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CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT IN BANGLADESH: EXPLORING  
POLICY AND PRACTICE THROUGH A VERTICAL CASE STUDY**

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CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT IN BANGLADESH: EXPLORING POLICY AND  
PRACTICE THROUGH A VERTICAL CASE STUDY**

A Dissertation Presented

by

SUMERA AHSAN

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

September 2018

College of Education

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SUMERA AHSAN

Approved as to style and content by:

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Cristine Smith, Chair

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Jacqueline Mosselson, Member

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A. Leah Wing, Member

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Jennifer Randall  
Associate Dean of Academic Affairs  
College of Education

## **DEDICATION**

To my father Muhammad Ahsan Ali Sarkar who would have been the happiest to see me here and whom I lost during this journey.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my advisor Dr. Smith for her tremendous support and encouragement. Her thorough review and feedback helped me not only to guide my dissertation, but also to build my academic writing and thinking skills in general. I am grateful to her for trusting me and valuing my ideas. I am thankful to my committee member Jacqueline Mosselson, Ph.D. for her thoughtful and comprehensive critique which was indispensable for a grand writing like dissertation. I thank my committee member Dr. Leah Wing for all her cooperation and, helpful comments and suggestions on all stages of this work.

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **TEACHER EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT IN BANGLADESH: EXPLORING POLICY AND PRACTICE THROUGH A VERTICAL CASE STUDY**

SEPTEMBER 2018

SUMERA AHSAN, B.Ed., UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA

M.Ed., UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA

Ph.D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor Cristine Smith

Formative Classroom Assessment (FCA) can be the single most powerful activity to promote students' learning (Hattie, 2009). In Bangladesh FCA is not in practice (Ahsan, 2009). Policies and teacher preparation on FCA are the two factors that influence the practice of formative assessment in classrooms (Stiggins, 1999; Plake, 1993). In my research I aimed to learn how different actors, discourses, and materials come together to produce policies on FCA in policy network and translate the policies in a Teachers' Training College (TTC), and in classrooms in an urban school.

I used 'critical socio-cultural approach to policy as practice' (Levinson, Sutton & Winstead, 2009) as a theoretical framework to inform my study. Actor Network Theory (Latour, 2005) was used as an analytical tool to analyze data to explore how different human and non-human actors assemble together to produce policy and translate policy into practice. I used Vertical Case Study (Vavrus and Bartlett, 2006) as a research method to collect data from national, regional, and local. At national level, I interviewed five policy actors and analyzed policy document related to FCA. At regional level, in a TTC, I

interviewed the principal of the TTC, six trainers and one practice teacher; observed 14 sessions related to classroom assessment; conducted FGDs with four different trainee groups of pre and inservice teachers; analyzed training manuals and presentations. At local level in an urban school, I interviewed the head teacher, eight teachers, and the supervisor; observed 18 classes; conducted FGDs with two groups of parents and two groups of students; and analyzed CA related materials, such as tests and lesson plans.

Findings reveal that at national level FCA has been termed differently in different policy documents with sporadic interventions. The policy document does not focus on FCA. For the teacher preparation at TTC, the trainers focus teaching mostly on summative assessment. At school there are new teachers who do not have any education or training on FCA. The limited knowledge and skills that experienced teachers acquire from TTC are also restrained by different factors, such as lack of resources and physical facilities, high teacher-student ration, teachers' low motivation, lack of support from the school and community when they try to apply.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	v
ABSTRACT .....	vi
LIST OF TABLES .....	xiv
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xv
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	1
Research Questions .....	4
Rationale of the Study.....	5
Significance of the Study .....	6
Context of the Research .....	7
Secondary Education and Student Assessment in Bangladesh.....	7
Quality of Learning in Secondary Schools .....	9
Factors Affecting Quality of Learning.....	10
Classroom Assessment Practice in Bangladesh .....	12
Teacher Preparation Policies in Bangladesh.....	17
Teacher Preparation Requirement for Prospective Teachers.....	17
Phases of Teacher Preparation .....	18
Organization of Dissertation .....	20
2. LITERATURE REVIEW .....	22
Classroom Assessment.....	22
Formative Classroom Assessment .....	22
Role of FCA in Facilitating Students' Learning.....	25
Formative Classroom Assessment: Poverty of Practice .....	28
Classroom Assessment in Policy .....	31
Teacher Preparation on Classroom Assessment .....	35
Concept of Teacher Preparation.....	35
Outcome of Teacher Preparation on Classroom Assessment .....	37

Classroom Assessment as Pedagogical Knowledge .....	39
Classroom Assessment in Teacher Preparation Programs.....	41
Content, Structure, and Effectiveness .....	41
Teacher Preparation on CA Policy .....	45
School Based Teaching Practice.....	46
Hidden and Null Curriculum .....	48
Theoretical Framework.....	49
Authorized and Unauthorized Policies .....	51
Policy Formation, Negotiation, and Appropriation .....	52
Community of Practice .....	54
Policy as a Practice of Power.....	56
How I Used Theoretical Perspective for My Study .....	57
3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS .....	60
Nature of the Study.....	60
What is Vertical Case Study? .....	60
Theoretical Underpinning of Vertical Case Study.....	61
Research Design.....	65
Sampling of Human and Non-human Actors.....	66
National Level.....	67
Policy Document to Trace .....	67
Key Policy Actors to Trace.....	69
Regional Level .....	70
Data Collection Site .....	70
Human Actors to Trace.....	71
Non-human Actors to Trace.....	72
Tracing the Interaction between Human and Non-human Actors.....	73
Local Level .....	74
Data Collection Site .....	74
Human Actors to Trace.....	75
Non-human Actors to Trace.....	76

	Tracing the Interaction between Human and Non-human Actors.....	77
	Data Collection .....	77
	National Level.....	77
	Document Review.....	77
	Interview .....	78
	Regional Level .....	79
	Observation .....	80
	Interview .....	81
	Focus Group Discussion .....	82
	Document Review.....	82
	Local Level .....	83
	Observation .....	83
	Interview .....	84
	Focus Group Discussion .....	85
	Document Review.....	86
	Data Collection Tools .....	86
	Data Analysis .....	88
	VCS Informing My Data Analysis .....	90
	ANT as an Analytical Tool.....	91
	Critical Socio-Cultural Approach to Policy as Practice: A Theoretical Framework for Analysis .....	92
	Delimitations.....	93
	Ethical Considerations .....	96
	Procedural Ethics .....	97
	Ethics in Practice.....	97
	Trustworthiness of the Research.....	99
4.	FINDINGS FROM NATIONAL LEVEL: POLICY NETWORK.....	102
	Formal Authorized Policies on Classroom Assessment .....	102
	Overview of Authorized Policy Production.....	102

CA in National Education Policy.....	107
Summary and Analysis .....	109
Teacher Preparation on CA in NEP .....	110
Summary and Analysis .....	111
CA in Teacher Preparation Curricula .....	112
Teacher Education Programs .....	113
Bachelor of Education Honors (4 years BEd Hons) .....	113
Bachelor of Education (one year BEd) .....	115
Master of Education (one year MEd).....	116
Teacher Trainings .....	116
Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for Subject Based Training .....	116
35 Days Long Training Course for Future Head of the Institutions.....	117
Training on Digital Content Development .....	118
Summary and Analysis .....	118
CA in School Curriculum .....	120
Summative Assessment .....	120
Classroom Assessment.....	120
Continuous Assessment of the Affective Domain of Learning .....	121
Summary and Analysis .....	122
Policy Negotiation .....	123
Negotiation in Actor Enrollment .....	125
Content Negotiation .....	126
Negotiation in Global and Local Knowledge .....	128
Negotiation in Assessment Discourses .....	130
Summary of the Chapter .....	132
5. FINDINGS FROM REGIONAL LEVEL: TEACHERS' TRAINING COLLEGE.....	134
Teacher Preparation Scope in Kolatoli TTC.....	134
Teacher Education Programs .....	134
Training or Teacher Professional Development .....	134

Teacher Education Curricula Translated into Practice .....	135
Coverage of FCA related topics.....	136
Regularity and Quality of Teaching.....	139
Student Absenteeism .....	141
Motivation to Teach and Motivation to Laern .....	142
Trainer and Trainee Interaction: Actors Co-constructing CA	
Concepts.....	143
Shared Teaching and CA .....	148
Teaching Practice (TP) .....	149
Project-based Short Term Trainings vs. Long Term Teacher	
Education.. .....	154
Assessment of TTC Trainees .....	156
CA Becomes Summative Assessment.....	159
Teacher Training Manuals Translated into Training Practice .....	161
Coverage of FCA in Trainings.....	161
Trainers' Influence on Content of Assessment .....	163
Trainer-Trainee Interaction: Actors Co-constructing School Reality of	
CA.....	166
Nature of the Training.....	169
Assessment of the Trainees.....	170
6. FINDINGS FROM LOCAL LEVEL: SCHOOL AND CLASSROOMS .....	172
Scope of Training on CA for the Teachers in Modhupur High School .....	172
CA Policy as Practiced in Modhupur High School .....	173
Overall Planning for CA .....	174
Class Test Schedule .....	175
Detention.....	175
Actors Co-constructing Informal Policies at School .....	178
Role of Head Teacher in Policy Practice .....	181
Application of Teacher Preparation at School: Possibilities and Challenges .....	182
Dissemination of the Trainings at School.....	182
Teacher Preparation and Changes in Policies.....	184
Follow-up and Supervision at School.....	187

Factors Influencing the Application of Teacher Preparation on CA .....	191
Physical Facilities in the Classroom .....	191
Class Load and Time Constrains .....	194
Number of Students and the Variation in Classrooms.....	195
Teachers' Motivation.....	198
FCA Policy as Practice inside the Classrooms .....	199
Overall CA Techniques in the Classroom .....	199
Questions Asked in the Classroom .....	199
CA Interaction.....	200
Feedback .....	202
Use of Creative Questions (CQ) .....	204
7.    DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION .....	208
Key Findings and Discussion in relation to Research Questions .....	208
CA Policy Production and Negotiation.....	208
Policies on CA Translated to Teacher Preparation .....	211
Policies on CA Translated into Classroom Practice .....	212
Direction for Further Research .....	214
Policy Level .....	214
Regional Level .....	214
Local Level .....	215
Recommendations.....	215
Policy Level .....	215
Teacher Preparation .....	216
Classroom Practice.....	216
Conclusion .....	217
REFERENCES .....	219

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Domains of Continuous Assessment and the Marks Distribution.....	121
2. Number of Teachers in Modhupur High School with Common Teacher Preparation Experience .....	172
3. Form for Collecting Data related to Implementation of CQ Development Methods.....	189
4. Form for Collecting Data related to Continuous Assessment (CA).....	189

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Theoretical Framework for Data Analysis.....	59
2. Levels of Vertical Case Study with the Human and Non-human Actors.....	66



# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### Statement of the Problem

The global movement of Education for All (EFA) with its goal of meeting the learning needs of all by 2015 has a strong emphasis on ensuring learning for all [United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization, (UNESCO, 2000)]. The various initiatives taken to ensure education for all have resulted in significant increase in student enrolment in primary schools. In most countries this quantitative expansion of education came at the expense of quality (Goldstein, 2004; Mundy, 2006). More schools were established and untrained teachers were recruited to meet the increased enrollment in schools. Bangladesh, an EFA signatory country, is not an exception in this regard. Primary enrollment increased from 8.2 million students in 1980 to 16.8 million in 1998 (Directorate of Primary Education, 2007). However, students' learning and academic achievement remain low overall and even lower in rural schools. For readers in grades 1, 2, and 3, the average oral reading fluency (ORF) rates were 16, 23, and 28 correct words per minute (CWPM), respectively. For 2nd grade readers, 1 in 4 (24 percent) and for 3rd grade readers, 2 in 5 students (43 percent) could not answer a single reading comprehension question [United States Agency for International Development (USAID, 2018)]. Nath, Mohsin and Chowdhury (1997) tested a large sample of 11- and 12- year-old rural children asking them a total of 13 mathematics questions. Only 28.7 percent of the children could answer all the question items correctly.

The quality of education has a greater impact on economic and social development than universal enrollment (World Bank, 2013). In school, learning happens

through effective teaching learning processes. If practiced in a formative way, Classroom Assessment (CA) has a vital role in promoting students' learning by providing effective feedback to both students and teacher (Bloom, Madaus & Hasting 1981; Black & William, 1998; Popham, 2011; Guskey, 2006). Formative Classroom Assessment (FCA) provides information regarding students' learning progress at various points of time to help teachers adjust teaching and learning contemporaneously. Through this process, teachers gauge the students' learning and reasons for not learning, then use that information to give students descriptive feedback to facilitate students' learning and/or to change instruction (Garrison & Ehringhaus, 2011). Hattie (2009), based on a review of thousands of educational studies, concluded that formative classroom assessment—making learning “visible to teachers”—is the single most important activity teachers can do to help students improve their learning (Hattie, 2009). However, teachers typically use classroom assessment as a process only to measure and record students' achievement (Stiggins, 1999; Brookhart, 2001; Campbell, Murphy, & Holt, 2002); such summative assessment is referred to as ‘Assessment of Learning’, rather than using FCA as a way to promote learning using “Assessment for Learning” (Popham, 2011).

Classroom assessment used by Bangladeshi teachers is not formative in nature (Begum & Farooqui, 2008; Ahsan, 2009; Tarana 2010; Rahman, Babu & Ashrafuzzaman, 2011; Chowdhury & Ahmed, 2013; Azim, 2014). In this study, I base my exploration of classroom assessment on several hypotheses that could explain why CA is not formative.

First, it could be failures of policies that don't define, prioritize, and/or mandate FCA. Stiggins (1999) argues that in a United States context, policies may not require,

encourage, or help teachers acquire and/or apply knowledge and skills in CA in classrooms. In this study, I collected data from key policy actors and analyzed policy documents related to CA, such as the National Education Policy (2010), Teacher Preparation Curriculum (BEd and MEd curriculum and teacher training modules between 2006 and 2016), and School Curriculum (2012) to investigate policies that influence teacher preparation in and practice of CA, how these policies are formulated, and factors influencing this policy formulation at the national level.

Second, there could be a failure of translation from such policies to the practice of preparing teachers to use FCA. While explaining the lower level of assessment literacy among teachers in the United States, Plake (1993) explained that teachers are not prepared enough through pre and inservice teacher preparation programs because either the curriculum of such programs did not provide sufficient CA content, or the instruction in such teacher preparation programs was ineffective (Plake, 1993). FCA might not be taught as much (quantity), or as well (quality) in the teacher preparation programs in Bangladesh, resulting in teachers not having the knowledge, attitudes, or skills (KAS) necessary to support its use in classrooms. Research shows that teachers in Bangladesh possess a narrow vision of CA, focused only on tests and oral questioning in classrooms (Tarana, 2010; Ali, 2011) and possess limited knowledge of CA (Mohiuddin, 2015). In this dissertation, I collected data from teacher trainers and from pre and inservice teachers (trainees) and I observed teacher preparation classes and sessions in a Teachers' Training College (TTC) to investigate what and how the teachers are learning about CA. From this, I considered the factors influencing the teacher preparation experience of those trainers and trainees. I explored how trainers and trainees experience and influence

policies in teacher preparation programs in one Teacher Training College (TTC) by analyzing how various actors translated national policies at the regional level at this training college.

Third, there could be a failure of translating teachers' knowledge, attitudes and skills into FCA practice in the classroom. Even with supportive policies, such policies may not be effectively implemented in schools and classrooms (Mosse, 2005). There can be school, community or environmentally related factors that hinder teachers from applying FCA-related knowledge and skills (Supovitz & Turner, 2000). In this study, I observed classes at one school, where I interviewed teachers, the head teacher, and supervisor and I conducted Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) with parents and students to investigate whether and how teachers are applying their learning from teacher preparation of CA in the real classrooms at the local level. I explored how teachers experience and influence the policies in a school or classroom setting by analyzing how national and regional policies influence the application of FCA at the school and classroom level.

### **Research Questions**

- (1) How do actors, materials and discourses come together in a national policy network to formulate policies for classroom assessment, and what factors influence formulation of these policies?
- (2) How do actors involved in a teacher training network translate policy related to CA into teacher preparation practice, and what factors influence this translation?

(3) How do actors involved in a community, school and classroom translate CA policies into practice in the school and classroom, and what factors influence this translation?

### **Rationale of the Study**

High stake assessments are of great importance in an era of accountability. Worldwide, there has been a huge increase in high-stake assessment and the trend is growing (Kamens, & McNeely, 2010). In Bangladesh, for example, an increasing number of reforms in the assessment and examination system in Bangladesh have occurred during the past five to ten years. For example, a new examination pattern was introduced in 2008 for the Secondary School Certificate exams (SSC) after grade ten. This involves a reduced proportion of multiple-choice questions (MCQ) and the introduction of alternative question styles (structured questions) to replace the then current narrative or essay type questions. It is expected that these reforms will enable testing all learning objectives of the curriculum and overcome the current over-emphasis on recall of facts from the textbooks. New procedures to ensure more valid question settings and processes for more equitable and reliable marking of student answers have also been adopted. Until 2013, students took two public examinations after completing grades ten and twelve. Since then, the Ministry of Education has added two additional examinations, one after grade five and another after grade eight. However, less focus has been put on reforming CA. Compared to reforms in high stake public examination, reforms of CA have been both minimal and sporadic. School Based Assessment (SBA) was introduced in 2007 and had several components for formative CA. SBA was subsequently replaced by Continuous Assessment in the 2012 School Curriculum.

The practice of CA is significantly influenced by teacher preparation (Stiggins, 1999; Plake, 1993). We need to know how teachers are prepared to use CA in schools. We also need to know if teachers are sufficiently prepared in training institutes to transform the particular changes in curriculum regarding CA. Policy dimension of teacher preparation is a less researched area in Bangladesh. Existing empirical studies on CA explore and identify only the problems in CA practice. This body of research merely investigates the underlying reasons for the problems in CA practice: 1) why teachers do not use CA in a formative way as Assessment for Learning, or 2) why teachers cannot apply what they have learned in teacher preparation ,or 3) what are the policies on CA that can influence CA practice in classrooms and teachers learning in teacher preparation programs.

### **Significance of the Study**

The practice of CA is significantly influenced by policies regarding CA and teacher preparation for CA (Plake, 1993; Stiggins, 1999). There have been different reforms in policies related to teacher preparation and practice of CA in secondary education being implemented in different settings, such as TTC, schools, and classrooms in Bangladesh. How changes in student assessment policies are being implemented in schools through teachers having education and training to implement the changes is yet to be explored. How new policy scopes and teacher education practice flow to the classroom is an important aspect to review that can give further direction for policy and practice related to teacher preparation on classroom assessment.

The study explored a school and its classroom setting to shed light on how teacher preparation does or does not inform FCA practice in classrooms. This study will help better understand how these policies are formulated and then negotiated in a regional Teachers' Training Colleges and in classrooms and schools at the local level. This research will develop insight into how policies on CA related to teacher preparation (teacher preparation curricula) do or do not inform teacher preparation in a teachers' Training College setting.

If we can learn about the strengths, gaps, and issues in translating CA- related policies into practice at both the regional level at TTCs and local level in school classrooms , then we can take informed steps to improve: 1) the process of policy formulation that supports FCA teaching in TTCs and FCA practice in classrooms 2) the effective translation of teacher preparation curriculum in TTCs to prepare teachers with adequate knowledge, attitude and skills on FCA, 3) the application of teachers' KAS on FCA in classrooms, and finally 4) students' learning through FCA.

### **Context of the Research**

In this section I provide background information on the Bangladesh secondary education system, placing teacher preparation and student assessment in this context.

#### **Secondary Education and Student Assessment in Bangladesh**

The education system of Bangladesh is divided into three levels: (i) Primary (Grades 1 to 5) (ii) Secondary (grades 6 to 12) and (iii) Higher Education (after grade

12). The secondary level is divided into three sub-levels: lower secondary (6-8), secondary (9-10), and higher secondary (11-12).

I chose a private school in which to locate this study because more than 98% secondary schools in Bangladesh are private schools. There are 19,508 non-public secondary schools in Bangladesh whereas only 339 are public (BANBIES, 2016). The government of Bangladesh encourages the private (in the U.S., these are called public schools) provision of education. There are two types of non-public education institutions in Bangladesh: fully independent, non-public schools that enjoy full autonomy in regard to almost every aspect of school administration, and government-subsidized schools that are required to comply with national standards regarding establishment, permission, recognition, staffing patterns, curricula and teacher recruitment processes (UNESCO, 2007). The majority of the non-government or private schools are latter type—government-subsidized that receive salary support from the Government.

The education system of Bangladesh is examination driven. Based on the results of the annual assessments in schools, individual students are promoted to the next grade. Annual assessments occur three times a year. Besides the annual examinations, public examinations are held at the end of lower secondary (grade 8), secondary (grade 10) as well as higher secondary (grade 12) levels. These public examination results are essentially used to fulfill the admission requirement to the next level of education. The percentage of repeaters in grades 10 and 12 is very high reflecting that many students fail the examination and need to remain in school for additional year(s) (World Bank, 2013).



## **Quality of Learning in Secondary Schools**

Classroom instruction practiced in Bangladeshi schools is not effective in promoting student performance. An analysis of the Secondary Education Quality and Access Enhancement Project (SEQAEP) impact evaluation baseline survey (2008) shows that for grades 6 and 8, teaching students in small groups has a large positive impact. However, only 27 percent of grade 6 teachers and 28 percent of grade 8 teachers use this teaching method. “Existing studies uniformly indicate that the most common teaching style in Bangladesh is lecturing and reading textbooks” (World Bank, 2013). No surprise that the quality of education explained by students’ academic achievement is poor, too. Learning outcomes are low at the secondary level and even lower compared to the primary level. For example, the result of an assessment of literacy shows that at grade level eight, competencies in Bangla, English, and Mathematics subjects are respectively 44, 44, and 35 percent. Out of 10 primary students who enter school, only about 6 to 7 students transit to grade 6; 5 students reach grade 10; and 3 to 4 students complete higher secondary without any repetition which also indicates a low level of learning (World Bank, 2013). Nationally, students from poor households perform lower than students of wealthy households. Children from poor families lag at least three-fourths of a school year behind their richer peers in the subject Bangla (language), and half a school year behind in mathematics (World Bank, 2013). There are discrepancies in the academic performances among schools, too. Based on data from the SEQAEP impact evaluation baseline survey (2008), the World Bank (2013) reports that performance of the students of government secondary schools and private schools that do not receive subventions from the government is better than that of the vast majority of the non-government

schools getting subventions. Studies show that performance disparities among schools are larger than among students within a school (World Bank, 2013). In reports on secondary education in Bangladesh, student performance is not linked with effective classroom assessment but always with classroom instruction. The link of FCA with higher learning achievement is yet to be acknowledged in the literature. The literature emphasizes summative assessment and thus explains student assessment as a tool to measure learning.

### **Factors Affecting Quality of Learning**

Different factors affect students' learning achievement. The Bangladesh Education Review reported by the World Bank (2013) identified factors contributing to low student learning. These factors relate to either teachers or systems or policy. Teachers constitute the largest single budgetary element in schools and the single most important determinant of learning by students within the school. Therefore, ensuring teachers' effectiveness positively influences the quality of the schools and the learning of students. Teachers' lack of subject knowledge negatively affects students' learning outcomes<sup>1</sup>.

The teachers, though not the only resource available in schools, are not utilized in the most effective manner in Bangladesh. Current recruitment and remuneration policies for teachers fail to attract and retain the best professionals. The profession of school teaching profession is no longer seen as a high-profile occupation. In actual practice,

---

<sup>1</sup> This finding is derived from the Secondary Education Quality Enhancement Project (SEQAEP) Impact Evaluation Survey 2008 data (World Bank, 2013).

there is little or no motivation for teachers once they are recruited and hired. Teachers are not encouraged to be innovative with their pedagogical approaches, to learn from their peers or from any other learning network. There is almost no feedback mechanism or established accountability system available for teachers to improve their practice in the classrooms. Surprisingly, teachers' additional years of experience in teaching is not correlated with higher student learning. An analysis of National Student Assessment 2011 found that observable credentials of teachers, including formal educational certificates and exposure to general training, are not correlated with high performance among grades 3 and 5 students (World Bank, 2013). The review attributes the ineffectiveness of more years of experience to low motivation levels of teachers and the ineffectiveness of educational certificates and training to the low quality of teacher education and training. These factors negatively affect students' learning. In addition, teacher absence and tardiness result in low time on task and low student performance. Student absenteeism adds another layer on that to exacerbate students' performance.

The education review also reports that there are constraints in policy at the systemic level that affect the quality of teaching and students' learning negatively. The examination- driven education system is one such factor as current examinations test how well the students can rote memorize and recall rather than real learning. This discourages incentives for innovative and high-quality teaching and learning. Given this situation, a teacher may not get any reward or incentive for helping each student learn curriculum competencies but will instead be judged based on the percentage of his/her students who have passed the tests or public examinations. It is therefore important to note that the summative and accountability assessment driven education system is seen as one of the

factors contributing to low student performance, and effective classroom instruction is seen as the way to improve student performance. However, discussion on CA to improve student performance is absent in the reports and literature on student performance in secondary education in Bangladesh.

Another factor hindering student performance is limited coordination among policy reforms. The education system of Bangladesh is large and complex in nature involving different key players and agencies. Therefore, reforms in the last few years have been introduced without much coordination among the agencies and levels of education. For example, at the secondary level, there were many projects to improve the quality of education, such as learning assessment; introducing school-based assessment; creative questions in Secondary School Certificate (SSC) exams; performance-based management systems (PBM) for schools; introducing the Non-Government Teachers' Registration and Certification Authority (NTRCA); motivational incentives for higher-performing institutions, teachers, and students; and targeted intervention to assist poorly performing schools. However, there is little or no coordination among these projects.

### **Classroom Assessment Practice in Bangladesh**

There is limited evidence through published empirical studies of teachers' assessment practices in classrooms in Bangladesh especially for secondary level classrooms. Ahsan (2009) investigated the assessment culture in secondary level classrooms in Bangladesh and explored the nature of CA in the framework of 'Assessment of Learning' and 'Assessment for Learning'. The researcher collected data through observation of 48 science classes in 8 schools in the capital city of Dhaka. She

found that the most used technique and the second most time-consuming activity for assessing students' learning in the classroom was asking questions to the students, along with class work and class tests. Classroom questioning was a one-way, teacher dominated process. It was an isolated activity, not integrated with the whole classroom teaching learning practice. The main purpose of questioning was measuring students' knowledge and, in some cases, as a means of punishment. Students' reactions toward classroom assessment were usually fearful and insecure. Students showed their interest in responding to the motivational and real life- related questions rather than questions that simply aimed to assess the previously taught facts. Feedback in the classroom was mainly evaluative, rather than descriptive. The author found that the assessment culture produced privileged and deprived groups and some prejudicial concepts about the students of these groups based on achievement scores in tests among teachers and students. She concluded that the culture of classroom assessment leans heavily towards the framework 'Assessment of Learning', rather than 'Assessment for Learning'.

Ali (2011) researched teachers' and students' perspectives on English language assessment in the Secondary English Language Teaching (ELT) curriculum in Bangladesh. For this qualitative research, he interviewed six English teachers and conducted FGDs with two groups of secondary students in two different schools. The findings reveal that English Language assessment at the secondary level does not promote a balanced development of the four language skills, but instead focuses on reading and writing, omitting the skills, speaking and listening. There is inconsistency between what is stated as the objectives of teaching English in the curriculum and the teaching and assessment methods used in the classrooms to measure those. The

researcher mentioned that though the summative evaluation for English Language still dominates the assessment of language, there is also evidence of practice of formative assessment. For example, all six teachers reported they use one-to-one meetings or conferences with students to identify their weaknesses and learning problems and to provide specific feedback to overcome any challenges. Ali argued that teachers were also trying to use individual assessment strategies to encourage students learning through assessment and feedback.

Mohiuddin (2015) conducted a study to learn the attitude, competence, knowledge and practice of teachers at the secondary level of education in Bangladesh about educational assessment. A total of 80 inservice teachers were selected for this study teaching in different subjects in secondary and higher secondary levels of education in different government and private schools in the city of Chittagong. The study used a survey to collect self-reported data. The teachers' attitudes towards educational assessment were generally positive: 12.5% of the teachers reported their attitude towards educational assessment as strongly positive, 51.2% as positive, 32.5% as neutral, and 3.75% as negative and none as strongly negative. In general, teachers perceived themselves as competent in educational assessment: 8.75% teachers reported themselves as having very high competence, 60% having high competence, 28.75 % having moderate competence, 2.50% having low competence, and none as having very low competence. However, Mohiuddin asked these teachers to take a 32-item test of their assessment knowledge—this revealed a mismatch between teachers' perception of their knowledge and their actual knowledge. The average test score was 12.42 with an SD of 3.34: 25% teachers answered 10 items or less correctly, 50% teachers answered 12 items

or less correctly and 75% teachers answered 15 items or less correctly. Teachers who had inservice trainings on educational assessment scored better on this test compared to teachers who had none.

In self-reports of their use of classroom assessment in Mohiuddin's study, the teachers reported involving students in the assessment process, analyzing assessment results, using alternative assessment methods, and using non-achievement factors in grading some of the time. On average, the teachers seem to be using classroom tests for assigning grades and motivating students for continuous learning. The teachers indicated that they use classroom tests most of the time for other purposes, such as diagnosing students' weakness, grouping students for instruction, planning for instruction, evaluating instructional methods, controlling students' behavior, evaluating academic achievement, comparing students' performances with each other, and promoting students from one grade to another.

Besides the published research, there are unpublished master's theses exploring classroom assessment. Yasmin (2013) conducted research which investigated secondary school teachers' attitudes towards and the practice of CA. In this mixed method research using a collection of qualitative data, teachers' attitudes were explored using the Likert Scale as well as the practice of CA and how it influences students' learning. Data were collected from 40 teachers from five secondary schools. Among the 40 teachers, 10 were selected for observing their classes and interview. The study found that the teachers possessed a favorable attitude towards CA. She found that the teachers with training on CA had more favorable attitudes towards CA than the teachers without training on CA, and this difference is significant. Out of 30 observed classes, oral questioning was used

25 times, homework 17 times, written tasks 9 times, calling students to the board 3 times, peer assessment 3 times, group work 2 times, class tests 2 times, and self-assessment 2 times. Feedback was provided most of the time by informing students of the right or wrong answer, rather than a descriptive feedback that gives direction for further improvement. Chakraborty (2014) found similar practices of CA regarding giving feedback while investigating continuous assessment in primary level. She found that the teachers are not aware of the continuous assessment system that was introduced by the government.

This is limited evidence to draw any conclusion about teachers' use of CA and its link with related policies and their professional development experience. However, from the above studies it seems that though teachers' attitude is positive towards CA, and though they employ a good amount of time in CA in the classrooms, their knowledge and skills of CA are poor. For example, teachers are using questioning most of the time as CA techniques than alternative methods of assessment and using assessment for grading purposes rather than Assessment for Learning (AfL). Both the attitude towards and knowledge of CA are influenced by the relevant training of the teachers. However, drawing evidence from the SEQAEP evaluation survey data, the Bangladesh Education Review (2013) reported that neither teacher training, nor teaching experience, has any positive effect on students' learning achievement. However, this review focuses on teacher preparation in general rather than teacher preparation on CA or FCA.

Mohiuddin's study indicates that knowledge of CA seems to be improved only by inservice trainings. In Bangladesh many teachers begin teaching in secondary schools without any preservice teacher preparation. Therefore, for many teachers, all that may



influence their CA skills is inservice teacher education and/or training programs. There is need for research that specifically investigates whether pre- and inservice education and training about CA can improve teachers' practice in the classrooms and students learning, and the factors that can influence teachers' application of KAS on CA in classrooms. There is also evidence that policy change in CA does not always flow to the classroom to change teachers' practice in the classroom (Chakraborty, 2014; Begum & Farooqui, 2008). Therefore, the process of translation of CA policies into practice, especially through the teacher education programs, needs further exploration.

## **Teacher Preparation Policies in Bangladesh**

### **Teacher Preparation Requirement for Prospective Teachers**

To be a teacher for junior secondary (6-8 grades) or secondary level (9-10 grades), the candidate should have attained a minimum of a bachelor's degree or equivalent, and a master's degree for higher secondary education (11-12 grades). There is no preservice education or training required for teaching in secondary schools. However, teachers who complete the BEd and/or MEd prior to recruitment receive a higher wage after their appointment. In order to be recruited in non-public or non-government institutions receiving funding from the government, candidates with the minimum qualifications described above are required to pass a competitive examination held annually by the Nongovernment Teachers' Recruitment and Certification Authority NTRCA. In the non-public secondary schools, local School Managing Committees (SMC) used to take the responsibility for recruiting teachers. Because of local influence

and other negative factors, SMC cannot ensure the recruitment of quality teachers. In February 2005, the government of Bangladesh established the Non-Government Teachers Registration and Certification Authority (NTRCA) through an Act of Parliament (UNESCO, 2007). Examination of teachers by NTRCA includes only subject-based knowledge and general knowledge, but no pedagogical knowledge. Therefore, teachers can be recruited without any CA- related KAS (Non-Government Teachers Registration and Certification Authority, n.d).

### **Phases of Teacher Preparation**

Teacher preparation and training happen at different times before and during teachers' careers. Akhter and Alam (2016) described three phases of teacher education and training in Bangladesh— preservice, induction, and continuous professional development. Preservice teacher education is a course taken before a teacher can be recruited. This entails a comprehensive education to prepare the teachers with the necessary content, pedagogical and professional knowledge and skills for teaching. In Bangladesh, anyone with the desire to choose teaching as a profession can enroll in these programs before employed as a teacher: 1) B-Ed (4 years bachelor) after passing the public exam at the end of grade 12, or 2) 1 or 2 years of BEd after their bachelor's degree, and 3) 1 or 2 years of M-Ed after bachelor's degree or BEd. However, this preservice education is neither a requirement nor is compulsory for getting into the teaching profession at the secondary level. The second phase is induction. Through this process all recruited teachers are provided training and support during the first few years of teaching. According to the suggestion of the National Education Policy 2010 of

Bangladesh, immediately after their recruitment, primary and secondary school teachers will undergo two months' foundation training. However, it has not yet been implemented for secondary level teachers.

The third phase is continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers already in service. After the teachers start working in schools, they receive inservice training on subject based (for example, for teaching English, for teaching science) or in general topics (for example, inclusive education, performance based management) at different times during their service. Teachers are not required to have any preservice education or training for joining the teaching profession but must acquire a bachelor's degree in education (BEd) within three years of joining their post, if they do not already have this degree upon joining. Many teachers join the teaching profession without any professional degree or training and then acquire a one or two-year BEd degree within three years of joining the teaching profession. Therefore, BEd and MEd can function as CPD if a teacher chooses to have it while being in teaching rather than having a degree before joining teaching profession. To avoid this confusion, as there are no fixed preservice teacher preparation programs for secondary level teachers in Bangladesh, I described teacher preparation for secondary school teachers in two parts— 1) teacher education (BEd honors, BEd and MEd), which is long-term in nature and is delivered as education programs, and 2) Continuous Professional Development (CPD) or teacher training which is short-term in nature and delivered as training. In all the teacher preparation programs, there is no specific training on CA. However, CA is included as a course or part of courses in the teacher education programs (BEds and MEd) and as topics for sessions in different trainings.

## **Organization of Dissertation**

This dissertation is organized in seven chapters. I have provided a brief description for each chapter in the following paragraphs:

In chapter 1, I first explain the problem that my dissertation focuses on followed by the research questions that I pose to address the problem. Then I describe the rationale and significance of this study. Finally, I outline the context of the research that includes: learning quality- related issues, their relationship with CA, the situation of CA practice, and teacher preparation policies in Bangladesh.

Chapter 2 outlines the literature review and theoretical framework for the dissertation. It discusses the key literature on formative classroom assessment, its relation with learning, the theoretical understanding of teacher preparation and professional development, teacher preparation for CA, and teacher preparation policies. Lastly, the chapter presents the theory “critical socio-cultural perspective of policy as practice” as the theoretical framework to be used for this research.

Chapter 3 describes the research methodology for this dissertation. It presents the nature of the study with a detailed discussion on Vertical Case Study (VCS), its theoretical underpinning and the design of my research. Then I outline the sampling and data collection method and techniques used at the national, regional and local levels, followed by a list of tools used for this study. This chapter also explains the data analysis techniques along with how VC, the Actor Network Theory (ANT), and the socio-cultural theory of policy as practice inform my data analysis. The chapter ends with delimitations and ethical considerations for this research.

Chapters 4-6 present the findings of my research along with integrated critical analysis and discussion. Chapter 4 discusses the major policies on CA (school curriculum) and teacher preparation on CA (teacher preparation curriculum), the process of formulating these policies, and the factors that influence this policy formulation process. Chapter 5 illustrates the negotiation and co-creation of the policies on CA at a Teachers' Training College (TTC) by different actors, trainers' (preservice and inservice teachers) experience of teacher preparation on CA, and the factors that influence this practice of the policies on CA in the TTC. Chapter 6 focuses on CA policy practice in a school. It discusses how different actors in a school and the community negotiate and co-create the policies on CA in schools and classrooms, and factors that influence teachers' application of CA- related learning from teacher preparation in classrooms.

The paper concludes with Chapter 7 which presents key findings based on three research questions and an overall synthesis of these findings. The chapter further describes the contribution of the dissertation to the related field, ideas for further research and a conclusion.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This dissertation focuses on policies regarding the use of Classroom Assessment (CA) and teacher preparation on CA, the role of teacher preparation to build teachers' competencies to use CA, and teachers' translation of those competencies into actual practice of CA. In this chapter, I present the significant discussions, discourses, and research findings in three areas: (1) classroom assessment; (2) teacher preparation, and (3) theoretical framework of my study-the "critical sociocultural perspective of policy as practice".

#### **Classroom Assessment**

In this section, I describe the concept of Formative Classroom Assessment (FCA), its role in improving learning, the practice of FCA including issues related to this practice, and possible reasons behind these practice-related issues. Finally, I explore the policy and teacher preparation-related aspects of CA that constrain the practice of CA. The practice of CA in Bangladesh is described in the first chapter.

#### **Formative Classroom Assessment**

Classroom assessment can be any activities such as tests, oral questioning, observations by teachers, portfolios, homework, or group work that the teachers use in the classroom to collect data on students' learning which guides the teachers' further instruction in the classroom. Popham (2009) defined classroom assessment as, "...formal and informal procedures that teachers employ in an effort to make accurate inferences

about what their students know and can do” (p. 6). To draw from the literature, the main features of classroom assessments are that these assessments:

- (1) have the potential to be formative in purpose and aim to improve students’ learning
- (2) are internal to the classroom and closely linked to classroom instruction
- (3) use tests or assessment activities that are usually teacher-made, not standardized
- (4) focus on providing feedback to the students which is crucial for improving students’ learning
- (5) are informal in nature
- (6) are usually low stake in nature for both teachers and students
- (7) are usually not graded (Popham, 2009; Black & William, 2004; Garrison & Ehringhaus, 2011; Stiggins & Chappuis, 2005; Shepard, Penuel, & Pellegrino, 2018)

In the literature, the terms *classroom assessment* and *formative assessment* are often used interchangeably as classroom assessment is well-known for its formative role in classroom-based informal approaches in enhancing students’ learning. However, not all CA is formative in nature. Black & William (2004) argue that any kind of assessment must promote learning, and assessment needs to be formative in nature to do so. They defined formative assessment as a kind of assessment which has the main purpose of improving students’ learning. They support the idea that classroom assessment has the potential to be formative in nature and raise the standard of learning but conclude that Classroom Assessment is not necessarily formative assessment and vice-versa.

There is no consensus on whether FCA should be graded or not. Some authors think that CA, as a valid and reliable source of evidence regarding students' learning, can be graded and linked to accountability or summative assessment for a better inference about quality of education. They propose that there are advantages to such blending and are optimistic that effectively blending these two assessments can accomplish this. The need for integrating formative classroom assessment and summative accountability assessment to enhance the reliability, validity, and utility of the accountability assessment data has been expressed by many assessment experts and educationists (Wilson & Carstensen, 2007; Banta, 2007; Wilson & Draney, 2004). Bennett (2011) also believes that the purposes of summative and formative assessments are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, they can coexist as primary and secondary purposes of the same assessment.

An opposing view regarding grading and blending FCA with summative one has been presented by other researchers. For example, Black and William (2009) think that classroom assessment is effective in raising standards only when the purpose is to improve students' learning, rather than grading. Black & William (2004) worked with teachers in six secondary schools for the project, the King's-Medway-Oxfordshire Formative Assessment Project (KMOFAP), in 1999 which encouraged teachers to experiment with rich formative assessment techniques which proved to be successful based on previous research. . The experiments include, for example, rich questioning, comment-only marking, sharing criteria with students, self-assessment, and peer assessment. They found that some teachers and students believe that classroom and accountability assessments are fundamentally different in their purpose, philosophy and process and need to be kept separate. In interviews, when asked if and how summative



assessment affected their teaching and assessment, teachers responded they had to teach to the (summative) test even while understanding that the summative test questions have less validity compared to formative assessment in terms of national curriculum specifications. Similarly, Shepard, Penuel, and Pellegrino (2018) proposed that to have integrity in the intention of formative assessment culture and to motivate students in learning, grading policies should avoid using points and grades. Rather, assessment should create opportunities for students to use feedback to improve their work.

### **Role of FCA in Facilitating Students' Learning**

Classroom assessment can improve students' learning if practiced formatively. Black & William (1998, 2004, 2009) conducted an extensive literature review of CA. The populations for these studies were diverse, ranging over ages from 5-year-olds to university undergraduates, across several school subjects, and over several countries such as Portugal, the United States, Australia, and the UK. They claimed that there are different features of classroom assessment, making it especially powerful for helping students enhance their learning. Features such as effective feedback, classroom questioning, and self-assessment of the students were discussed to make it formative classroom assessment. All of these studies show that innovations that aimed to strengthen formative assessment practice in the classroom produced significant and often substantial learning gains (for example, Fontana & Fernandes, 1994; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1986; Wininger, 2005). Formative classroom assessment is also helpful in closing achievement gaps in classrooms (Black & William, 2009; Stiggins and Chappuis, 2005; Stiggins, 2005).

Unlike summative classroom assessment, such as end-of-the-semester or year-end tests, FCA is integrated into classroom instruction which gives immediate feedback to teachers and students on their teaching and learning so that teachers can improve their teaching and give feedback to students to improve their learning. An example of formative CA can be an oral question-answer session after teaching a unit (Garrison & Ehringhaus, 2011). William (2011, p.3) described the formative role of classroom assessment as both “Assessment for Learning” and “Assessment as Learning” as opposed to summative, high-stakes, and accountability assessment, which mainly plays the role of “Assessment of Learning”. While assessment of learning refers to focusing on measuring by providing final scores, grades, certificates, or ranking, which is not immediately meaningful for the students to improve their learning, assessment for learning is used especially to help students further enhance their learning. Assessment as Learning, which is a more sophisticated way of thinking about assessment, means that the assessment process itself can be a way to help students learn. Self-assessment, peer assessment, and other alternative ways of assessment such as games, debates, projects, presentations used in classroom assessment are not only used for measuring learning but themselves constitute a rich learning process for the students. According to William (2011), the formative feature of classroom assessment is its most powerful aspect, which has a diagnostic use of assessment to provide feedback to teachers and students over the course of instruction. The goal of formative assessment is to identify what students have and have not achieved by using classroom assessment techniques such as teacher observation and classroom discussion, interviews and brief, in-class writing assignments, class tests and homework. Then, the teachers can make responsive changes in teaching and

ultimately in students' learning. Since formative assessment is tightly linked with instructional practices, teachers must first consider how their classroom activities, assignments, and tests support learning aims and allow students to communicate what they know and then use this information to improve teaching and learning.

Besides the work of Popham, Black, and William, Hattie's research on CA also found that CA practice is an important tool for facilitating students' learning. Over the past decade Hattie (2009, 2012, & 2013) has been trying to trace the major influences on student achievement or learning. In a research conference paper, Hattie (2013) summarized his findings on the influences on students' learning and focused significantly on assessing students. He found providing effective feedback to be the most significant factor influencing students' learning. While describing seven principles to promote effective learning, "maintenance of learning" (p. 33) was included, which he thinks needs to be deliberately taught and embedded in the student. He believes this is the reason for educators to spend a significant amount of time developing assessment tools for teachers to help them know their impact (Hattie, Brown, & Keegan, 2005). This is also why teachers need to know how "to assist students to become assessment savvy to help in their own diagnosis, response to intervention and evaluation of learning, and why we see the 'teacher as evaluator of their impact' as central to the Visible Learning messages" (p. 33). He argues that the key aspect of maintenance is feedback because it influences what happens after instruction. Meta-analyses relating to feedback show very high values ( $d = 0.75$ ) of influencing students' learning.

Among the most powerful notions is that when the feedback to the teacher is maximized about their impact on students, this has the greatest beneficial effects for the student, as it is then teachers are adaptive in their interventions, have a more effective sense of the magnitude of the influence they are having, and the

prevalence of their impact is shown to them in terms of how many students are “learning.” (Hattie, 2013, p. 34)

He mentions that one of the most powerful ways for teachers to recognize the impact of their teaching is to have classroom dialogue ( $d = 0.82$ ), which is usually rare in U.S. classrooms. He concluded about feedback, saying, “We need to be more attentive to observing students learning in classrooms and less attentive to how teachers teach. Watch the students not the teacher; watch the impact of the teacher on students not the teaching methods of the teacher”. (p. 34).

There are critiques regarding the research that advocates FCA for its role in promoting learning. Dunn & Mulvenon (2009) argue that although there is a plethora of literature arguing that classroom assessment in the form of formative assessment can raise educational outcomes of students, the definition of classroom assessment and formative assessment remain vague and excepting theoretical arguments, there is very little empirical research showing that real educational achievements result from formative classroom assessment. Another critique of most such research is that the outcome of FCA is measured through conventional paper pencil tests or summative tests which are not always a good measure of learning. Bennett (2011) argues that though widely acknowledged, the effectiveness of formative assessment claims is not always well grounded because of the lack of a uniform definition of the concept of formative assessment. Therefore, more empirical research on CA practice can shed light on this FCA topic.

### **Formative Classroom Assessment: Poverty of Practice**

There is evidence that FCA can raise the standard of students’ learning. Yet, CA

is not practiced formatively in classrooms. Black & William (2001) referred to this as “poverty of practice” (p. 4). Research studies on the implementation of the UK’s educational reforms have also found that formative assessment is “seriously in need of development” (Russell, Qualter, & McGuigan, 1995). William & Black (2001) described some practices of classroom assessment which make formative assessment ineffective in terms of promoting students’ learning in the classroom. For example, rather than giving feedback, sometimes assessment is based on marking and grades which seems ineffective for students to improve their learning. Like accountability assessments, classroom assessment can also focus on memorizing facts and trivial learning rather than important learning such as critical thinking and problem solving. Black & William (2001) summarized studies in UK and found that though the teachers say that they want to promote understanding and higher order learning, what they actually measure using classroom assessment is sometimes more or less recalling facts. This ultimately drives students to memorize facts, not understand. In many cases, the questions and other methods used for CA are not discussed with or shared between teachers in the same school, and they are not critically reviewed in relation to what they actually assess. The CA is not aligned to curriculum goals and objectives. Sometimes the assessment is used to segregate, or rank students based on their score and the students are compared to each other which encourages unhealthy competition rather than cooperative learning and support. Consequently, feedback from classroom assessment teaches pupils with low attainment that they lack ‘ability’; as a result, they are de-motivated, believing that they are not able to learn (Black & William, 2001). In the secondary schools of Bangladesh, too, FCA is not practiced; CA is rather dominated by summative assessments (see

Introduction).

There are different reasons for this “poverty of practice” in classroom assessment. Black and William (2001) explain the issue from two perspectives— from the larger system’s perspective and the teacher’s individual view- related perspective. They argue that the most significant reason for this poverty of practice is the influence or dominance of high-stakes accountability assessment on classroom assessment. They believe that because of the pressure of high-stake examinations and summative assessments, teachers are teaching to tests and are more inclined to increase students’ test scores rather than students’ learning by providing descriptive feedback. They also mentioned another reason for this poverty of practice of formative assessment— teachers’ beliefs and perceptions based on a “Fixed IQ view”, rather than an “untapped potential” view. Teachers may not truly believe that changing classroom instruction and assessment can make changes in students’ learning and motivation (Black & William, 1998, p. 9).

Popham (2011) also tries to explain this ineffective practice of classroom assessment, but from a different perspective. He focuses more on teachers’ preparation, or professional development scope and experience. He explains that those teachers who are not using classroom assessment in an effective way may have experienced the same practice when they were students. Moreover, they did not have any further professional experience or learning which could help them unlearn this practice and instead learn effective ways of using classroom assessment. Popham (2011) mentioned that many teachers do not have adequate and clear ideas about the potentials of classroom assessment for students’ learning. They also do not know how to use it effectively in the classroom. Popham (2011), based on his experience as an educator in the preservice

teacher training in the United States, showed that professional education programs are not fruitful in educating teachers for using classroom assessment as the teacher professional development curriculum does not include important matters on formative assessment.

Some authors propose that poverty of practice can also prevail because of the policies of teacher preparation of CA. For example, Stiggins (2002) found that fewer than half of the states in the United States require competence in assessment for licensure as a teacher. This policy limits and discourages the scope of teachers to acquire competencies on CA as professional skills.

To summarize, the literature suggests the following factors which contribute to the ineffective use of CA: (1) dominance of high stake exams in policy, (2) teachers' perceptions and beliefs regarding students' change, which do not focus on classroom practice, (3) less or ineffective teacher preparation programs on CA, and (4) teacher preparation policies (curriculum) that do not encourage CA. Among these factors, the dominance of high-stake exams is related to CA related policy and can therefore be included in the larger policy related issues. On the other hand, teachers' perceptions, beliefs, and skills all can be attributed to teacher preparation. Therefore, the poverty of practice can be explored in two levels larger policy, and teacher preparation practice and experience.

### **Classroom Assessment in Policy**

Policies need to support FCA to happen in classrooms and to be taught to the teachers in teacher preparation programs. Therefore, to ensure formative use of classroom assessment, the school curriculum needs to provide the scope for teachers to practice it in

the classroom. Then teacher preparation, both preservice and inservice teacher education and training, needs to ensure enough and effective experience so that the teachers can acquire appropriate and relevant KAS on CA to practice in the classroom. There needs to be a clear link between the CA-related content of school curriculum and teacher preparation curriculum. Besides the curricula, other grand education policies at the larger systemic level, such as policies related to the examination system and teacher promotion should also encourage, incorporate, and promote FCA (DeLuca & Bellara, 2013; Brown, 2004).

Classroom assessment, although much praised in the literature as key for students' learning, does not receive as much policy attention as accountability assessment (Black & William, 2001). They argue that in some cases, attention has been put towards classroom assessment in policy papers as the policy focuses on raising education standards or student achievement, and they know that classroom assessment is crucial for this purpose. However, actual change in assessment practice in the school level is absent. For example, in England and Wales, there have been some changes in policy and practice in education since the 1988 Education Reform Act which has had powerful effects on assessment. Though the statements of policy and all subsequent statements of government policy regarding this policy act have emphasized the importance of formative assessment by teachers in classrooms, most of the available resources and public and political attention have been concentrated ultimately on accountability assessment (Black & William, 2001).

The focus on high-stake assessment while neglecting FCA is a global phenomenon. Authors from Australia, Canada, Ireland, Israel, New Zealand, Norway,



and the United States analyzed the emergence of assessment for learning (AfL), its evolution and impact on school systems, and current trends in policy directions for AfL within their respective countries across the globe (Birenbaum, DeLuca, Earl, Heritage, Klenowski, Looney, Smith, Timperley, Volante, and Wyatt-Smith, 2015). They also concluded that although the research base for AfL seems to be well established and accepted in the various countries studied here, education policies have yet to be fully enacted for leading a significant shift in teacher practice. They also found that the ongoing tensions between formative and summative forms of assessments world-wide pose challenges to the practice of authentic and sustained AfL practices in school systems across much of the Western world.

Besides the dominance of high-stake accountability assessment, Black & William (2001) proposed another reason for insufficient policy attention to CA. They think that classroom assessment is seen by policy makers as unproblematic and already in place in the classroom, thus not meriting any attention. Cizek (2009) mentioned that the ways to ensure validity and reliability in classroom assessment is a very recent discussion and has not been researched before. For this reason, it was seen as more as an informal activity in the classroom and was not included as a valid source of data on student achievement. This also outlines another reason for excluding CA from policies.

To explore the reason for the low competencies on assessment in teachers in the United States, DeLuca and Bellara (2013) analyzed the alignment between preservice policies, professional standards, and course curricula aimed at developing teacher competency in educational assessment in the U.S. context. They found points of both alignment and misalignments across data sources. The alignment in data was found as the

content was fairly well matched to standards for professional practice at instructional and educational levels with policy documents representing more global educational objectives for teacher competency in assessment. Specifically, this trend was evident for the content themes of assessment processes, assessment fairness, and measurement theory. Across standards and curriculum documents, these themes were highly represented at instructional and educational ranges of knowledge and moderate to high depth of knowledge levels. The authors revealed that these themes represented points of misalignment across data sources. Policies, standards, and curricula differed in their relative representation of these themes with an emphasis on preservice policy documents at global and educational levels of knowledge compared with minimal representation of these themes across standards and curricula documents. This finding implies that teacher education programs may be addressing these concepts more fully in other program components beyond their explicit assessment education courses. Indeed, the duration of required assessment education courses is short, typically one semester (which is 3 hours), leaving little instructional time to provide teacher candidates with a strong theoretical and practical foundation in assessment processes, assessment fairness, and measurement theory, let alone providing adequate coverage of more integrated and complex concepts of assessment for learning, communication of assessment information, and linkages between classroom environment and assessment.

In the United States, teacher education accreditation agencies develop standards for teacher candidate learning. However, they do not prescribe or develop any specific program structure for accreditation. Individual agencies providing teacher education determine the specific structures; therefore, the content of assessment and the methods of

teaching the assessment education vary. Moreover, for explicit assessment education courses, setting curriculum for such courses remains unstandardized and falls largely within the purview of individual programs and instructors who teach assessment courses (DeLuca, Klinger, Searle, & Shulha, 2010). These factors can contribute to the misalignment of policies of CA represented in school curricula and teacher preparation curricula. DeLuca and Bellara (2013) suggest that regulations, policies, and student evaluation standards related to assessment should be included in the assessment education curriculum for teachers.

CA in the teacher preparation program is explored in the next sections as another factor contributing to the poverty of practice of FCA in classrooms.

### **Teacher Preparation on Classroom Assessment**

This section discusses relevant discussions on concepts, outcome, content, structure, policy, and practice of teacher preparation focusing on CA.

#### **Concept of Teacher Preparation**

The concept of preparing teachers encompasses multiple terms, including teachers' professional development, professional learning, teacher education, teacher training, preservice or inservice training, and teacher preparation, depending on the point of the teacher's career when they experience the teacher preparation, nature of the program, and intention of the program. In most of the literature, the term Teacher Professional Development (TPD) has been used to present a comprehensive idea of teacher preparation. Schwille and Dembele (2007) explained professional development as

a collection of career-long processes and the related system and policies through which educators, such as teachers, administrators, and supervisors can acquire, broaden, and deepen their knowledge, skill, and commitment. Avalos (2011) defined TPD and professional learning as:

teachers' learning, learning how to learn, and transforming their knowledge into practice for the benefit of their students' growth. Teacher professional learning is a complex process, which requires cognitive and emotional involvement of teachers individually and collectively, the capacity and willingness to examine where each one stands in terms of convictions and beliefs, and the perusal and enactment of appropriate alternatives for improvement or change. (p. 10)

Another concept of teachers' learning is presented in Job Embedded Professional Development (JEPD) based on the aspect of teachers' learning situated into their workplace and built with their daily work (Croft, Coggshall, Dolan, Powers, & Killion, 2010). JEPD is built into teachers' day-to-day teaching practice and designed so that teachers can learn about content-specific instructional practices to improve students' learning (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Hirsh, 2009). It works as a cycle of continuous improvement for the teachers in their teaching profession as it is integrated into the teachers' everyday teaching through which teachers can assess their teaching and students' learning to come up with locally rooted (school-based) solutions for the immediate problems and challenges they face (Hawley & Valli, 1999; National Staff Development Council, 2010). Croft, Coggshall, Dolan, Powers and Killion (2010) gave examples of different formats of JEPD, such as action research, case discussions, coaching, critical friends groups, data teams/assessment development, examining student work/tuning protocols, implementing individual professional goals/learning plans, lesson study, mentoring, portfolios, professional learning communities, and study groups.

## **Outcomes of Teacher Preparation on Classroom Assessment**

Teacher preparation is discussed intensively in the literature for its positive outcomes on education. The outcome of teacher preparation or teachers' learning is explored and explained in three different stages and attributes in the literature: (1) change in teachers' knowledge, attitude, dispositions, (2) change in teachers' classroom practice, and (3) change in students' academic achievement. Most of the literature focuses on teacher preparation in general and outcomes as teachers' change in general. Limited literature focuses on teacher preparation on CA or outcomes as changes in teachers' assessment practice.

There is plenty of research focusing on the impact of TPD in changing teachers' beliefs, assumptions and attitudes. Villegas-Reimers (2003) in her international literature review argued that TPD has an impact on teachers' beliefs, assumptions, and personal theories (for example, Kallestad and Olweus, 1998; Young, 2001; Wood & Bennett, 2000; Borko and Putnam, 1995). Research also shows that TPD has effects on teacher behavior or teachers' classroom practice (for example, Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon and Birman, 2002; Suporvitz, Mayer, and Kahle, 2000). Many studies have focused on investigating the effect of TPD on students' academic achievement or success. The report of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future mentioned that investment in teachers' knowledge and skill development has more impact on students' achievement than other budget expenditures. Villegas-Reimers (2003) presented several research findings supporting the idea that the more TPD teachers have, the higher the level of student achievement (Educational Testing Service, 1998; Falk, 2001; Grosso de Leon, 2001; McGinn & Borden, 1995; National Commission on Teaching and America's

Future, 1996, 1997; Tatto, 1997; Angrist and Lavy, 1998; Vescio, Ross and Adams, 2008; Cohen and Hill, 1997; Wenglinsky, 2002; Warwick and Reimers, 1995). However, no significant improvement in achievement of the students was seen for religious schools. The small number of these schools and the fact that the training started late in these schools may have accounted for this.

There has been scant research focusing on teacher preparation on CA and changes in teachers' CA knowledge, skills, confidence, and practice. Research suggests that while it is challenging to change prospective teachers' conceptions of assessment toward a more complex and formative orientation, achieving change in their minds and practice is possible (DeLuca, Chavez, & Cao, 2013; DeLuca, Chavez, Bellara & Cao, 2013). Chen (2005) used a standards-linked questionnaire in a sample of 61 students. He found increased confidence in assessment for those teacher candidates at undergraduate and graduate levels who participated in an explicit measurement course. DeLuca and Klinger (2010) also administered a questionnaire to 288 elementary and secondary teacher candidates. The researchers also revealed benefits of preservice measurement courses on teacher candidates' confidence. Koh (2011) examined the effects of professional development on teachers' assessment literacy in two groups of teachers who were teaching grade four and five English, science and mathematics. The groups were: (1) teachers who were involved in ongoing and sustained professional development in designing authentic classroom assessment and rubrics and (2) teachers who were given only short-term, one-shot professional development workshops in authentic assessment. The researcher found that the assessment literacy of teachers who were involved in

ongoing, sustained professional development had increased significantly during the second year of study compared to the other group.

Sato, Wei, and Darling-Hammond (2008) compared the classroom assessment practice of two groups of teachers in the framework of formative assessment: one group of teachers were in the process of National Board Certification; the other group was the control group, not enrolled in any certification program. It was a three- year- long longitudinal study. They found though the initial scores of the National Board candidates had lower mean scores than the comparison group on all six assessment dimensions, by the second year they had achieved higher mean scores on all dimensions. More importantly, these candidates continued to demonstrate substantially higher scores in the third year. They demonstrated changes in the variety of assessments used and the way assessment information was used to support student learning.

There is a lot of empirical research evidence showing teacher preparation and training can bring positive changes in teachers' knowledge, attitudes, beliefs; in teachers' practice in classroom; and in students' learning achievements. However, more empirical research is needed to connect teacher preparation on CA with teachers' formative CA practice and its link with students' learning. Research also shows that the effectiveness of teacher education and training regarding the changes in teachers and students depends on the content, policy, and practice of teacher preparation programs.

### **Classroom Assessment as Pedagogical Knowledge**

What teachers should be taught in teacher preparation programs is an old and ongoing issue of discussion. Gimmestad and Hall (1995) presented worldwide learning

content for teacher preparation programs. They mentioned four general domains of knowledge for teacher preparation—General Education, Content Knowledge, Pedagogical Knowledge, Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK). This basic structure is still widely followed worldwide. General education includes knowledge and skills that all college students should acquire as basic learning as an educated citizen, such as communicating in written and oral language, basic skills for computation, use of technology, and general knowledge of history, literature, arts, and science. Content knowledge means the knowledge of the subject matter that the teachers will teach. Pedagogical knowledge entails learning how to teach by acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to be a teacher. Many of these skills can be more general and independent of specific subject matter teaching, such as learning theories, classroom management, student assessment, multicultural issues in education, and Information & Communication Technology (ICT) in education. The authors described Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) as the most important and complex in nature among all the four domains of knowledge. Shulman (1986) coined this term PCK, which is not merely the combination of general, content, and pedagogical knowledge but a sophisticated application of all these, which results in additional knowledge and skills possessed by expert teachers can acquire. When a teacher practices PCK, he/she can have knowledge of and ability to draw upon powerful examples, analogies, illustrations, and demonstrations that will make sense to specific students. The concept of PCK has become a crucial piece in designing teacher education. Therefore, FCA can be part of the pedagogical knowledge and PCK for teachers to learn.



Teachers need both pedagogical and content knowledge for teaching in classrooms. Wilson et al. (2001) through their literature review tried to answer: “What kind of pedagogical preparation and how much of it, do prospective teachers need?”. The authors described “pedagogical preparation” as the various courses that teachers take in such areas as instructional methods, learning theories, foundations of education, student assessment, and classroom management. The authors conclude that many studies found that pedagogical aspects of teacher preparation matter, both for their effects on teaching practice and for their impact on student achievement (for example, Hawk, Coble, and Swanson, 1985; Felter, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 2000). In contrast to these studies, Goldhaber and Brewer (2000) found no difference between the achievement of the students with certified teachers or uncertified teachers. However, the authors (Wilson et al. 2001) caution that many studies use a weak proxy for pedagogical preparation, which is merely having teaching credentials. Therefore, the results yield little insight into which aspects of pedagogical preparation are most crucial. Moreover, the content and arrangement of such courses in programs of teacher education vary widely from institution to institution.

## **Classroom Assessment in Teacher Preparation Programs**

### **Content, Structure, and Effectiveness**

Teachers’ knowledge, skills, and attitude related to CA are important factors in practicing FCA in classrooms. Classroom assessment is perhaps the single most common teacher professional activity, with teachers devoting approximately 33% of their professional time assessing students in their classrooms (Stiggins, 1991a). Classroom

assessment literally influences every other aspect of teaching-learning in the classroom. Therefore, it is very important that the teachers know how to conduct valid and reliable classroom assessment that can help teachers make informed decisions. Yet, research has documented that teachers' assessment-related literacy, skills, and often attitudes are generally weak (Brookhart, 2001; Campbell, Murphy, & Holt, 2002; Plake, 1993; Mertler, 1999). Stiggins (2001) also argued that practicing teachers and administrators in the schools have unacceptably low levels of assessment literacy. Brown (2004) explored teachers' conceptions of assessment in terms of their agreement or disagreement with four purposes of assessment; (a) improvement of teaching and learning, (b) school accountability, (c) student accountability, or (d) treating assessment as irrelevant. The Teachers' Conceptions of Assessment (COA-III) questionnaire was administered to 525 New Zealand primary school teachers and managers. On average, participants agreed with the improvement conceptions and the school accountability conception, while rejecting the view that assessment was irrelevant. However, respondents disagreed that assessment was for student accountability. Improvement, school, and student accountability conceptions were positively correlated. Irrelevance conception was inversely related to improvement conception and unrelated to system accountability conception.

Teachers often claim that their lack of preparation is largely due to inadequate preservice training in student assessment (Plake, 1993). Research suggests that despite assessment education efforts, beginning teachers self-reported feeling unprepared to assess student learning and maintained low assessment literacy levels (Campbell & Evans, 2000; MacLellan, 2004; Mertler and Campbell, 2004). This indicates the

ineffectiveness of assessment education, too. The ineffectiveness of assessment education is explained in the literature by theory-laden, limited preservice assessment education, disconnection of the assessment education from assessment of teachers in local classroom context, and misalignment of assessment education to current educational assessment standards (DeLuca & Klinger, 2010; Graham, 2005; Stiggins, 1999).

Though there is extensive discussion in the literature regarding teacher education programs in general, there is very little discussion on how CA should be integrated into the teacher education programs, and how it is. Stiggins (1999) listed the following seven competencies for teachers' assessment literacy to be included in teacher preparation programs:

- 1) Connecting assessments to clear purposes
- 2) Clarifying achievement expectations
- 3) Applying proper assessment methods
- 4) Developing quality assessment exercises and scoring criteria and sampling appropriately
- 5) Avoiding bias in assessment
- 6) Communicating effectively about student achievement
- 7) Using assessment as an instructional intervention (pp. 25-27)

DeLuca and Bellara (2013) argue that “assessment literacy involves integrating assessment practices, theories, and philosophies to support teaching and learning within a standards-based framework of education”. Stiggins (1999) listed several options for including assessment-related necessary content in teacher education programs where none of the options is a stand-alone one:

- 1) A unit on assessment methods in an educational psychology course
- 2) A unit on assessment in an introduction to teaching course
- 3) Multiple units on assessment within the context of various methods courses
- 4) Units on assessment within curriculum design courses
- 5) A separate course or set of courses on assessment methods
- 6) Independent study in assessment
- 7) Independent study as part of a learning team
- 8) A program of assessment training taught by professors who model various methods
- 9) Instruction provided by an assessment-literate master teacher during student teaching (p. 24)

CA- related learning can be provided to teachers in different approaches in teacher preparation programs. DeLuca and Klinger (2010) described three approaches to incorporate assessment literacy in teacher preparation programs: (1) explicit, (2) integrated, and (3) blended assessment education. Explicit preservice assessment education includes discrete course(s) in student assessment. In an integrated approach, assessment issues are integrated into broader curriculum and professional studies courses. A blended approach combines both explicit and integrated for assessment education. Researchers have also found that although an explicit assessment course helps to facilitate greater confidence and skills in beginning teachers (Campbell et al., 2002; Chen, 2005; Greenberg & Walsh, 2012; Mertler & Campbell, 2004), current mandatory assessment education is too minimal to allow significant changes in candidates' conceptions and practices of assessment (MacLellan, 2004; Volante & Fazio, 2007) or

engage in deep and complex learning about linkages between assessment, teaching, and learning (DeLuca & Klinger, 2010; Graham, 2005).

There is little literature suggesting what content should be included to teach teachers about FCA. Stiggins (1999) presented comprehensive criteria for teacher education institutions or programs to self-evaluate their programs to understand if they are including the content needed to prepare teachers to address the day-to-day challenges of CA. The self-evaluation framed by Stiggins focuses on the questions- ‘Do teachers have the scope to develop the ability to use the assessment process and its results to enhance student learning?’ (Stiggins, 1999). For this, he includes 7 competencies on CA: connecting assessments to clear purposes, clarifying achievement expectations, applying proper assessment methods, developing quality assessment exercises and scoring criteria and sampling appropriately, avoiding bias in assessment, communicating effectively about student achievement, using assessment as an instructional intervention. For each competence, the questions for teacher education faculty to ask are the following: “Do we teach it? Do we model it? Do we certify it? And do our graduates feel confident that they have mastered it?” (Stiggins, 1999, p. 25).

### **Teacher Preparation on CA Policy**

Teacher preparation policies focusing on the requirement of teacher preparation on CA can promote or suppress FCA practices in classrooms. Stiggins (1999) addressed the issue of states’ requirements not including much on CA. Therefore, teacher preparation programs also do not focus on CA competencies for teachers adequately in the U.S. context. He mentioned that as teacher preparation programs are not preparing all

teachers adequately to meet the day-to-day assessment challenges of teachers, a lot is spent for teachers' CA inservice training. One of the surveys of NCME for state teacher licensing standards found that only 25 of the 50 states require that teachers either meet specific assessment competence standards or at least complete assessment coursework during their preparation. Though this is a better picture of the number of states requiring CA- related requirements compared to the survey results from 1993, 1988, and 1991 (O'Sullivan & Chalnick, 1991; Wolmut, 1988), it is time that more states require CA standards in licensing teachers. There is very little research documenting the content, effectiveness and nature of inservice teacher preparation programs for CA.

Scholars and researchers are advocating for FCA to be included in policy and practice. For example, Stiggins (1999) argued that though the National Council on Measurement in education (NCME) of the United States works for improving the quality of high-stake tests, the time has come for them to advocate for improving the quality and rigor of classroom assessment. He thinks that concentrating only on high stake tests will corner the most important piece of assessment that happens in the classroom and covers 99.9% of the assessment happening in a student's life.

### **School Based Teaching Practice**

Practice teaching or practicum is a vital part of any preservice teacher preparation program (Wilson et al., 2001). White (1989) explained the practicum experience as a rite of passage, which helps the new or prospective teachers gain cultural knowledge about teaching. In many countries, practice teaching is most favorably viewed of all the parts of the curriculum (Ben-Peretz,1990; Wilson et,al., 2001). To acquire CA- related skills,

practice teaching can give prospective teachers experience using CA in a real classroom setting, helping them understand the issues and challenges of practicing CA. Wilson et al. (2001) concluded from their extensive literature review on a U.S. context that if the teacher candidate can work under close supervision in a real classroom situation, this experience can shift their attitude. However, whether that actually impacts the quality of teachers' preparation depends on the purpose and quality of the field experience. The purpose of the field experience can include showing what the job of teaching entails, helping teachers learn about classroom management, and giving practical opportunities to apply concepts learned in coursework.

Researchers critique the quality of practice teaching experience received by student teachers. From their literature review, Wilson et al. (2001) mentioned several issues regarding field experience, such as its disconnect from the theoretical studies of teacher education or poor coordination with the university-based components of teacher education. They also found from their review that it becomes an issue when field experience covers only the mechanical aspects of teaching. They further revealed that teacher education institutions find it challenging to find suitable placements for their students and to identify schools that share educational perspectives with teacher education programs. Another factor that affects how the student teachers' experience will be shaped is the norms of the schools in which prospective teachers are placed.

Research identifies promising practices for improving the quality of practicum. Tom (1987) thought that in the teacher education curriculum, pedagogical knowledge should be replaced with pedagogical questions that the students can use at the starting point, using both ethics and crafts of teaching. Pearce and Pickard (1987) argued that the

practicum should not be rooted to predetermined issues and concerns about classroom teaching; rather, it should evolve from the practice. They argued that we cannot confine the complex experience of a new teacher to a fixed checklist, for example. Cooperating teachers can influence the nature of the student teaching experience very effectively. Clandinin, Davis, Hogan and Kennan (1992) described an innovative teacher education approach by which prospective teachers have scope to reflect on their personal practical knowledge perspective. In this program, a group of 28 prospective teachers, 6 university teachers, and 28 school teachers collaborated together. Through sharing and responding to each other's stories, a new opportunity of learning was created for the prospective/new teachers. Innovative tools and techniques, such as a dialogue journal, response group, and renegotiated assignments, constituted the central component of the curriculum.

### **Hidden and Null Curriculum**

A hidden curriculum acts as a message transmitted to students through institutional context and program structure and process. Ginsburg and Clift (1990) identified different themes through which these messages are transmitted. First, the idea that teachers lack power is transmitted through coursework, practicum, and the little or no involvement of teachers in curriculum development. Through course work, new/prospective teachers get the idea that teachers hold power only with students and are “subordinate to administration, university professors and politicians” (Parsons & Beauchamp, 1985, p. 55). This lack of power is further reinforced by a teacher's having very little or no control over the curriculum development and curricular decision making. Second, the hidden curriculum of teacher education presents a fragmented view of



knowledge, both in coursework and field experience. The notion that knowledge is given and unproblematic is also transferred through teacher education programs and becomes problematic to teachers when they start teaching and gain experience. This concept of a hidden curriculum is quite relevant for teacher preparation programs in Bangladesh where CA is presented as non-problematic in nature. When teachers emerge themselves in the real classroom situation they reveal issues in practicing CA formatively.

Null curriculum is a message transmitted to students by what is not included in a curriculum (Ben Peretz,1990). Katz and Raths (1985) gave examples that when the teacher education curriculum does not include the ethics of teaching, the biological root of human beings, the development of professional dispositions (for example, the disposition to suspend judgment about children; the consideration of alternative explanations for a situation) as goals of teacher education programs, this restricts the scope for developing certain faculties of a teacher. Therefore, while analyzing what is included regarding CA in the teacher preparation curriculum, it is just as important to identify what is not included.

### **Theoretical Framework**

I used the Critical Socio-cultural Approach to Policy as Practice (Levinson, Sutton, &Winstead, 2009) as a framework for analyzing my data. Sutton and Levinson (2001) first explained the foundational postulates of a critical practice approach to the study of education policy. Then, they expanded and deepened many concepts in 2009 as their Critical Socio-cultural Approach to Policy as Practice. Levinson, Winstead, and Sutton (2018) have drawn particularly from sociology, anthropology, and political

science, especially from political and legal anthropology, to situate this theoretical perspective in the *Anthropology of Education Policy* in 2018.

Policy and its practice are social phenomena and thus can be well explained using a socio-cultural perspective. Policies can attribute strong meaning to different norms of society by codifying social norms and values. They can build fundamental organizing principles of the society. Sometimes policies even manifest implicit or explicit models of society and thus guide the behavior and actions of individuals in society. By studying policy, we can decode many aspects of a society, such as economic, legal, cultural, historical, and moral implications, as it encapsulates total social phenomena (Shore and Wright, 1997). It can “create whole new sets of relationship between individuals, groups, and objects” (Shore and Wright, 1997, p.7).

Levinson, Sutton, & Winstead (2009) argue that their approach, *Critical Socio-cultural Approach to Policy as Practice*, to see, explain, analyze and critique policy-practice is an alternative approach to the normative sense of policy, where policy is described as a set of laws or guidelines to follow by actors or stakeholders. Such typical policy talk, as they argue, aims to examine the success and failure of policies in ordering or reordering behavior as prescribed in the policy text. However, they described the policy process as “a complex set of interdependent socio-cultural practices” (p. 768), especially as “a practice of power” (p. 767) and aim to focus the promise of fuller democratic participation of mass people in policy-practice process. They aim to discover the social and cultural logic of power to negotiate and appropriate policies that usually remain hidden. In these ways their perspective to analyze and see policy differs from many other traditional studies of policy.

The Critical Socio-cultural Approach to Policy as Practice focuses on five concepts or groups of concepts to explain the Critical Socio-cultural Approach to Policy as Practice which are particularly relevant for making sense of my research data: (1) authorized or formal policy versus unauthorized or informal policy, (2) policy formation, negotiation, and appropriation, (3) community of practice (CoP) and, (4) power as an overarching influence in policy-practice process. They explained how authorized policies are produced and then negotiated and appropriated in different settings as informal or unauthorized policies by actors of different CoP where power plays a vital role in deciding who can do policy and what can policy do. Later in 2018, the authors clarified that negotiation and appropriation can also happen in the process of developing formal authorized policies. In the following section I will explain each of the concepts, give examples, and explain how I use these lenses to make sense of my data.

### **Authorized and Unauthorized Policies**

Authorized policies are policies that are formulated through a formal and authorized process usually by government and authorized policy actors. These formal policies usually take the form of texts and documents. Informal or unauthorized policies are those that are re-formulated and/or negotiated in a local setting by local actors and can differ in a variety of forms from the authorized policies (Levinson, Sutton, & Winstead, 2009). They make a distinction between these two types of policies and argue that non-authorized policy actors, such as teachers, students and or parents appropriate the authorized policies as a CoP in situated locate. By doing so, these actors are, in effect, creating new policies which the authors refer to as unauthorized or informal

policies. Shore and Wright (1997) believe that these authorized policies are political in nature but are disguised by objective, neutral, legal-rational idioms.

### **Policy Formation, Negotiation, and Appropriation**

Focusing on policy formation is what Critical Socio-cultural Approach to Policy as Practice has in common with other traditional policy studies that focus mainly on policy implementation. However, Levinson, Sutton, and Winstead (2009) state that the critical approach that analyzes practice does not take problem identification of the policy formulation process for granted. Rather, they scrutinize the social context “where the interests and languages comprising a normative policy discourse get negotiated into some politically and culturally viable form” (p. 778).

Policy can get negotiated between opposing parties and interests. Levinson, Sutton, &Winstead (2009) use the term *negotiation* in a socio-cultural sense to account for the process of meaning making. They argue that policymakers negotiate a complex field of meanings and understandings of different concepts, ideas, and discourses. From an anthropological perspective, meaning making is always negotiated in social life and thus is vital to social action. “Values are never fixed but rather are contingent on the mobilization of meaning in specific situations” (p.779). The authors argue that whether actual political negotiation is involved or not, the negotiation of meaning is a vital part of policy formation. They further explain that the negotiation of meaning happens not only in the policy formation process but also across and within different “institutional and micro institutional sites where policy flows and takes shape” (p.779).

Instead of discussing implementation of policy, Levinson, Sutton, &Winstead (2009) shift their focus to the appropriation of policy. According to the authors,

appropriation happens later, after policy formation, when an authorized policy signal circulates in different related settings via different means. “Appropriation refers to the ways that creative agents interpret and take in elements of policy, thereby incorporating these discursive resources into their own schemes of interest, motivation, and action, their own figured world” (p. 779). The authors clarified that the process of appropriation is more than the sense making of local policy actors referred to by Spillane, Reiser, and Reimer (2002). “It points to the possible recursive influence of local actors on the formation of authorized policy, even as it recognizes and valorizes rather more local, unofficial types of policy formation than are the outcome of these actors’ encounter with authorized policy” (p. 779). They also explained that through the appropriation process ideas, norms, and values developed in a particular social group of CoP become more generalized in the public domain and part of a different social group’s or CoP’s cultural repertoire.

Levinson, Sutton, & Winstead (2009) present an example of this appropriation and negotiation from the study of Street (2001). Street (2001) studied teachers’ union politics in Mexico. She found that though the authorized state policy for administrative decentralization presented a narrow vision of autonomy as a way of giving responsibility to regional bureaucracies, teachers in a democratic resistance movement appropriated the term in their own way to advance an agenda related to much deeper local democratization. Here, the meaning of autonomy got negotiated as a part of appropriation. The teachers advocated local school autonomy using a democratic process, in which consensus would be built between teachers, parents, and students. They used the

rhetoric of autonomy to explain the reason for resistance to the state's evaluation of material responsibility for public school.

### **Community of Practice**

The concept of CoP was first presented in Lave and Wenger's (1991) work on situated learning. Later, Wenger (1998) elaborated the concept in his book. Levinson, Sutton, & Winstead (2009) state that they focus on the concept of CoP as an analytic term to illuminate what happens when policy is formulated and when it gets appropriated. Lave and Wenger's (1991) highlighted three constitutive dimensions for CoP while defining its properties: (1) mutual engagement, (2) joint enterprise, and (3) shared repertoire. These dimensions cannot exist in isolation to each other. First, CoP consists of mutual engagement. This means that the members of a CoP do things together on a daily basis. They negotiate the key meanings of what they are doing as a group. Here, the authors clarify that the engagement of a CoP need not be a face-to-face interaction at a local site. Nowadays, in an ever-increasing technology-based social space, CoP can mutually engage across multiple sites and spaces. The mutual engagement of a CoP is directed towards a joint enterprise. This enterprise has been developed historically by and for the members of the community. This enterprise fulfills some existential and material needs of the members of that CoP. It is not necessary to have agreement among the members; rather, disagreement can be a productive part of the enterprise. Joint enterprise does not mean that all the members in a CoP believe the same thing. It means that the meaning is communally negotiated. Finally, a CoP will have a shared repertoire. It means that the CoP will develop or adopt a common body or system of shared "routines, words,

tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions, or concepts” (Wenger, 1998, p. 78). Etienne and Wenger (1998) discussed the relationship between local, self- defining communities and the broader social forces that define their practice in the communities. They argue that CoP is shaped by factors outside the community over which the members have no control. However, the community of practice responds to outside mandates and as the members respond to these mandates, the practice of the community evolves. The broader factors that influence the CoP are referred to as global and the CoP as local. Wenger (1998) argues that although a CoP is more and more influenced by the global flows of ideas, discourses, power, and meaning, the locality of engagement still resides within the CoP.

How a CoP gets involved in policy production, negotiation and appropriation is also explained in the study of Levinson, Blackwood, and Cross (2013) regarding lower secondary education reform policy in Mexico. A new education policy established new pedagogical, school administrative, and school culture guidelines along with forms of evaluation. The researchers explained the policy negotiation and appropriation process in schools using the concept of CoP. Their findings reveal that different categories and sub-categories of actors at school, such as different subject teachers, supervisors as communities of practice influenced the interpretation and appropriations of the policy. For example, the supervisors as a community of practice appropriated the policy in earnest. The reasons are: they themselves were teachers in the past, they have close contact with teachers, and they possess an autonomous space within the administrative structure of the state education system. However, as they have pedagogical experience from an earlier generation, they tended to reproduce certain hierarchical relationships and

non-dialogical forms in the training of the teachers (their students). On the other hand, for teachers, the appropriation varied. Some teachers rejected the reform as an imposition of neoliberal state in cahoots with powerful international interests. Most of the teachers tried to implement the policy in earnest. However, their life histories, ideological formation, and professional experience affected the way they interpreted the policy.

### **Policy as a Practice of Power**

Discourse of power is central to the Critical Socio-cultural Approach to Policy as Practice. Power plays a role in every step of policy-practice process- formulation, negotiation, appropriation, and reification. According to Levinson, Sutton, & Winstead (2009) policy defines reality, orders behavior, and allocates resources accordingly. Like for most other critical approaches, they believe that policy making, and implementation process happens in a social structure which is historically dominated by elites. These approaches aim to find out how policies serve to reproduce existing structures of domination and inequalities. They argue that policies codify and extend the interests of who has more power in society. They refer to Bhola (2000) who defines policy as the manifest intentions of power elites. Power elites use policy to distribute social goods. The extent to which this practice of power is democratic depends on the ways the power elites are formed and legitimized or the ways that other social groups may participate in policy formulation. Along with that, the authors in their Critical Socio-cultural Approach to Policy as Practice added the aim of democratizing policy making.



### **How I Used Theoretical Perspective for My Study**

I used this critical socio-cultural approach to policy as practice while making sense of the data and trying to answer questions such as: (1) Why certain policy related to CA works in a certain way in a specific context like TTC? (2) What socio-cultural factors influence the formulation, negotiation and appropriation of that policy? (3) How do different communities of practice negotiate and appropriate authorized policies as locally influenced by broader context- related global factors? How I used this framework is described in the methodology chapter in details.

Besides this theoretical perspective, I also utilized two concepts used in the anthropology of policy to explain and examine policy. The concepts are: (1) the fragmented nature of policy and (2) policy as a tool to (re)define social and cultural identity and position. These concepts helped me synthesize my analyzed data within a broader framework. I took these concepts from the field anthropology of policy as “Policies are inherently and unequivocally anthropological phenomena” (Shore and Wright, 1997, p. 7).

Shore and Wright (1997) addressed the fragmented nature of policy that makes it hard to understand the constituents of policy. The policy manifesto can take various forms.

Is it found in the language, rhetoric and concepts of political speeches and party manifestos? Is it the written document produced by government or company officials? Is it embedded in the institutional mechanisms of decision-making and service deliver? Or is it ... whatever people experience in their interactions with street-level bureaucrats? (p. 5)

This fragmentation is very relevant for my research, as the policy pieces I analyzed regarding teacher preparation and assessment are created at different times for different reasons, having no real connections among the different policies. This cannot give us a comprehensive outlook for policy guidelines on how teachers should be prepared for CA and how the CA would work in a school context.

Policy can shape individuals' way of thinking about their self-identity and position in society, influence them to redefine their social and cultural status and positions, structure the way they exercise power in the society, determine the way of doing things, and influence indigenous norms of conduct. Shore and Wright (1997) give an example of Stanely's study (1991), which shows how policy can influence people's own definition of their identity. When policies are designed to expose the legal profession to market forces, we can see changes in how lawyers define themselves. It is worth noticing that they are increasingly defining themselves as entrepreneurs or suppliers in a market who supply specific commodities in the market, rather than other alternative identities, such as an instrument of justice. I tried to see how policy in Bangladesh can define CA and related concepts in different settings, such as in a TTC, in school, or in a policy network which then influence different CoPs to specifically identify themselves with specific position and identity.

## Critical Socio-cultural Approach to Policy as Practice

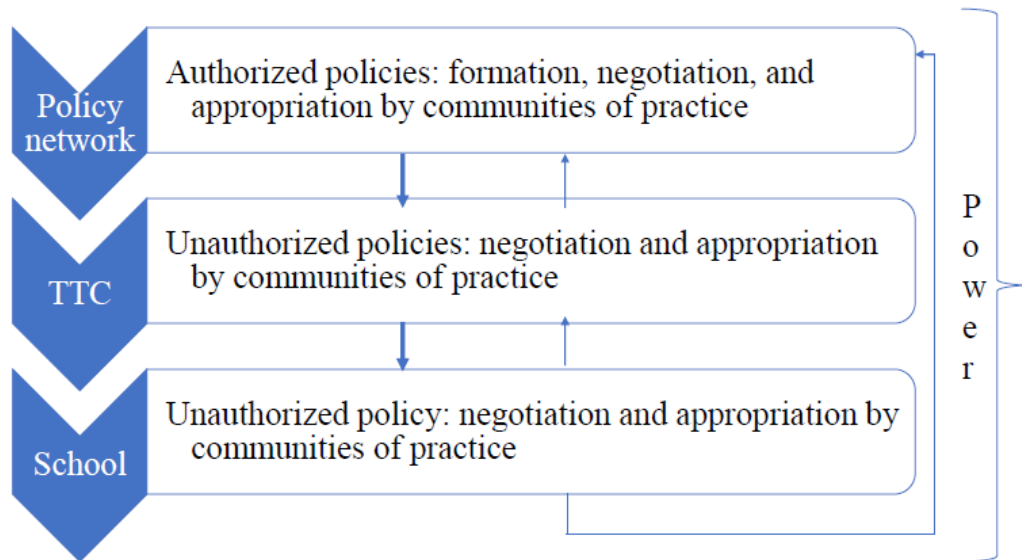


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework for Data Analysis

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS**

This chapter describes the research design and methods used for the study. It includes the nature of the study, research design which includes outlining the concepts and theoretical underpinning of vertical case study, selection of sampling for national, regional and local levels which includes selection of sites, selection of human actors as research participants, and selection of non-human actors, such as documents and teaching or training materials. It also presents the data collection process and the tools for collecting data at each of the three levels. Finally, the chapter outlines the process of data analysis, delimitations of the study and ethical considerations.

#### **Nature of the Study**

I used the Vertical Case Study (VCS) research method to learn about the policy-practice-application process and levels of interaction related to teacher preparation on classroom assessment. In the next section, I describe the Vertical Case Study research method and its relevance to my study.

#### **What is Vertical Case Study?**

Vertical case study is a research method that aims to understand policy formulation and practice as a socio-cultural process by collecting data from multiple sites, networks, and levels, from macro to micro, and from global to extra-local (Vavrus & Bartlett, 2006). The analysis of elements at different levels helps us understand the “flows (and frictions) of influence, ideas, and actions through these levels” (Bartlett &

Vavrus, 2014b, p. 120). Vertical case study focuses its attention on global and national forces that shape policy formulation and its implementation at different levels.

Ultimately, the purpose of using VCS as a research method is to have an insightful understanding of the policy-practice dynamics at each level. Since the aim of my study was to explore the policy-practice aspects of teacher preparation on classroom assessment, it was relevant to trace the production and negotiation of policy mandates/documents in different policy-practice interaction phases and settings, such as policy production in a policy network, practice of teacher preparation on classroom assessment (CA) in Teachers' Training Colleges (TTCs), and practice of classroom assessment at local level schools. Vertical case study explores how understanding at different levels produces similar and different interpretations of the policy, problem, or phenomenon under study (Vavrus & Bartlett, 2006). Therefore, the vertical case study method allowed me to compare different levels to see how the same policy and curriculum of teacher preparation and classroom assessment are interpreted and practiced differently at different levels such as in TTCs, schools, and classrooms.

### **Theoretical Underpinning of Vertical Case Study**

To understand the nature of VCS, it is crucial to understand the core theoretical or conceptual frameworks tied to VCS, such as sociocultural studies of policy as practice, actor network theory, multi-sited ethnography, and policyscapes (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2014a; Bartlett & Vavrus, 2014 b). This understanding of these theories also contributed to understanding my theoretical and analytical framework as I used critical socio-cultural

policy as practice as my theoretical framework and the Actor Network Theory as my analytical framework and tool.

Vertical case study draws particular ideas from the sociocultural studies of policy as practice (Shore & Wright, 1997; Levinson & Sutton, 2001) which unlike other policy studies, do not focus only on policy success but acknowledge that policy is a highly political process involving actors at different levels to co-produce it while implementing. This study of policy recognizes that policy production is a social process that can happen in disparate locations. This policy as practice study recognizes that different social actors influence policy formulation and implementation to different degrees. The authority may differ in influencing to “(1) define what is problematic in education; (2) shape interpretation and means of how problems should be resolved; and (3) determine to what vision of the future change efforts should be directed” (Hamann & Rosen, 2011, p.462). Thus, VCS draws heavily from the sociocultural studies of education policy and focuses on both policy formation and implementation or appropriation. With policy formulation, a set of statements defines reality and human behavior and influences the allocation of resources. According to this study of sociocultural policy, policy implementation is a process of appropriation by social actors who selectively implement policy coping with other ideas and discourses situated in different places and time (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2014 b). Teachers’ experience of teacher preparation programs on classroom assessment is not an isolated phenomenon; rather, it is a part of policy-practice dynamics that is defined, shaped, and appropriated at different levels, such as in national policies & curriculums, teacher training colleges, and schools by different actors, such as policy makers, trainers, trainees, teachers, students, the head teacher, and parents. These actors have differences

to the degree they can influence the shaping of the policy while implementing. To understand this process of teacher preparation as policy formulation and an appropriation process occurring at different levels by different actors, the sociocultural theory of policy as practice was an important contributor to my study. I used the sociocultural studies of policy as practice as my theoretical framework for analyzing the data with a critical understanding of power. I drew upon critical socio-cultural studies of policy as practice in the literature review chapter.

The conceptual building blocks of VCS can be further reinforced by the actor-network theory (ANT) along with sociocultural approaches. The recognition that actors' influencing policy can be spread across time and space calls for the actor-network theory (ANT) to contribute its conceptual building blocks to VCS. Actor network theory defines networks as "assemblages" of dynamic actors, both human and non-human, that can shape educational practices influencing policy across time and space (Nespor, 2004, p.369). This theory focuses on how human actors and resources in networks are involved, excluded, and enrolled; how linkages are made, shifted, and dissolved; and how social acts within networks influence further actions (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2014 a). Framed by the actor network theory, I analyzed data collected from different sites: policy networks, TTCs, and schools to see how disparate actors, ideas, materials and discourses coalesce to form networks that produce, co-produce and negotiate policies at different sites. ANT uses texts, such as curriculum, education policy, training manuals, and other non-human resources, such as training sessions, teacher-student or trainer-trainee relationships in a network for analyzing teacher preparation policy, practice and application.

Vertical Case Study, as derived from the concepts of sociocultural theory and ANT, emphasizes looking into different sites, levels, and networks to understand policy implementation or appropriation. This calls for qualitative methodologies that emphasize data collection at multiple sites related to a research interest, such as multisited ethnography. Multisited ethnography focuses not only on the flow of people, goods, and ideas across space but also the interconnectedness across dispersed locations which is referred to as a “distributed knowledge system” (Marcus, 2011, pp. 23-25). In my research, I collected in-depth data from disparate locations, such as from policy networks, from a TTV, and from an urban school. I explored how teacher preparation for classroom assessment is practiced in different settings, how the curriculum and policies concerning TPD on classroom assessment are interpreted at different sites, and how they are connected as a distributed knowledge system.

Vertical Case Study builds on the concept of policyscape for its understanding of policy and its practice. It focuses on how different ideas about educational policy link up with one another moving from country to country. The policyscape views the state as an important object of analysis (Carney, 2012). Carney argues that global policies have dislodged the state from its national context and have been influenced by different forces, global scapes, development agencies and their vested interests. For example, the embrace of a particular teaching method, e.g., learner-centered pedagogy by countries around the world, represents one kind of policyscape. Disparate policy actors from different policy or other networks are involved in different stages of policy production and negotiation of teacher preparation on classroom assessment in Bangladesh. This building block of VCS spreads light on how different global and local forces and their vested interests influence



shaping the policy-practice process in the policyscape, and how the forces move in different places, such as from national policy network to TTC, from TTCs to schools, and from schools to classrooms.

### **Research Design**

I used VCS to explore the vertical dimension to study the broader policy of CA and teacher preparation on CA, and how different actors at different levels reproduce and negotiate it. I investigated three levels: national, regional, and local. At the national level, I reviewed policy documents (National Education Policy, teacher preparation curriculum, and school curriculum) and interviewed key policy actors to learn about the national policy guidelines on CA and teacher preparation on CA, the process of formulation of these policies, and the factors influencing the policy formulation process. At the regional level, to know how teacher preparation policies (teacher preparation curriculum formulated at the national level) on CA are practiced, and the factors that influence this practice, I investigated a Teachers' Training College (TTC) in the city of Dhaka. I collected data from different actors in the TTC, such as the principal, trainers, trainees, and practice teachers, and reviewed documents related to teacher preparation experience on CA, such as training modules and power point presentations. At the local level, I collected data in an urban school from different actors, such as the head teacher, teachers, supervisor, parents and students, and reviewed materials related to CA such as lesson plans and teacher-made tests. Data from this level depicted how different actors are translating CA policies into practice, how the teachers are applying their CA related learning from the TTC in classrooms to conduct Formative Classroom Assessment

(FCA), and the factors that influence this practice in classrooms. Through this study I have explored how the human and non-human actors at different levels assemble in a network to produce, negotiate and appropriate authorized and/or informal or unauthorized policies as localized policy-practice of classroom assessment.

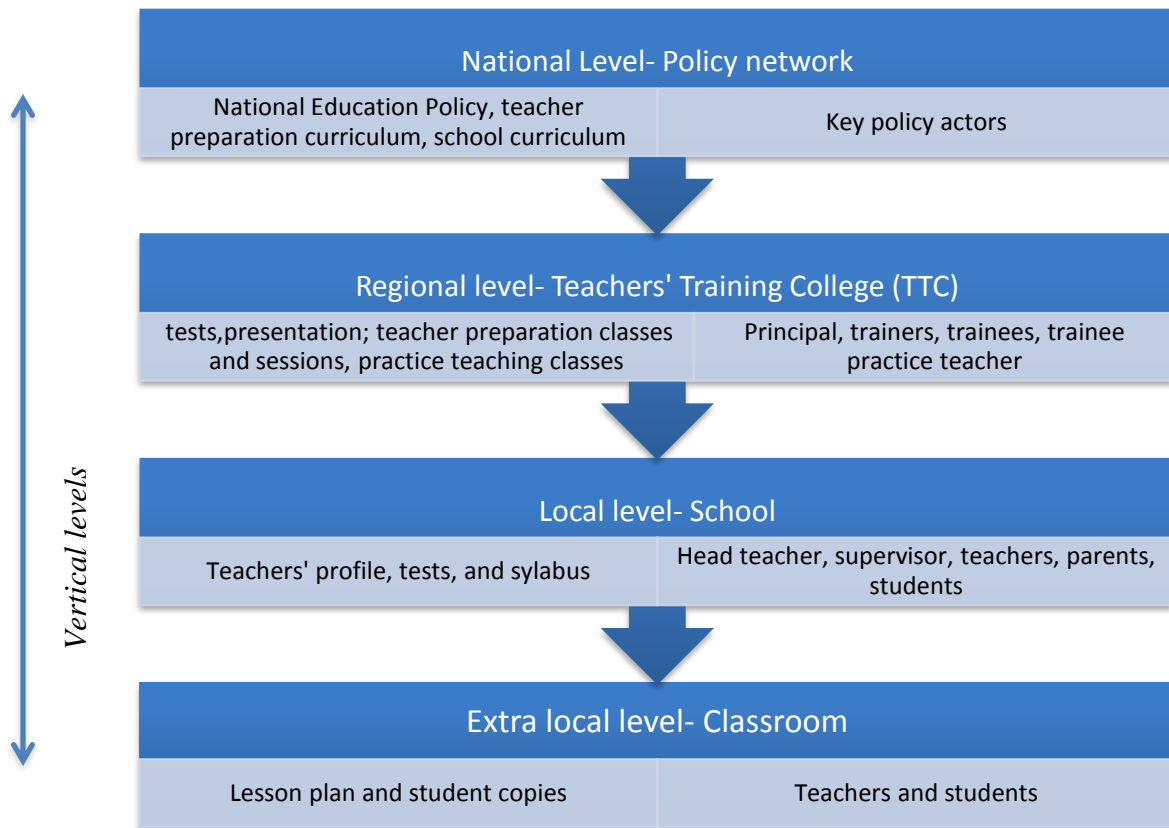


Figure 2: Levels of Vertical Case Study with Human and Non-human actors

### **Sampling of Human and Non-human Actors**

Vertical Case Study draws methodologically and conceptually from multisited ethnography as it emphasizes collecting data from sites located in dispersed locations (Marcus, 1998; Bartlett & Vavrus, 2014a). A single researcher can fruitfully engage in this type of multisited research (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2014a). VCS also draws from Actor Network Theory (ANT) that believes non-human actors, too, have agency and therefore,

should be included for units of analysis. In this section I list the non-human and human actors that I traced at different sites of levels or networks to understand the policy-practice of teacher preparation of CA.

“Methodologically, there are two ANT approaches—to follow actors via interviews and ethnographic research, or to first examine material objects, such as texts, reports, and databases, that serve as intermediaries that pass between actors.” (Koyama, 2012, p. 876). For the policy network, I started with tracing the non-human actors, i.e., the policy pieces, and then traced the policy actors who are involved in producing and negotiating the policies. In the Teachers’ Training College, I started with interviewing human actors, such as principal and trainers, and then traced the non-human actors, such as the modules of the trainings and power-point presentations. In the school, I started with tracing human actors, such as by interviewing the head teacher and teachers. Then I collected data from the non-human actors, such as teacher-made tests and syllabus. However, for each level, the process was iterative and there were times I went back and forth tracing the human and non-human actors.

## **National Level**

### **Policy Documents to Trace**

For this study, I reviewed relevant parts of the three types of policy documents:

- (1) the most recent National Education Policy (2010);
- (2) teacher preparation curricula, and
- (3) secondary school curriculum

Among the 28 chapters in the National Education policy document, there is one chapter on examination and evaluation (pages 58-60) and another on teachers' training (pages 64-66) that are relevant for my research. I purposefully selected these two chapters to review.

I decided to review only the curricula of the teacher education programs and the manuals of the trainings that are offered at the TTC that I selected as my site of data collection. There are two different types of teacher preparation programs available in Bangladesh—long-term comprehensive teacher education programs (BEd Hons, BEd and MEd) and short-term trainings or continuous professional development (1 day to 35 days long, for example). In the long-term programs, CA is covered either as a separate course or topics within a course. There are some short-term trainings focused solely on CA while others have just parts on CA. The titles of the trainings, courses, or topics on CA can vary, such as continuous assessment, school-based assessment, assessment for learning, and formative assessment. I reviewed the teacher education curricula of National University that are in place in all TTCs:

- (1) Four years of Bachelor of Education (BEd Hons.)— It is a preservice teacher education program
- (2) One year of Bachelor of Education (BEd)—It can be either a preservice or an inservice teacher education program as any person with or without teaching experience can enroll in this program.
- (3) One year of Master of Education (MEd)— It can be either a preservice or an inservice teacher education program as any person with or without teaching experience can enroll in this program.

I also reviewed modules/manuals of short-term trainings organized by different government projects that were in operation in the TTC from where I collected data and which has CA-related sessions. I reviewed modules/manuals as the trainings usually lack any formal curriculum. However, all these modules need to be approved by the Ministry of Education. The training manuals I collected and reviewed are listed below:

- (1) Manual for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) I and II
- (2) Manual for training for future head teachers
- (3) Manual for training on ICT-Digital content development

I reviewed the parts of the curricula and training manuals that are related to classroom assessment. For the school curriculum, I also reviewed the general guidelines provided on CA in the beginning chapter and the CA guidelines for two subject-based curricular framework as samples. Therefore, I used purposeful sampling, which is common for qualitative research, based on reasons for selecting the samples (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). “The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposeful sampling.” (Patton, 2002, p.160).

### **Key Policy Actors to Trace**

I interviewed five key policy actors to learn about the formulation and development of the above-mentioned policy documents and their scope and implementation process in the policy network. I used the term ‘network’ to imply that these key informants may not be working in a single site or organization but are involved

in policymaking and implementation at the national level. Initially, I selected two key policy actors for interviewing, one working in the planning of the trainings in a government project as a project consultant and one working in the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) in its training division who is responsible for planning and managing trainings. The three other key policy actors were selected using “snowball sampling”, that is a method by which a researcher selects further samples after getting information about the later samples from the sample(s) they initially chose. (Patton, 2002, 176). The rest of the policy actors are: a consultant of another project who also works for teacher quality improvement, a researcher working at the Bangladesh Examination Development Unit (BEDU), and a curriculum expert working at the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB).

## **Regional Level**

### **Data Collection Site**

The teacher education programs and trainings described in an earlier section are offered in three types of sites:

- (1) Institute of Education & Research (IER) in different public universities
- (2) Different government and non-government TTCs located in different sub-districts (upazilas) of the country— 14 govt., and 97 non-government
- (3) National Academy for Educational Management in Dhaka (trainings for the institutional heads)
- (4) Bangladesh Open University (It offers BEd and MEd for teachers in distance mode).

Among all these venues for teacher preparation, TTCs are the only venues where both teacher education programs and short-term trainings happen simultaneously for different groups of trainees. They exist in a variety of locations throughout the country. Between the private and government teacher training colleges, the government TTCs are more structured and organized in running the education programs and training sessions in a timely manner (initial interview with officer, Training Division, DSHE). Therefore, I selected a government teacher training college as my site for data collection. I have selected one specific govt. TTC in Dhaka using “maximum variation sampling” as it has maximum variation in the teacher preparation programs available there. “This strategy for purposeful sampling aims at capturing and describing the central themes or principal outcomes that cut across a great deal of participant or program variation” (Patton, 2002, p. 172). Throughout my writing I use the pseudonym “KOLATOLI TTC” to refer to the TTC from where I collected data.

### **Human Actors to Trace**

Throughout my dissertation, to indicate the teachers in the TTC who takes classes in the teacher education programs and sessions in the training programs, I use the term *trainer*. I use the term *trainee* to mention any participant in the TTC either enrolled in teacher education programs or participating in any training sessions to obtain teacher preparation- related KAS.

I interviewed the principal of the TTC, who is the head of this institution. For the other interviews I purposefully selected six trainers of the TTC who teach courses or sessions related to CA and one trainee who was doing practice teaching in a placement

school and volunteered to participate. I conducted total four FGDs with the trainees in the TTC. The first group for FGD was composed of six trainees (inservice teachers) drawn from a short course, only 35 days long, who volunteered to participate in my research. All these trainees had a minimum 10 years of teaching experience in secondary schools. The second group of teachers were four in number who were already in teaching positions and getting their MEd (1 year) in the KOLATOLI TTC. The third group of trainees was also enrolled in the MEd 1 year program of the KOLATOLI TTC and had finished their BEd program and immediately joined this MEd program. These trainees do not have any teaching experience yet. The fourth group for FGD was comprised of four trainees from BEd (1 year). This group had trainees both with and without teaching experience. To select the groups for FGD, I used purposeful sampling from clusters of trainees through which I tried to capture major variations in the field of interest in which each of the groups will have a more or less homogeneous sample (Patton, 2002, 174). For example, I tried to select both male and female trainees; trainees from different age groups when applicable (for BEd hons all the enrolled trainees were in the same age group); and trainees coming from different types of secondary schools, such as government, non-government, and MPO non-government (if they were already in teaching) in the FGD groups of trainees. I selected trainees who had already finished taking the courses and/or sessions on CA but were still in the TTC.

### **Non-human Actors to Trace**

While collecting data from the human actors, I also traced non-human actors, important mediators influencing the training experience in TTC. I collected three



PowerPoint presentations of the trainers who covered CA- related topics in the trainings and several tests of BEd and MEd examinations.

### **Tracing the Interaction between Human and Non-human Actors**

There was no course or topics in any course related to assessment for the BEd (Hons.) during the semester I was collecting data. In MEd (1 year) the curriculum does not have any topics related to CA. I observed five classes on CA for BEd (1 year). I used “Opportunistic sampling” (Patton, 2002, p. 179) and observed as many classes as possible (total of 5) of BEd (one year) talking to the trainers who were teaching content on CA.

When I collected data in the TTC, there was no specific training going on devoted solely to training on CA. There were only three trainings going on that included some sessions on CA. They are 35 days training for the head teachers, subject- based Continuous Professional Development (CPD), and training on ICT-Digital content development. I observed four, two, and three (total of eight) sessions of these three different trainings, respectively, to understand how CA- related curricular content is translated into teachers’ preparation experience. This method of sample selection is flexible and I decided to use it after going to the field— it depended on whatever unfolded in the field. I also observed two practice teaching classes of each of the two trainee teachers who were doing practice teaching in a school in which they both had been placed. The coordinator of the teaching practice helped to find both a school that already gave the trainee teachers opportunity to take classes in the school and the trainee teachers who volunteered to participate.

## Local Level

### Data Collection Site

I selected a school in Dhaka to make my commute to the school easy and less time consuming as I was staying in Dhaka while collecting data. I selected a school that is non-public in nature and receives a Monthly Payment Order (MPO) from the government. I decided to choose this type of school as most of the secondary schools in Bangladesh are private schools receiving a Monthly Payment Order from the government (98%). This type of schools is independent in their management but receives a salary for a part of the teachers and staff by ensuring certain criteria: “ (a) recognition of the institution from the respective authority, (b) recruitment and staffing pattern rules for teachers and employees, (c) minimum enrollment, (d) curriculum and co-curricular activities, (e) audited accounts of income and expenditure, (f) satisfactory examination results, and (g) an approved management committee. For rural school, the land needs to be owned by the school itself and needs to meet the minimum spatial area set in the directive” (UNESCO, 2007). Another reason for selecting this school is that this school has different types of teachers— teachers who are newly recruited as well as experienced teachers with different training experiences, such as BEd, MEd and other short-term trainings including the ones that I observed in the TTC. This helped me ask specific questions about specific trainings to the teachers during interviews and to link their practice to their learning from the teacher preparation programs. For example, from the observation of the training on ICT Digital Content development I knew that the teachers learn to develop PowerPoint presentations in those trainings. I noticed that how to use digital content for CA techniques was not discussed in the trainings. I, therefore, asked

the teachers if they had ever used PowerPoints in teaching classes after having that training. I also asked how they use CA while using PowerPoints. For my dissertation I used the pseudonym Modhupur High School to refer to the school from which I collected data.

### **Human Actors to Trace**

I interviewed the head teacher of the school who is the head of the institution. I interviewed the academic supervisor for this school who is responsible for visiting different schools in her catchment area including this school. Out of 38 teachers in this school, I interviewed eight teachers from the school with different teacher preparation experience (around 21% teachers of that school). For selecting the teachers for interviewing, I used stratified purposeful sampling by reviewing their teaching and teacher preparation (teacher education and training) experience. The strata: newly recruited (less than a year experience) without any formal teacher preparation experience (2 teachers); 5 to 10 years of teaching experience with trainings (a part of the trainings cover the topic CA) but no BEd or MEd (1 teachers); 5 to 10 years of teaching experience with both trainings (a part of the trainings cover the topic CA) and BEd and/or MEd (2 teachers); more than 10 years of teaching experience with trainings (a part of the trainings cover the topic CA) but no BEd or MEd (1 teacher); and more than 10 years of teaching experience with both trainings (a part of the trainings cover the topic CA) and BEd and/or MEd (2 teachers).

I conducted four Focus Group Discussions—two with the students and two with the parents. The students and parents were from two specific classes from morning and

day shifts that I observed. I selected four boys and five girls for the two FGDs with students. These students were from the two classes that I observed from the day shift and morning shift, respectively. The students were selected with the help of the teachers to include students with both higher and lower academic achievements and coming from different socioeconomic backgrounds to achieve maximum variation in sampling. For FGD with parents, I selected five parents of the students (boys) from the same class and another five parents of the students (girls) of the same class I observed. However, they are not necessarily the parents of the same students I conducted FGDs with. Parents were also selected with the help of the teacher to include parents from different socioeconomic backgrounds and whose children have different academic achievements.

### **Non-human Actors to Trace**

While tracing the non-human actors in the school, I examined and analyzed teachers' training profiles for the school, the syllabus that the teachers use for defining their classroom teaching scope, sample lesson plans that they have prepared by themselves for taking classes for grade specific subjects, and teacher- made tests that were used in class tests or terminal examinations collected from each of the four teachers that I interviewed. I also collected and reviewed two student copies (classwork and homework) from each of the 4 different grade-specific subject classes I observed totaling 8 student copies (4 classwork and 4 homework copies).

## **Tracing the Interaction between Human and Non-human Actors**

I observed multiple classes from different grades and subjects. The teachers who teach these classes were included along with others in the list of teachers I interviewed.

The classes that I observed:

- (1) Bangla for grade nine (five consecutive routine classes in five days),
- (2) social science for grade eight (four consecutive routine classes in four days),
- (3) science for grade eight (five consecutive routine classes in five days),
- (4) English for grade six (four consecutive routine classes in four days).

### **Data Collection**

I collected data at three levels: national, regional, and local levels. In this section I describe the methods and techniques of data collection I used in each of the levels and for what purpose. I used a variety of data collection methods to collect data from different human and non-human actors in my study.

#### **National Level**

### **Document Review**

To understand the existing broad policy of teacher preparation and classroom assessment, I reviewed and analyzed selective parts of the three policy documents—the National Education Policy 2010 of Bangladesh, the most recent education policy; the curricula of the teacher education programs developed centrally and used by all TTCs; and the secondary school curriculum developed centrally and used by all general stream

secondary schools. “The focus and selection of documents and artifacts depend on the purpose of the inquiry and the research questions” (Rallis & Rossman, 2012, p.128). For reviewing the documents, at first, I skimmed through the whole document to understand the flow of information and to specify the parts that have content related to teacher preparation and CA. After that, I reviewed and analyzed those parts related to teacher preparation and CA in depth to understand: the policy intentions in the education policy, the coverage and focus of CA-related content in the teacher education and school curricula, the flow of policy intention from national education policy to teacher education and school curricula, and connections among the three policy pieces.

### **Interview**

In VCS, policy formulation is viewed as production of social knowledge in a social space (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2014b). The formal authorized policy is produced at the national level in a policy network. To understand how different actors assemble together in a national policy network to create the policy document and to understand the process of negotiation and appropriation in the network, I interviewed five key policy actors. These policy actors are involved in policy production and/or planning for policy implementation in national policy network.

I used a semi-structured interview protocol and audio recorded all the interviews that I conducted for this research. The information about this type of interview method thus applies to all the interviews that happen at other levels too. The semi-structured interview protocol or the “interview guide approach” (used by Patton, 2002) helped me generate data that I planned to receive from the research participants. At the same time, it

helped me have space in my data collection that allowed me to have relevant data from research participants that might emerge during conversations or discussions (Patton, 2002, pp. 342-347). In this method, the researcher develops questions, categories or topics to explore information related to the research topic but remains open to any topics the participants bring in. Thus, this method helps to elicit a participant's worldview (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Each of the interviews lasted approximately one hour. "Follow up questions" for clarification and elaboration were asked whenever needed (Rossman & Rallis, 2012, p. 184). Through the interview questions I wanted to know: the roles and responsibilities of the policy actors in developing, authorizing/deauthorizing, negotiating, and implementing policies; how they perceive policy intention; their perception of global influence in the policies; and their perception of factors that influence the policy formulation process.

### **Regional Level**

The information from the national policy level helped me prepare the research protocols for this level. For example, when I knew what topics related to CA are included in the MED. curriculum, it guided me to ask specific questions of the teachers about their learning CA. The formal authorized policy is produced at the national level of the policy network. One of the aims of this study is to trace how the policies are translated into the TTC to educate the teachers on CA through informal policies coproduced as a socio-cultural process. To understand this process and the factors that influence this process, I interviewed relevant actors in the TTC, conducted FGDs, observed training sessions and practice teaching classes, and reviewed relevant documents.

## **Observation**

To learn how the main actors in this regional level, the trainers and the trainees implement, negotiate and appropriate policies on teacher preparation about CA, I observed training sessions in the teachers' training college. I also observed practice teaching classes in a placement school to understand how the trainee teachers (trainees of the TTC) apply their knowledge and skills on CA learned in the TTC to real classroom settings. Observation of people, actions, and events help us understand the context and identify tacit patterns that the trainers and trainee may not aware of or may not want to talk about (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). As I am neither a trainer, nor a trainee in the training sessions, I was present in the training sessions as a non-participant observer. I observed only the training sessions or teacher education classes that cover the topics related to CA. I also observed the teaching practice of two trainees from the TTC who were teaching as trainee teachers in a school in which they had been placed by the TTC. I recorded information from each observation using a semi-structured observation protocol while observing the training sessions and the teacher education classes. During the observation, I tried to look for: focus and intention of the training sessions; how in depth the CA part is taught and how; focus of CA content (formative/summative, Assessment of Learning/Assessment for Learning); the teaching materials used; the types of CA used in those sessions by the trainers to assess the trainee students, if used at all; and the reaction of the trainee students. Both the trainer and the trainees were notified of my intention to observe the session, and I received permission through a consent letter signed by the trainer.



## **Interview**

I used a semi-structured interview protocol to interview the principal (head of the TTC), trainers of the teachers' training college, and a trainee from the TTC doing teaching practice at a placement school. For each of the different research participants, I used different semi-structured interview protocols. These research participants are the actors in this regional level and I learned how they creatively appropriate the nonhuman actors or elements and the curriculum of TPD on classroom assessment in this network of the teacher training college. The focus of the interview with the principal was to learn about his roles and responsibilities as the head of the institution to implement, negotiate and authorize/deauthorize teacher preparation and school curricula; and his perception of the intention, flow and contextualization of the policies. From the trainer of the TTC, I wanted to know their roles and responsibilities to implement, negotiate and authorize/deauthorize teacher preparation and school curricula through teaching in teacher education classes and conducting training sessions; their perception of contextualization of the teacher preparation programs in the TTC on CA; and factors that influence the policy-practice process in the TTC. From the trainees I have learned their experience of teacher education programs in developing CA- related knowledge, attitudes, and skills (KAS); their exposure to education policy and school curriculum; and the issues confronting them in developing CA- related KAS in the TTC. From the trainee teachers doing practice teaching in placement school, I wanted to know how they are applying their knowledge and skills of CA learned in the teacher education program; the challenges they face while applying those in the placement schools; and their perception

of feedback and supervision from their supervisors and how it helps them improve their practice.

### **Focus Group Discussion**

I conducted four Focus Group Discussions with four groups of trainees: (1) trainees (teachers) with teaching experience who come to the TTC for in-service training, (2) trainees (students) of BEd (1 year) both with and without teaching experience, (3) trainees (students) of BEd (Hons) who are not yet teachers, (4) trainees (students) of MEd who have teaching experience. I selected these groups to ensure that I collected data from both preservice and inservice teachers. I contacted the responsible trainers (teachers of the TTC) for obtaining the students of BEd and MEd for conducting the FGDs. For conducting FGD with the trainees of the inservice training, I contacted one trainer responsible for training sessions for that specific training along with others. He asked for volunteers and the trainees who volunteered to participate formed this FGD group. I conducted the FGDs in a separate classroom in the TTC and audio recorded the FGDs. The FGDs were designed to elicit: the trainees' experience of teacher education programs in developing CA-related knowledge, attitude and skills; their exposure to education policy and school curriculum; and the issues they face in developing CA-related KAS in the TTC; and the factors that influence their learning in the TTC.

### **Document Review**

I collected PowerPoint presentations for different training programs from the TTC and reviewed the parts relevant to the topic CA. By analyzing the text, I tried to

understand the depth of CA- related content; its focus and coverage of topics related to CA; and relations with other policy pieces, such as national education policy, teacher education curricula or school curriculum. I also reviewed BEd and MEd tests in previous years to understand the assessment focus for these programs. This review and analysis of documents helped me learn the content of the teacher education and training materials as nonhuman actors that form a part of translating TPD policy into practice at the regional level.

### **Local Level**

Data collected at the regional level were useful in revising research protocols for the local level. For example, after observing the trainings, I had a clearer idea about the skills the trainees practice in the training programs. This helped me tailor questions for the interview to ask about specific classroom assessment concepts and skills learned in the training programs. Collecting data from the local level helped me reveal how the actors in a school coproduce the nationally formulated authorized policies on CA, how teachers apply their KAS on CA in classrooms to practice FCA, and the factors that influence teachers' application of KAS on CA in classrooms.

### **Observation**

The teachers are the main actors for practicing CA and for implementing their learned experience of CA concepts and skills in the classroom. The classroom is the place where CA ultimately happens and where the students experience it. Therefore, observing classes helped me trace the interaction between teachers and students as a network of practice; how the teachers apply CA knowledge and skills learned in their teacher

preparation programs; how the students respond to CA; and how teachers and the students together formulate, negotiate, and authorize informal policies for classrooms.

### **Interview**

I interviewed the head teacher, supervisor, and teachers—the main actors in an urban school using semi-structured interview protocols. Different interview protocols were used for different actors at this level to identify their unique contributions in the negotiation and appropriation of an authorized policy in a typical urban school. The interview with the teachers focused on how they implement the school curriculum as a policy in the school and classrooms; how policies are contextualized in a school setting; and how they apply their knowledge of CA from the teacher preparation programs; and the challenges they face in applying the KAS acquired from teacher preparation programs. I interviewed each teacher after observing at least one or two of his or her classes. This helped me to ask questions referring to his or her particular classroom practice on CA, for example why they apply particular skills learned in the TPD and why not others. The teachers can give reference from the classes that I observed; for example, they could present certain techniques as successful giving the rationale that the students were apt to pay attention while using that technique. The interview with the head teacher helped reveal how his leadership assists building a network in the school to translate, co-produce and authorize/deauthorize formal and informal policies on teacher preparation and CA. I used the interview with the supervisor to learn how she enrolled in the school network of policy-practice and how her supervisory role influences informal policy production, negotiation, and appropriation in the school.

### **Focus Group Discussion**

I conducted focus group discussions with students of grade six (boys) and grade nine (girls), and parents from these two grades. These students belong to the classes that I observed. I used FGD protocols with guided questions for the students and parents. From the FGDs with the students I wanted to know: how they perceive CA and its goals; what features of CA they find useful and what features of CA they perceive as harmful to their learning; how different CA techniques are used every day in the classroom; the students' role in CA; and the feedback process for CA. For the FGDs with parents, I aimed to understand: their perception and understanding of CA occurring in the classrooms in this school; the impact of this CA in promoting their children's learning; their understanding of how curriculum is practiced in the school; their scope of participating in CA -related policies; and their understanding of CA for improving students' (their children's) learning.

I audio recorded all the FGDs. For each focus group discussion, I did debrief the research purpose, the FGD process, and the ethical considerations written in the consent form as a group. Each parent participant of the focus group signed the consent form. For each student along with the assent form (different form of consent form for minors), their parent also signed a parental permission letter as per the requirement of the University of Massachusetts Amherst IRB regulation for collecting data from minors. I gave all participants a copy of the consent form that was signed by both the research participant and me. I collected the signatures from the parents for the parental permission letter via the teacher. The FGDs took approximately an hour to conduct and occurred inside an unoccupied classroom after school time or during short breaks depending on the availability of the groups.

## **Document Review**

I collected and analyzed the teacher education, training, and teaching experience profile of the teachers of this school to understand the pattern of education and training experience of the teachers about specific concepts of CA. During my interviews with teachers and the head teacher, I found that the subject and grade- specific syllabus, lesson plans, and the teacher- made tests for the end -of- the- year final examination are critical non-human actors that influence CA policies and process. The tests and lesson plans show how the teachers are applying their test making skills learned in teacher preparation programs. Therefore, I collected and analyzed the syllabus and teacher- made tests from each of the teachers whose classes I observed. I also collected and reviewed two student copies (classwork and homework) from each of the 4 different grade-specific subject classes I observed totaling 8 student copies (4 classwork and 4 homework copies). These documents served as productions of the teacher and/or students to know about the conceptualization of the CA process practiced by the two main actors at this level— the teachers and the students and the feedback process as it is a vital component of formative CA.

## **Data Collection Tools**

In this section I include a list of data collection tools that I used to collect data from different human actors at different levels. When I used each of the tools for the first time, I used that as a pilot and later revised the tool based on the piloting experience. I did not use the data generated from piloting the tool in this study. The tools or research protocols are:

- (1) Interview protocol for
  - Policy actors
  - Principal of the TTC
  - Trainers of the TTC
  - Trainee teacher of the TTC who was in teaching practice
  - Head teacher of the school
  - Teachers of the school
  - Supervisor of the school
- (2) Observation protocol for observing
  - Training sessions and teacher education classes at TTC
  - Practice teaching classes at a placement school
  - Classes at school
- (3) Focused Group Discussion (FGD) protocol for group of
  - Trainees at TTC
  - Students at school
  - Parents at school

All the research protocols are semi-structured in nature. Therefore, they included some specific questions or prompts for the research participants. There was accommodation for asking follow-up questions for clarification, elaboration, and other questions based on the research participants' response to specific questions.

## Data Analysis

Rallis and Rossman (2012) argue that data analysis is the inductive-deductive interaction between the conceptualization and systematic reasoning process during the planning of research and what we actually find in the field as data. Reflection was a critical part in my data analysis process as the preliminary analysis of data at one level informed the data collection and analysis at another level. For example, while I was reviewing data collected from the national level policy network and regional level TTC, I found that the new school curriculum has introduced the concept of Continuous Assessment and the teacher training and education now include this concept for teachers' learning. This motivated me to ask questions to teachers in the school if they knew about this new addition, how it is different than the older concept of School Based Assessment, and how they are practicing this in the classrooms. My data analysis followed the steps mentioned by Rossman and Rallis (2012, p. 273)—“Organizing the data, familiarizing myself (yourself) with data, identifying categories, coding the data, generating themes, interpreting, searching for alternative understandings, and writing the report”. During the data collection period, I always wrote reflective memos in the field notes. I transcribed and refined the data collected in different levels from different actors using different tools. I organized and stored the data in different categories and sub-categories. The first categories are: national level, regional level, and local level. In each level I established sub-categories based on tools such as interviews, observations, FGDs. These sub-categories were further organized with transcription of data from different actors such as interviews with teachers, FGDs with students, and observation of training sessions.



Reading the field notes helped me generate themes and categories, relating the memos with theories and other researches, or questions for further inquiry. I used both “holistic and categorical analysis” (Rossman & Rallis, 2012, p. 265) in my VCS. There is a holistic analysis of how different actors make sense of the policy at each level. “Holistic strategies describe connections among the data in the actual context—a place, an event, a person’s experience, a text. The result is a narrative portrait of an individual or program” (Rossman & Rallis, 2012, p.268). Therefore, there are three holistic analyses for three different levels— national, regional, and local. The main themes which emerged from the national level are: policy guidelines available on CA in policy documents, production and negotiation of these policy documents, and factors influencing CA- related policy formulation processes at the national level. The main themes which emerged from the regional level are: practice and negotiation of formal policies (CA related KAS in teacher preparation curricula) in TTCs, informal policy production related to CA in TTCs, and factors influencing the policy practice in TTCs. For the local level, the emerged themes are: practice and negotiation of formal CA policies (school curriculum) in the school and classrooms, CA- related informal policy production, teachers’ application of KAS on CA in classrooms, and factors influencing the application of KAS on CA and practice of CA policies. For categorical analysis I compared and examined the relationship between the different levels of the study— national, regional, and local. For example, I tried to understand how the same actors, though located in a specific site, such as school, can be involved at multiple levels such as a member of the curriculum committee, trainer of the teachers and teaching in school.

Data analysis at each level was informed by three different perspectives: (1) VCS, (2) ANT, and (3) critical socio-cultural theory of policy as practice. The total flow of policy-practice dynamics at each level and the relationship between and among the levels are captured through VCS. ANT has described how different actors at each level as a network of formal/informal policy production are enrolled to translate policies related to CA into practice and how non-human actors such as teacher- made tests, training modules act as mediators to translate policies into practice have been described using ANT. Finally, why policies are practiced in certain ways in a specific context or why certain factors have clout at a particular level is explained using “critical socio-cultural theory of policy as practice”.

### **VCS Informing My Data Analysis**

Employing VCS, I collected data from different levels and sites of the social to understand the flow of policy as practice, how policy is implemented and contextualized at different levels, and how policy can be perceived and practiced from multiple perspectives at a single site. Data from the national level helped me understand how policies on CA, teacher education curricula and school curriculum were formed and what was initially intended by these policies along with factors that influenced policy formulation. Then, I tried to understand how these policies are practiced at relevant levels and sites. Data collected from the regional level site, a TTC, helped me learn how the teacher education curricula on CA are practiced in the context of a TTC. It helped me understand how trainees are being educated or trained on CA through different programs and what are the factors that influence this policy-practice. Lastly, I collected data from

the local level, a school, and from classrooms nested in that school. Through the data gathered from the school and classrooms, I tried to understand the practice of CA of the teachers as an application of what they have learned in teacher preparation programs, and other factors influencing their practice, such as their personal motivation as a teacher, support from the school and any incentive system for their practice. In this way how policies on CA and teacher preparation on CA interact in different levels and how the policies are practiced being localized in a local context having both local and global (external to that local site) influences were explored through VCS.

### **ANT as an Analytical Tool**

I used ANT as an analytical tool to make sense of the data collected at different levels and sites. ANT gives some powerful conceptual tools that can help analyze data from that conceptual perspective. ANT helped me consider each level as a network of relevant human and non-human actors developing, negotiating, and appropriating policies. This theory also helped me understand the different factors that can influence the enrollment of different actors in a network of policy formulation or for translating policy into practice. The relevant and ever-changing positions of the actors in the network defining the policy in that specific network each time is what I looked for using ANT. Each actor and his/her/its roles and activities are analyzed from their relative position in the network, not as an individual person or object. For example, I analyzed the TTC not as an institution but as a network in which human actors, such as a principal, trainers and trainee and non-human actors, such as teacher education curricula, training manuals, PowerPoint presentations, discourses relevant to CA come together to form a network to

translate the policies (curricula) into practice. Here, the actor, such as a trainer is defined as his/her relative position in the network, not as an individual. Therefore, I tried to trace all the interactions happening in the network to understand the practice of policy that is ever fleeting in nature. The purpose was to capture the messiness of the network and how it works and changes over time.

ANT gave me the conceptual tool to include non-human objects in the analysis as having agency to translate. This was particularly important for my study because I could explain the policy documents that I analyzed as powerful non-human actors, rather than objects that have the power to act as powerful mediators at different levels and sites to translate and transform the policy into practice. Besides the policy documents, there are other non-human actors, such as teacher- made tests or trainer's presentations on a particular topic, that can reduce, transfer, or expand the policy pieces to a different practice compared to the intention of the authorized policy. For example, it was interesting and relevant to analyze how the lesson plan as a nonhuman actor becomes a powerful agent to reduce and replace different practice teaching skills by producing a single page lesson plan.

### **Critical Socio-Cultural Approach to Policy as Practice: A Theoretical Framework for Analysis**

While exploring policy-practice dynamics of teacher preparation on CA and its application in school and classroom, I used Levinson, Sutton and Winstead's (2009) theoretical parameters of critical practice approach to policy as a social process. Traditional theories to approach policy define policy as a set of laws or normative guidelines having a status of governing text aiming to bind people to its mandates when

actually circulating through a social field. The focus of these theories is to examine the success of the policies in ordering or reordering behavior as prescribed in the policies.

Levinson et al. (2009) have challenged this vision of policy-practice and suggest policy to explore a complex set of inter-dependent sociocultural practices, especially a practice in which power plays an important role as modalities of domination and the aspect of fuller democratic participation. They have presented several key expositions that are important concepts to understand my dissertation— appropriation, authorized policy, and unauthorized or informal policy. Appropriation was defined “as a form of creative interpretive practice necessarily engaged in by different people involved in the policy process” (p. 767). The authors argued that if the policy actors appropriate non-authorized policies, they are, in effect, making new policies in situated locales and communities of practice. The aim is to discover “who can do policy?” and “what can policy do?” by exploring a cultural logic of power that can remain hidden unless deeply explored (p. 769). For my research, while exploring the aspect of policy-practice dynamics, I explored how authorized policy is formulated and then appropriated and negotiated at each level of policy implementation sites as a form of unauthorized policy in a local context in a local context, being influenced by local local (in the site) and global (external to that specific context) factors. Overall, this theory helped me explain my findings— why certain policies are practiced in a certain way in a socio-cultural context.

### **Delimitations**

Delimitation of a study can be defined as what the researcher decides not to do (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The first delimitation of my study arises from the selection of

sites for data collection that are located in an urban area. The national, regional, and local level sites, respectively, the policy key informants, the teachers' training college and the urban school are in the capital city, Dhaka. Second, it includes only one site for the regional and local level— one TTC and one school. However, my study method is a vertical case study that is qualitative in nature. The findings of qualitative research cannot be generalizable in a probabilistic sense (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Thus, a big sample size and sample from a diverse population is not necessary for this research. Despite the limitation in selecting the sample area and sites, the study generated insights into how policy is formulated at the national level and then is negotiated, appropriated and localized in different sites by different actors. It is even possible that the findings of this study be transferable, not generalizable (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). For example, we can say that in a similar context, policy may have similar patterns of localization, and power dynamics may operate the same way while formulating policies when other situations are similar.

Fourth, I did follow the trainee (teachers) from the TTC to the schools to interview. It would have been difficult to get teachers from the same school in that TTC, newly appointed, and experienced. Moreover, the teachers who are in the teacher education programs or training sessions are usually on leave and not taking classes. However, most of the teachers whom I interviewed in the school had teacher education programs/trainings in the same TTC from where I collected data.

Fifth, to keep the research manageable and doable, I identified boundaries for my research that define the scope of the study. I studied only the secondary school teachers'

CA-related education, training, and practice. There is more research being done on primary education level in Bangladesh.

A teacher professional development program for primary teachers, the new Diploma in Education, has recently been developed. Moreover, Bangladesh has achieved significant progress in primary education for increasing enrollment rate, decreasing dropouts and increasing gender equity, though more in a quantitative sense. Achieving secondary education milestones remains a distant goal. Thus, secondary education in Bangladesh requires more urgent attention and inquiry. I included only the lower secondary (grades 6-8) and secondary level (grades 9 &10) for this study, intentionally excluding the higher secondary level (grades 11 &12) that also forms part of the secondary level. The higher secondary level is a separate category named as 'college' and its curriculum is very different than that at the junior secondary and secondary level. To avoid complexity, I preferred not to mix this sub- level of education as it is too different and requires different approaches of interpretation and analysis.

There are both government and non-government TTCs in Bangladesh. I researched in a Govt. TTC located in Dhaka. This TTC offers a variety of long-term and short-term TPD programs. Therefore, collecting data from this TTC gave me a fuller scenario of TPD on CA. While selecting the school, I chose it based on location (an easy commute), having teachers with different years of teaching experience, having teachers who had teacher preparation experience from the same TTC that I explored, and being a non-government school, as most of the secondary schools in Bangladesh are nongovernment.

I did not include the second and third axis or dimensions of the VCS, the horizontal and transversal dimensions, but only the vertical one. The horizontal dimension analyzes how the same policy is produced differently at different horizontal sites. The transversal dimension of VCS requires analysis of how a policy changes across a specific time period. It would require a separate analysis to determine how the same policy is produced in different sites or levels and/or to see how policy documents are produced at different times to identify changes over time. There are many factors that may influence the production of a policy document, such as the political situation and intention, global influence, national and regional movements, and the vested interest of specific policy makers and actor groups. Relating all different factors while analyzing the text would be beyond the scope of this dissertation.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The aim of my qualitative research was to learn about secondary level school teacher education and training on classroom assessment—  
how policies related to TPD on CA and curricula of TPDs and schools are created, negotiated, appropriated and localized in different sites of policy production and implementation. For this, I used the VCS method to collect data at three different levels, i.e., national, regional, and local levels. I interviewed key policy actors, a TTC principal, trainers, the head teacher, teachers, and supervisors; I conducted FGDs with trainees, students and parents; reviewed grand policy documents, training -related documents, tests, test scores, lesson plans, syllabi, and student copies. My research involved significant amount of interaction with human actors and non-human actors (documents)



produced by human actors that I need to acknowledge with the consideration of ethical issues that I faced.

### **Procedural Ethics**

For my research, I submitted paperwork to the School of Education Institutional Review Board (IRB) to receive approval for my preliminary research design before starting data collection. As part of my submission, I submitted a consent letter, an assent letter, and the parental permission letter that I used for my research participants. The sites for my data collection were in urban areas. The written consent did not carry significant intrusive or confusing nature of signing one's name in these areas.

### **Ethics in Practice**

I describe my ethical considerations in the following paragraphs in three main parts – respect for persons, beneficence, and justice.

Respect for persons involves ensuring that research participants are not forced to participate. In Bangladesh there is usually a hierarchical power dynamic in institutions. While having permission to collect data in the TTC and school, I first needed to approach the principal and head teachers, respectively. The principal then connected me with other trainers and the head teacher with other teachers and the supervisor. The trainers and the teachers then helped me collect data by participating in interviews, allowing observing their sessions and classes, and by asking trainees and students to participate in FGDs. Though I explained to the principal, the head teacher, and all the other research

participants that the participation is voluntary, I am concerned whether the participants had the actual power to decide whether to participate or not.

Ensuring privacy is an important part of ensuring respect to research participants. In most cases, the only place in a school to interview a teacher or trainer is the teacher's room in the school and TTC respectively, where teachers share one common working space. In a teacher's common room, it was tough to maintain privacy, and the teachers did not feel free to share their opinions and ideas freely in fear that their colleagues may overhear them. I interviewed most of the teachers and trainers in a separate unoccupied classroom.

A difficult choice I had to make was about using tape recording. From my previous experience as a researcher in Bangladesh collecting data from schools and training institutes, I felt a sense of discomfort among the research participants about the conversation being tape-recorded. None of the participants refused to give permission to record the conversation, but a few of them during their interview time asked me to stop the recorder and write down a part of the interview.

Besides respect for persons, beneficence is another important aspect of ethical research. Part of beneficence constitutes in doing no harm to participants and not merely using them for the sake of research. In my research, my best hope is that this research would help to help to shed light on the policy-practice dynamics in the arena of TPD on CA and the insight from the findings can help improve the policies and practice of TPD and CA in Bangladesh. If it helps improving the practice of TPD and teachers practice in classroom, all the research participants would benefit either directly or indirectly from this improved practice in education. I found that most of the research participants,

particularly teachers, parents, and students felt very good and relieved talking about the issues.

Another important aspect of ethics is justice. Justice focuses on fair treatment and explores who would receive the benefits and who would bear its burden (Hemmings, 2006). In my research, I tried not to see myself as an ‘expert’ on the topic; rather, during my interaction with the research participants I tried to acknowledge that my participants are the experts from whom I can learn a great deal. I tried to ensure that the participants voices were heard while writing my report.

### **Trustworthiness of the Research**

Trustworthiness is used in most qualitative research rather than validity. According to Rallis and Rossman (2012), a study can be defined as trustworthy if it follows criteria for acceptable and competent practice, and if it is conducted ethically.

First, I used Vertical Case Study, a qualitative method that is based on strong methodological and theoretical background (discussed detailed in the section-Overview of Vertical Case Study and its relevance to my study), which establishes my research’s methodological trustworthiness. The concept of validity for VCS goes back to the criticism of Crossley and Vulliamy (1984) referring to the issue of generalization as what we learn about one context may not be true for another. They referred to this issue as “ecological validity” (p. 198). They emphasized researching on cultural, economic, historical, and political forces in a given context that play out in an educational setting, such as schooling. I collected data from specific sites being actively engaged with conversation with the actors of the sites, i.e., my research participants, and observing the

relevant context. Thus, my research provides a “more systematic and theorized understanding of the relationship between context and process, structure and action” (Broadfoot, 1999, p.226) that makes it trustworthy.

I used Actor Network Theory (ANT) as a unique analytical tool that explains the socials as networks of actors bringing the non-human actors in focus. This analytical framework or tool is very relevant for my research as I am trying to catch the messiness of policy production and co-creation in different settings and to understand how policy is localized in specific networks.

Well thought-out data collection and organizational techniques are essential to the goodness of qualitative research (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 7). The detailed plan of the study, for example, the week- wise data collection plan that I made before collecting data confirms the soundness of this research.

In addition to the general approach, several techniques reinforced the trustworthiness of my study. These include:

- (1) Triangulation means using various data collection methods and collecting data from different data sources (Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Cho & Trent, 2006; Creswell, 2008; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Triangulation was used in my research to ensure that I have enough and relevant data. For example, to know about CA practice, I interviewed teachers, students, and parents and observed classes.
- (2) Researchers can use strategies of discussing the research process with knowledgeable peers so that researchers can confirm their interpretations. Marshall and Rossman, (2011) and Rossman and Rallis (2003) described it as

critical friends and Creswell (2008) and Marshall and Rossman (2011) as peer debriefers. For my study, I had two critical friends— one has already finished her doctoral study and other person is in the same stage of doctoral study with me.

- (3) Member checks happen when a researcher shares data and interpretations with participants (Cho & Trent, 2006; Creswell, 2008; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). At the end of each data collection session, I described what main points I wrote down from the interviews or FGDs. If participants wanted me to change or add any points, I did that accordingly. However, this was not possible for the classroom or training observations.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS FROM NATIONAL LEVEL: POLICY NETWORK

At the national level, I wanted to learn how actors, materials and discourse come together in a policy network to formulate, negotiate and appropriate policies for classroom assessment, and what factors influence formulation of these policies. For this, I reviewed key policy documents on Classroom Assessment (CA) and interviewed the key policy actors involved in policy production and the negotiation process.

#### **Formal Authorized Policies on Classroom Assessment**

I reviewed and analyzed three formal policy documents: (1) National Education Policy 2010 (NEP), (2) teacher preparation curricula, and (3) secondary level school curriculum. NEP is the grand policy that informed the other two types of policies<sup>2</sup>.

#### **Overview of Authorized Policy Formulation**

National Education Policy, teacher preparation curricula, and the school curriculum— all these policy pieces are produced under the Ministry of Education. The grand or highest policy reviewed for this study is the National Education policy. It was developed in 2010 under the Ministry of Education, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

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<sup>2</sup> Although the teacher preparation and school curricula are practiced at the regional level (TTC) and local level (school and classrooms) respectively, they are produced nationally involving national level policy actors. That is why I discussed the teacher preparation and school curricula at the national level.

The teacher preparation curriculum is divided into two types: (1) teacher education curricula (one year BEd, four years BEd Hons, and one year MEd) and (2) teacher training manuals (trainings last 7 to 35 days). The curricula for BEd (one year), BEd (Hons), and MEd are developed by National University (NU). These curricula of NU are developed through projects under the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE), which is also within the Ministry of Education. The short trainings are also prepared under different projects of DSHE, Ministry of Education.

The National Curriculum and Textbook Board, an autonomous body under the Ministry of Education, was responsible for developing the secondary school curriculum. The Secondary Education Sector Development Project (SESDP), DSHE, Ministry of Education also took part in developing the school curriculum.

The important actors to produce these policy pieces are: (1) the Ministry of Education, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh; (2) government projects, such as Teaching Quality Improvement (TQI) and the Secondary Education Sector Improvement Project (SESIP) for secondary education under the Directorate of Secondary and higher Education (DSHE), Ministry of Education; (3) National University (NU), an autonomous university which is affiliated with different public universities of Bangladesh; and (4) the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB), an autonomous body under the Ministry of Education.

Specific steps were followed for developing the policy documents. For example, the following steps were used to develop the teacher education curriculum (BEd one year 2017):

- (1) Collecting and reviewing the curriculum of National University and Open University to revise the BEd curriculum
- (2) Reviewing the BEd (Hons) curriculum of the Institute of Education and Research, University of Dhaka
- (3) Identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the existing BEd curriculum using the information generated from analyzing these curricula
- (4) Developing questionnaires for the teacher trainers and the trainee students based on those strengths and weaknesses
- (5) Collecting data from three TTCs using the questionnaires
- (6) Conducting two FGDs with the trainers of Teachers' Training College Dhaka and the Open University.
- (7) Analyzing the data from the FGDs by 20 experts in a workshop
- (8) Reviewing the draft curriculum developed by the national and international consultants of Teaching Quality Improvement –II Project in a workshop
- (9) Sending the curriculum to National University for approval through the TQI Project, Ministry of Education
- (10) Evaluating and approving the curriculum by a five-member specialists committee formed by National University (National University, 2016, p. 6-7)

The main initiatives for developing the policies are taken by the government which recruits policy actors from different relevant agencies, institutions, and groups for



producing the policies. The National Education policy, school curriculum, teacher education curriculum and short-term training manuals— all are produced in separate committees that are formed by different members pulled from different related organizations/entities. For example, for developing the school curriculum, there was a total of four committees besides the subject and grade-based curriculum development committees: the national curriculum coordination committee, professional committee, technical committee, and vetting committee (seven sub-committees for seven different subjects). Both the national curriculum coordination committee and professional committee had 21 members including the chair and one member-secretary for the latter committee. The technical committee had a total of 11 members including one convener and one member-secretary. For each of the seven sub-committees of the vetting committee there were two members. In these committees, actors were enrolled from these networks: government officers from high positions such as a secretary, an additional secretary; a former director and the present Director General of NAEM; the Director General, DSHE; the director of the Institute of Education and Research (IER), Dhaka University; a main reporter of a TV channel; the Director General, Bangla Academy; Director General, Islamic Foundation; the SESDP Project director; Chairman, Secondary and Higher Education Board; Chairman, Madrasah Education Board; Chairman, Technical Education Board; professors from Dhaka University, Chittagong University, Jahangir Nagar University, and Shjalal University of Science and Technology; the former Director General of the Directorate of Primary Education; a former professor of TTC; a consultant of the SESDP project of the Bangladesh government; the chairman and curriculum specialists and dissemination controller from NCTB; a former dean of Open

University; the Director, Bishhya Sahitya Kendra, head teacher of a secondary school.

The following chart shows the process of national curriculum development:

Different committees work as temporary policy networks for developing different policy pieces. Relevant policy actors from different powerful networks, such as the Ministry of Education, projects, NCTB, TTC, Open University, and National University, Public universities come together to form these policy networks to produce the policies. These policy networks do not exist in a real permanent spatial sense as the policy actors are no longer connected to each other in these networks once the policies are produced. Once a policy is produced, these actors return to their original networks from where they had been recruited. These policy networks are temporary in nature but have longer effects for the non-human actors (the policy documents) they produce. The policies, once produced, possess agency as a non-human actor which then translates policy into practice in regional and local level networks working as a mediator (Koyama, 2018).

If we analyze the steps of policy production— for example, the steps followed to produce the teacher education curriculum-- we see minimum involvement of school teachers. Even the committees that produce the policy document have very few teachers. Among the three different types of policies, the school curriculum was developed in the most heterogeneous policy network where policy actors from many different networks were pulled together. However, there is minimal recruitment of teachers into these committees. No teacher was enrolled in the National Curriculum Coordination Committee, Technical Committee, or Vetting Committee; only one principal from a very renowned school was enrolled in the professional committee. In the subject-specific curriculum development committees, for example, English, Bangla, and Science,

approximately one- third or one- fourth of the members were school teachers. No school teacher was enrolled in the NEP committee. The recruitment pattern indicates that these networks are built confirming the specific roles and identities of the actors envisioned by society. High ranking government officials from the Ministry of Education, NCTB, and the government project were recruited as the policy leaders. University teachers were recruited as scholars and knowledge creators in almost all the committees, especially in curriculum development committees. School teachers were not seen as experts in the field; rather, their presence was more ornamental and powerless. This harkens back to the hidden curriculum of teacher preparation where teachers sense a lack of power because of this exclusion in policy development (Ginsburg and Clift, 1990).

### **CA in National Education Policy**

The National Education Policy 2010 has a total of 28 sections offering general direction for different areas of education in Bangladesh. “Examination and Evaluation” was one of these 28 sections. This section focuses first on the problem that the existing assessment and evaluation system evaluates only the acquisition of knowledge, omitting two other important areas of students’ qualities— emotional attitudes responsiveness and intellectual faculties. Then it describes several general “aims and objectives of examination and evaluation” followed by “strategies” to implement those aims and objectives. The conclusion provides some general rules related to examination and evaluation that should be followed throughout all the streams and levels of education.

To quote the aims and objectives which are related to CA: “to initiate a creative method that seeks to evaluate the students’ acquisition of the course contents and not rote learning” (Education Policy 2010, p. 58).

To quote the general strategies and the strategies related to primary and secondary education related to CA:

- (1) “Proper attention will be paid to the true evaluation of knowledge acquired at all stages of education. The examination systems will be made more effective.
- (2) Initiatives can be taken to fix up and realize the methods of evaluation that reflects the continual growth of the emotions and intellect of the students.
- (3) In the existing system, primarily, rote learning is evaluated. This cannot be a proper evaluation. In fact, proper evaluation can be made when the internalized knowledge of the student is assessed and not rote learning. The proposed creative system of evaluation is oriented to that end. The proper implementation of this system will depend on the preparation of right kind of textbooks, set of rules to prepare question papers and an effective understanding of the process by the paper-setters and students. So, effective steps will be taken to prepare the right kind of textbooks, to set proper rules and to create appropriate awareness and knowledge of all concerned.

Strategies for Primary and Secondary Education:

- (1) The existing system of continual evaluation conducted by the schools for Classes I & II and the quarterly, half-yearly and annual evaluation system for the students of Class III and onward will continue. Effective continual evaluation system will be in practice for every class. Sports and drills will be included in the continual evaluation system”.

- (2) “Steps will be taken so that the practical examinations of the secondary level are evaluated properly” (National Education Policy 2010, pp. 58-59).
- (3) The general rules related to CA are stated as:
- (4) “Examination dates of terminal and public examinations will be fixed at the very beginning of the academic year and that will be followed strictly”.
- (5) “Guidebooks, notebooks, private tuitions, coaching centers, etc. are some of the hindrances to quality education system. Steps will be taken to stop all these. Steps will be taken against those persons involved in preparing and distributing guidebooks and note- books. Necessary steps will be taken against the teachers neglecting their duties. Besides, the students will be cautioned against the negative effects of guidebooks, notebooks and coaching centers” (National Education Policy 2010, p. 60).

### **Summary and Analysis**

The policy identifies the main problem of the evaluation system of Bangladesh as being incapable of evaluating any of the qualities of students except their knowledge and rote memorization. It proposes changing the ‘examination system’ to bring in the ‘true evaluation of knowledge’. It proposes a Creative Method of Evaluation or testing as a solution for this as a testing system to use in public examinations. But it does not explain what the “creative method” is. This policy wants to bring change in student assessment by changing the public and summative assessment. It is very clear that CA or formative assessment is not seen as a as a solution for this problem of rote-learning. The three aims and objectives and the three strategies mentioned for this section are very general and can

be related to any kind of assessment. However, in one statement, the policy suggests that there should be continuous assessment in all grades, which indicates the importance of CA. How CA should be conducted or what is the present status of CA in schools are not mentioned. All the guidelines, rules, regulations, and training for the teachers are focused on training the teachers as question setters, examiners, and textbook writers and do not prepare them for regular classroom assessment. In this way the policy created teachers' identities as examiners and test developers rather than classroom teachers who focus on CA in a formative way.

### **Teacher Preparation on CA in NEP**

National Education Policy 2010 contains a section, "Teachers' Training" which I reviewed and analyzed to find content related to teacher preparation on CA. Both teachers' education and teachers' training were included, and the two terms were used interchangeably in this section. This sometimes makes it difficult to conceptualize what specific teacher preparation activities the policy is referring to— short-term trainings or broad teacher education programs. The text criticized the teachers' education and training in Bangladesh as very traditional, insufficient, certificate- based, loaded with theoretical knowledge, incomplete in practical learning, and based on rote learning and a conventional testing system. Fourteen aims and objectives of teachers' training (actually teacher preparation) were included followed by 17 general strategies to achieve these aims and objectives. The objectives are general for the professional development of all teachers at all levels (primary, secondary, higher secondary, and higher education levels) and only one of these can be related to CA in a broader sense. That is: "to enrich their

[teachers'] quality to analyze problems and to take decisions" (National Education Policy, 2010, p. 64).

Based on the aims and objectives, 17 strategies were proposed. Among the strategies, I am quoting only the strategies that can be traced down to the secondary level teachers' education and training at TTC where I collected data (Kolatali TTC used as pseudonyms):

- (1) "Immediately after their recruitment, primary and secondary teachers will undergo 2-months' foundation training and for the college teachers it will be for 4-months. The primary and secondary level teachers must take part in courses of C-in-Ed and BEd within 3 years of joining their posts".
- (2) "Continuous assessment will be conducted to evaluate the proficiency of the trained teachers. Any weakness found will be remedied through special measures (National Education Policy, 2010, p. 64)".

### **Summary and Analysis**

Foundation training, as an induction and recommended in the policy, has not yet started for secondary school teachers. The suggested continuous assessment system of the trained teachers was explored in the TTC and school described in the next chapter. Both the aims and objectives and the strategies of the teachers' training and/or education are broad. Policies are intentionally kept vague (Apthorpe, 1997). The broadness of the policy can provide the flexibility to develop more specific content. However, this broadness can also create a false idea of accountability. For example, when the policy states the goal is to help teachers develop and update their "professional knowledge"

(NEP, 2010, P.64), what is meant by “professional knowledge” in this document is not clarified or specified. It leaves the scope of the teacher preparation curriculum to define this term. However, it also leaves the chance to be elusive to trace, measure, reproduce or understand what the teachers need to achieve as professional knowledge. Though the policy does not include any specific aims for educating or training teachers on assessment or evaluation, it is possible that when the policy aims to train teachers on “skills in the strategies of teaching-learning” (NEP, 2010, p.64), assessment was meant to be a part of that teaching-learning process. However, assessment was not given specific priority to be included in policies on teacher preparation. This vagueness also makes regional and local policies (teacher preparation and school curricula) different and difficult to coordinate. There is little overlap among the policy actors who make the National Education Policy, who make the teacher preparation curriculum and who make the school curriculum. Each group has the potential to view the grand National Education Policy differently and thus formulate their regional and local curricula differently with different foci, philosophies, and ideas.

### **CA in Teacher Preparation Curricula**

There are two types of teacher preparation programs: (1) long-term teacher education programs, such as BEd & MEd, and (2) short- term trainings or professional development programs. The long-term teacher education programs have structured curricula; the short-term trainings are mainly conducted based on teacher training manual/modules. There are different curricula for teacher education programs for the different institutions offering these programs. There are different short-term trainings for



all different school subjects and are based on different important topics or issues, such as inclusive education, disaster management, and information and communication technology. It is beyond the aim and scope of this research to review all the curricula of all teacher preparation programs. Therefore, for the teacher education curricula, I reviewed only the teacher education programs curricula that regularly happen in the Kolatoli TTC, where I collected data. For the short-term trainings, I reviewed and analyzed manuals/modules of trainings, which regularly occur in the Kolatoli TTC and which have content related to CA.

### **Teacher Education Programs**

#### **Bachelor of Education Honors (4 years BEd Hons)**

This program is a four- year long program which took effect from the 2013-2014 session. There is one compulsory core course for all students in the fifth semester of the total eight semesters - “Assessment and Evaluation in Education” with a total of 100 marks and 4 credits. The course is focused to test development and statistical analysis. The units in this course are: The Concept of Assessment and Evaluation; Characteristics of Measurement Tools; Standardization of Tests; Tools and Techniques of Evaluation Tests; Use of Descriptive Statistics and their Interpretation; Standardization of Scores and Interpretation.

Except for this course, assessment concepts were contained in another course titled “Teaching Learning methods and Strategies”. In one unit of this course titled “Lesson Plan to Facilitating Learning”, “formative assessment strategies” was a subtopic. The subject- based courses which prepare teachers to teach certain subjects in schools,

such as Bangla, geography, and economics, are mostly content driven. In most of the subject- based courses there is no content on assessment. In some courses, there is a small portion dedicated to assessment. In the course Micro Teaching and Simulation, among the five skills/ components to be demonstrated, assessment was framed as “classroom questioning”. In “Practicum and Internship”, “Construction and Use of Achievement Tests” was one unit representing all the concepts pertaining to assessment.

I decided to include assessment of the trainees of the TTC, too, as a unit of analysis because the experience of how they are assessed in the TTC can represent an important factor affecting their attitudes towards CA and the practice of CA in school. The methods of assessment and evaluation of the BEd (Hons) students, as included in the curriculum, vary for different courses. The courses include a combination from these CA activities: in-course examinations, assignments, class attendance, class participation, and semester final examinations for assessment of the courses. Some include practical examinations, field trip reports, action research (though there is no part on AR in the research course), and a term paper. The terms used to imply the assessment and evaluation methods for the courses are confusing. The following terms refer to student assessment: evaluation, course requirement, assignment, assessment, and action research. Assignments, instructional strategies and assessment were three components in a course outline. In another course outline, assignment and evaluation were two components along with other components. However, assignment is actually a technique for assessment/evaluation. There is a final exam after each semester.

### **Bachelor of Education (one year BEd)**

This one- year program took effect in 2006-2007. The curriculum was revised and replaced by a new curriculum in 2017. I analyzed the old curriculum (prevailing from 2006), because when I collected data from the TTC and school, the new curriculum had not yet started. In the old curriculum, there is one course on student assessment, i.e., “Learning, value judgment and reflective practice” of 100 marks. It has assessment related units: Assessment in Bangladesh Secondary schools (the current focus on examination and then school- based Assessment as a recent initiative); Assessment and Evaluation (formative assessment is included as a part of a unit); Principles of Good Assessment (for summative exams); Different types of Assessment (focused on questions and test construction; criteria based assessment and self-assessment are included in this unit, too); Interpreting Text and Exam Results (based on descriptive statistics); School- Based Assessment (as it was then the emphasis of the government); and significant focus on teachers’ reflective practices to improve professional development. In this curriculum almost all teaching subjects (except teaching Bangla) had at least one separate unit on assessing students for each particular subject area.

Evaluation of the BEd has continuous internal assessment (40%) based on: written assignments including formal reports, individual research tasks, small group projects, seminars/group presentations, peer/lecture observation, journal/diary keeping, and teaching practice (TP) observation. There is also an external final examination (60%), interview/ viva voce (pass/fail), and attendance (75% to sit for the exam).

### **Master of Education (one year MEd)**

This curriculum has been in effect since the 2006-2007 session. In this curriculum there is no specific course on assessment either in the compulsory courses or in the elective courses. One of the 12 options for a thesis subject is “test and evaluation”. There are units in several courses that are related to assessment: “Selection of Teaching Methods and Evaluation Techniques”; “Examination system”; “Evaluation System in Secondary Education”. However, all of these topics are related to evaluation, examination and testing, but not to assessment or CA.

For students enrolled in this MEd program, there are: 40% of their grade as internal exam and 60% as external exam. To sit for the final exam, 75% attendance is a must. Two in-course exams make up the 40% internal exam and teachers can also assign assignments or essays to write.

### **Teacher Trainings**

#### **Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for Subject Based Training**

There are two phases of this training: 14 day-long CPD-I and a follow up training of five days that is CPD-II. I reviewed three manuals as samples: (1) CPD-I for biological science teachers (January, 2008), (2) CPD-I for social science teachers (December, 2008), and (3) CPD-II for all teachers (August 2009). In these trainings, a total of 8 of the 20 sessions are related to classroom assessment. The session topics are: the aims and importance of questioning in teaching-learning activities, principles and techniques of questioning, classification of questions, preparing sample questions and administering question-answer sessions with students, school based assessment (three sessions),

structured questions (now named as creative questions) and the principles of developing structured questions.

CPD-II is a follow-up training after any subject-based CPD-I. Among the 11 sessions of this follow-up training, two sessions are specifically related to classroom assessment. The sessions are: open questioning, and formative assessment. In session nine, there is scope for the teachers to know about how the different concepts and skills acquired from this CPD which can be applied and practiced. In this session, the applied parts of open questioning and formative assessment were included as an option with other topics. Teachers will decide which topics they want to discuss regarding practice in school. In the sample lesson plans included as an attachment, steps for formative assessment activities, end of the lesson evaluation, and homework are included.

### **35 days Long Training Course for Future Head of the Institutions**

I reviewed a sample manual that had been revised in 2016. This training is divided into 11 modules. Among these, one module has content related to classroom assessment. The content includes basic concepts of assessment, evaluation, examination, and different types of assessment. It has a lot of content on continuous assessment, its importance and how to perform it according to the new curriculum 2012. The content includes Bloom's taxonomy and different types of questions (multiple choice questions/MCQ and creative questions) and how to develop these questions and types of MCQ questions. In this training manual there are examples of different types of questions and time allotted the trainees to practice developing different types of questions. Ten sessions equivalent to one and a half days have been allocated for teaching these topics.

### **Training on Digital Content Development**

This is a 12 day-long training run by the government of Bangladesh to educate the teachers to develop digital content (PowerPoint presentations) to use for their teaching learning and assessment in the class. This training does not have any specific session on CA. It trains and gives scope to the teachers to develop step by step content for lessons in a digital format; CA is included in those steps.

### **Summary and Analysis**

The content, coverage, and time allocated for CA- related topics vary significantly in different teacher preparation programs. In the MEd (one year) curriculum there is no specific course on assessment or evaluation. For the BEd (Honors) curriculum for four years, there is less focus on continuous and formative assessment and more focus on examinations and tests. However, the BEd one year curriculum has more content on formative assessment. In this curriculum, for each of the teaching subjects there is a separate unit on how to assess that specific subject matter. Interestingly, the BEd (one year) curriculum was developed much earlier than the BEd (four years) one. Therefore, revision does not mean that it would include more content on CA. The policy actors negotiated the meaning of the importance of including CA topics in the curriculum. Sometimes, with revisions, a lot of new content is added and the part pertaining to assessment is compromised, as the time to educate teachers remains the same in the curriculum. Another reason for this compromise in CA related content is— “The assessment content is compromised because in many cases the committee does not have any assessment experts but general educationists or subject experts who think that the

teachers already know how to assess” (Bashir Uddin, project consultant). Again, minimum inclusion of school teachers in the curriculum development process can also explain its lack of relevant contents.

Compared to the long-term teacher education program, the short-term training modules contain more coverage of classroom assessment content. For example, CPD-I and II and Training for future head teachers have a lot of content on CA. The effect of this increased focus on CA on teachers’ practice can be expected to be evidenced in subsequent research as the modules undergo revision (these two modules were revised in 2016). However, the most common pre-service teacher education, the one year BEd, focuses mainly on School Based Assessment (where CA is focused). The short-term trainings are not guaranteed for all the teachers in all schools, or for all grades and subjects. Teachers are selected from schools for certain trainings by the head teacher and the Thana Education Office. There is also discrepancy regarding subject teachers. For example, science teachers have more training scope to learn about CA compared to other subject teachers, as special trainings exist only for science teachers. Therefore, based on my review of the curricula, it is apparent that teachers have the opportunity to get at least some basic understanding of and skills on CA after entering the teaching profession if they get the CPD trainings. However, there is the chance of poor implementation of the curricula in TTCs or training venues and of teachers’ lack of motivation to learn and/or implement their learning.

### **CA in school curriculum**

The new national secondary school curriculum (for grades 6 to 12) was developed in 2012, the first revision in 17 years. School curriculum 2012 provides extensive directions for classroom assessment. It describes the policy on how to assess students' regular work and then add those scores (20%) to the end of the year summative assessment (80%). I have described the instruction presented in the curriculum regarding CA (either summative or formative in nature).

### **Summative Assessment**

According to the curriculum each year, schools will conduct two exams, one in each of the two terms. Promotion to the next grade is based on the total marks of the student's two "term examinations" (80%) plus the continuous assessment marks (20%). Test development and assessment of the answer scripts for the 1st & 2nd term examinations and public examinations will be according to the instruction for creative questions. There are also specific curriculum components for each of the subjects including 'assessment' for each of the learning outcomes.

### **Classroom Assessment**

The National Curriculum 2012 explicitly argues that, though both summative and formative assessments are important, formative or continuous assessment is more important in the classroom context as it can diagnose students' areas of weakness and can give direction after observation of students' work, measuring the four skills of language and the affective domain of learning and can also help teachers improve their teaching.



For each subject, 20% of the marks or grades are allocated to this continuous assessment which is added to the end of the year examination.

Table 1: Domains of Continuous Assessment and the Marks Distribution

	<b>Domain/area</b>	<b>Marks</b>
a	Classwork	10
b	Homework and inquiry-based	5
c	Class test	5
	Total (for Continuous)	20

For each subject, there is specific instruction for classwork, homework, inquiry-based work, and class tests: how many class tests to conduct and for how many of those to keep records, duration and schedules of class test.

### **Continuous Assessment of the Affective Domain of Learning**

In addition to these three CA areas, curriculum also emphasizes the importance of developing and continuously assessing students in the affective domain of learning or the development of values, including: patriotism, leadership, honesty, discipline, cooperation, active participation, tolerance, awareness, and timeliness. The class teacher will discuss with other subject teachers to assess these affective domain areas and then will keep a record for each student. This requires that the class teacher of a specific grade and section work with all subject teachers to come up with assessment figures for each student.

The curriculum suggests that affective growth can be assessed during daily assembly, sports, play, cultural activities, study tours, observing national days, religious

programs, science fairs, math Olympiads, participation in either boys' scouts girls' guides, BNCC, and activities for conservation of environment.

### **Summary and Analysis**

Overall, the national secondary curriculum provides basic guidelines on CA to schools. For each subject, 20% of marks or grades are allocated to this continuous assessment performed by the teachers in classrooms to be added to the end of the year final examination which makes up the rest of the marks (80%). Though the curriculum uses the term continuous assessment and describes it as formative assessment, the extent to which CA is formative or summative in nature depends much on how it is used. The inclusion of 20% of CA with summative assessment also makes it debatable to refer to it as formative assessment. By using CA for the purpose of grading, the curriculum confuses the purpose of CA with the overall purpose of term examinations which is to determine progress to next grade or level. However, the CA marks are included in summative assessment also because, "if no mark is assigned for CA, it may not be done at all by the teachers." (Sirajul Islam, project consultant)

Formative CA is closely linked with instruction and provides effective feedback to teachers for improving teaching and for students to improve their learning. Later, for each of the grade- based, subject- based description in the curriculum, learning outcomes have been linked with instruction and sample CA questions and activities. However, the curriculum does not provide any clear direction to the teachers on how to link that CA with either instruction or effective feedback which is vital for FCA.

The curriculum requires recording the affective domain of learning such as discipline, patriotism, leadership, and honesty during different activities. These domains of learning are very general and can be defined in many ways. How to assign marks and comments for these is not included in the curriculum which merely instructs the class teacher to discuss with other subject teachers to assess these affective domain areas and then keep a record for each student. This requires that the class teacher of a specific grade and section work with all subject teachers to come up with an assessment figure for each of the students in their grade and section, making this work cumbersome and impractical.

Using Creative Questions (CQ) to increase students' creativity is a special feature of this new curriculum. The name is misleading as in the world literature this is termed structured questions. In structured questions, students are given a situation or prompt. Then, they need to answer a set of questions which assess their knowledge, understanding, application and higher order learning such as analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating, and creating. How these types of questions will help nurture students' creativity and not invoke rote memorization is not explained. In general, FCA has more focus on the school curriculum compared to NEP and the teacher preparation curriculum. However, more instruction centers on how to conduct the CA process, rather than instruction on how to make it formative using feedback.

### **Policy Negotiation**

Negotiation occurs at each step of policy production. By policy negotiation I refer to any discussion, discourse, debate, dialogue or interaction among human and non-human actors reaching an agreement while producing any formal or informal policy

inside a policy network and among policy networks. Policy negotiation actually involves negotiating meanings among the actors who make policy. ANT “aims to explain how people, their ideas, and material objects they produce assemble together in a dynamic collective activity to attend to a particular issues” (Koyama, 2012, p.870). For my study I used this perspective to explain how different human and non-human actors, such as policy makers, teacher trainers, trainees, head teachers, teachers, students, parents, curricula, grand policy, training and teaching materials assemble together as a heterogeneous network to produce, negotiate, and appropriate the formal and informal policies on CA in different sites, such as in a formal policy scape, TTC, school and classrooms. Negotiation is a significant analytical part in ANT:

Actor-network studies, it is argued here, bring a new focus to the complex negotiation of power among human and non-human elements in these processes. ANT concepts help to trace important nuances in these processes, showing how they actually function as messy networks folded into spaces alongside other networks, and how injunctions of accountability are negotiated at different nodes of these networks (Fenwick, 2010, p. 271).

According to Koyama (2012), who drew her study from ANT,

A network is a set of dynamic, complex, and often contested relationship among actors, who are logically made up by social relations. In other words, networks are assemblages of heterogeneous materials and each of these materials, either human or non-human can move educational practices across time and space. The linkages created by the networks are temporary and nonlinear in nature.

Below, I analyze data collected from participants at a national policy level to understand how different types of negotiation happen in a formal policy production process within a formal policy network. Negotiation was explored for this study from the following perspectives.

## Negotiation in Actor Enrollment

Actor enrollment is the involvement of specific people in developing and writing a policy. This negotiation in recruiting actors who represent very different networks or a Community of Practice (CoP) with very different experiences and ideas influences policy content:

I was the only one in the committee who is expert in this matter [teacher preparation]. Other members had general expertise on education. When I argued that the chapter in Education policy should be titled as ‘Teacher Education or preparation’, not ‘teacher training’, they did not agree. I explained the difference to them, but they responded that training is a general term that we are using for a long time to refer any kind of teacher preparation, and it is easy for mass people to understand. I explained it few times, but they did not listen to me. I could not sell it to the other 18 members of the committee.

--Sirazul Islam, project Consultant, and member of NEP development committee.

The same person explained:

The section on assessment and examination in the NEP was not written by an assessment expert, but by a committee member who is a famous writer and university professor. He has no degree in education, but obviously thinks and discusses a lot of educational issues. This is the reason why this section describes general flaws of assessment system and comes up with solution related to change in high stake public exams. CA was not seen as a solution of the rote-learning based evaluation system. Continuous assessment was suggested in general without any specific techniques, methods, or directions. If we had someone in the committee who has expertise on assessment and/or worked on this issue, we could have got a different section on assessment in NEP.

-- Sirazul Islam, project Consultant, and member of NEP development committee.

Included in the policy and curriculum are many ideas, theories, and concepts on assessment which come from just a few specific policy actors or members of a CoP. For example, Sirajul Islam, a member of a school curriculum development committee, remarked, “It was my idea to incorporate the practical tests or exams as part of CA incorporated into classroom instruction”. Another policy actor said, “I included the alternative methods of assessment in the curriculum dissemination training manual. It was my idea” (Azmal Khan, National Curriculum and Textbook Board).

Different policy actors interviewed mentioned various characteristics or the status of policy actors which can increase the negotiation power to be enrolled in the policy network and their clout in including or excluding concepts in the policy document. These are: (1) “being expert in the field, (2) previous involvement in other related policies, (3) political or bureaucratic power” (Azmal Khan, curriculum specialist, NCTB), (4) “being famous among the country’s population (for example, a popular writer), (5) having a role in disseminating and circulating knowledge and information (column writer, book author , for example), and (6) power from designation” (Sirajul Islam, project consultant, interview on June 20).

### **Content Negotiation**

Policy actor Sirajul Islam mentioned that the main negotiation of policy content happens in the committees during meetings after the actors have been recruited. Different actors from different networks or a CoP (such as MoE, secondary education boards, university faculties, school teachers, civil society, NCTB, head-teachers from schools) engage in debates about the rationale for and against including or excluding topics or issues in a particular way.

For the national education policy, the details and specific discussion on CA were lost in the bigger and more general discussion on changes in the entire assessment and evaluation system of the nation. As mentioned by one of the committee member of NEP development:

We spent a lot of time discussing the new decisions about inauguration of a public exam after grade eight, and regarding introduction of creative/structured questions for public examination. These were for the renovation of the whole assessment system. We did not have much time left to talk about details on classroom

assessment. Yet, we agreed and mentioned on the curriculum that there should be a system of continuous assessment of the students at all classes [grades].

-- Sirajul Islam, project consultant and participant in NEP development

Negotiation about the content of the policy also depends on how the policy makes sense of the concepts around CA, and how policy makers prioritize the concepts. It is apparent that high stake public examinations were deemed more important than CA.

Priorities for negotiation of content can also be political. About the reason for this priority, the same person remarked:

Public examinations are very important as it measures the overall achievement of the students. This is the only way to show the achievement of the nations- by having good pass rates or overall CGPA. Therefore, government people sitting in the meeting were more inclined to talk about those examinations and they have more power to dominate the discussion.

-- Sirajul Islam, project consultant and participant in NEP development

In the teacher preparation curriculum development stage, the same emphasis on exam and tests prevailed over CA. While preparing the BEd (one year, new, effective beginning 2017) curriculum, for example, there was a debate on whether to have a separate course on assessment or not. Later, the course was framed as “Learning and learning assessment”.

We, the committee members were thinking if we should have a separate course on student assessment or not. Later when we had the full list of concepts to be included in the curriculum in front of us, we found that we cannot have a full separate course on assessment. Therefore, we have this course “Learning and Learning Assessment” where two main ideas were included: Learning and Assessment of Learning. One committee member also wanted to include concepts related to CA such as formative assessment, assessment of learning, assessment for learning, and alternative ways of assessing students in this course. But most of us argued that the teachers need to know the more practical aspects of doing assessment. So, we included the creative questions and continuous assessment, as these are the assessment methods the new curriculum mentions, along with basic ideas of assessment and evaluation.

-- Shah Alom, trainer at a TTC and committee member of BEd curriculum development

One trainer (outside of a TTC) who was involved in one of the workshops in school curriculum development for secondary level stated:

We were told to present sample lesson plan which the teachers can follow. The presenters presented lesson plans which starts with behavioral objectives. I opposed this idea and told that our curriculum states that it has the framework of constructivism. Then, why should we focus on behavioral aspect of learning. We need to change the lesson plan format too. But no one was comfortable because even though we stated “constructivism” as the overall framework for our curriculum, most of us do not know how to change the other aspects of the curriculum such as teaching learning, assessment, teaching aid, which can support this perspective of constructivism

--Kabir Ahmed, core trainer and participant of curriculum development workshop

Even though there is change in the content of the theoretical aspect of a policy piece, such as in the school curriculum, the practical aspects of assessment in the policy piece still do not have this reflection. Content negotiation is also controlled by there being insufficient people with the understanding of how to transform this theoretical aspect of assessment into a practical aspect for the assessment. Different CoPs with different ideologies may advocate for certain content and coverage.

--Saifur Rahman, BEDU expert, Examination and Evaluation

### **Negotiation in Global and Local Knowledge**

Global concepts and discourse on assessment and teacher preparation come into a policy network playing important roles shaping CA and teacher preparation policies being enrolled as non-human actors. From the interview with key policy actors I found that these concepts can enter the policy network mainly through three different channels:



(1) training and education programs that the policy actors have taken, (2) content from the internet, and (3) foreign consultants working on projects.

Global content and ideas influence our local policy as many of the actors developing policies have received education and training from abroad necessary for their job responsibilities. For example, policy actor Safiur Rahman working on the Bangladesh Examination Development Board (BEDU) had a six- month-long course “Assessment and Measurement” in Melbourne, Australia when he joined the SESIP project. This focused on item development, item analysis, and psychometric analysis. While talking about the different types of input during policy formulation and planning, all policy actors stated they investigated the policies of other countries to better understand the global scenario. Another global influence while developing policies comes from the input from foreign consultants working on the projects that develop and implement policy document. For example, “A total of 12/13 foreign consultants are working in this project. Both content from internet and people contribute in shaping policies in this era of globalization” (Sirazul Islam, project consultant).

Sometimes, there is also conflict between global and local knowledge which can be seen as conflict between different CoPs. One policy actor told, “I do not think we need so many international consultants in different places like in SESIP, NAEM, NCTB, for example. Local knowledge is more important”. He also mentioned the conflict between local and global knowledge or between the national and international consultants that he experienced while working on a project. In one of the tasks in the project, a national consultant juxtaposing an alternative student assessment proposal challenged the international consultant’s proposal. Other members also thought that the national

consultant's proposal was superior, embedded in context, and feasible. The international consultant ultimately left the job as he felt he was not needed anymore. The policy actor (national consultant) also explained that sometimes the international consultants offer mechanisms such as scoring using the internet, which is not feasible in terms of the infrastructure of Bangladesh. So, even though they offer an idea, the national consultants judge in based on their own context to accept, reject, or modify.

### **Negotiation in Assessment Discourses**

There are two prominent discourses in the policy network related to assessment and there are two CoPs who try to promote each one as described by the policy actors. One discourse focuses on examinations and tests. "They either believe that the changes in national level high stake testing will bring change in students' learning and achievements, or they just want to show the increase in students' overall achievement to showcase educational achievement for the country" (Saifur Rahman, BEDU). "The other discourse focuses on classroom-based assessment or assessment for learning. The CoP promoting this idea believes that real change in learning will happen through continuous formative assessment" (Azmal Khan, NCTB). Safiur Rahman, who works in BEDU, argues, historically, the assessment system of Bangladesh is examination- based, summative-focused and encourages rote memorization. Recently, in the policy there has been increasing efforts to incorporate classroom assessment to play a part. Many policy actors are advocating for classroom assessment over high-stakes public and summative examinations. He regards himself an advocate for classroom assessment and mentions this effort of negotiation as a challenge for two main reasons. One, the CoP who is in

favor of promoting examinations is more powerful than the CoP advocating for CA as most of them have some bureaucratic and political power. Two, the community or mass people remain unprepared to accept the promotion of classroom assessment especially because it gives responsibility and authority to local school teachers for grading the students. He gave the example of the following negotiation. Policy actors who were advocating for classroom assessment started with the claim: School Based Assessment in 2007 to promote classroom assessment using 30% of CA was to be included in the end of the year summative assessment and then be gradually made part of public examinations. But due to resistance from teachers, schools, and parents it was not practiced properly in schools. Then in 2012, continuous assessment replaced SBA using 20% of marks from CA with a simplified version of SBA criteria. Summing up, the negotiation and appropriation for including, practicing and incorporating CA in schools is an ongoing challenge.

Right now, there is a conversation going on for balancing between CA and the external evaluation or public examination that occurs after grades 8,10 and 12 at the secondary level. All the policy actors interviewed argued that though classroom assessment is important, how to make it more valid, reliable, and acceptable can be a contentious issue in the context where society is concern about overmarking and undermarking by biased teachers. Policy actors are thinking of adopting a policy to adjust the CA marks for including it with public exam marks. If the average score of CA and public examination varies more than 20%, then the CA scores for that subject in that specific school will be dismissed and the imposed score will be the average score from the public examination (all students will get that same score for CA). Sirazul Islam, one

of the policy actors thinks “If this continues for four to five years, the teachers will become honest in marking.” So even though he believes in the importance of classroom assessment, he does not believe in teachers’ honesty. However, Azmal Khan, another policy actor harshly critiqued this proposal and said that if we put responsibilities on teachers without having faith in them that is even more dangerous than not having classroom assessment in focus. Policy actor Saifur Rahman thinks:

This idea of moderation or marks adjustment may obviously affect students especially who may have got more than average marks in case they have to receive an average mark with moderation. Also, some students are really good in hands on activities rather than paper pencil tests. By adjusting marks, we are ignoring these differences. However, we have to come to a negotiation. Otherwise we cannot introduce classroom assessment. We have bitter experience about SBA. Azmal Khan, the curriculum expert on NCTB, argues that sometimes there are

actors in policy networks who have the power to negotiate or translate CA- related policy with no specific knowledge and experience of CA—this is a big issue. They translate policy based on their positional power and in many cases these policies fail at the practical field level.

The one who makes decisions on assessment is not aware of formative assessment and its values. If we propose any idea to promote CA they just say that this will not do. They are stubborn in their opinions. For example, the SSC exam is in February, so we cannot just change the marking system now (September). The students who will sit for the exam this year will suffer. We protested. But they (higher government officials) want to do things quick. The officers in the ministry-they are the highest authority to make decisions on the changes. They have the final say and their decisions are faulty. Even the board chairman or DG cannot argue with them.

--Azmal Khan, the curriculum expert in NCTB

### **Summary of the Chapter**

Members from different communities of practice or networks such as the Ministry of Education, National Curriculum and Textbook Board, National University, and public

universities come together along with local and global ideas and discourses on CA, such as School Based Assessment, structured questions, Assessment for Learning as an assemblage to make policies on CA. These heterogeneous assemblages of human and non-human actors from different CoPs act as powerful networks to formulate CA policies. Policy negotiation happens in these networks through dialogues and debates where members from different CoPs try to include, exclude, elaborate, shorten, and craft CA- related meanings. Political and social power (capital) puts certain CoPs or members of a CoP in a position which makes easy or difficult to negotiate. The way an actor is involved in different CoPs is an important indicator for his/her negotiation power. For example, members such as high government officials have more power to enroll and advocate for CA content while negotiating. Again, a member of a CoP composed of university teachers had almost equal negotiation power because of his popularity as a writer and thinker of education. Teachers as a CoP were less represented in policy formulation and negotiation which indicates an imbalance in power to negotiate. The end product, the negotiated meaning focuses on summative and public examinations, rather than formative classroom assessment. These negotiated meanings are intentionally kept vague to make it difficult to trace and assess.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **FINDINGS FROM REGIONAL LEVEL: TEACHERS' TRAINING COLLEGE**

How actors involved in a teachers' training college translate policy related to teacher preparation for CA into practice and what factors influence this translation are explored in this chapter. For this, I spent 35 days in Kolatoli TTC (using abc as a pseudonym) tracing human and nonhuman actors by interviewing and conducting FGDs with trainers and trainees, observing training sessions and teacher education classes, and analyzing training materials.

#### **Teacher Preparation Scope in Kolatoli TTC**

##### **Teacher Education Programs**

Following are the teacher education programs that happen regularly at Kolatoli TTC under National University (NU):

- (1) Bachelor of Education (one year) – Usually in-service in nature
- (2) Bachelor of Education (four years) – Usually pre-service in nature
- (3) Master of Education (one year) – If students get admitted just after completing a four-year BEd, it is pre-service for them; otherwise, it's in-service in nature

##### **Training or Teacher Professional Development**

Besides the regular teacher education programs, there are different short-term trainings for teachers offered by different projects/programs. At different times, different projects focus on different topics. Right now, TQI-II is actively developing the trainings for secondary school teachers and has the following trainings that are conducted here using expert resources from Kolatoli TTC:

- (1) 35-days training for head teachers and future head teachers
- (2) Continuous Professional Development (CPD) - these 14-day long trainings are subject- based. When I was collecting data, political science, subject- based CPD training was happening at Kolatoli TTC.
- (3) CPD for ICT-Digital content development training for 14 days

All these teacher education programs and the trainings have content related to assessment and/or CA to different extents. In the next sections, I describe and explain how policy pieces such as formal teacher education curricula and teacher training manuals are practiced by human actors such as trainers and trainees and their interaction creating informal policies in this TTC network and the factors that influence the appropriation of the policies. As there are significant differences between teacher education programs and trainings in duration, participants, curriculum, and the format of the classes/sessions, I describe the findings in two separate subsections – “Teacher Education” and “Trainings”.

### **Teacher Education Curricula Translated into Practice**

Formal policy, the teacher education curricula, is translated into practice in the TTC through teaching the curricular content by the trainers of the TTC and the interaction between the trainers and trainees in classrooms. This policy translation is affected by different local factors inside the TTC and global factors located outside the TTC. Data collected from the TTC shows that regularity of the classes, student attendance, shared teaching of the trainers, the trainer-trainee interaction in the classroom, motivation of the trainer to teach and motivation of the trainees to learn are

the local factors influencing curricular translation. Besides these local factors are global factors such as the scope of teaching FCA in the curriculum, teaching practice experience of the trainees, late enrollment of the trainees, competition among TTCs, and involvement of the TTC in project-based, short-term trainings outside the TTC that influence teaching- learning at TTC. These factors are interrelated and act within the broader framework of formal policy guidelines and the informal policies created and practiced by the actors of the TTC.

### **Coverage of FCA related Topics**

Coverage of CA and FCA related topics in the teacher education programs that happen in Kolatoli TTC was discussed in detail in the previous chapter. The MEd curriculum does not have any specific course or content related to CA. BEd (Hons) and the BEd one- year program each have a course that partially covers FCA related content. However, both these courses' contents focus mostly on test development, examination, descriptive statistics, and School Based Assessment (SBA). Very little content has FCA related topics.

Within the TTC network, there is disagreement on how much the programs are currently covering and should be covering regarding assessment and CA. Out of five trainers interviewed including the principal of the TTC, three of the trainers stated that the coverage of CA related concepts is not sufficient in the BEd (Hons), one year BEd, and MEd curricula. These trainers have concluded that teachers are not well prepared to practice CA effectively and formatively in schools to improve students' learning. For example, a trainer at Kolatoli TTC, Fateema Begum, argued that the content of the



teacher education courses on assessment is totally focused on summative assessment and test development. There is no specific content on CA or formative assessment. She also reported that unlike the BEd one- year curriculum (both old and new), BEd Honors does not include content on assessing specific subject areas in subject-based courses (such as in Teaching Bangla or Teaching Mathematics course) except for a few. The principal of the TTC thinks that there should be one separate course on assessment for both the BEd (one year) and MEd program. Now, all that trainees receive is material blended in from other courses such as some concepts of assessment in the course “learning and learning assessment” in the one year BEd. Previously, there was a course “Measurement and Evaluation in Education”, which is no longer in the BEd curriculum. Because of the emphasis on having more content on other topics such as learning, ICT, and global perspectives on education, content on assessment has been condensed in a one-year curriculum (both BEd and MEd). He also thinks that we need a separate course on CA, or at least a significant number of units on CA; otherwise, the depth and weightage of CA are lost.

On the other hand, two other trainers think that coverage of FCA is adequate in the teacher education curriculum. Dr. Shah Alom teaches one teaching course on a specific subject in BEd (four years Hons). He said:

No content is there related to how to assess that specific subject in the course outline. Only how to teach is highlighted. We teach the content of that subject- how to teach it, how to make it catchy to the students, and how to use teaching aid in class. I do not teach assessing this subject as it is not in the syllabus. It is important- how to teach not how to assess.

In the MEd curriculum there is no separate course on assessment. These two trainers also argued that as students usually have a BEd when they enroll in the MEd, it is

reasonable not to present assessment- related concepts/topics because these students have learned assessment and CA in their BEd. Dr. Tareque Mahmood, who taught the same subject course previously in the one year BEd and now teaches in the four-year BEd honors, echoed:

We teach about assessment related topics in the subject based course but not in details, very general idea about assessment. In the new curriculum we have more parts on assessment in this subject based course. However, I think that as we already have a course on assessment, we do not need to teach them separately for each subject.

During the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), trainees enrolled in a MEd and have teaching experience, were unsure of whether they need topics on CA in the MEd curriculum or not. Biplob Podder said, “I do not know if there are new concepts, ideas and techniques on CA out there except what we have learnt in our BEd. If there is any, then that can be added in our MEd curriculum.” Shamsun Naher said, “If there are new innovations and recent changes in CA ideas and policies, then that can be added to the MEd curriculum”. Delwar thinks:

It would be better to have CA related topics in MEd at least to have a revision of what we have learnt in the BEd. We have done our BEd a long time ago. And there are changes in concepts in literature and also changes in policies and curriculum of Bangladesh.

How much the curriculum covers FCA related topics determines how much the students learn about FCA. However, this coverage in the curriculum is a factor that lies outside the TTC community of practice. Teachers who expressed their opinion that whatever coverage we have for the curriculum on CA is acceptable were also a part of the network of policy makers who developed the BEd (four years) curriculum. During the interview, one of these teachers explained in detail how the process of developing that curriculum occurred and how they ensured the content of CA was included in different courses. This is a process to retain the formal policy by actors in the regional network

who actually were involved in national policy network developing the policy. However, while these actors confirm the policy, at the same time other actors in the network challenge the policy. For example, Fatema Begum, a trainer, severely criticized the BEd (Hons) curriculum as focusing only on summative assessment and test. There are two conflicting Communities of Practice at Kolatoli TTC --one trying to preserve the status of content coverage, and the other challenging it to focus more on FCA. The trainees as a CoP are still unsure about content structure and there needs to be more dialogue with them by including them in the authorized policy making process. A change in policy may occur when there is more effort in terms of empowering other actors in the network (principal, trainers, and trainees) so that their voices can be heard, and there is more connection between the actors who create the policy (curriculum), and the actors who practice and/or experience the policy.

### **Regularity and Quality of Teaching**

The overall quality and environment of teaching at Kolatoli TTC affects how CA related concepts are constructed in classrooms. Both formal and informal policies affect learning. The BEd and MEd Students (trainees) during the FGD mentioned that the consistency and quality of teaching at the TTC are unsatisfactory. Not all classes occur during the semester. Therefore, the trainer-teacher contact hours are reduced. In the reduced timeframe, sometimes the trainers skip several topics in the course outline or explain many CA concepts in a very short time to cover all topics. Three BEd students think that the teaching quality of many trainers is also not good. Three trainees mentioned

that some of the teachers are not serious about teaching at all. They also think that the concepts of FCA are taught theoretically with little or no scope for practice.

Sometimes the teachers come to the class not prepared. They do not talk much relevant to the topic but other things roaming around the topic. They are well-known and expert we know. But if they could have a little bit preparation, the class could be much effective for us. They talk about other things, not relevant to the topic and it hampers our class. In this situation we miss a lot of content and skill on CA. Moreover, the teachers teach the CA related concepts theoretically only. Rarely the teachers (trainers) involve us in practical work on student assessment.

-- Badal, trainee from BEd program

In this situation, with reduced time, cramped concepts, and ineffective teaching, FAC concepts are not made clear to them. Many teachers do not keep regular attendance, and even if they do, it does not matter much. All the students are accepted to sit for the exam. “The teachers do not maintain the curriculum and the policies strongly, and so do we. It is a flexible system.” – one BEd student argued.

Four teachers (trainers) out of five interviewed noticed that the curriculum for teaching the trainees about CA- related content is very theoretical in the BEd programs (both Hons and one year). It presents very little opportunity for hands-on practice, except when the students go to the Teaching Practice in School (TP), which is also uncertain and depends a lot on other factors (discussed in a later section). As critiqued by a TTC trainer who was teaching a course on student assessment in a BEd program for last three years:

There is not much scope for exercise on making educational tools, but just teaching them what is test, characteristics of good tests, advantages and disadvantages of different types of tests, for example. There is no time or number allocated for practicing test development, classroom questioning or analyzing different CA tools. The only practice that they do is developing learning outcomes based on Bloom’s taxonomy. We do not have enough time for practicing Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ) or creative question development.

--Fateema Begum, TTC trainer

She also suggested that there should be a separate course or a part in any other courses at a later stage in the program to allocate time for practicing developing different types of assessment tools. It could be a continuation of previously taught theoretical content. She thinks that in that way the trainees could connect theory and application to solidify their learning.

However, the trainees argued during the FGD that if teachers wanted to, they could make it more practical by giving them practical works to do in the classrooms and giving more practical examples while teaching.

### **Student Absenteeism**

The trainers of the TTC mentioned student (trainee) absenteeism as one of the obstacles for them to teach and for the trainees to learn. Tareque Rahman stated,

When I teach the course on student assessment FCA topics are taught in two days. Because of being absent in the classes many students (trainees) miss these topics. The students are not serious about the classes and do not come to all the classes. The trainees in the FGD argued that as the classes do not happen regularly and not

all the teachers teach seriously and regularly they do not feel inclined to attend classes regularly. Three BEd students also mentioned that they do not have a clear career path through this BEd and this also affects their motivation to attend classes regularly. Though there is curricular policy to add 10% marks for the attendance, it is clear that it is not maintained strictly. In 50% of the classes that I observed, no attendance record was taken. We see that different actors, trainers and trainees construct informal policies of class attendance which are flexible in nature. Trainers and trainees as two different CoPs have their own reality and rationale for this flexible attendance policy which is different from two different perspectives.

### **Motivation to Teach and Motivation to Learn**

Teachers' motivation to teach and students' motivation to learn influence both the teaching of the teachers and the learning of the students. Three teachers (trainers) of the TTC said that most of the teachers (trainers) are not motivated mainly for two reasons. First, they are not satisfied with their own careers and promotions and there is no incentive for good teaching. Second, as many students (trainees) of the TTC are not sure of their career path they are not motivated to learn. The teachers also feel demotivated to teach these extremely demotivated trainees who attend classes irregularly. They find it difficult to teach them as the students frequently skip class and are not motivated to put in enough effort to learn the concepts of FCA. However, two of the senior teachers (trainers) at Kolatoli TTC gave a different perspective. They expressed satisfaction regarding their careers and promotions. They also related that they are highly motivated to teach even though there is a small portion of students who are not motivated to learn. Therefore, even in the same CoP there are members with different motivations, interests and attitudes towards the trainee students.

All the trainers interviewed at Kolatoli TTC mentioned that some of the broader systems or policies demotivate them. Four of the trainers mentioned that NU enrolls students even after the semester is half-way done. This interrupts their teaching and makes it difficult for them to teach all the students about FCA the same way. Many students are enrolled after teaching FCA related topics has been concluded. Two other trainers described the competition between the govt and private TTCs as a factor for their demotivation. They explained that many private TTCs, increasing in numbers, are very flexible in class attendance, and student assessment. They overmark students in the

examinations and pass the students. Trainees also compare those flexible policies of private TTC s with the Kolatoli TTC. The trainers think that to thrive in this competition they also need to be flexible in policies and that can affect students learning FCA.

Several MEd trainees said that they do not take classes seriously as they see that these policies of class attendance are flexible. Many students get enrolled after the official deadline of enrollment. However, a few students said that sometimes they are negligent in learning at the TTC as they are not sure about their futures. If there were a clear career path exclusively for teachers that would help them hold onto their motivation.

### **Trainer and Trainee Interaction: Actors Co-constructing CA Concepts**

Let us start with a picture of a BEd classroom to depict the scenario I observed during classroom observation:

Teacher: Please discuss in group- why do we assess students? Try to write different points on this.

(After seven- minutes group work)

Students in one group answered:

- (1) to measure students' learning
- (2) to increase students' creativity
- (3) to compare among students (T: actually to grade them, not compare)
- (4) to measure how much they are attentive
- (5) to make students confident

(6) to know about the learning process (Trainer: you better say, to evaluate teachers' teaching process-if this is ok or not for students' learning processes)

(7) to remove shyness (Trainer: We can do different activities to remove shyness which are different. I [the trainer] asked why we would assess students).

There is little or no discussion in detail about the points, and the feedback is confined to teacher correcting or adding more information. Other class observations show that even when the teachers present, they use bullet points and then explain them briefly, sometimes giving an example (especially when teaching different types of questions/tests).

In most of the classes the idea of summative assessment was discussed more elaborately and the idea of formative assessment was confined to class tests and classroom questioning only. Following is a classroom interaction:

Trainer: "Which one is more expensive to administer, formative or summative assessment?"

Trainee from one group: "summative"

Trainer: "How come? Formative assessment will have more tests, doesn't it mean more expensive?" (The teacher is reducing the concept of formative assessment to class tests)

While explaining the difference between formative and summative assessment, three of the teachers gave class tests as examples of formative assessment and final exams as examples of summative. There was rarely any discussion about alternative CA techniques. Only in one class did the trainer talk about projects and in another class the teacher explained portfolio when asked about it.



CA content is taught mainly as a part of a lesson plan and to prepare the students for TP. It is very apparent that the teachers and the students take TP much more seriously than the classes. They ask for different tips for the TP and even told the teacher, “We have come to today’s class only to get some tips for our TP as we will go to the schools next week” (though the teacher was teaching a different topic). The teacher in three of the different classes explained CA as a component of a lesson plan that comes at the end of the class asking students questions regarding the topics taught. When the teacher asked, “Can I ask questions during teaching?”, the student answered, “No, it comes at the end of the lesson plan, in the last column”. The trainees’ ideas and conceptions were confined to the rigid framework of a lesson plan. The concept of lesson plan was also very limited to many students who missed the class when the lesson plan was discussed. All they had as a reference was a sample lesson plan from their peers. In one class the teacher was upset and said “It may have been my fault to have given you a sample lesson plan. Almost all of you wrote group work as a technique to assess like the sample lesson plan. It is something that will vary based on what are you teaching.” This also shows that students are not prepared to select CA techniques for teaching different topics. This remain a big discussion in many classes I observed regarding which format of lesson plan to follow for TP. In one BEd class the students were upset, “In all the TTCs there is a one page format for the lesson plan, but here the principal is with a 3- pages format.” Teacher and trainer of the TTC Bilkis Ara said that she takes classes on Teaching Mathematics. She explained-

There are content on CA in Teaching Mathematics. It comes more as a part of lesson plan. Total three teachers teach this course. My part is lesson plan. So, I link it as a part of lesson plan. I get only one or two days to cover the concept of

lesson plan and to link it with CA. If I could have the students do some practice that would be great. But I do not have time.

While observing the class I found that in many classes, assessment was discussed mainly as a part of the lesson plan. The concept of assessment gets reduced to the last part of the lesson plan rather than a general concept or a mechanism to know about students learning and giving feedback. The students conceptualize it as a segment of a class at the end asking questions. The teachers, too, as several teachers teach one course, give students segmented ideas of CA which are never synthesized.

In almost all group works that I observed, the teacher tells the students to stop just when they have become engaged in deeper conversations on CA. They cannot go deeper. The teachers try to finish a lot of the topics in class within a short period of time. Two out of the five trainers, who were interviewed, believe that what they are teaching in class is the only source of knowledge the students get because the students usually do not study after class. In one BEd class, one group of students were discussing which types of assessment (formative or summative) have a more significant role in enhancing students' learning.

Student-1 (S1)- Formative assessment happens during course time, so students have room for improvement.

S2: Students can be encouraged to learn

S1- Teacher can identify their weakness in teaching and change

S3- However if the students do not pass the final exam, they have to remain in the same class...

S4- Because of this decision, students take summative assessment more seriously

S2- Everyone is just concerned about getting CGPA 5 on the public exam

S1- But the ones who do well in formative assessment always do well in summative too.

S2- Not necessarily... for example....

..... (time was over, the discussion stopped there)

Another teacher asked in class to do group work of identifying formative and summative assessment questions for a specific lesson such as “Triangle” for grade six.

This made the students really confused because the same questions can be used both for formative and summative purposes. Later, she gave an example of formative questions:

Showing different types of triangle you can ask, are these figures alike? Students may reply yes, then you can ask why? They may say, they all have three sides. All these are formative questions and teacher need to observe who are answering, who are not, who is confident who are not etc. You can also tell them to draw a triangle. You can then compare two different triangles drawn by two different students.

--Bilkis Ara, TTC Trainer

Some examples of summative questions: “How many types of triangles are there based on the sides (bahu)? - if you give this question on an exam, then it’s summative. If we tell them to draw triangles in with different lengths of sides, and then explain different types of triangles, then it is formative assessment”. This teacher took the approach of explaining CA or formative assessment from class tests and asking questions to deeper levels of activity- based question- answer approach and built in a feedback process which was not seen in any other classes.

Even though there are curriculum guidelines or formal policies on what to teach on CA, the actors’, trainers’ and trainees’ specific interactions in the classrooms create a different informal CA content policy which reduces the CA to just a part of the lesson plan and classroom questioning and tests as techniques. This fragmented presentation of FCA in different classes gives the trainees fragmented ideas of FCA; there is no

opportunity to synthesize or consolidate the ideas to create a holistic understanding of FCA.

### **Shared Teaching and CA**

There are policies that are created informally in the Kolatoli TTC which affect the learning of FCA by the trainees regarding all content including CA and FCA. Shared teaching policy is an informal policy at Kolatoli TTC. Several teachers take responsibility in teaching one single course of BEd (one year) and MEd (one year). They divide the course unit by unit and decide who will teach which unit. Neither the teachers nor the students like this way of teaching. Students of the MEd program during FGD expressed their issues regarding this matter-

For one subject we have four or five teachers. This is not helpful for us. Different teachers teach different units. Not all of them have the same teaching style. Not all of them are expert in that subject. It is tough for them and also for us. Five teachers teach us the concept of assessment in five different ways. If we tell one definition from what we have learnt from one teacher, another teacher does not accept that.

--Dewar Ahmed, Trainee from MEd program

This shared teaching also affects the trainees' assessment.

The assessment of our learning is also hampered. They have different types of assessing. They divide the answer scripts (based on roll number) among them. For the same writing one gets 9 out of 15, another student gets 14 out of 15, because different teachers grade us for the same course.

--Halima Khatun, Trainee from BEd program

This policy of shared teaching is an informal policy that emerged to address a local problem of this TTC where there are more interested teachers to take over one course. This informal local policy is a compromise of quality teaching to fulfill the teachers' interest to teach certain classes.

## Teaching Practice (TP)

The BEd students do their TP at assigned schools. The TP occurs in two phases – the first one is in March. One of the major issues mentioned by all the teachers of the TTC is the issue of late enrollment of the students at the TTC which impacts almost all aspects of teaching and learning at this TTC including TP. Because of this late admission issue, most teachers think that they do not get enough time to prepare the students/trainees for their teaching practice in schools:

Some students have got admitted just one day before TP. They have no idea about TP. We gave them a format for lesson plan but that is not enough. They are just writing whatever they can in the lesson plan.

--Bilkis Ara, TTC trainer

Another issue regarding TP as mentioned by one of the trainers interviewed was that the TTC cannot connect well with the school for the TP. The schools have exams and other activities which can hamper the necessary activities of the practice teachers:

This year we could not send the students to schools for TP. We had to do simulation but it is not the same as TP. The school told us that they have first term exams (all schools now follow the same schedule for exam). That whole month is their exam. Then there is Eid vacation and Ramadan.

--Tareque Mahmood, TTC trainer

He explained that previously when this TTC had the July-June session, the schedule for TP used to match the school's schedule. But, recently for several years, the TTC has been having a January-December session which creates conflict between the TP schedule and the school's schedule. The same opinion was echoed by another TTC trainer:

We try to do a lot of follow up on CA practice in the TP. But the challenge is that we have Jan-July period for TP. The schools usually have sports and other activities such as milad, pujo in the beginning of the year and class does not start on time. Previously we had July-June session. That time we could have the students take more classes without losing time.

--Dr. Tareque Mahmood, TTC trainer

Both the trainers and the trainees think that teaching practice is the most important part of a teacher's education as it gives them firsthand experience of teaching in a real situation (from interviews with trainers and FGD with trainees). The teachers think that this is the time when the students can apply what they have learned about classroom assessment. However, to what extent trainee teachers from the TTC will be able to participate in the school's assessment depends a lot on the assessment policies of the schools in which they are performing TP. For example, the school where I observed TP administers two class tests in the first half of the academic year. One trainee teacher said, "It is not the same for all the schools. I know one of my fellow classmates who is in a school for TP which requires only one class test in the first half academic year". Again, to what capacity the students will be able to practice their CA skills in their TP depends on their school's decision on how it will involve the trainee teachers in its students' assessment. For example, the school where I observed TP did not allow the students to prepare tests for any summative assessment (half yearly exam).

Students' ability to apply their skills related to CA depends on the main teachers whose proxy classes the trainee teachers are taking. My interview with the two trainee teachers revealed that teachers can be flexible and assign a lot of power and responsibility to the practice teachers to make their own CA during their TP period. On one hand, teachers can be rigid not even allowing practice teachers to develop and administer class tests. One trainee student doing TP in that school mentioned that she is teaching "Business Entrepreneurship" in grade nine and the subject teacher told her to prepare the class tests and grade the exam papers. On the other hand, another trainee teacher was not allowed to prepare, administer or grade any class test. It seems that in many cases the

practice teachers cannot take part in summative assessment (end of the year final examination), but take part in developing class tests, employing class tests and day to day CA such as classwork and homework.

Most of the trainee teachers got the chance to prepare lesson plans, which included classroom assessment as one aspect and practice some CA activities in the regular classroom. However, the issue was, the trainee teachers got little opportunity to take planned regular classes of their own subject. Rather, they had to take classes that were not of their subject of specialization and/or were assigned to random classes for which the teachers were absent. For example, one of the practice teachers (Tunazzina) from the TTC who was teaching in the school did not get a chance to prepare the CT for the class she taught. She also could not teach a full course of the subject that she is specializing in or the subject that she is supposed to teach here in the school. Assessments can be different for different subjects and thus she could not practice the CA very well of her subject “Management” as she is taking classes on “Islam shikhha”, “Social science”, “Mathematics”, and sometimes other random classes if the teachers of those classes are absent. Like Tunazzina, Tofazzol also has only two fixed classes, but he had to take four to six classes daily (stop gap classes when the teachers are absent).

Tunazzina, also mentioned that when school students are used to a certain CA culture, it is difficult for her to come to the class for a short period of time and change the culture. For example, she told them repeatedly that if she asks a question, that not all should answer at once but should raise their hands if they know the answer. However, out of habit they always answer together. If the regular teacher of that class did not ask many questions in class or did not give regular homework, it is tough for her to introduce these

as both she and the students know that she is here for a short period of time. Like Tunazzina, Tofazzol also thinks that since practice teachers are here for such a short time, neither the school administration, teachers and students, nor the practice teacher can develop strong ties. They know that they cannot alter either the CA practice or the culture and must maintain what is already in place. Tofazzol mentioned that the students do not respect, love or cooperate with him like the regular teacher. It takes time to achieve these and they both know that the time is short. And cooperation is essential for having effective CA. He said, “I know about role play as assessment techniques from one of our simulation classes. But I am afraid to practice it here because I am afraid that the students will not cooperate. If I am in a school as a permanent teacher, then I will try role play”.

The practice teachers also think that it is sometimes tough to apply what they have learned in their BEd. Mr. Tofazzol thinks that the big classrooms in this school are not conducive to CA with a participatory approach and the one to one connection and individual feedback that they have learned in the BEd program. The immovable benches in this school are also problematic for group work he thinks.

After observing the two practice teachers’ classes I conducted follow up interviews. What the practice teachers told me about the aims and techniques of CA does not match with what they are actually doing in the classroom. For example, during the interview, practice teacher Tunazzina explained that her aim of asking questions at the end of the lesson as a part of CA was: “I wanted to know how much they have understood, how much attention they paid while I taught.” However, during the observation of the practice teaching class, I found that it was all fact-based questions that she asked in the classroom which requires recalling, but not understanding. In the



interview about CA- related concepts, she related that she did not learn anything related to formative and summative assessment but a little bit about feedback which she refers to as a mechanism for giving the students the right answer. While having conversation it was clear that in many cases she knows the “should” but didn’t know how to apply it in the classroom. When I asked Tunazzina if she could think about other questions she could use in the classroom because even if the students do not understand, they can still answer by memorizing or just seeing the text book. Then she replied,

It is really tough for me. I know that I should ask questions so that I know if the students have understood what I taught them. But, I had no scope in my BEd class to practice making those questions. I thought that these questions are good. But now after discussing I also think that it actually assesses their recalling capacity.

--Tunazzina, practice teacher in placement school

When I asked if she could receive any help from the teachers of this school or from the TTC, she replied,

The teacher whose class she teaches is very busy and I have not seen any other practice teacher to go to any teacher to seek help. My supervisor from the TTC observed one of my classes and gave me good grade. He did not give me any concrete feedback though. He will come another final day and grade me finally.

--Tunazzina, practice teacher in placement school

She said that she mainly has known about questioning as CA techniques and a bit about group work and board work (asking students to come to the board to write) but no other techniques of CA, she thinks group work is mainly a teaching- learning activity and is unsure how much to use it as an assessment technique or tool. She also said that that students do not understand Creative Questions (CQ) very well. She does not use CQ for assessing the classroom. She said that she is not sure if other students are also on the same page regarding knowing about CA or not as she missed a lot of classes. She is doing a masters at the same time in another college and therefore missed a lot of classes at the TTC.

Tofazzol Karim said that since he has tutored from his early student years (grade 12), he knew about assessing students regularly and giving them feedback which after getting to know the BEd program, he understood was formative assessment. He also knew about other CA techniques such as group work, pair work, board work, mind mapping, and presentation, for example. He also mentioned that some of these he actually has done for the students he teaches in private tutoring. However, he did not know the terms used for these concepts. He thinks that BEd has given shape and named the experiences he has had previously.

Overall, TP could be the most significant part of the BEd program as it provides them hands- on experience of teaching which is crucial as it gives them the opportunity to teach real students in a real classroom situation. However, loose connections between the TTC and the school, trainee teachers' lacking supervisory help necessary to connect theory to practice, and the school policy and decision to involve practice teachers in minimum levels of CA are issues that hinder the real objective of the TP.

### **Project-Based, Short-Term Trainings vs. Long- Term Teacher Education**

During my data collection time I uncovered different ideas regarding the attention put towards trainings and teacher education in Kolatoli TTC and its effect. Two trainers stated that many teachers in this TTC are loaded with project work, and trainings happen under different projects. They get extra remuneration and publicity for conducting these training sessions. There is competition for who gets how many sessions to teach these short term trainings. This hampers their time commitment and attention towards the teacher education programs. The principal was more positive towards these trainings

happening at the TTC. He mentioned that sometimes the BEd and MEd classes become a burden for the teachers. For example, he mentioned that for training on ICT, there are two trainers from the TTC for 20 teacher participants. This training is one-day long. The teachers involved in this training also have BEd and/or MEd classes to take. So, one trainer leaves the training for one hour to take a BEd or MEd class and then rejoins the training. This shows that the principal prefers accommodating the trainings at Kolatoli TTC even while compromising the teacher education classes.

FGD with MEd participants revealed their dissatisfaction regarding this. One FGD participant said:

We know that in this TTC all teachers are experienced and experts. But if they could give us more, could share with us more, that would be very helpful. Sometimes they do not have time. There are a lot of trainings going on here. The teachers are involved in those trainings. So, sometimes they do not have much time, or they need to share his/her time in both our class and in other training sessions. They are busy with trainings. For example, the teacher comes to our class from a project based training session, teach a bit and then goes to the training session again. It is not always effective. they are under pressure.  
--Ziaur Rahman, Trainee MEd

Halima Khatun says:

Another thing is that they do not get extra payment for taking our classes. These are regular. But for training they get extra payments. So, they have motivation for taking those training sessions and they gave more attention to those trainings. If those trainings were not there, or would not cause much pressure, may be they would pay more attention to our classes.  
--Halima Khatun, BEd trainee

The trainees also expressed their dissatisfaction regarding resource allocation. Halima Khatun said, “The computer lab is most of the time occupied by the trainees who come for short term trainings. It reduces our access to the computer lab”.

Shifting attention towards a particular teacher preparation program is an informal policy that the actors of the Kolatoli TTC developed. This policy surely emerged as a response to the global policy of government projects developed in the Ministry of

Education to deliver the trainings through the TTCs. To carry out this policy, trainers as a CoP are trying to balance their work load and adjust their new training course work with the already existing teaching of the BEd and MEd courses. The trainees as a CoP coexist in the TTC network as an opposing group of actors who find it detrimental to their learning. However, the trainees have no power to contribute to this global or local policy change regarding project-based trainings taking place in Kolatoli TTC.

### **Assessment of TTC Trainees**

Students learn about CA not only from the curriculum content that the teacher teaches in the classrooms but also from the assessment culture in which they themselves are immersed. Therefore, how TTC students are being assessed is an important aspect for this research. In the conversations in the FGD with the BEd and MEd students, they said they learned from not only the content of the curriculum on assessment or CA but also from other sources such as the way trainers assess them here in the TTC. One BEd student trainee said:

We are taught that formative assessment is important for students learning as it can provide feedback to the students. But here in this TTC, we get our internal exam results with our external exam result at the end of the year. Is this internal exam formative assessment? If they want us to practice formative assessment in classrooms then why don't they practice it here?

--Mohammad Rony, trainee from BEd program

In the TTC the students are assessed based on 60% summative and 40% formative assessment as described in the curriculum. The 60% marks are for an external examination arranged centrally by National University. This is a written/paper-pencil test. There is a viva or interview and comprehensive exam at the end of the program with a satisfactory or unsatisfactory result. For the semester-based BEd (four years), the viva

(satisfactory/ unsatisfactory) takes place in each of the two semesters. Overall, 40% marks are counted as satisfactory. This system is so that they do not forget what they have learned even in the first semester when they graduate. This is why after two semesters they have viva, as argued by TTC trainer Dr. Shah Alom, who was a member of the BEd four-year curriculum development committee. This also emphasizes merely recalling facts to pass the exam, not learning and applying the learning.

The 40% of the formative assessment is divided into three parts – two-term exams (15+15=30), five marks for class attendance and participation, and five marks for assignment. The assignments vary according to the course teachers. For example, Dr Shah Alom said that for a course this semester/year the students submitted a book evaluation. “I told them the points or characteristics on which they will evaluate the book. I also gave them another assignment on field visit based on which they will submit a report” (Dr. Shah Alom, TTC). There was another teacher giving an assignment to students (which I observed during class observation) which was just to answer several questions (knowledge and understanding level). Therefore, how much formative the curricular formative assessment will consist of depends on the course teacher too.

Several TTC teachers argued that the students are not serious about formative assessment:

The students think that it is very easy to get this 40% marks. They sometimes even think that they can get this grade by convincing the teachers or creating pressure on the teachers. They take the summative one seriously; but no sincerity for this 40% marks.

--Fatema Begum, TTC trainer

The trainees think that the teachers do not emphasize the formative assessment part as much as they do for the summative one.

They [the trainers] do not give specific instruction on the attendance or assignments. The deadline of submitting assignments are flexible most of the time. Many teachers do not keep record for the attendance. On the other hand, the teachers start giving us instruction about the final end of the year when we are enrolled. They put special emphasis on the summative examination.

The BEd (one year) trainees in the FGD said that most of the trainers do not use assessment techniques that they have read about in books. They sometimes ask questions, but mostly lecture in class. Sometimes they show PowerPoint slides. They argued that they do not have a rich experience of CA from this Kolatoli TTC. However, one trainee mentioned that he has learned assessment techniques from their teachers of the BEd who practiced those in the classrooms in this TTC. Mohammad Rony told about another teacher who always reserves some time at the end of the class when students ask questions about the topic followed by a discussion. The teacher also asks important thought- provoking questions. This class is very effective he thinks. As he further expanded his thought, “We do not need to memorize concepts for this class”.

FGD with the students revealed that the students want more continuous assessment. They argue that the aspects covered in the TTC assessment do not cover all the important values and characteristics required of teachers. The assessment process, philosophy and criteria vary from teacher to teacher they noticed. Some teachers give more emphasis to class participation, but some do not care about that, for example. While observing the teacher education classes, I found that the teachers used board work, group work, and presentation, but only for teaching and discussing topics, not for assessing students. Only in one class after teaching did the teacher give group work and the students gave a verbal presentation. In interviews with five trainers, four of them said that they do not use CA systematically or in a planned way. However, they do systematically

make assignments and in-course exams which are part of the curriculum-guided marks to allocate.

Sometimes, there are some good practices of formative assessment in the curriculum, but these are not always followed. For example:

We have a very good assessment approach in one of our courses on Compulsory learning outcomes (aboshhokiyo shikhon dokkhota) in BEd. In that course we have two seminars of ten marks and total 50 for this kind of assessment. This is a very good approach of assessment. However, we cannot follow this because of time constraints, lack of motivation and, also because of weak monitoring system- there is no accountability.

--Fatema Begum, TTC Trainer

### **CA Becomes Summative Assessment**

The 40% marks for formative assessment ultimately become summative in nature. First, in the classroom, teachers do not use any systematic assessment process for assessing and aiding students' learning. During classroom observation, it was rare that the teachers involved the students in the classroom for assessment in a meaningful way. In most of the classes the teachers asked questions while teaching, but most questions were sporadic and did not allow students to get feedback or move towards learning facilitation. For example, while explaining features of different types of assessment (formative, summative and continuous assessment), one student commented, "There is a difference between exam and assessment". The teacher's response was, "Please wait, I will come to that point later". Thus, though they apparently teach CA to be fluent, student- centered, continuous and flexible, in practice it becomes, teacher- centered, non-fluid, rigid, and segregated from teaching. Even though teachers ask "why" questions, they still prefer specific answers and are not open to discussing what the students have come up with. Secondly, there is little provision of giving feedback, which is not sufficient and/or

effective. The feedback is not given in a timely manner. The allotted time for providing feedback for many assessment activities allows little time for improving those areas of learning. It was ironic that while the teacher was teaching about formative assessment and feedback, one student asked, “when can we see our CT/ mid-term test scores/marks?”. The teacher replied that there is no regulation to announce the number until the end of the session. The students are not even allowed to see their exam copies.

Fatema Begum thinks that the head of an institution is always concerned about the reputation of the institution. Thus, sensitive stories, for example, like students putting pressure on teachers to give higher marks are never explored out. That is why internal assessment scores are published later at the end of the academic year so that students do not have any opportunity to influence. “We were told not to communicate the internal marks with them earlier in the semester/year, but along with the external marks. In this way we are safe, and we can do justice”. But she also said that only 10% of students would try to exert pressure on teachers for higher marks. For this 10% students, the formative assessment of 40% is being a summative assessment as they do not get the in-course exam marks immediately, let alone any formative feedback to improve their learning. Dr. Shah Alom included that “we can show the students the marks only. For example, 6 out of 15. They become aware, so that they can do better in next exam”. It seems that the teachers are even not aware of how this informal policy in the TTC is transforming the formative assessment into summative.

The total environment of assessment for teacher education programs emphasizes summative assessment and transforms the curriculum policy in such a way that formative



assessment becomes summative in nature. The trainees recognize this focus very well and it can affect their attitude towards using formative and summative assessment.

### **Teacher Training Manuals Translated into Training Practice**

Teacher training manuals are translated into practice in the TTC through training on different topics and skills for different groups of teachers by the same trainers at the TTC who teach the teacher education courses. Interactions between the trainers and trainees in training sessions contribute to building FCA- related concepts and skills of these in-service teachers. This policy translation is affected by different local factors inside the TTC and global factors located outside the TTC. Data collected from the TTC show that trainers' own philosophies and attitudes towards CA, and trainer-trainee interactions in the classroom are the local factors which influence curricular translation. Besides these local factors there are global factors such as the scope of training about FCA in training manuals and the nature of the trainings that influence teaching learning at TTCs. These factors are interrelated and act within the broader framework of the formal policy guidelines and the informal policies created and practiced by the actors at a TTC.

### **Coverage of FCA in Trainings**

The participants in FGD who were in the TTC for a 35-day training for future head teachers also explained their experience of trainings and other teacher preparation for CA that they had experienced in their lives. They are all assistant head-teachers with teaching experience varying from 20 to 35 years. They all mentioned that some topics covered in this 35- day training are related to CA such as Continuous Assessment requirements in the curriculum, tools of continuous assessment, and creative questions.

But this represents only a small portion of the entire training as the training is mainly management -related. Besides this 35-day training in this TTC, they mentioned different trainings organized by NAEM, other govt. TTCs, and BRAC where they had trainings which helped them acquire knowledge, understanding and skills on CA. Except for one madrasah teacher who had never had any teacher training experience related to CA, all other participants mentioned one to three trainings which had topics related to CA. But none of the trainings were devoted solely to CA; rather, CA was just part of a training. Of six participants, three mentioned they had trainings from BRAC which they found it to be very effective regarding knowing about CA techniques. Two participants said that they had had trainings containing some topics on CA but they could not recall anything as they had had the trainings 5 to 10 years ago.

Besides the trainings occurring in Kolatoli TTC and the trainings mentioned by the trainees at Kolatoli TTC, there are other trainings which include topics on CA. A core trainer (not working in this TTC, but as faculty at IER), Asefa Siddiqa, informed me that she has been involved as a core trainer with the responsibility of training master trainers under a Teaching Quality Improvement (TQI) project. She also wrote manuals for subject-based teachers training under TQI-II. She argues that for language assessment the issue was that there was no mechanism for assessing listening and speaking. There were tests only for reading and writing. Now, 20 marks are included for listening and speaking.

In the training sessions, we teach them how to do that assessment in classroom. As a demo or simulation, we take the test of the master trainers (trainees of the sessions) to demonstrate the techniques. We also give them opportunity in the sessions to practice. We also teach them the skills of developing tests, MCQs and how to ask questions in the classroom. After teaching a topic the teachers usually ask questions with 'what', we teach them to ask questions with 'how' and 'why.

--Asefa Siddiqa, core trainer

She also included that under the supervision of NCTB, a team where she is also a member developed a teacher's curriculum guide. There, the concept of "Assessment of learning" and "Assessment for Learning" is included for the first time for teachers. For each subject there is guideline on how to perform AFL in the classroom. Sample questions and answers are included as examples. Plans for activities are also included. However, there is more focus on asking questions. (Asefa Siddiqa, Core trainer).

In the trainings we try to teach them how to give effective feedback which most of the teachers are not aware of. The words they use are not motivating, but rather discouraging. What phrases they can use- 'I am afraid probably you are not right this time', 'try again', 'you are nearly close to the right answer'- which we teach them for example to use in classroom while giving feedback. I give them example of feedback language and ask them to develop more to have a list.

--Asefa Siddiqa, Core trainer

### **Trainers' Influence on Content of Assessment**

The formal policy of teacher training, the training manuals, are translated by trainers in Kolatoli TTC. Actors who translate this policy into training session can influence the translation based on their own philosophy, attitude and understanding of CA and FCA. While observing the training sessions, I found that even though the same topics are covered, different teacher/trainers may deliver very different aspects, philosophies and/or ideas of CA. This happens more when the content structure is present in the manual but not enough explanation and details on the topics are given. The core trainer from the larger teacher preparation network (who is not the trainer of Kolatoli TTC), Faizul, said that even if there is an explanation of the topic, many trainers neglect to read it. For example, in the 35-day training for future head teachers in the TTC, the same topics such as concept of assessment and evaluation, domains of assessment, formative and summative assessment, differences between formative and summative

assessment, significance of the two types of assessments (AOL and AFL), and the curriculum regulations of CA were taught very differently by two trainers in two different sections with different trainee participants. While the trainer Jahanara Begum explained the term *evaluation* more as “a process of judging the effectiveness of students’ learning”, Trainer Suneel Sarkar explained it more as a “quantitative and qualitative analysis of students learning samples/achievements”. The difference between evaluation and assessment drawn by Ms. Jahanara Begum was mainly as “assessment is for learning assessment and evaluation for program, and institutions”. She gave the example of class tests as assessments and the end of the year final exam as evaluation. Trainer Mr. Suneel Sarkar explained the difference more as “relative difference of assessment being more continuous, throughout the time span compared to evaluation which is relatively more one shot type occurring after relatively longer period of time” and he related it to AOL vs. AFL. He gave a range of assessment or evaluation settings such as regular classroom questioning to public exams and explained how we can put them in a continuum. While explaining the importance of summative and formative assessment, Ms. Jahanara focused on exam and achievements in exams; thus, for summative, the importance lies on how it quantifies students’ learning and for formative, how it prepares the students for a summative exam. On the other hand, Trainer Mr. Suneel explained the role of formative assessment mainly in terms of identifying learning difficulties, assessing and developing four language skills, the possibility of assessing the affective domain of learning, and for the purpose of teachers learning about what to do or change next. He also talked about alternative forms of assessments such as role play, debates, etc. which were absent in Ms. Jahanara Begum’s class. He even talked about broader social aspects included in CA to

encourage youth for a more open, egalitarian world and society as it gives scope for expression of their knowledge, understanding and feelings. Overall, Ms. Jahanara Begum was more motivated towards summative assessment as it currently rules our education system, and Dr. Suneel was more towards formative assessment as he feels it should guide our education system.

The instruction in training manuals that should be followed in the training sessions is not always followed by the trainers. Sometimes, there are practical issues to consider which require a change in the planned training sessions. For example, in the training of digital content development which I observed, teachers develop content for a lesson in PowerPoint in a group that will include different stages of a lesson for a class including assessment. For this activity, teachers are supposed to be grouped based on the subject that they teach in school. However, in two of the training sessions I found that few teachers can actually practice content development of their own subject because they cannot form groups as they have none or very few members. In this situation the trainer includes these teachers in other larger groups. For example, one math teacher was included in the group of science teachers. And in another session, the Islam education teacher was included in the Bengali (language) subject teacher's group. This was also the experience of one of the teachers I interviewed from the school. Saiful Ahmed explained to me that since he was the only teacher in that training session who teaches ICT, the trainer requested that he be part of a group of teachers who teach a different subject, science. The trainer gave the rationale that as Saiful Ahmed has his own educational background in science, he may join that science teachers group. In all these cases the

teachers were deprived of the scope of practicing developing digital content and the assessment part of their own subjects.

Trainers from the TTC and from outside the TTC but from a broader training network remarked that sometimes the time they have for the trainings is insufficient to cover the content. This happens more often when the manuals for trainings have not yet been not tried out, and yes, in many cases the manuals are written in a hurry and then go directly to the trainer for implementation. Many adjustments must be made at the venue. Ultimately, what part of the content will be covered and to what extent depends significantly on the individual trainer. Therefore, most of the time the nonhuman policy document is appropriated by the human actors in the local TTC network translating the document into a myriad of training experience for the trainees.

### **Trainer-Trainee Interaction: Actors Co-constructing School Reality of CA**

In different training sessions, the trainers and the trainees had the scope to discuss how classroom assessment happens in the real classrooms in rural and urban school contexts. They tried to put the learning in a real context and figure out the issues of applying the skills learned in the TTC. During the 35-day training for future head teachers, a lot of issues or practical problems emerged during discussions and the question- answer sessions related to assessment. At times, trainees (in-service teachers) revealed the actual situation of practice in classrooms or schools which may be very different from what is written in the curriculum. For example, when the trainer Mr. Suneel was talking about practical classes and tests/exams set for science and other particular subjects' assessment, many teachers said that they do not follow the rules for

taking specific numbers of practical classes or exams articulated in the curriculum. Some teachers said that they actually do not do any practical tests as they do not have the proper apparatus or facilities, and there is no monitoring, either.

Sometimes, the exploration of practical issues of classrooms initiated a vigorous discussion in the training sessions regarding good and effective assessment practice. For example, when trainer Mr. Suneel said that the curriculum instructs the teachers to assign homework for the students which requires no more than 20 minutes each, the teachers raised an issue that,

If we assign 20 minutes time bound homework, we cannot complete or cover the whole syllabus. If I have 20 math problems in the exercise, I can barely cover 10 in the classroom. The rest 10 I have to assign them for homework in order to complete the syllabus. (Mahboob Khan, Trainee in short training).  
However, the trainer explained:

Why you have to make them do all the math in the book to cover the syllabus? You will show them the techniques and processes, the theories. When they know that they can do similar Math by themselves. We think that we have to make them do all the Math and then they memorize those. Thus, we cannot come out of the rote-based learning and assessment. Instead you need to give them 20 minutes of thought-provoking homework.

-- Dr. Suneel, TTC Trainer

Sometimes during the training session, some sensitive issues emerged regarding assessment practice in school. In one session on assessment in the training for future head-teachers, the teachers also talked about the issue that they are sometimes instructed by the head-teachers to pass all the students somehow by grade inflation. They said that this even happens when they mark the public/board exam papers. They are told by a higher authority to over mark and pass the students. Here, the reality of the classroom or school confronts the larger context of education and the exam system of the entire

country. This reality is hard to change but reflects a collective understanding through sharing.

However, very few trainers encourage open discussion of school- related issues during their sessions, as they are concerned about finishing the content for the session. Most of the sessions do not allow adequate time to discuss the practical issues of application of CA concepts and skills. For example, trainer Tareque Mahmood actually encouraged discussions related to the practical issues in the classroom and did not stop them to go onto the other topics needed to be covered in that session. But like most of the trainers, Nargis Ara stopped the trainees in the middle of their discussions whenever she felt like it was killing her time to cover the content for the session. She was talking about the marks or grades distribution for CTs. One trainee teacher asked, “Sometimes, we have two sections for a grade and there is significant achievement gap (in terms of CT) between these two sections, how can we eliminate this gap?”. Many other students wanted to join this conversation.

Trainee-1: “Yes it happened to me in my classes too.”

Trainee-2: “Other teachers sometimes do that intentionally. They overmark”.

Trainee-3: “Or maybe there are actual differences in the students of these two classes”.

However, the teacher/trainer thought they were getting off track from the main topic. So, she intruded saying, “Competition is normal, if the head teacher is strict, he can manage this”. The trainee teachers were not satisfied with this answer and were discussing on their own regarding the matter, creating lots of noise in the classroom. Then the trainer asked in a high-pitched voice, “Listen to me, sit down sir, we have a lot to cover today”.



Trainee 4: “Another thing is...”. Trainer took the floor and said, “No sir please; we need to finish...”.

### **Nature of the Training**

The training happening at Kolatoli TTC is one shot, crammed with information, and general in nature. The participants of the training gave feedback or suggestions for improving this kind of short trainings. First of all, they all think that this training for the head-teachers (and other trainings like that) tries to cover too much content in too short a period of time. Sessions last from eight in the morning to five in the evening with very short breaks. The trainers come and teach in a hurry and sometimes squeeze in the content. In the FGD all the participants said that a significant amount of content on CA was covered in a very short time. The trainees cannot process the information very well within such a short time. They think that instead of this cramming style of training, there could be more frequent trainings of short duration. With that they also wanted practical experience or field visits in schools to be built into these trainings. It would help them make a connection between theory and practice. They also said there needs to be links to different trainings they are having. They feel that they are having different isolated trainings with little integration. Trainees in the FGD also mentioned that the trainings are one-shot in nature and do not have any follow up on how to apply the knowledge and skills learned in the TTC to actual classrooms. They also stated that the topics, contents and the andragogy of the trainings are decided by different projects. Training covers general content on FCA, but not specific issues specific teachers deal with in very specific context.

### **Assessment of the Trainees**

In the National Education Policy 2010, there was guidance for including a strategy for ongoing assessment for trained teacher. In some training manuals or modules there are specific parts for assessing the trainees. But not all manuals are written that way. The assessment part (assessing the trainees in training sessions) in most manuals is ignored. I did not observe any assessment of the trainers in any of the training sessions I attended. The trainer explained, “Timeframe also does not match with the content and activities prescribed in the manual. In many cases we have to cut down the end of the session activity-that is the assessment.” (Shah Alom, TTC trainer).

For the 35-day training for future head teachers, group work and presentation proved to be the only way of assessing them in the training sessions/classes. However, their framework for the group work and feedback sessions was not structured at all. For most sessions there was no time limit fixed for each of the groups to receive feedback; thus, the first group received lots of feedback but other groups got far less time. The feedback process and content for the trainings were usually very unstructured and flexible. After the presentation of CQ preparation in groups, feedback was given by teachers and peers taking too much time for the first two groups and leaving the other groups very little time to present and get feedback. The feedback content was related to whether the test is too difficult, whether the test will take too much time or not, the wording and phrasing of certain questions, but not any in- depth discussion as to whether the tests really require deep thinking by the students to explore their knowledge, understanding, application and higher order skills. There were also no written or specific guidelines or rubrics for assessing or giving feedback to the groups. As the trainer/teacher

of the TTC mentioned, “For the short courses or trainings, we do not have any specific structure for assessment of the students or participants” (Dr. Shah Alom).

There is no specific and regular structure of formal summative assessment of the trainings and no procedures to link any assessment results with trainers’ instruction improvement or trainees’ learning improvement, incentive or career path as an in-service teacher. Formative assessment in the trainings happens in an informal way without deliberate intention to link it with trainees’ improvement. The overall assessment structure and environment of training at Kolatoli TTC gave the trainees the tacit message of insignificance of student assessment in an educational program.

## CHAPTER 6

### FINDINGS FROM LOCAL LEVEL: SCHOOL AND CLASSROOMS

At the local level, I explored how actors involved in a community, school and classroom network translate CA policies into practice in the school and classroom, and the factors influencing this translation. I traced human actors by interviewing the head teachers and subject teachers, observing classes, conducting FGDs with parents and students, and analyzed non-human actors by reviewing CA related materials. The aim was to understand the complex assemblage of these human and non-human actors and their interactions, which as a network translates policy into practice in schools.

#### **Scope of Training on CA for the Teachers in Modhupur High School**

Here is a table showing the teacher preparation profile of the teachers of Modhupur High School.

Table 2: Number of Teachers in Modhupur High School with Common Teacher Preparation Experience

Teacher preparation programs	Number of trained teachers	
	Senior teachers (total 38) (13-38 years in this school)	New teachers (total 12) (0-3 years in this school)
BEd (2006)	31	1
MEd	6	0
CPD-1	30	1
CPD-2	5	0
PBM	2	0
Training for future head teacher	2	0

Analysis of both the scope of training and the training profile of the new and experienced teachers reveals: (1) Although there are different trainings which have components of CA, except for CPD, only a few teachers have these trainings. (2) Almost

all the teachers who got recruited in the school started their teaching without any teacher preparation experience. Most of the newly recruited teachers earn the BEd within three years of joining. (3) Among 38 experienced teachers, 31 have a BEd and 30 have CPD-1 training. These two TPD experiences are the most common for the experienced teachers. The content of BEd and CPD-1 as related to CA is limited to basic concepts of assessment, evaluation and test; skills on classroom questioning; and SBA. This means most teachers have only very basic ideas about evaluation and assessment where the focus is on examination, testing, and measurement. This is the “scope” of knowing and learning about CA, not “actual learning”. I have discussed the shortcomings in teacher preparation practice in chapter 5 and will discuss issues of applying CA- related learning in classroom in this and a later section.

### **CA Policy as Practiced in Modhupur High School**

Three types of informal assessment policies are developed and practiced in this school: (1) Not all authorized policies are practiced as is. The authorized policy (the curriculum and government regulations) gets negotiated and co-created in the local level school network by different actors. (2) In the authorized policies, sometimes there are general instructions about CA. The actors at the local level create specific informal policies on CA. (3) Sometimes the actors of the school create new informal policies which are practiced in parallel with authorized policies.

Informal and unauthorized policies are developed, negotiated and appropriated through participation and involvement to different degrees by different actors such as the head teacher, subject teachers, students of the school and their parents. These informal

policies may or not have any written format. The policy is negotiated and appropriated through internal meetings (SMC meetings, staff meetings and one-to-one meetings) and personal communications. Sometimes the school committee makes a decision and circulates an informal policy as a notice to all teachers or even to parents (From a meeting with the head teacher and the science teacher, Tasmina Alam).

### **Overall Planning for CA**

The head teacher mentioned that the final exam contains both CQ and MCQ. However, the class tests structure depends on the teacher, whatever they prefer. There are other decisions such as when to administer the model tests\* and how many model tests will be administered before the board exam for example – there is no such guideline in the curriculum. To make such decisions he said that he consults with the teachers. However, the day-to-day classroom assessment part such as class work, homework, and classroom questioning he leaves to the subject teachers to plan and implement unless there is any complaint or issue raised by other teachers, students or parents. He explained,

The class test marks are added with the final end of the grade examinations. So the class tests are important. The parents also inquire about marks. Day to day CA has no marks. So, I leave it on teachers. Also, it is not possible to monitor the day to day CA or guide teachers on that.

--Head teacher of Modhupur High School

The head teacher added that the idea of new Continuous Assessment introduced in the school curriculum replacing the School Based Assessment (SBA) has not yet been implemented in the school as not all teachers have been trained in this.

It [Continuous Assessment] will take time to start unless there is another change. Also, we, the teachers in the school, do not talk much about CA. We talk more

about administrative things, classroom management, and syllabus completion for example- broader issues of schools in our meetings.

--Head teacher of Modhupur High School

### **Class Test Schedule**

School reality defined by the actors in school can be very different than the reality experienced by the actors who develop a policy. The new curriculum instructs that class tests should be administered during regular class hours. Policy actor Azmal Khan from NCTB said that the purpose was to integrate the class tests as CA into the teaching-learning process. However, the school has separate routines for class tests, too. Class five, for example, is from 11am to 1:30 pm next week. During that time, the teachers have meetings. Head teacher said, "If we use class time for the class tests then it becomes difficult to complete the syllabus before half yearly or final exam".

### **Detention**

The new detention policy in the school has been working as an informal policy practiced in parallel with a formal policy on student punishment nullifying the effect of the formal policy. This policy was introduced by the head teacher after listening to the teachers complaining about students not learning their regular lessons. If any student cannot respond to the classwork or the questions asked by the teachers, or do not bring the homework, the responsible teachers are requested to send those students to a room adjacent to the head teacher's room. They have to be there and prepare the responses. They cannot leave until they can produce a written or oral response. This detention policy started just a week after I started collecting data. The head teacher argued,

Due to the new government regulation, we cannot give the students any kind of punishment let alone physical punishment. This regulation is not suitable in our school context. Most of the parents of the students of this school are not very educated. Many students are from a very low socioeconomic status. Most of them experience punishment and frequent beating at home. In this situation, when the students are used to this strict environment, then it is really tough for us to get them done their studies without any punishment or control. Therefore, as we cannot punish them, I have started detention policy to counter that policy. You may know that detention prevails worldwide in many countries.

--Head teacher of Modhupur High School

The parents during the FGD expressed quite different opinions. They argued that they do not administer physical punishment to their children at home. They said that nowadays parents are much aware and do not usually punish their children physically. They believe that punishment is detrimental to education. Parents said that students learn better when treated with love, care and respect. One parent said that detention is making the students really anxious. Previously, the students had to deal only with the class teacher and subject teachers. But now they are sent directly to the head teacher. Many parents (two parents raised this point and others agreed) think that as the teachers are not teaching properly they are giving the excuse that because the parents give physical punishment at home, the teachers cannot teach without giving physical punishment. “They are trying to blame us to get rid of their own inefficiency” (Julhaj Ahmed, father of a grade nine student during FGD). One parent said, “Parent’s education and awareness improved, but not the school situation” (Halima Begum, mother of a grade eight student during FGD). Another parent remarked, “It actually shows the inability of that teacher who sends his/her students to detention/to head teacher. They need to have mechanisms to teach and assess inside the classroom and ensure that the students are learning” (Abul Kashem, father of a student during FGD).

One parent was annoyed because of the technical aspect of this informal policy:



This (detention) is problematic as they do not let the parents know about this, and even if the school hours are closed, the students cannot leave without having the work done. Parents wait outside and worry. I know that the school is over at 12 pm. It was 1:30 and still my son did not come out. I I felt really tense.

--Jhuma Akter (Mother of a student during FGD)

Teachers had a mixed response regarding detention as an informal policy. Science teacher Tasmina Alam thinks that in this way the students will be held accountable for their own learning. They have to ultimately come to him or the head teacher and either write the responses or tell the response to respective teachers. The students cannot leave without doing that as their names and roll numbers are written down in the head teacher's notebook. She said, "This system is new. As we, the teachers cannot punish the students according to the government's new law, so we have found a new way so that they learn their studies" (Tasmina Alam, science teacher during interview). When I asked about the issue, "The students are there for a long time and are missing other classes, what is your thinking about that?", the teacher replied,

If they get punishment [ultimately the teacher labeled this as punishment] one day, then they will not do it again. As we cannot beat, or make them remain stand in the class, or even touch their hand, so let's do this. This was head-teacher's idea as all the teachers complained that they cannot control the students without giving punishment. Detention is working. Today I found that 80% of the students have come prepared with the lessons for today. They are taking it seriously. Also, the head-teacher is asking questions to them and also calling their parents if they cannot answer. As it is open and all the students are seeing, it is shameful for them.

--Tasmina Alam, science teacher

During the FGD with students (boys in the day shift), they talked about detention as a new rule in their school. They were still figuring out the pros and cons of the policy and how it affects different students. During the FGD one student said that he had never got a scope to go for detention and he was eager to go there. But later throughout the discussion, he and other students, too, revealed their fears about detention. At first the

student said that detention is good because if the students cannot learn at home because of some problems, they can learn here under the HT's supervision. "The student will not get out until he memorizes the lessons. Thus, he/she will not get behind for the exam." (Morshed Alam). But while talking about how those students in detention might feel, the students said, "I do not know, I had never been there. But...mmmm.." (Morshed Alam). Then another student said:

If a student is sent to detention, their mental state is in danger. They cannot even study there in this mental condition. I did not have detention yet, but I have seen those students from outside the classroom and I found sheer pain and fear on their face.

--Tuhin Ahmed

### **Actors Co-constructing Informal Policies at School**

Human actors who were involved in co-constructing the informal policies on CA in abs school are the: (1) Head teacher, (2) subject teachers, (3) students, and (4) parents. Who gets invited to and who is excluded from the network of unauthorized/ informal policy making varied. Teachers who had relevant experience or information about that specific policy had special power to be included in the network of informal policy making as an actor. For example, while deciding on whether the teachers should use CQ for class tests or not, the head teacher first discussed this with Nurul Amin, the assistant head teacher as he has received the 35-day training for future head teachers which contains information about what is required by the curriculum regarding CA (interview with head teacher).

Teachers who were more likely to support policy formation were more likely to be invited than others. For example, the headteacher was talking about having an informal policy for moderating test items for the class tests, too. Usually, moderation is done only

for the final exam test items. He revealed that he tried to have a specific teacher on this committee as he thought she would support the initiative. “I try to keep her in many committees as she is always very supportive to my initiatives” (head teacher during interview).

This network of making an informal policy at the school level is not a homogeneous assemblage of actors. Therefore, different actors may propose different versions of the policies and then negotiate a final policy. There can evolve opposing networks who may not want that policy. This network of actors, teachers, students, parents, or a combination of these actors, may negotiate for a different informal policy. For example, Tasmina Alam, the science teacher, said they give one or two model tests to grade eight and ten students to prepare them for public/board exams. This year the head-teacher along with a few other teachers wanted to have two model tests. The teacher added that sometimes the parents also want more tests and request this of the head-teacher. But the teachers are still struggling to finish the syllabus. She described,

Then many teachers said the head-teacher that the classes are more important than the exams or tests. Otherwise it would be tough for the teachers to finish the syllabus. Now the decision is to take only one model test after Eid. Our target is to finish the syllabus, not to give tests- we explained the head teacher. He understood.

--Tasmina Alam, science teacher

Sometimes, students and parents are invited into the network for policy creation and negotiation. For example, the parents of the students of grade eight (who will sit for a terminal public exam at the end of this grade) wanted model tests for their children but for specific subjects only – Science, Math, and English. Now, according to their demands the teachers will administer model tests only for these subjects. However, the parents think that they have very loose involvement with the school and the teachers. According

to them, they are notified only if their children get a bad score or if they do anything wrong. When I asked about the parents' meeting that the head-teacher called yesterday, one parent said that she did not get any such invitation—she thinks that only the parents of good students are called. However, another parent disagreed saying she had got a call for that meeting. Sometimes, parents have different access to policy making and negotiation. For example, one guardian (student's elder sister) said that she has special access to the school and teachers because she had been a student at this school. Sometimes, the head teacher and a few other teachers ask her opinion regarding decisions, such as how the feedback process for the class tests should be.

Most of the time, students with good academic achievement are enrolled for policy discussion. For example, when the students expressed their concern that they need CQ for CA too, social science teacher Sadeqa Sultana immediately formed a small group of four students to go to the head teacher and present their opinion to him. All those students are high academic achievers and front benchers.

This process of informal policy negotiation and appropriation is an ongoing process in school and through this process the network of the teachers, students, and parents is always active. Though active, this network is always seeking stability, as any actor, or actors of another network can challenge it anytime. For example, the head teacher along with a few other teachers first decided to give two model tests for grade ten. But when he informed all the teachers of this, the teachers talked among themselves. Most of the teachers thought that there should be only one model test considering the time they have to finish the syllabus and the content of the syllabus still to cover. This

group of students immediately saw the head teacher and explained their idea challenging his decision.

### **Role of Head Teacher in Policy Practice**

The head teacher of this school has a diploma in Education and a Master of Education from IER, University of Dhaka. He is now enrolled at IER for higher study and research. He started his teaching profession in 1989 immediately after graduation. He has been head teacher at this school for three years. He said that he tries to utilize any possibility of getting training as he thinks that trainings can change teachers' attitude and behavior positively. For example, he had trainings on CPD, creative questions (as a master trainer he has also trained other teachers in other schools), 35-day training for head teachers and curriculum development among other trainings. The last training was on AISAS, which trained him to evaluate an institution based on some fixed criteria. This helps to grade the institution and based on the criteria assists in planning to improve the grade of the institution. He did it collaboratively with his colleagues.

The head teacher acknowledged that not all teachers have the necessary skills on CA. But he thinks that that familiarity with CA is a necessary skill along with classroom management skills so that the teachers can ask questions in the classroom effectively. He thinks that the HT should be a role model for taking classes and conducting CA for all teachers and then the teachers should use their own intelligence and skills for taking classes and conducting CA.

According to the head teacher, in different training sessions regarding achievements of students, CA, general techniques of CA, and feedback are usually

discussed by the trainers as a natural sequence. He also thinks that even if the teachers lack specific training on classroom assessment, they know basic assessment regulations which are critical such as when to give class tests, how many class tests to give, how much to allocate for the final exam, etc.

The head teacher possesses a lot of actual power, as well as power perceived by the teachers. If there is any change in the formal authorized policy or if there is a new policy, the head-teacher receives the circular. He then communicates this with relevant teachers, students, or parents. For example, Afzal Hossain, the English teacher, learned about the change in question patterns for the newly introduced ICT subject from the head-teacher. After learning this, they prepared the internal exams for this year accordingly, maintaining the new pattern of the public exam (SSC).

Power distance and power relationships exist between head teachers and teachers at different levels/status. Part-time teacher Afzal Hossain had innovative ideas on how to include speaking and listening tests/activities as CTs and CA. But he has not shared his ideas with the head teacher, saying he is not sure if the head teacher would listen to someone very minor like him when there are other senior and permanent teachers in the school.

### **Application of Teacher Preparation at School: Possibilities and Challenges**

#### **Dissemination of the Trainings at School**

Trainings for the teachers usually follow the cascade method. The experts in specific subjects (such as English, mathematics) or in specific topics (such as inclusive education, disaster management) are core trainers who teach the master trainers. The

master trainers teach the field level schoolteachers. For most of the trainings it is not possible to train each teacher in a school who may need to have the trainings, unless the number of the teachers in a school is very few. Therefore, a limited number of teachers from each school are selected for each training. It is expected that the trained teacher will then arrange an in-house training/workshop with the help of the head teacher to disseminate the learning of the training to his/her fellow colleagues at the school. In the EFG, the head teacher encourages teachers to disseminate the training by arranging in-house workshops for all the teachers. He had already arranged a 3 days-long workshop on Creative Questions after he participated in a training on this topic. Several teachers also attended training on Digital Content Development. After returning from the training, they arranged training on this topic here in the school. However, the head teacher and several other teachers also noted that due to the pressure of taking classes, it is not always possible to arrange in-house training for all the topics that the teachers get training on. Usually the head teacher decides on the topics, which are “urgent, and/or most important” to cover for in-house training (Interview with head teacher).

Even when the teacher and the head teacher arrange the in-house training or workshops, they usually compress the topic as they get less time to cover the topic compared to the original training. When questioned who decides on what to include and what to exclude, Iqbal ALi, a teacher in that school, replied that the head teacher gave him all the responsibility to arrange the workshop on “Digital content” and she along with another teacher decided what to cover. They tried to present the whole idea of the content that they got from the main training, but there was no time for participation or practice of developing digital content like in the original training.

It is interesting that through this model of cascade training, there is a broad network of human and non-human actors at each level who recreate the training curriculum. Topics are included or excluded based on the actors' perceptions and practical situation of that locality. Sometimes, there are several conflicting networks at each level while re-creating the content of the curriculum for each level. Ultimately what the trainers will teach to the trainee teachers and what the trainee teachers will teach to the other teachers in the school varies a lot. During an FGD with the trainee teachers who were attending the 35-day long training for the headteachers/future head-teachers, Mohiuddin Ahmed, a teacher from a non-government school, mentioned that it never happened in their school that someone got training and then he/she arranged an in-house training/workshop for the other teachers. He just knows that teachers are having trainings, but who gets what training they know nothing about. Therefore, the policy translation depends on how closely linked the actors (teachers) are within the network and the willingness of the actors especially head teacher.

### **Teacher Preparation and Changes in Policies**

Most of the teachers interviewed who have more years of teaching experience have done their BEd and /or MEd a long time ago. Niru Madam said that she received her BEd in 1992. A lot of policies such as curriculum, national education policy, and assessment policies have been changed since then. BEd and MEd are the only long-term educational program for teachers which have the scope to provide more comprehensive concepts and skills on CA. Then, the teachers have CPD training (first one and then follow up) for their own subjects. Many of them have received it a long time ago, too.



Therefore, teachers do not have updated knowledge or understanding or skills on CA, especially when the training content has changed so much. For example, Tasmina Alam has been teaching in that school since 1995. She received her BEd in 1994-95. She said that now she has forgotten most of the things she learned in her BEd. She just vaguely remembers some assessment techniques learned in a course on assessment in the BEd. It helped her to do CA she thinks – asking questions and preparing tests using Bloom’s taxonomy. She thinks a course on Educational Psychology was also helpful to understand students’ psychology as they come from different backgrounds. Therefore, it helped her choose different CA techniques for specific groups of students. She also had the training from TQI, the CPD-I for biology for grade 9-10 in 2000. Social Science teacher Sadeqa Sultana completed her BEd in 1992. She has done the CPD-I training in 2007 and CPD II in 2016. She told me that in 2007 that CPD-I was on “social science”. But the subject has changed to “Bangladesh and world studies”. She got these changed ideas long after the change, in 2016. She did not get any training on creative questions or digital content. She found similarities in BEd training and the CPD-I training. However, the CPD focuses more on communicating with students, making the class participatory, soliciting answers from them, rather than just replying or lecturing, and using teaching aids. “CPD-II concentrated more on digital content and the teacher-student relationship” (Sadeqa Sultana).

School teacher Iqbal Ali is working on his BEd now while teaching here in this school. He said that he just had a course “Shikhon, mullo jachai o protifolonmulok onushilon”. When asked what he has learned from this course he replied that he has learned different techniques of drawing the attention of the students to the lesson such as

brainstorming and participation. When asked about formative and summative assessment, he replied that he could not be familiar with all the concepts and ideas that are presented in the BEd classes as he attends just the Friday classes. Out of three days, he attends only one day of classes each week as he is teaching here (part time). So, he actually misses two-thirds of the content each week. He said that formative and summative assessments are topics included in the syllabus. He mentioned that he tries to cover this by reading books and manuals.

Teachers at Modhupur High School have teachers who have had different teacher education and training at very different times and from different training institutions. Therefore, the teachers stand in very different places regarding what knowledge and skills they possess regarding CA and FCA. This is reflected in their assessment practice in the classrooms where I observed different classes of different subject teachers. The science teacher was using CA with comprehensive feedback process involving practical works but with no systematic way to record progress. The English teacher was using CA, which was very structured, based on quizzes, and with limited feedback for improvement. The Bangla teacher used CA which was based on CQ with limited ability to either measure or encourage students' learning, and with no effective feedback. The social science teachers' CA was based on CWs which requires students to write down answers for some questions. The questions were more or less from the recall or understanding level – there was no effective feedback system.

Six out of eight teachers interviewed said that they are not motivated to use CA as learned from their training because they know that the CA policy will change again soon,

even before they become expert in practicing the current one. For example, Tasmina Alam said that

When we learn any new idea or technique about classroom assessment, we need time to make a tool, lesson plan or alter our previous materials based on the new idea or policy. However, there is little time for us to do that. We cannot change the practice radically. We try to do that slowly and when we are almost done incorporating the new idea that we have learnt from the training, there comes another new training, which aim to train us a different technique. This happens because of the abrupt changes in policies of CA.

Academic Supervisor Tania Sultana also thinks there should be appropriate planning beforehand on what specific trainings will be offered to whom and at what time of the year. Now it happens very abruptly.

Academic supervisor, Tania Sultana, thinks that if the teachers get regular trainings, trainings, they are more apt to change their then they change their practice. She believes that the head teacher is more supportive in those schools which can send their teachers to trainings and there is follow- up after the training by the head teachers, and supervisors have greater success in students' academic achievement. She also reported that there is a huge difference in CA practices among different schools:

In some schools, teachers give good feedback but in many other schools there is almost no feedback in CA. Some teachers in good schools are trained. They teach interactive way, asks questions in classroom, gives immediate feedback, give creative assignments- asks them to prepare model, charts etc. The weaker schools just give home works. Students copy from the book. They give some questions and tell the students to write the answers. Many questions, if not all are from guidebook.

--Tania Sultana, Academic Supervisor

### **Follow up and Supervision at School**

Follow up and supervision is very important in the school context, especially when: (1) Not all teachers get the trainings on CA needed to practice formative CA. (2)

These trainings are not always effective. (3) Teachers are not motivated to learn and/or change their practice of CA. (4) There is no specific structure available to follow up the practice of the teachers after getting any training. The only system available for supervision is done by the academic supervisor under the Thana Education Office. The head teacher said that the Thana Education Officer or the academic supervisor do not come to the school for any follow up or classroom observation as they are very busy. I interviewed Tania Sultana, the academic supervisor in her office. She worked as assistant inspector for an SESDP project for five years. Now she has been working as academic supervisor for almost two years. As part of her job responsibilities she observes classes, mentor teachers, gives training to teachers on various aspects such as classroom management, CQ, Digital content, for example, and supervises the overall development of the school. According to her, it is tough to observe classes as an academic supervisor rigorously in the same school continuously, let alone the same teacher's class. For example, in her area she has a total of 52 institutions for her academic supervision. In three months she covered all but three of the institutions. But she was able to visit the schools only once. The three staff members of the Education Office work together to cover all the institutions. Also, they have so many other responsibilities in the office such as now they are distributing the curriculum guide to the schools for the teachers.

We used to go to the school in the beginning. First, we used to participate in the assembly. Then we used to observe classes from grade six to ten. We used to stay 15 minutes to each class. If we see that they are not following the direction (training), we give them directions for improving their teaching. mainly on how to teach and use teaching materials. We observe the class based on the checklist criteria that we need to fill up.

This form has a total of 18 sections. Two of the sections are related to CA.

Table 3: Form for Collecting Data related to Implementation of CQ Development Methods

The teachers of the institution develop CQ	Develop CQ with the help of other institution	Collect CQ from outside sources

Table 4: Form for Collecting Data related to Continuous Assessment (CA)

Keeping record of student achievement data following CA	Number of teachers keeping the entire record	Number of teachers keeping the partial record	Number of teachers not keeping any record

Interestingly, the table for the section “Observation of class teaching (need to fill up after observing minimum two classes)” has no criteria for student assessment. It seems like CA has been deleted from its original space and the scope has been confined to CQ and CA where only the number of teachers practicing the policies is important.

She thinks that if they can visit a school for a month continuously only then can a visible change be made. Teachers become more responsible and careful and can identify their problems and make corrections. However, she also says that it is true that this change seems temporary. When they stop visiting and supervising, the teachers revert to their usual ways. She says that the school visits are not continuous. They cannot observe a teacher’s class regularly and thus cannot give any effective and rigorous

feedback for improvement. The academic supervisor said that there are teachers who are doing an excellent job indeed. She feels like they need to be awarded. But she has nothing to offer except praise. She also thinks that these teachers need to get incentives or prizes.

Many teachers said that the TTCs are very good. Their trainings are really good.

We go there and come back rich. But we need region-based socio-economic help to implement those. I have learnt but I cannot give all the students a microscope. Real life materials like leaves, soil- I can supply but not the instruments,  
.....Tasmina Alam, science teacher.

When the teacher was asked if she ever had any chance to tell the trainers about these realities in school, she replied, “They always tell us that they know that, but asks us to do whatever we can do. They know these problems. Only few schools are rich and can afford.”

Tania Sulatana, academic supervisor, expressed pleasure because they have developed a very good data management system where they collect and update all data from all the schools; for example, the number of teachers. number of teachers with training, teachers’ profiles, public exam results, student numbers, etc. for each school. She says,

We do not even need to go to schools sometimes. Now we can access data of the schools from office. We see their school profile and can guess what’s the situation. Then we decide and go to specific schools. We also can communicate via mobile phones with the head-teachers. We sometimes can get information about the school over the phone. It was not possible in a day or two. Staff like us has worked for it, to collect the information and always asking them to update the information for day after day. We ensured that all data is there. Though it is the duty of the teachers and the head-teacher to update, we had to push them, motivate them, and sometimes teach them how to do that.

She said that they have also a Facebook page where they and the teachers upload pictures of trainings. She showed me the pictures on a FB page in a school where she trained 58 teachers and they all have recorded a diary and got her to sign. “Sometimes I tell them that I see your Facebook activities, and those are very good. I do not need to go to your school”. She believes that teachers are now more linked with them because of the education offices. Now they can send them letters directly and they also call the school. At least one of them calls the school every month or two for updates.

The use of technologies, cell phones, Facebook, and data management system act as mediators to translate CA supervision into a digital format. This reduces elaborate and complex interactions such as school visits, classroom observations, and interactions with teachers to a more simplified and time-saving mechanism of curtesy calls to the principal, checking the data base of the school, and uploading training pictures on the Facebook page, for example.

## **Factors Influencing the Application of Teacher Preparation on CA**

### **Physical Facilities in the Classroom**

Many teachers said that sometimes the physical facilities are an impediment while trying to implement what they have learned from their training. Following are some examples from the teachers’ interviews. The ICT subject teacher mentioned:

Though I know that for some of the topics the best way to assess the students is to assign practical work. However, in this lab (the only lab in the school), I have 40 seat arrangements here. I have 70 students. The students who do not get a seat stand. I divide them in group. Working computers are 15. So, I have 15 groups. Each has 5 members. Two can sit and 3 remains standing or shift the role and seats. Ultimately one or two students can do it really practical. And I have to assess based on that group performance and go ahead with my lesson.

He also included that he cannot perform classroom assessment as continuous assessment, assessing all the students on a regular basis and keeping track of their development, mainly because of large class sizes and the inadequate number of computers. The students also do not cooperate with him sometimes during assessment time. "I think it would be great for me if I can have a training on classroom management too." Several other teachers associated classroom management with classroom assessment. It seems that when they try to apply the techniques of classroom assessment in the classroom there is an issue related to classroom management, which they do not know how to solve. Mariam Begum, another teacher, mentioned "I have learnt from the training that I can assess the students in classroom through group works. But when I made groups, there is too much noise and most of the students talked outside of the discussion topic in the group." When I asked if the trainers in the training gave any idea or hint on how to make the group works effective, she replied, "Not that I can remember. They told us about the standard size of a group, and how to facilitate the discussion. We also practiced in the training session, but here in school, I cannot apply." The computer teacher also included in her interview that, "It is not possible, or even practical that I remember the performance of all 70 students in the class tests or half yearly exam and then individually guide them based on that."

School teacher Afzal Hossain echoes the same. He said that in the training the trainers gave them group work and pair work and said that they can also practice group work and pair work in their classroom teaching and assessment. However, he said that to do group work properly he needs to relocate the benches which takes time and creates a lot of noise. He added that he cannot control the class if he needs to change so much in a



class. He also mentioned that the benches in this school are not at all suitable to allow the students to turn around and sit. There is no gap in the back of the seat for that. He said that pair work is possible he thinks. But he is so tired of giving continuous classes that he has no energy to change his original plan and style. He did try it once or twice though. Azizul Huq, the English teacher, also said that the classroom spaces are small, the benches are fixed and inflexible for group work. He also mentioned that if sometimes her class does group work there is noise from the class and the neighboring classes feel disturbed. He also said directly and indirectly that the head teacher also discourages any major changes from the regular lecture-based class. However, in my personal interview with the head teacher, he talked highly about a science teacher who teaches and assesses using alternative techniques such as bringing leaves or other natural elements into the classroom.

When the ratio of equipment that we use for assessing students is large, for example three students in one computer, then there is chaos. When I want to assess if they can use the internet, if all 25 computers are working the internet gets really slow.

ICT teacher Saiful Ahmed said,

I start with assessment because I tell them to practice at home what I have taught them last day. Most of the students have computers, few do not have. And it creates a real problem for them. Some students came to me personally and said that we do not have computers at home, what should we do? I said them to do it in the lab when they are here and ask me if they face any problem. They do not get time to use the computer lab except for this ICT class as they have classes all the time and only 20 minutes tiffin break. When the girls' shift ends then the boys starts coming. I wanted to extend one class for the girls and found it to be a bit chaotic as the boys start to come too. In this situation my assessment becomes biased and unfair as they are not getting the same facilities or scope for preparation.

### **Class Load and Time Constraints**

English teacher Azizul Huq thinks that they should be provided teaching aids to use in teaching and assessing as they do not have time to prepare those. They are always under pressure. They have to give a lot of classes.

I give four classes in the three days of the week and then five classes in the rest of the three days in the week. And there are also stop gap classes. We do not get time for taking preparation. We do not prepare formal lengthy lesson plans, but we at least need to write down some points before going to the class. I do not get time for that even!

Science teacher Tasmina Alam also talked about the class burden. In secondary schools they have a lot of classes to give every day – usually four or five classes every day. Not only that, they also have to give stop gap classes if any teacher is absent – this happens almost every day. So, there is no time to check classwork and homework or prepare for class, let alone take a rest.

School teacher Afzal Hossain said that he has to give five classes every working day, besides the stop gap classes which he needs to give almost every day based on need. For example, although he was not assigned to teach any class in the first period on the day of the interview, he still had to give a class that period. He mentioned that usually he has back to back classes without any gap. He thinks that teachers need at least 15 minutes for a transition from one class to another. There is no prep time. Usually he goes to class without any specific preparation for that class. Sometimes he makes lesson plans at home at night. However, he thinks that since he's been giving classes for several years, he no longer needs much preparation now.

The academic supervisor, on the other hand, thinks that the teaching load for teachers is not excessive. The teachers need to give around six classes each day and she

thinks this is not too much. According to her, if the teachers are experienced they should not require much time for preparation. They also have a lot of resources for preparation such as trainings and teachers' diaries they receive. "We provide teaching aids, sample lesson plans. So, I think this is a lame excuse that they do not have time to prepare for classes."

### **Number of Students and the Variation in Classrooms**

Science teacher Tasmina Alam said that in the latest training of CPD, they told us to have maximum 40 students in a classroom.

But I have almost 60 students in some classes. They also told us to make groups of 10 and make them sit in a circle. And then give them to do something in group, for example, discussing on a question and writing down and present in larger group of students.

Teacher Tasmina thinks that this is not possible because of the teacher-student ratio in her school. Sometimes she even has 80 students in a class.

Assistant head teacher Nurul Amin said that he has learned about doing classroom arrangements and classifications based on age, merit, and interest which helps CA. In his classroom he has different types of students. Some can respond after he says something just one time, for some he needs to say things twice, and there are students who do not understand even after he explains several times. He said that he has time limitations.

Therefore, to him it is a challenge – how can I teach all of them together? Even when he has several sections, there at least 40 students in a class. And there are different types of students. He thinks that the good schools do not face this type of problem. They can make their class size small, and most of their students are good students – they are homogeneous and easy to teach. Sadeqa Sultana, social science teacher, also thinks that

another issue is the school has students who differ too much from a high to low range of intellectual capabilities. “When I teach not all students get the same way.” Like many other teachers, she related it to the socio-economic status or background of the students,

I do not know if you know it or not, in this school we have both Jhalmuri Wala’s [street vendors] children and officers’ children. Their family backgrounds are very different. In BEd I have learnt not to read from the book. But I have found that for some students it is the best to read from the book. Sometimes some students ask me the meaning of simple word which makes me astonished, that they do not even know this simple word. They cannot read well at home and have no help at home. So, for many students it is better to read line by line from the textbook and explain. In BEd for Social Science subject they discourage reading from book. But I have to do it. This is the practical situation.

English subject teacher Afzal Hossain said,

There are 5 to 10% students in the class who do not understand the lesson usually. If I want to concentrate on them, other students are done by that time and bored. No training taught me to solve this practical problem. This English teacher also finds it challenging in the classroom to teach all three

categories of student:

Some are really meritorious, and they deserve a lot; some are medium or average category, if I teach them good then they can catch; and there are some other students who are really dull, for whom we have to invest a lot. He finds it tough to manage classes with these three categories of students.

English teacher Afzal Hossain always gives the students tasks first. He thinks otherwise students make a lot of noise and become disorganized.

When I asked the teacher if she knows about inclusive education, and if there is any idea included under this umbrella term on how to accommodate students from different socio-economic background or intellectual capabilities, Niru madam said that she had learned about inclusive education in CPD-II but cannot remember much. However, she also mentioned that it deals mostly with how to accommodate students with special needs in the classroom. She said that she also has a student in her class who

finds it very difficult to understand the lessons and cannot perform well on exams. Especially, she faces problems in writing. She cannot memorize much. The teacher said that she has fixed a seat for her. Usually no one likes to sit with her. Initially she assigned the third captain of the class to sit with her and help with studies. “I told her to help her understand and write things down when the teachers write on the board as far as you can”. The teacher also told her to write just copying from the book so that she at least learns to write properly. One day the third captain told the teacher that she does not want to sit with her anymore and someone else wants to help the student. However, that person also left.

Recently, I found that two students are sitting from their own eagerness and interest. I am the class teacher. For assessment, I try to make it as flexible as possible for her. I use the same test, but I mark her liberally. If she can write the main or key words, I give her marks. I do not count the spelling mistakes or sentence constructions for her. Still she is doing really bad on exams. Due to the govt rules, even if she scores poor in the internal exams, still she can sit in the public exams.

School Teacher Tasmina Alam told me:

Whatever we hear in the training sessions, we cannot follow all of them. We have limitations. The first and most problematic thing is the teacher student ratio. We have too many students in our classroom to do interactive activities, daily assessment for all students, giving exact feedback, and group work. Like many other teachers in the school Tasmina Alam also mentioned the socio-

economic status/background of the students’ parents as a barrier.

The students and their parents are not aware. They get free government books, but they do not bring the books according to the routine. Sometimes we need to call the parents. But not always it is easy to access them. Even if we call them, they do not even come sometimes.

## **Teachers' Motivation**

Many young teachers said that they are getting preparation for BCS and it hampers their preparation for the classes. They do not have much time to prepare for their classes. Teacher Iqbal Ali said, “Now I am taking preparation for BCS. It is tough to do both. As BCS has an age limit now I am concentrating more on BCS preparation.”

School teacher Afzal Hossain has been teaching here for almost three years. He has not yet begun work on a BEd or MEd and said that he would do it only when he passes the age limit for taking the BCS exam. Until then he will prepare for the exam and try. He also said that if he does a BEd or MEd he would do it in Dhaka university, not in any private universities. He talked with his colleagues and learned that the MEd degree from private universities is not given much value, priority or significance. Even though he is very busy with private tutoring and wanted to avoid a heavy MEd course, still he would not select a private MEd as those are of less quality.

Sadeqa Sultana, science teacher, said that as alternative assessment, she has tried role play. She has learned about group work, questioning and role play, for example, from CPD training. Role play was mentioned in the textbook. The students really enjoy role play and she thinks that it is feasible to do this. She also thinks that peer assessment is also possible. She mentioned, “actually we the teachers are not sincere – honestly speaking. If we can do sincerely then it is possible to do these. We have limitations, but still we can do it. The problem is – teachers are not motivated”.

## **FCA Policy as Practiced inside the Classrooms**

### **Overall CA Techniques in the Classroom**

I observed a total of 18 classes of 4 individual teachers. During these classroom observations I found classroom questioning to be the mostly used as techniques for classroom assessment. Besides classroom questioning, class work was given which usually means asking students to write the answers for several given questions. One teacher used frequent quizzes – daily and weekly. Sometimes the teacher asked the students to come to the board to write answers or draw a picture/diagram or asking them to read from a book (especially for language class). Only one time was a student asked to present his work in front of the class. All the assessment activities are done by the teachers, except in one class students were asked to exchange their copies with their peers sitting beside them and check each other's work.

### **Questions Asked in the Classroom**

Teachers ask questions in the classroom mostly related to recall and sometimes understanding. For example, after teaching a poem “Manush” the teacher asked the following questions:

- 1) Who wrote the poem “Manush”?
- 2) This poem is taken from which poetry?
- 3) Do you know the name of the first poetry of poet Kazi Nazrul Islam?
- 4) What is the meaning of the word “Sammo”?
- 5) Who is “Kala Pahar”? (From Bangla classroom observation)

In a social science class, the teacher gave a list of questions for the model test and none of those were CQ. Most of them were from a knowledge and understanding level, a few from an application level and none from a higher order learning level (social science class observation).

On many occasions, teachers ask questions while teaching, but then himself/herself gives the answers without waiting for a response. These types of classroom questioning happen more frequently, especially as an individual style for several specific teachers. These are actually questions to attract students' attention in the class, but are not for assessment. For example, while teaching a Bengali story "Aam atir vepu", the teacher asked the questions, "Who has close relation with the nature?", then he answered himself "Human beings". Students were also trying to answer. Some students said in a low voice "Trees". But the teacher totally ignored the response and started to ask other questions and he alone answered.

### **CA Interaction**

While asking questions in class, teachers usually pose questions to those students sitting in the front benches. In classrooms the students with higher academic achievement (who score higher marks on school exams) sit in the front benches. The teachers usually ask questions of the back benchers when they talk in the back and disturb the teachers. They were sometimes given punishment such as standing in class, or requesting to call their parents, or sending them to detention when they cannot answer questions. If the teacher wants a student to read from a textbook they usually call students from the front benches (on two similar occasions in classroom observation, this happened).



Students in the FGD said that when they sit in the back, they get distracted very easily as they cannot hear the teachers properly. When they miss a part of the lesson, they cannot understand the subsequent parts as these are all related. They said that are afraid to ask the teachers to repeat. Instead, they sometimes ask their peers sitting around them. They explained this is because when they were asked questions, many times they cannot answer properly and get punishment. When students fail to understand a concept in class and are afraid to ask the teacher, two things can happen: (1) If the classroom environment is not very strict they ask their peers beside or near them, or (2) If the classroom environment is strict, not allowing peer consultation, the students remain silent. The result is by missing one concept, they fail to understand the rest of the lecture because the concepts are all linked. Eventually, they virtually drop out of that class's session.

If any student cannot answer a question, sometimes his/her class roll (which indicates his/her relative position in the class based on the test results) is asked. One student in the FGD said that, "When the teachers give an example of a girl or boy while teaching, then they use the name of a good student usually. Scoring high in class tests, half yearly and final exams are important to be good to teachers" (Maliha Akter). During class observation I found that the students from the front benches are very vocal and loud when asking questions, but the students from the back ask in a low voice and most of the cases were not heard or ignored by the teachers. Some teachers make eye contact mostly with the students in the front benches while teaching (three teachers out of eight). In many cases when the back benchers give examples, the teacher ignores them. For example, when a teacher asked for examples of liquid food we process for preservation, one student from the back said, "Sirka/vinegar". The teacher ignored this answer. I

observed similar incidents in two other classes, too. In my observation of a science class, the teacher called on one student and showed me his HW copy to show how he followed her direction. She also asked his score in the last science test to show his high performance. Sometimes peers also shame peers. “Why did you raise your hand? Did you got 5 correct? Huh, I saw you could not answer one.” When the teacher asked who understood, almost all raised their hands. And one student laughing and pointing to another student who did not and said, “Sir, he did not understand, but still he raised his hand”.

### **Feedback**

When the teachers ask questions in class, usually they just indicate to the students if their answers are right or wrong. Very rarely will they explain why it is or is not a right answer (only on two occasions during my classroom observation did teachers explain why answers were wrong). Sometimes students get punishment for answering wrong – the most common punishment is to remain standing until the teachers ask them to sit. If the teacher assigns any written classwork, students either take their copies to the teacher sitting on the chair in front, or the teacher walks in the aisles to check the classwork one by one. I saw several class works and usually there is a check mark or cross and sometimes with circles around a word or two, such as “good”, “explain more”, “give an example”. However, these written comments or symbols as feedback remain vague and obscure and unhelpful for the students. Students talk about these with their peers, which illustrates this vagueness. For example, the social science teacher asked her students to write down “What is a disaster, and how can we be prepared for a disaster?” The teacher

wrote in one of the student's class work copy "need to explain more". The student then asked her peers, "Do you think I need to add examples of different kinds of disaster or the negative effects of the disaster?"

In many classes (four out of seven classes where CW was assigned), the teachers started from the front bench to correct and give feedback to the classwork assigned but the bell rang before they could finish even half of the class. On a few occasions (two) teachers announced the answers and students themselves checked their answers. Only one teacher gave detailed feedback to students while reading their HW or CW copies in class. It was more like a conversation with the students: "Why did you write *bastusongsthan* (ecosystem) like this way? ...You have to mention how living and non-livings are connected. You also need to mention specific producers' names here...." (Observation of grade eight science class conducted by Tasmina Alam). Many teachers (two teachers on six occasions) blamed and shamed the students when they could not respond to their questions correctly. One teacher however, gave encouragement for future performances and said it is okay to make mistakes. For giving feedback after the final exam, Tasmina Alam writes the MCQ answers and knowledge-based answers on the board. For the rest of the questions, she gives feedback verbally, in general. Other teachers do the same except for two of the teachers interviewed. They said that most of the time they lack the time to give feedback or discuss the tests. They just return the students their copies and ask them to return them with their parents' signatures.

When the teachers ask questions, they wait for the right answers. They keep asking different students until they receive the right answer. However, many students who try to answer are not told why their answer is not correct. If there could be a

discussion about the wrong answer, a lot of misunderstandings could be clarified. For example, when the teacher asked for the name of a preserved food, and when the student answered 'vinegar', further questions could have been asked such as: Why do you think vinegar is a preserved food?, Does vinegar act as a preservative and preserve food?, What is a preserved food?, What do we use to preserve food? It is also possible that this girl might have meant that vinegar is used for food preservation.

### **Use of Creative Questions (CQ)**

In the National Education Policy, teacher preparation curriculum, and school curriculum, CQ were highlighted and covered in significant detail. During the classroom observation time, only one teacher used creative questions for the class work. No other teacher ever used CQ either for asking oral questions or for written classwork. However, a literature (Bengali) teacher used CQ which had very short stems (2-3 sentences) and made similar questions for all sets of CQs. For example, for all the questions for assessing "application", the students were asked to find a similarity between the stem and the specific story of their syllabus. For questions of higher order or critical learning, the students were asked to analyze a given statement. On two occasions he did even not include any question from higher order learning. Ultimately, the CQs for this subject were totally framed in a box of specific questions. Students were also thinking in this pattern. During the FGD with students, while discussing CQ, one student explained, "It must be the application part because it is asking to compare between two storylines. An example of traditional CW questions written by the teacher on the board (social science teacher):

- (1) What is a disaster?
- (2) How many types of disasters are there?
- (3) Write down the causes of disaster.

Another example:

- (1) What is a tsunami?
- (2) What is the cause of a tsunami?
- (3) Describe its effect.

Even though the teachers do not use CQ for CA, several of them (two teachers on only two occasions) gave instruction on how to answer CQs in summative tests. They explained vaguely about CQ instruction in class and never gave any examples. A science teacher admonished the students saying that they usually write only two sentences in the higher order learning level of CQ, but they need to write more. CQ is therefore reduced to the number of sentences.

In the FGD four students talked about CQ. Two of the students (boys) in the FGD said that they find those questions difficult to answer. They are facing this type of question beginning in grade six (now they are in grade eight), but they still sometimes cannot grasp it well. However, the other two students in the FGD group said they prefer this type of question to the traditional questions because it has a stem and they can progress step by step. All four students think that the teachers do not explain the CQ well to the students and/or the teachers do not know CQ very well. One student said, “Sometimes the teachers also do not understand CQ well. So, they cannot make a good CQ and cannot score us accurately. They get confused” (Fazle Rabbi). They also said that many teachers in many cases use CQs from the guidebook. It encourages the students to

read the guidebook. When they memorize from the guidebook and use this on exams, that really does not measure their learning, but rather memorization power and skills. Similar responses were given by the girls in the FGD. They think they still (grade nine) do not get it totally; especially they get confused with (application) and (evaluation/higher order learning) parts of the questions.

They (the teachers) tell us that you do not understand, it is your fault. But, teachers also need to know how to mark the responses of CQs. Sometimes whatever we write they give one mark for each. Sometimes they do not read the answers properly but put a score (Maria Afzal).

The boys also said that sometimes the students just copy from the stem and the teachers give them full marks. The students think that the teachers do not read the answers very well and put a mark in hurry. The students also get the idea that they can get marks just by copying from the stem.

The parents, too, doubt if the teachers really understand CQ well or not. During the FGD a parent expressed that, “I doubt if they have training on that or not. If they have training, they need to teach according to the training” (Julhaj Ahmed). The parents said that there is no systematic rubric to follow to score the CQ answers. The teachers do not tell students clearly what and how they can write to get a certain score for each of the four questions. Another parent said that the teachers also do not know how to prepare CQ. Sometimes, the stem is too big or small. The questions do not follow the step by step CQ pattern – knowledge, understanding, application and higher order learning. “When they prepare the question, I do not think they think about the answers. That is why when they get the answers, they cannot assess properly” (Tayeb Ali). Parents think that there is an obvious lack of training for the teachers for preparing and marking CQ. Parents think that it would be great if the teachers use CQ for CW and HW, too, so that there would be

more practice for both the teachers and the students, allowing all to have a grasp of it. Usually teachers give short questions for CW and HW that is the CA. But in final exams they have CQs.

Classroom assessment policies are a part of the classroom assessment culture in the school network comprised of teachers, principal, students of abc school, the supervisor from larger educational context, and parents from the community along with CA- related policy documents or pieces of documents such as the supervision matrix, school curriculum, and teacher's lesson plans – all relevant human and non-human actors come together as an assemblage to develop informal policies of CA in the classrooms. For local reasons, informal policies on CA practiced for a long time become norms and part of the CA culture. With this assemblage of actors, translation of a formal curriculum or policy in Modhupur High School happens through appropriation of the policies and formulation of informal policies. This translation should be influenced by teacher preparation programs which does not happen as the teachers do not have recent trainings with updated knowledge about policy changes and lack motivation for keeping pace with abrupt policy changes on CA. What teachers are doing for CA in Modhupur High School constitutes an informal system of asking questions in classrooms whereby teachers use teacher- made class tests with limited and infrequent feedback. The classroom questioning part is not planned, and no record is kept to measure or encourage progress. The tests are used to add to the summative evaluations. Therefore, the formative purpose of CA is absent in Modhupur High School.

## CHAPTER 7

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

#### **Key Findings and Discussion in relation to Research Questions**

I aimed to learn about the policy-practice dynamics of CA exploring how the policies on CA are produced, negotiated and appropriated at different levels of practice. Following are the research questions that I addressed in my study.

- (1) How do actors, materials and discourses come together in a national policy network to formulate policies for classroom assessment, and what factors influence formulation of these policies?
- (2) How do actors involved in a teacher training network translate policy related to teacher preparation for CA into practice, and what factors influence this translation?
- (3) How do actors involved in a community, school and classroom network translate CA policies into practice in the school and classroom, and what factors influence this translation?

#### **CA Policy Production and Negotiation**

The concept of classroom assessment is badly and inconsistently presented in the policies. Different terms were used in different policy document to refer concepts related to formative classroom assessment and were not defined. There are sporadic reforms in CA policies and the policy documents brought new terms related to new reforms on assessment in Bangladesh. For example, in National Education Policy 2010 the term ‘evaluation’, ‘ongoing evaluation’ were used. In the teacher preparation curriculum,



‘assessment’, ‘evaluation’, ‘formative assessment’, ‘value judgment’ and ‘School Based Assessment (SBA)’ were included as a part of the teachers’ learning. In the School Curriculum (2012), formative assessment is defined and used consistently along with the concept ‘Continuous Assessment’, replacing ‘School Based Assessment’ introduced newly. It creates confusion among the policy makers, trainers, trainees and the school teachers. Formative Assessment not being defined and conceptualized properly and using different terms interchangeably to refer formative assessment were reasons mentioned in the literature for the poor representation of formative assessment in policy and practice (Dunn & Mulvenon, 2009; Bennett, 2011).

Even though the formative assessment is much clearly defined in the school curriculum, no teacher in the school had a copy of the curriculum or had an easy access to the curriculum. What the teachers knew about FCA is from their teacher preparation, if they had. In the school where I collected data from, the new teachers had no formal trainings on CA. Therefore, the teachers lack the knowledge of CA.

The network of policy production and negotiation works as a temporary network, enrolling actors from different agencies and institutions. In the policy production networks, mostly the government officials, project consultants, and university teachers are enrolled. There is very minimum and ornamental participation of the school teachers, and education experts, especially assessment experts. As a result, policies formulated are not sensitive to the context where the policies are practiced. For example, the curriculum suggests class teachers to consult with subject teachers to assign grade for each student on his/her affective domain characteristics such as honesty, patriotism etc. In the school teachers found it extremely time consuming and impractical to practice. On a related

topic, CA ideas constructed and viewed by the students and parents are very different than the policy actors and even than the school teachers. This creates a social barriers and mistrust among the actors as their voices are not heard in the policies. That is why when policy instructed the schools to practice SBA in secondary school to include 20% CA marks in end of the year summative examination, many actors especially the parents reacted negatively as they were afraid that the teachers can be biased. The absence of assessment expert in the policy networks are shown in the policies where CA is not defined or badly defines. There is no research on how CA is defined in curriculum, by which actors, and how does it affect the formation and implementation of the curriculum.

Limited focus on FCA is a global issue and one of the mostly stated reasons is the importance of high-stake accountability assessment in the education system (Popham, 2011; Birenbaum, DeLuca, Earl, Heritage, Klenowski, Looney, Smith, Timperley, Volante, and Wyatt-Smith, 2015). Bangladesh is not an exception. In the policy documents FCA is not in focus. Education policy focused mainly on public examination and summative assessment. In teacher preparation curricula, CA is cornered by summative assessment and examinations and is confined to classroom questioning and test development. The policy instructs to add new high-skates public examination after grade five and eight. Most of the reforms on assessment are on examinations, question setting, and answer script scoring. School curriculum has a better representation of FCA compared to the other two types of policies. Even though in school curriculum, FA was presented as a tool for promoting student learning, FCA was not in focus. It was presented as a part (20%) of the summative end of the year examination. Details on how to keep record of CA is discussed but not much on feedback.

## **Policies on CA Translated to Teacher Preparation**

This is also an issue for the United States where different training institutes offer different courses. Different courses are linked to different policies on assessment and in different degrees. This creates different levels of knowledge and understanding of assessment policy among different groups of teachers (DeLuca, Klinger, Searle, & Shulha, 2010). This study found the same to be true in Bangladesh. The teacher education curricula (BEd and MEd) does not focus on FCA, rather focus on examination, summative assessment, test development, and use of descriptive statistics. Moreover, according to the interview with the trainees, the classes in the TTC were not effective as those were irregular, lecture and demonstration based. As many trainees (students) who are enrolled in this TTC for the teacher education program are not sure of their career paths and as for many of them teaching would be the last option to take, both the teachers (trainers) and the students (trainees) at the TTC felt demotivated to participate in teaching-learning of CA. Trainers interviewed have shifted their focus on short term project-based trainings from long term teacher education. The important part of the teacher education, the practice teaching did not give the students observed in the school placement enough scope to practice FCA, and to get close supervision to connect their FCA skills and knowledge if learnt at all. For the short-term trainings for the in-service teachers, several trainings have clear and focused content on CA, FA, and even include ideas, such as alternative assessment methods, self-assessment and peer assessment. However, these trainings are not given to all school teachers at a time, and sometimes, for specific group of teachers, such as head teachers, science teachers, and language teachers. Moreover, the classes are not happening regularly, and the students do not attend the

classes regularly for the teacher education programs. Therefore, the FCA concepts and skills are not disseminated evenly and consistently to all the trainees. As a result, CA concepts, skills, attitudes, and culture varied significantly in the school from teacher to teacher. Besides the content, the trainings are mostly cramped with knowledge and not equipped to address the real-life issues of the teachers. The practicum or practice teaching give the trainee teacher the opportunity to practice their FCA related knowledge and skills only in a narrow and structured way without any constructive feedback from the supervisors.

### **Policies on CA Translated into Classroom Practice**

Research shows that teachers feel that they are not prepared for the CA with adequate skills and knowledge (Plake, 1993) and they attribute this to the inadequacy of the teacher preparation programs (ref). This appears to true of the Bangladeshi teachers in this study as well. The teacher recruitment policy does not require any formal training to be a secondary school teacher. Therefore, the new teachers who joined the school sample in last 6 months while I started collecting had no formal training on FCA. This means that these new teachers, who takes similar or more class loads compared to the experienced and trained teachers, do classroom assessment without any formal knowledge or skills on FCA. All they rely on are their past experience as a student and informal trainings. Informal trainings occur as a mentoring or coaching from senior teacher to junior teachers which they claimed does not help them to conduct FCA in classrooms. The in-house trainings to disseminate the training content by a trained teacher after having formal training from training institution did not happen always. For

the trained teachers, all the senior teachers who have more than 10 years of teaching experience, had finished their teacher education and training on CA long time ago and could not remember much what they have learnt. However, in abc school, teachers do not feel that they are incompatible to practice CA effectively. They think that CA is asking questions in the classroom or giving class works. They are not well aware of how to deliberately conduct FCA and take it as an integral part of class instruction that happens naturally without acquiring specific skills.

Even though when they learn CA techniques and try to apply that they found it difficult to apply in their context where the teacher student ration is high, low resource, low community support, and minimum physical facilities. The teachers felt that the trainings do not equip them with practical tool that can be applied in their own context rather give them general ideas on how to conduct FCA. In this scenario, FCA is not practiced in the classrooms by these teachers. Though there are formal policies on CA stated in the school curriculum, those were either not practiced or practiced partially. For example, though there is specific instruction on the activities of CA in the curriculum to be conducted and recorded to add with the end of the year summative exam, the teachers administer only class tests to record and add with the summative exam. new CA policies were introduced in the school in parallel with authorized policies which even contradict the formal policies. For example, the head teacher introduced a new policy in the school. If a student cannot perform satisfactorily in CA, the students will be sent to detention in a separate classroom. In that separate room the students stay until they can produce a satisfactory performance in oral or written form. This idea of detention is borrowed globally to fit in this context as punishment in parallel to the formal policy from the

government not to punish any student in educational institutions. The students in the detention are getting psychological punishment as they revealed their fear and anxiety around detention. Thus, this informal policy is acting as a contradicting policy with the authorized policy that instructs not to give punishment to students. There is no supervision available for the school and for the teachers to support them in their CA activities. This encourages informal policies to be practiced in the classrooms.

### **Direction for Further Research**

In this section I present the key research questions from each level which I think are the most important to answer which can help to improve the CA, teacher preparation of CA, and CA practice in classrooms.

#### **Policy level**

How do key policy actors gain and practice the power to negotiate and appropriate formal policies on CA in different networks? How to obtain a more democratic participation environment in policy formulation? Answering this question will ensure a more democratic environment in policy scope which will help to capture real issues of FCA and the practical and feasible solutions and directions- which is missing right now.

#### **Regional level**

What kind of teacher education and training can effectively teach FCA knowledge and skills to the teachers in a low resource context? Even if we have the best policies,

translation of policies in TP is important and teachers always raise the issues of low resource context. Therefore, we need to figure out the ways in which teachers can be trained which is cost effective, easy for large teacher population and does not include extra pressure for the teachers and teachers will be motivated to apply.

### **Local level**

How do different CA practices influence students' learning in the classroom?

There is research confirming that CA improves learning which are mostly based on western context. There is few empirical research in developing countries on that. Also, during class observation I found that teachers' different CA practice, and environment influence students' learning, and motivation to learn in different ways. For example, in a strict environment, students learn only from the teacher, but in an open and flexible assessment environment the students can also learn from unstructured and informal peer discussion and consultation.

### **Recommendations**

#### **Policy Level**

- (1) Develop and use FCA terminologies consistently in different policy documents.
- (2) Invite more school teachers to policy development with real negotiation power.
- (3) Focus on FCA and include more content on FCA with detailed guidelines.

Summative assessment can be there for a bigger picture and not high stake for teachers and students. National assessments can replace public examinations to

get the idea about quality of learning. In a system like this formative assessment can thrive.

- (4) There should be assessment experts in all the policies that relates to CA.
- (5) Produce different related policies following a specific timeline.

### **Teacher Preparation**

- (1) Introduce specific courses and trainings on FCA including practical aspects of FCA.
- (2) Train TTC trainers on how to train the teachers; use formative assessment in TTC.
- (3) Overhaul practicum to ensure meaningful participation in FCA guided by supervisors.

### **Classroom Practice**

- (1) Supervise teachers' FCA practice regularly and build school based support system.
- (2) Introduce job embedded and long-term trainings as CPD.
- (3) Build strong connections with larger networks such as parents and education office.
- (4) The teachers should get easy access to the policy documents such as NEP, teacher preparation curriculum, and the school curriculum where FCA is well defined with easy language, with example, and the skills of FCA are defined too.



## **Conclusion**

Although there is significant evidence indicating that FCA is an important factor in improving student learning, this study showed that FCA is not happening in classrooms (at least in one school in Bangladesh) and that a contributing factor is the way policies on FCA are crafted and translated, either directly to schools and classrooms or indirectly through teacher preparation. At the national level, there are two communities of practice—the bureaucrats and the educators—involved in setting policy; each group has conflicting ideas on CA. The bureaucrats focus on public examinations and “big data” to showcase the success of education system and government initiatives, while educators focus on FCA, believing it can improve students’ learning. However, as the bureaucrats possess more political power in negotiating policy formulation and reform, the final policies focus more on summative assessment, with limited information or guidance on FCA. This one-sided policy formation is exacerbated by the use of inconsistent terminology for continuous assessment, complicating the negotiations about FCA. What is needed is a more democratic mechanism for negotiating and setting policy at the national level, where local teachers, parents and other stakeholders have equal power to influence discussions about CA and FCA, as well as ensuring that the policies reflect the actual challenges on the ground—in schools and classrooms—of implementing and ensuring the success of FCA for student learning.

These inadequate policies are then translated to limited and poor quality of training and practicum for teachers on FCA in the Teacher Training College, which (within the TTC featured in this study), contributes to teachers entering classrooms without either strong theoretical or practical skills for using FCA to gauge student

progress and adapt their teaching for maximum student learning. Low motivation of trainers and student teachers, as well as limited time dedicated to FCA in classes, adds to insufficient preparation on FCA. Even with limited guidance from the national policies, teacher preparation about FCA could be improved if the existing courses and trainings would focus more on practical aspects of learning FCA connected with effective practicum with regular and intensive supervision.

Thus, by the time teachers begin (or continue) teaching in the school, they are not adequately prepared to implement FCA and so are not able to identify the issues in student learning or how to improve teaching to promote it. Poor supervision structures mean that, instead of thorough classroom observation and feedback for teachers, the focus on student learning is limited to looking at “big data” from the school at the education office. Even with the existing gaps in national and regional level, FCA could be practiced in school if there would be school based support system guided by headteacher and supervisor.

There is minimal and ornamental involvement of local level actors, such as teachers, students and parents who (from this study’s data) have insightful and practical ideas on FCA. As the formal policies are not always seen as practical or feasible to the local actors in TTC and school, many of those are appropriated in local settings changing the formal policies. Without the equal input from the local community of practice at the national and regional (Teacher Trainer College) level, FCA practice is limited due to impractical and insufficient policies and teacher preparation, and the local actors, including—and critically--teachers do not own the abrupt changes in assessment policies made without involving them.

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