Policy Lessons for Inclusion from the Fate of the CCE Within the Performativity Culture in Education

Nalini Juneja

Executive Summary

This article uses the fate of the Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE)—a process of classroom transaction mandated by the Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009 as a case to illustrate the point that altering policy alone is insufficient to effect change and inclusion. The existing paradigm, in this case, the culture of performativity in education, through its obeisance to marks, grades, and detention as indicators of learning and merit, feeds off and in turn sustains beliefs in the role of education in maintaining the social status quo.

The provisions of the RTE Act 2009 were built to work together as an organic unit to support the well acknowledged principle that knowledge cannot simply be transferred from teacher to pupil. Using this principle known as constructivism, which also underlies Argyris’s single-loop learning, each child constructs her own understanding and learning. The teacher acts as a facilitator by continuously observing and assessing what the child has understood, and on this basis proceeding to clarify or add information. This process of continuous comprehensive evaluation was mandated in the RTE to enhance both learning and inclusion. Academic authorities under the RTE Act were notified by the central and state governments for prescription of curriculum and evaluation procedures in conformity with the framework of the NCF 2005.

However, as this article shows, it was found that instead of the intended CCE based on the NCF 2005, another procedure, also incidentally named CCE, was being implemented. This CCE process with a system of assessment that was internal to the school had been developed (at short notice) for the secondary stage to replace the 10th class board examinations of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).

The manner in which policy implementation can go astray has been demonstrated in this article as it attempts to describe and explain the appeal of this CCE, which came neither from the authorized academic authority nor was appropriate for the stage at
which it came to be widely adopted. The article dwells on the policy actors, their motivations and interests, and this all too hasty application of CCE which predictably failed to enhance learning at the developmental stage at which it was applied. The ricocheting effects of this misapplication have led to the RTE Act being placed in Parliament to allow the state to bring back the pass–fail system, and the culture of performativity and exclusion at the elementary stage that the RTE Act had aimed at eradicating.

In conclusion, this article returns to implications of this case for any cultural change in public policy without first changing the social norms that sustain such policies of exclusion.

A s undergraduate students of psychology, one of our first ‘experiments’ in the psychology lab was on ‘knowledge of results’. Here, a ‘subject’ (usually a wary student from another course) was blindfolded and instructed to turn a pointer on its pivot to make an angle of 45 degrees, 30 degrees, etc. Subjects who were told how close they came to the required target were found to progressively improve with each attempt, while the subjects who were given no such simultaneous feedback of assessment, or ‘knowledge of results’, did not.

I was unimpressed by this introduction to the psychology of learning; did something as obvious as this really need to be demonstrated by an experiment? Today, I worry that this fundamental principle seems to be overlooked to ensure that every child learns. This happens, even as the right to education and learning is avowed as integral to the 12th plan agenda of inclusive growth. Issues of annual surveys of learning achievement in schools, of reintroduction of 10th class board examinations, and a return of detention policies dominate current emanations from the NITI Aayog, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), and the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), respectively—all apparently in an endeavour to ensure the betterment of learning for all children in schools. Foregrounding these is the disenchantment with Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE), a curricular intervention intended to ensure that every child learns through the institutionalization of a process that is child-centred, integral to the learning process and of benefit to both “learners themselves and to the educational system by giving credible feedback” (NCF, 2005, p. 71).

In 2009, the Right to Education (RTE) Act had mandated ‘continuous and comprehensive evaluation (CCE) of a child’s understanding and ability to apply the same’ (Section 29.2.h) to complement policies such as no detention and age appropriate admission at the elementary stage among its slew of reform measures having the potential to transform the institutional structure and climate of elementary education in India (Kumar, 2017). Simultaneously, for the secondary stage, the CBSE announced a paradigm shift from examination to effective pedagogy in the replacement of its 10th class board exams with school-based evaluation—CCE with effect from 2011 (CBSE, Circular No. 39).

However, barely after it lifted off, CCE is in trouble at both the elementary and the secondary stages. In October 2016, at the 64th meeting of the CABE, expressing concern at “deteriorating learning outcomes it was resolved, to amend the no-detention policy by making suitable amendments to the RTE Act”, and in August 2017, a Bill in Parliament to this effect was introduced (MHRD, 2016, p. 16). Thus, the imminent return of pass–fail exams in elementary classes will make CCE redundant at the elementary stage. While at the secondary stage, the announcement, almost immediately thereafter, by the CBSE, of the restoration of 10th class board exams for the 10th grade from the year 2017–2018, knells the demise of the CCE even at this stage (CBSE Circular No. Acad-05).

The culture of performativity in education—a term used by Stephen J. Ball (2000) to describe society’s obsession with statistics, testing, grades, and goals—has often been rued in reiterating that education should be about all round development of potential rather than about marks in an annual exam. In this context, therefore, this article attempts to understand this rejection of CCE—a system which had sought to counter this culture of performativity through a child-centred intervention rooted in the principle of simultaneous feedback in order to ensure that every child learns. The article reflects on the research on CCE in practice, using the lens of organizational theory to draw implications for the success and sanguinity of future attempts at ensuring that each child is learning. At the outset, however, this article explains how learning is constructed—a process which those familiar with organization theory will recognize as akin to single-loop learning (Argyris, 1976).
CONSTRUCTIVISM, LEARNING LOOPS AND THE RTE

In order to understand how the RTE Act attempted to facilitate learning, one first needs to appreciate the process of learning itself. Frequently conceptualized as the filling of a jar, it has for long been recognized that learning is not as simple as transferring knowledge from one mind to another. For instance, all students on hearing the same lecture do not acquire the same knowledge, and will not reproduce it like a tape playing back a recording. The fact that every child understands and learns differently tells us that the process of learning involves connecting new information to existing understanding and constructing new knowledge with the help of cognitive resources, tools, and social interactions.

If knowledge cannot be transferred, then the teacher cannot be a giver but the facilitator of that knowledge. Within classroom interaction, the child makes explicit his/her current understanding (and is thus an active partner and not a passive receiver)—thereby enabling a teacher to correct, clarify, add, and further facilitate the construction of knowledge in a continuous process of assessing, evaluating, and facilitating. The process of learning thus builds on a student’s existing knowledge, with facilitation from the teacher. Known as constructivism, this paradigm of learning is at the core of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005. This along with a process of CCE, of what needs to be done next to facilitate learning by the teacher, has been described as ‘two of the most progressive measures to reconceptualise and re-imagine what was essentially a rote-based education system’ (Economic & Political Weekly [EPW], 2017, p. 9).

The similarity of this process to Argyris and Schon’s (1978) single-loop learning might immediately be apparent to students of organizational theory, for it too is grounded in constructivism (Kinsella, 2006). Furthermore, an understanding of the learning loop and the management of organizational learning as interdependent processes allow one to more readily appreciate the clauses of the RTE Act 2009 that sought to make provision for the enabling conditions for a constructivist process of teaching and learning in classrooms.

THE ORGANIZATION OF LEARNING AND THE RTE ACT

The RTE Act restricts class sizes, to a maximum of 40 children at the primary stage and to 35 children per class for grades 6–8, to ensure that the teacher may devote the individual attention necessary to active engagement and discovery of each child’s current state of knowledge. To empower teachers to devote themselves solely to teaching (and escape deployment for cattle censuses, etc.), the RTE Act prohibits non-teaching duties except for those related to election, census, and disaster management. A teacher’s duty has been for the first time been specified by law, as are a minimum number of school working days and teacher working hours (distinct from instructional hours). Clauses provide for teachers to be professionally trained, and for their service conditions and remunerations to be according to declared norms—a sore point with schools gaining from exploitation of the teacher labour market.

All children must only be in full-time formal schools (and not in part-time non-formal education centres for the poor). For the first time in India, a school is defined by law and norms for basic infrastructure (like an all-weather building, etc.) prescribed.

With schools, teachers, and children in place, the RTE Act mandates the conditions for learning and construction of knowledge—a school environment without corporal punishment, fear, or threats. A provision for no-detention, already a policy in 23 states, was put into the law. If education is child-centred, active, and focused upon all-round development, then evaluation has necessarily to be an ongoing process of observation and correction. Therefore, CCE was mandated as part of the teaching–learning process.

Thus, in the RTE Act, learning is understood as being constructed in a process very similar to Argyris and Schon’s single-loop learning through a continuous process of detection and correction of error, while other clauses of the Act put together the conditions for such learning to take place, which, as in the case of Senge’s learning organizations (Senge, 1990), work together as a system.

Working together as a system, the RTE Act had the potential for actualizing individual goals of personal learning and national goals of the right of elementary education of each and every child. Perhaps, this strength was also its weakness. The removal of any one key element also had the potential to unravel it.

CONTINUOUS AND COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION (CCE)

The term CCE is indigenous in its genesis. CCE was recommended as an alternative to annual examinations
in the report of the India Education Commission (1964-66, also referred to as Kothari Commission), and reiterated in the National Policy on Education, 1986. Evolving in its conceptualization, the NCFs of 2000 and 2005 recommended it as a system of evaluation ‘integral to the teaching learning process’ (Sharma, 2014, p. 3). CCE involving ‘ongoing observational and qualitative assessments of children and the use of feedback within learning activities using a “daily dairy” as the tool in this process was advised by the National Curriculum Framework 2005’ (NCF, 2005, p. 73). In this sense, CCE is a process of assessment for learning and has been described as ‘an Indian form of formative assessment’ (Sreekanth, 2017, p. 3). CCE primers produced by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT, n.d.) demonstrate its use for all subjects at the elementary stage.

For the secondary stage, the CBSE conceptualized CCE as sets of ‘formative assessments’ (FAs), the scores for which, fed into the scores of term-end tests called ‘summative assessments’ (SAs) that provided a final score at the end of each grade. Worldwide, the process of FA is used by teachers and students to provide feedback during instruction in order to adjust ongoing teaching and learning. Acknowledged as a route to raising student achievement, the term FA has acquired a buzzword status (Louie et al., 2011). SA, in contrast to FA, involves tests or regular activities separate from the teaching–learning process, such as in tests at the end of a completion of a chapter or at the end of term.

THE CCE IN PRACTICE

Research studies on implementation of the CCE report confusion among teachers and parents about CCE (Chopra & Bhatia, 2014; Jhingran, 2016; Kothari & Thomas, 2012; Mohanty, 2010; Sharma, 2016; Singhal, 2012). Srinivasan (2015) reports that teachers are as scared of CCE as the students.

The system of evaluation, instead of becoming integrated into the process of teaching and learning, were felt as an extra burden. The shifting of focus away from teaching–learning to the process of assessment and record-keeping, and of time being wasted in the process of maintaining records, were a common refrain from the field (Jhingran, 2016; Nawani, 2013; Sharma, 2016; Singhal, 2012). Mohanty (2010), for example, reported that students feel that it will mean more assessments for them on an ongoing basis. Teachers feel that their work has increased tremendously with assessments having additional descriptive indicators.

In place of the envisaged flexibility in curriculum transformation, it was found that ‘the requirements of following certain formats has come to dominate schooling and that teachers fulfil the needs of the CBSE-CCE in a mechanical manner’ (Srinivasan, 2015, p. 81).

The situation was not much different at the elementary stage in government schools. In a study of CCE programmes of 12 states and union territories (UT) across India, it was found that instead of following the more flexible pattern advised by the NCERT, the CCE material of most states comprised of ‘formal prescriptive and rigid recording procedures of the FAs’ (Sharma, 2014, p. 14). The study noted with disapproval that the practice of ‘gathering information of child’s learning progress through different cycles of FAs and SAs is being used to label her/him with a particular level and is beating the purpose of assessment for learning and assessment as learning’ (Sharma, 2014, p. 13).

Similarly, it was noted by Jhingran (2016, p. 95) that the teaching–learning process itself, far from becoming child-centred, ‘continues to be teacher centred and focussed on rote memorisation, choral repetition and the copying kind of drill-oriented activities’. The maintaining of records too had become dissociated from what was taking place in the classroom and,

[It]he most disturbing finding from the field was that across states and schools, CCE records are exclusively maintained for showing supervisors, and for reporting to parents, never for understanding students learning progress, gaps and needs. Recording of assessment findings (qualitative or marks/grades) seems to be an end in itself. (Jhingran, 2016, p. 100)

These disparaging research reports on the CCE add to the negative opinions expressed in meetings of the Committee for Assessment and Implementation of CCE in the context of the No-Detention Provision in the RTE Act set up in 2012 (also known as the Geeta Bhukkal Committee). At the final meeting of this subcommittee, the chairperson summarized its views thus:

In all the field visits undertaken by the sub-committee and in class room interactions with the student, teachers and parents, there is a common perception about negative impact of No Detention policy. All of them have expressed a need for detention policy if the performance of schools and students have to be improved. So many states raised this issue in the CABE meeting because they are dealing with field responses. In the state legislative assemblies, Education Ministers are being questioned on the rationale and implication of introducing No Detention policy.
In Haryana, Call Attention motions have been moved on the subject. If the records of other state assemblies are examined, such discussions are likely to be available. This was a demand for re-examination of this provision by large number of states which led to constitution of the Sub-Committee to review this matter in detail.

(Report of the ‘Committee for Assessment and Implementation of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation [CCE] in the context of the No Detention Provision in the RTE Act’ GOI, [2014, p. 233])

Expectedly, this subcommittee recommended amendment of the roll-out plan of no-detention; and their advice for ‘a system of state-wide assessment at grades 3, 5 and 8—with no detention up to grade 5, provisional promotion after grade 5 and detention after level 8’, all but rendered CCE as superfluous (GOI, 2014, p. 17).

CCE: QUITE CONTRARY

As observed earlier, contrary to the high expectations from CCE in bringing about a transformation in the education system, through a process of FA integrated into the teaching learning process, what transpired was quite reverse. Not only were CCE/no-detention resisted politically but field experiences of CCE too belied the anticipated freedom from examinations, stress reduction, and child-centred flexibility in curriculum transaction.

Moreover, although two variants of CCE were available (one developed by the NCERT for the elementary stage and the other by the CBSE), in the field the variants of the CBSE model (characterized by FA scores added to SA scores) were predominantly found to be in use in most states—even at the elementary stage, and also in central schools such as Kendriya Vidyalayas, and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (for which the NCERT was the notified academic authority for curriculum and evaluation under the RTE Act).

THE CBSE MODEL OF FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

The findings from research studies that the CCE in practice (predominantly the CBSE model of CCE) was confusing and burdensome instead of stress reducing and learning enhancing prompts questions about why it was perceived that way.

Closing examination of the CBSE manual (CBSE, 2010a) and the procedures for FA reveals an operationalization of FA inconsistent with internationally accepted definitions such as those of UNESCO’s International Bureau of Education (IBE; 2013) which stipulates FA as integral to the teaching–learning process, involving students in the process of assessment and feeding back to inform students and the adaptation of ongoing curriculum transaction. Globally, FA is understood as a ‘process’ (and therefore not marked or graded, as was done in the case of the FAs of the CBSE)—‘any assessment system that involves tests or regular activities that are interpreted in relation to performance criteria and which are reported are deemed summative assessment of learning’ (Brown, 2013, p. 2). Recognizing the intricacy of this process, Black (2007) explains:

A frequent misunderstanding is that any assessment by teachers, and in particular the use of a weekly test to produce a record of marks, constitutes formative assessment. It does not. Unless some learning action follows from the outcomes, such practice is merely frequent summative assessment: the key feature, interaction through feedback, is missing. Another misunderstanding is the belief that this is about the coursework assessment that forms part of some GCEs; such assessment cannot aid learning unless there is active feedback to improve pupils’ work as it develops. (Black, 2007, p. 2)

CBSE’s operationalization of FA as marked FAs and added to SAs (end of term SA) has evoked academic censure. Even the report of the Geeta Bhukkal Committee set up in 2012 notes that academic member Vinod Raina questioned the lack of coherence between CCE of NCERT and CBSE, and reported inadequacies in the understanding of CCE; academic member Dr Kiran Devendra of NCERT is quoted as having ‘expressed concern on conducting more number of tests in the name of CCE’; and that academic member Professor Nargis Panchpakesan, ‘criticised that most of the schools are adopting CBSE CCE against NCERT CCE’ (GOI, 2014, p. 170).

According to Sharma (2016, p. 88), ‘the traditional system of examinations is being merely dressed up in a new set of terms (formative and summative assessment, scholastic and co-scholastic domains, and the like) instead of the necessary holistic shift in approach to assessment that is actually called for’. While Srinivasan (2015, p. 62) derisively refers to this ‘division of the assessment of the so-called scholastic areas or curricular areas into FA and SA as the CBSE’s major contribution to the evolution of the CCE framework’.
Sreekanth (2017) raised objections to ‘a centralised prescription and monitoring mechanism [which] takes away the essence of FA’ (p. 13) and to the summing up of FA and SA scores, ‘aggregating the two together to produce end of year grades is questionable’ (p. 4).

‘The reason for this state of affairs’ according to Srinivasan (2015, p. 82), who had studied the implementation of the CBSE model of CCE in Jawaher Navodaya Schools, may be attributed to the gaps in the understanding of CCE at the planning level in the three important organisations involved in the business, namely, NCERT, CBSE and NVS’. On the other hand, perhaps with greater insider information, Sreekanth (2017, p. 14) attributes the ‘missing linkages and coherence between CCE concept and operationalization to the lack of engagement of suitable expertise for the academic activity, having theoretical and practical understanding, appropriate to the context, and keeping current concerns in clear focus’. He raised issues regarding understanding of the philosophy of FA among the group formulating the CBSE manual on CCE:

The composition of the group that has formulated the CBSE manual is largely drawn from the practitioner community (teachers) whose practical experience and interests are of course important to be taken into account. However, there is a lack of involvement of academics in the group who understand the philosophical dimensions of the reform and the appropriate role of FA in the new context. (Sreekanth, 2017, p. 14)

If indeed the CBSE’s formulation of CCE resulted from misunderstanding of the FA construct, then three questions come to the fore. First, the question of its launch in this condition by the CBSE; second, of the unquestioning adoption of this model, even at the elementary stage by the central government and by most state governments; and third, of the appeal of this model over the NCERT model of CCE.

LAUNCH, ADOPTION, AND APPEAL WITHIN A PERFORMATIVITY CULTURE

Launch by CBSE

Parallels come to mind from a historic, premature, and ill-fated launch of NASA’s Challenger, which exploded soon after lift-off. Researchers who examined this disaster through a behavioural ethics lens found that in common with many organizational and policy decisions, the construal of the issue had a determining effect on the decision to launch. Ambiguity regarding the technical safety of the Challenger’s ‘O-Rings’ should have, according to Tenbrunsel and Bazerman (2011, p. 2), been perceived from the perspective of safety first. However, framing it as a management decision ensured the fading out of issues such as safety first, while issues of time and efficiency, and of pleasing the bosses at NASA came to the fore.

In the case of CBSE’s CCE, Sreekanth (2017) points out that the reform was launched without a pilot study being carried out to ascertain its feasibility and modification needs. He says, ‘in the case of CCE of the CBSE, focus group discussions were held with stakeholders and the scheme was then launched across all schools affiliated to the CBSE…’ (p. 18). The CBSE (2009) announced its scheme to all the heads of the CBSE institutions on the 20 September 2009, and in explaining its rationale quoted the then Union Minister for Human Resource Development:

Push the process of examination reform in accordance with NCF 2005. This will include making the Class X examination optional, thus permitting students continuing in the same school (and who do not need a board certificate) to take an internal school assessment instead. (Press Information Bureau [PIB], 2009)

This quote is from the Agenda item No. 7 of the Minister’s first 100 days agenda announced on the 29 June 2009 (PIB, 2009). It was perhaps the rush to meet the deadline of the Minister’s 100 day agenda which prompted CBSE’s urgency to launch its CCE without trial.

ADOPTION BY GOVERNMENTS

Srinivasan (2015, p. 62) points out that ‘after RTE, 2009 came into effect; the CBSE extended the implementation of CCE for Classes VI–VIII in the schools that are affiliated to it. The CBSE published a series of manuals on CCE. Later, many states introduced CCE for Classes I–VIII’. Thus, within less than a year, the CBSE had not only extended itself to its own schools beyond the secondary stage (CBSE, 2010a) but the same model was adopted by schools under the central government and, as reiterated by Srinivasan, state governments too adopted this model for the elementary stage of Classes I–VIII. One explanation for this is obvious, when the RTE Act came into effect in 2010, CBSE’s CCE model was readily available, whereas NCERT exemplars did not come out for a few more years thereafter (Jhingran, 2016).
Neo-institutional explanations for the ready adoption of the CBSE’s CCE lie in the view of institutions being embedded in and influenced by their environment (field) from whom they seek legitimacy. In situations of uncertainty rather than functional efficiency, which is often difficult to ascertain, logics of confidence and good faith prevail (Meyer & Rowan, 1977), in this case, faith in the CBSE. Furthermore, isomorphism with dominant others in the field offers both supportive buffering and shared legitimacy. Viewed from these standpoints, reassurance feasibly met convenience in state governments’ decision to adopt a tried and tested model of CCE already in use in private CBSE and central government schools.

‘PERFORMATIVITY CULTURE’: THE APPEAL OF CBSE’S CCE

‘Currently the board examinations negatively influence all testing and assessment throughout the school years beginning with pre-school’ (NCF, 2005, p. 71). Even as most would agree with this statement in the NCF, it is equally true that examinations, marks, and grades represent the familiar that one is comfortable with. Marks and grades enable one to know how a child is doing in school. Across schools, their relative performances in board exams are perceived as indicators of their standing. Thus, even as one might disparage such a culture of performativity in the education system, the fear of negotiating the educational minefield devoid of such performance markers supports resistance to their obliteration.

Conceding the necessity to acknowledge social and parental subscription to the performativity culture, Dhankar (2017) points out that the most important argument of those wanting to rescind CCE and reinstate a compulsory board is that ‘the children will reach the next level of school grossly under-prepared …. This argument cannot be dismissed summarily’.

The choice and reinforcement of CBSE’s model of CCE, with its multiple-registered, marked, and summated tests in preference over the NCERT’s model (devoid of such dramatic evidences) was thusly set in the logics of a culture of performativity. Jhingran (2016, p. 16) points out that ‘in most states, the conduct of periodic assessments using a fixed set of prescribed tools and techniques and recording marks/grades or descriptive qualitative statements is considered the important part of CCE’.

In this model, FA, although described by the manual as an integral part of teaching–learning activity, ‘included grading and marking and a weightage in the semester and year-end final grade’. Astonishingly, it was found that the state-level core group was aware that this was conceptually not appropriate; nonetheless, they opined that this ‘needs to be done because formative assessment will not get done if it is not graded and no weightage is assigned to it’ (Jhingran, 2016, p. 54).

![image]

Perhaps this finding of a deliberate twist of meaning to FA in the above case to serve the purpose not of CCE, but of teacher accountability, supports Sreekanth’s apprehension about the CBSE’s FA, and whether ‘as an affiliating and monitoring agency for the schools affiliated to the Board, it has adopted its own priorities and mechanism to implement CCE which is not in conformity with the philosophy of FA’ (2017, p. 15).

Prevailing dispositions in favour of performativity in education make it easy to comprehend the attractiveness to policymakers of assessments which serve multiple, even contradictory purposes, exemplifying Ball’s statement (2000, p. 2) that ‘performativity is a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation, or a system of terror in the operation of which purposes are contradictory, motivations blurred’. Apparently, the very appeal of CBSE’s CCE lay in its unproblematic accommodation, in contrast to the systemic transformation required by NCERT’s CCE, within the existing examination-valuing status quo. Second, its adoption by CBSE-affiliated and central government schools lent credence to its functional fitness as an appropriate tool for the assessment for learning that it purported to be. But above all, perhaps the deciding factor in its appeal to policymakers, as seen in the case of Gujarat, resided in its potential as a tool for teacher accountability.

Thus, as seen in this section the CCE in practice, in its design and implementation, was mutated by understandings of education by actors e.g. policymakers, teachers, parents, society—within the frame of reference of a performativity culture, reducing it to a competitive game and a set of motions to be ticked off as done. The frame itself, through which the CCE was construed and understood, remained untouched.

CONCLUSION

What does the lesson of the CCE portend for education within the agenda of inclusive growth? Is it, as suggested by the experiment described at the beginning
of this article, about the psychology of learning and the presence/absence of the all-important feedback (learning) loop connecting performance achievements and objectives? Would a policy designed to fit the feedback loop correctly into the teaching learning process change policy outcomes to ensure that every child learns? As seen in this article, the intent of policy, its tools, and its processes of implementation are mediated by understandings and meaning-making by actors in the system.

In the context of India, Wiener’s (1991) research on the belief systems of educational policymakers shows that India’s per capita income and economic situation is less relevant as an explanation than the belief systems of the state bureaucracy. According to Weiner:

At the core of these beliefs is the Indian view of the social order, notions concerning the respective roles of upper and lower social strata, the role of education as a means of maintaining differentiations among social classes, and concerns that ‘excessive’ and ‘inappropriate’ education for the poor would disrupt existing social arrangements. (1991, p. 5)

It was in line with such beliefs, widely shared by educators, social activists, trade unionists academic researchers, and, more broadly by members of the Indian middle class, holds Weiner, “that resources were channelled into elite government and state aided private schools, in an effort to create an educated class that is equal to educated classes in the West, and that is capable of creating and managing a modern enclave economy” (1991, p. 5).

Weiner could well have been echoing Weber’s (1946 [1922–1923], p. 280) famous ‘switchmen’ metaphor:

Not ideas, but material and ideal interests, directly govern men’s conduct. Yet very frequently the ‘world images’ that have been created by ‘ideas’ have, like switchmen, determined the tracks along which action has been pushed by the dynamic of interest.

What the psychology of learning experiment failed to consider or convey to me at that time, I realize now, is that the feedback to the learner is mediated through the will of the interventionist and his/her motivations to enable the learner to learn. Policy is implemented by administrators, teachers, and others in the system, and its lines of action are determined by the ‘dynamic of interest’. Education policy necessarily involves teachers but often fails to ‘involve’ them. Gavin Brown reminds us,

It cannot be assumed teachers will enact policy as intended. Indeed there is strong evidence that how teachers conceive of a phenomenon, acts to filter (i.e. control what they will pay attention to), frame (i.e. control how they will understand what they pay attention to), and guide (i.e. influence their behaviour) their responses to that phenomenon. (2016, p. 1)

Policy intentions require shared values and commitment to purpose—including, as pointed out by Jhingran (2013, p. 31), ‘teachers’ beliefs about children’s learning, teaching, assessment, the hierarchical teacher–student relationship, etc.’ Nawani (2013, p. 40) too reminds us, as does the fate of the RTE mandated CCE, ‘isolated reforms in techniques of measurement will not have much meaning unless accompanied by concomitant changes in the classroom culture’. The culture of performativity which pervades our system of education and our conceptions of what education is, what it is for, and even the organization of the process of teaching–learning itself needs overhauling, if it truly wants to embrace every child within the larger agenda of inclusive growth. The manner in which a CCE was instantly prepared and administratively applied to the educational system without reflection, testing, or preparation is but an example of the culture that needs to change in order to walk the talk of inclusive education.

NOTES

1. The views expressed in the article are personal.
2. According to UNESCO’s IBE Glossary of Curriculum Terminology, both Formative assessment and Assessment for Learning are part of the teaching learning process and used only for understanding learner’s needs, and involves learners in the process: Assessment for learning - Assessment of learner’s progress and achievement, the primary purpose of which is to support and enhance learning by adapting the educational process to meet the learner’s needs whenever required. See also ‘Formative assessment’. (Pg 6)

Formative assessment - Assessment conducted throughout the educational process with a view to enhancing student learning. It implies: eliciting evidence about learning to close the gap between current and desired performance (so that action can be taken to close the gap); providing feedback to students; and involving students in the assessment and learning process. (Source: CCSSO 2008). See also ‘Assessment for learning’-. (Pg 27)

Source: Unesco International Bureau of Education (2013) IBE glossary of curriculum terminology. Retrieved from https://www.kicd.ac.ke/images/ICT/IBE_curriculum_glossary_final.pdf
REFERENCES

Argyris, C. (1976). Single-loop and double-loop models in research on decision-making. Administrative Science Quarterly, 21(3), 363–375.

Argyris, C., & Schon, D. A. (1978). Organisational learning: A theory of action perspective. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Ball, S. (2000). Performativities and fabrications in the education economy: Towards the performative society. Australian Educational Researcher, 27(2).

Black, P. (2007). Full marks for feedback. Make the Grade: Journal of the Institute of Educational Assessors, 2(1), 18–21. Retrieved 19 January 2018, from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Paul_Black5/publication/255626594_Full_marks_for_feedback/links/54f9f87e0cf21ee4fdddfe51.pdf

Brown, G. T. (2013). Assessing assessment for learning: Reconsidering the policy and practice. In M. East & S. May (Eds), Making a Difference in Education and Social Policy. Auckland, NZ: Pearson. Retrieved 20 January 2018, from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Gavin_Brown3/publication/259461548

Brown, G. T. L. (2016). Improvement and accountability functions of assessment: Impact on teachers’ thinking and action. In M. A. Peters (Ed.), Encyclopedia of educational philosophy and theory. Singapore: Springer Science + Business Media. doi:10.1007/978-981-287-532-7 391–2

CBSE. (2009). Circular No. 39/20–09-2009. Retrieved 16 November 2015, from http://cbse.nic.in/circulars/cir39-2009.pdf

———. (2010a). Continuous and comprehensive evaluation manual for teachers classes VI to VIII. Retrieved 16 November 2015, from http://www.cbse.nic.in/ncert/index.html; http://cbseacademic.in/web_material/cceresources/3_CCE_Manual_Revised_2011.pdf

———. (2010b). Circular No. 59 dated 9th September, 2010. Retrieved 20 January 2018, from http://www.cbse.nic.in/circulars/cir59–2010.pdf

———. (2017). CBSE circular No.:Acad-05/2017 dated 31/01/2017. Retrieved from http://49.50.70.100/web_material/Circulars/2017/05.circular_10th_Board_Exam_English.pdf

Chopra, V., & Bhatia, R. (2014). Practices of teachers’ in implementing continuous and comprehensive evaluation: An exploratory study. MIER Journal of Educational Studies, Trends & Practices, 2(2), November, 168–176.

Dhankar, R. (2017, February 9). Why we fail out children. The Indian Express. Retrieved 20 January 2018, from epaper.indianexpress.com/c/16726250

Dhankar, R. (2017, February 9). Why we fail out children. The Indian Express. Retrieved 20 January 2018, from epaper.indianexpress.com/c/16726250

Economic & Political Weekly (EPW). (2017). Editorial: Will detaining children ensure learning? Economic & Political Weekly, 52(34), 26 August, 8–9.

Jhingran, D. (2013). Learning for all: Assessing and improving children’s learning in India. Background Paper presented at the Roundtable Discussion on ‘Enhancing Teaching–Learning Outcomes’, UNICEF, New Delhi, 12–13 December 2013.

———. (2016). Review of continuous and comprehensive evaluation in six states in India. New Delhi: UNICEF.

Kinsella, E. (2006). Constructivist underpinnings in Donald Schön’s theory of reflective practice: Echoes of Nelson Goodman. Reflective Practice, 7(3), August, 277–286.

Kothari, R. G., & Thomas, V. M. (2012). A study on implementation of continuous and comprehensive evaluation in upper primary schools of Kerala. MIER Journal of Educational Studies, Trends & Practices, 2(2), November, 168–176.

Kumar, K. (2017, December 20). Don’t make the class 10 boards compulsory once again. Hindustan Times. Retrieved 20 January 2018, from http://www.hindustantimes.com/opinion/don-t-make-the-class-10-boards-compulsory-once-again/story-bkUauRSgb99BEnOHXz2cEL.html

Louie, J., Sánchez, M. T., North, C., Cazabon, M., Mello, D., & Kagle, M. (2011). A descriptive analysis of state-supported formative assessment initiatives in New York and Vermont (Issues & Answers Report, REL. 2012–No. 112). Washington, DC: US Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast and Islands. Retrieved 20 January 2018, from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northeast/pdf/REL_2012112.pdf

Meyer, J. W., & Rowan, B. (1977). Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. American Journal of Sociology, 83(2), 340–363.

MHRD. (2016). Record of Proceedings of the 64th Meeting of CABE held on 25th October, 2016. Retrieved 20 January 2018, from http://mhrd.gov.in/record-proceedings-64th-meeting-cabe-held-25th-october-2016

Mohanty, M. (2010). Impact of CCE in schools. Teacher Plus. Retrieved 20 January 2018, from http://www.teacher-plus.org/comment/impact-of-cce-in-schools

National Curriculum Framework (NCF). 2005. CBSE Circular No. 39/20–09-2009 dated 20th September, 2009. New Delhi: NCERT. Retrieved 20 January 2018, from http://cbse.nic.in/circulars/cir39–2009.pdf

Nawani, D. (2013, January 12). Continuously and comprehensively evaluating children. Economic & Political Weekly, 48(2), 33–40.

NCERT. (n.d.). A primary package (CCE). New Delhi: Author. Retrieved 28 March 2013, from http://www.ncert.nic.in/departments/nie/dee/publication/pdf/CCE_Primary.pdf

Press Information Bureau (PIB). (2009). Announcement of Ministry of Human Resource Development dated 29th June 2009. Retrieved 15 December 2015, from http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelcontent.aspx?relid=49413

Senge, P. M. (2006). The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization. Broadway Business.
Sharma, G. (2016). Reversing the twin ideals of right to education. *Economic & Political Weekly, 51*(9), 85. Retrieved 20 January 2018, from http://www.epw.in/journal/2016/9?0=ip_login_no_cache%3D55303ce3337d46dd884c1f67f5a12acf

Sharma, K. (2014). CCE programme/scheme of states and UTs: A study. Department of Elementary Education, National Council of Educational Research and Training. Retrieved 20 January 2018, from www.ncert.nic.in/departments/nie/dee/publication/pdf/CCEDEE25_8_15.pdf

Singhal, P. (2012). Continuous and comprehensive evaluation: A study of teachers’ perception. *Delhi Business Review, 13*(1), 81–99. Retrieved 15 December 2015, from http://internationalseminar.org/XIII_AIS/TS%2025/23.%20Ms.%20Pooja%20Singhal.pdf

Sreekanth, Y. (2017). Continuous and comprehensive evaluation (CCE): Policy and practice at the national level. *The Curriculum Journal*. Retrieved 20 January 2018, from http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09585176.2016.1275725

Srinivasan, M. V. (2015). Centralised evaluation practices an ethnographic account of continuous and comprehensive evaluation in a government residential school in India. *Contemporary Education Dialogue, 12*(1), 59–86.

Retrieved 20 January 2018, from http://ced.sagepub.com/content/12/1/59.full.pdf

Tenbrunsel, A. E., & Bazerman, M. H. (2011). *Launching into unethical behaviour: Lessons from the challenger disaster*. Retrieved from http://freakonomics.com/2011/06/01/launching-into-unethical-behavior-lessons-from-the-challenger-disaster/

UNESCO-International Bureau of Education. (2013). *Glossary of Curriculum Terminology*. Geneva: UNESCO-IBE. Retrieved 19 January 2018, from http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/IBE_GlossaryCurriculumTerminology2013_eng.pdf

Weber, M. (1946 [1922–1923]). The social psychology of the world religions. In H. H. Gerth & C. Wright Mills (Eds), *From Max Weber* (pp. 267–301). New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Quoted in Swidler, A. (1986). Culture in action: Symbols and strategies. *American Sociological Review, 273–286*. Retrieved 20 January 2018, from https://is.muni.cz/el/1423/podzim2010/SOC978/SOC_470_Swidler.pdf

Weiner, M. (1991). *The child and the state in India: Child labour and education policy in comparative perspective*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

---

**Nalini Juneja** is former Professor and Head, Department of School and Non-Formal Education, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), New Delhi. She was associated since 1996 with working groups of the Ministry of Human Resource Development on right to education. She was a convener of the group which drafted the essential provisions of what is now the RTE Act, 2009, and also participated in drafting its Model Rules. Her research work has revolved mainly around various aspects of the right to education.

e-mail: nalinijuneja@gmail.com