improvement in the same aspects where one needed improvement. Would you like to try this out in your class? What will be the benefits of this kind of self assessment?

When a child appreciates the map of school premises, drawn by a friend, it is peer assessment. The teacher can ask each child to appreciate a special skill of the classmate sitting next to her and record it as a peer assessment.

Various kinds of self assessment as well as peer assessment can add much value to the overall assessment process. Appreciation by self and classmates makes the child feel better about self. It can help the child build self esteem. During cooperative learning, group members are often asked to rate the positive social behaviour of other members like helping and encouraging. A word of caution, the teacher needs to take care so that self and peer assessment neither become a tool of excessive praise nor undue criticism for any child.

**Notes****Sociometry**

Developed by Jacob Moreno (1887 – 1974), the purpose of sociometry is to facilitate group task effectiveness and satisfaction of participants by bringing about greater degrees of mutuality amongst people and greater authenticity in relationships.

Teachers know that the groups of children they work with are more than an aggregation of individuals. They know that the groups have form and structure: that there are patterns of sub-groups, cliques, and specific friendships. Some children are liked by their group more than others. Some are also less liked and often even rejected by their group. The patterns of friendship and rejection play an important role in determining how the group will react to learning situations, and to various types of group management techniques which teachers might wish to use.

Sociometry is an important tool of peer assessment. Generally it helps the teacher know the popular and loner children and children's groups in the class. Following picture gives an idea of how the sociometry techniques helps teacher understand student interrelations in a class.

9.7.2 Cumulative Anecdotal Records

Manorama teacher often uses anecdotal records in assessment. She always carries her small diary and a pen with her, ready to note down significant and interesting details of students' behaviour. One day, she happened to see in her class that the student Bittu gave coloured chalks to Rinku, whose parents could not afford to buy the same. During visit to a bakery with her students, she noticed Fatima asking many questions about baking of biscuits. Manorama teacher noted both the incidences in brief. One day, while going home with friends, Seeta saw a snake and keeping her cool, managed to take the group away to safety. After hearing the story from Seeta, Manorama teacher made a note of Seeta's courage and leadership qualities. Bobby was afraid of dogs, and children often teased him. Manorama teacher came to know of it when she found Bobby beating other children and asked him for the reason. She tried to take away his fear of dog by getting a pet dog in school once a week for a few weeks and gradually Bobby overcame his fear for dogs. She noted this change in Bobby and reported it in the progress book.



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Check Your Progress-4

- Why does Manorama take note of such episodes/ observations? Suppose you are in her place, describe how are you going to use these records?

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On different occasions, different types of incidences are noted by the teacher. Such observations, on each child, get accumulated in the teacher’s diary. At the end of the year, different notings for every child make a cumulative anecdotal record for that child.

9.7.3 Assessment Through Projects

Projects make an integral part of teaching learning EVS. Two aspects of children’s learning can be assessed through projects. One is their learning of the EVS content and other is the general EVS objectives like the social skills and values. When children carry out a group survey of a local water body, green area and the birds in the vicinity, the teacher can assess a variety of aspects related to not just the content but also other skills, such as:

- Ability to effectively communicate with local communities
- Presentation quality of the project report
- Quality of participation — Students can be asked questions such as (i) name the group members who often helped each other (ii) name the friends in your group (iii) were you able to resolve differences of opinion during the group work? (iv) did you share the resources?
- Ability to think and analyse processes and relations in real life situation.

9.7.4 Extent and Quality of Participation

The learners while being engaged in the process of learning in school plant they undergo variety of situations of participation in discussing with peer and teacher. The learners are of different types from the point of view of their participation. Some are quite active and raise various questions based on their view points and try to formulate knowledge on their own if given chance. The extent of their



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quality of participation is least dependent on teacher's presence resulting in increasing retention of knowledge they become rich source of feedback on the quality of learning situations for the teacher even their participations become self-monitored and self-assessed to a great extent.

Second group of learners mostly accepts view point of the teacher obediently accepts whatever comes to it and try to internalise without raising little questions. As a result the scope of feedback gets restricted. They also show the dependency syndrome on teachers resulting in less efficient retention. This provides less scope for effective learning centred assessment.

The third category carries some learners who are not very much interested in the learning process. Under compulsion they are in the class. They find little interest in learning if given chance they prefer to run away from the class. They seldom participate in learning activities and mostly dependent on rote learning. The extent of their mental presence due to their childhood status is very much dependent on teacher's presence in the class resulting in less retention of knowledge. The poor quality of participation provides little scope for learning centred assessment. Here, as a teacher your role must be very specific in creating situations where the extent and quality of learner participation be maintained resulting in effective learning centred assessment.

9.8 LET US SUM UP

Assessment is a critical part of formal teaching learning process. Good assessment is about assessing learning and supporting learners in overcoming shortfalls in her learning process. For assessment to be effective, it must be continuous and comprehensive, reliable, valid, fair and flexible. Positive teacher's outlook towards the process of assessment in the classroom as a tool to support learning can make learning meaningful. A variety of learning centred approaches can help achieve the process of assessment.

You will learn about tools and techniques of assessment in the next part of this unit.

9.9 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check your progress-1

Answer will be subjective from your experience you have to write the answers

Check your progress-2

Answer from your own experience appropriate to the situation created



Check your progress-3

Answers appropriate to the situation

Check your progress-4

Given your own expert opinion appropriate to the situation

9.9 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

- <http://fcit.usf.edu/assessment/basic/basicc.html>
- <http://www.learningandteaching.info/teaching/assessment.htm>
- learnline.cdu.edu.au/t41/teachinglearning/assessmentvet.html
- www.cal.org/flad/tutorial/reliability/3andvalidity.html)

9.10 UNIT-END EXERCISES

1. Review the various assessment interactions that you had with your students during last year. Highlight the types of assessment used by you. Critique each one of them for its effectiveness.
2. Share your experiences of assessing a child's learning in a group work situation. What key criteria did you use for the same.