

Assessment Practices of Integrated Curriculum in Morang: A Case Study of Private School

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ABSTRACT

Assessment practices in early-grade education play a critical role in supporting children's holistic development through integrated curricula which implement learner-centered educational methods. In Nepal the Integrated Curriculum (IC) for Grades 1-3 implements a new approach which focuses on interdisciplinary learning and child-centered teaching methods while assessment is designed to serve as an ongoing assessment tool which helps learners to progress. However, limited empirical attention has been given to how these assessment principles are enacted in classroom practice especially in private school contexts. This study examines the assessment practices of the Integrated Curriculum (Grades 1-3) in a private school in Morang District Nepal. The study explores how school leaders and teachers apply assessment principles through their educational practices to help children achieve their complete development. The research focuses on classroom observation which includes ongoing monitoring and portfolio management and rubric

implementation and authentic learning activities that expose students to real-world situations. The researchers employed a qualitative case study design which used an interpretive framework to study actual classroom environments. The researchers selected the principal and teachers as main study participants while they collected data through classroom observations and interviews and assessments of students' workbooks and assessment records. The research method provided a complete comprehension of assessment methods which were planned and assessment methods which were actually used in educational settings. The research results show that there exists a discrepancy between the authentic assessment standards which the integrated curriculum promotes and the authentic assessment standards which teachers apply in their classrooms. The leadership team understands the concept at a basic level but they apply it inconsistently because exam-based methods and low parental participation continue to shape their assessment methods. The school has not reached complete implementation of authentic assessment practices yet.

Keywords: Integrated curriculum, assessment, interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, integration

INTRODUCTION

The unified Basic Education curriculum for Basic Education from Grades 1 to 3 started in Nepal during 2019 to create education methods that develop students in all areas while enabling them to study different subjects and apply their knowledge to actual situations (Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), 2019). The curriculum establishes assessment as an ongoing process which develops students through evaluation methods that measure their progress without using traditional tests. The assessment approach uses authentic assessment tools which include portfolios and project work and rubrics and feedback and remedial instruction as its main assessment method.

The research base in Nepal continues to focus on public schools and their curriculum implementation problems because policy documents show their assessment practices with private schools. Private schools face unique challenges because their students need to meet parental demands for academic performance through assessment methods which affect their evaluation

procedures. This study addresses this gap by examining how assessment practices of the integrated curriculum are enacted in a private school context.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To examine the implementation of authentic assessment practices within the integrated Curriculum (Grades 1-3) in a private school in Morang, Nepal.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Early Foundations of Assessment and Constructivist Learning

The development of assessment methods and learning methods started from constructivist educational theories. Vygotsky (1978) introduced the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development, emphasizing learning as a socially mediated process supported through scaffolding. This theoretical perspective established the basis for formative assessment methods which focus on assessing student progress during their learning journey.

Wiggins (1998) developed the idea of authentic assessment which requires students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills through practical situations instead of using memorization techniques. Black and Wiliam (1998) showed that when instructors use formative assessment to provide students with feedback their instructional methods will lead to better student learning outcomes. The research demonstrated that assessment functions as a fundamental part of the learning process instead of serving as a method to evaluate students after they finish their studies.

Development of Feedback, Formative, and Authentic Assessment (2000–2010)

Assessment research demonstrated its power to advance learning outcomes during the early 2000s. Stiggins (2005) emphasized assessment for learning because he saw assessment results as essential tools for making teaching decisions and developing remedial programs. According to Broadfoot (2007) assessment needs to help students develop their skills because schools use it only for student evaluation purposes.

Hattie and Timperley (2007) presented a widely recognized framework for effective feedback which demonstrates how students use specific feedback on their tasks to achieve learning progress.

The research by MacMath et al. (2009) during this time period established performance-based assessment and portfolio assessment as effective methods to measure student learning and interdisciplinary skills in child-centered educational environments.

Portfolio, Rubrics, and 21st-Century Assessment (2010–2018)

Assessment research developed into new methods of assessment because educational systems now require 21st-century skills. Andrade and Cizek (2010) demonstrated how rubrics improve assessment procedures by making results clearer and more dependable although teachers found it difficult to create and implement these assessment tools.

Pellegrino and Hilton (2012) showed that authentic assessments help students develop academic skills which include working together and solving problems and sharing information with others. Hartley (2014) examined how portfolios serve as instruments which help students track their academic progress while developing their ability to think about their work. Later studies by Andrade and Heritage (2017) and Panadero et al. (2017) proved that students achieve assessment results through active participation with assessment criteria which they use for self-evaluation.

Integrated Curriculum and Assessment Policy in Nepal (2019 onwards)

The Integrated Curriculum for Grades 1–3 which the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC, 2019) brought to Nepal marks a major change that supports child-centered and interdisciplinary educational practices. The policy requires assessment methods which use formative and continuous and authentic assessment methods through portfolios and project work and feedback and remedial teaching.

Lamsal (2021) explained how Nepal implements integrated curriculum through its foundational elements which focus on holistic child development. Rijal (2021) and Adhikari (2022) studied the initial implementation problems which public schools faced because of teachers' insufficient readiness and their inability to evaluate students consistently.

Recent Empirical Studies in the Nepali Context (2020–2025)

Research conducted in Nepal demonstrates that schools face difficulties when they try to use authentic assessment methods. Research had shown that assessment practices are often influenced by exam-oriented culture, parental expectations and limited teacher capacity (Sharma, 2020; Shrestha 2025). The research area of assessment practices in private schools remains unexplored because existing studies only examined how public schools implement integrated curriculum systems (Rijal, 2021; Adhikari, 2022).

Dhungel (2024) observed that private school assessment systems used for student performance evaluation did not follow proper standards because the schools maintained insufficient documentation and did not use formative assessments effectively. Shrestha (2025) found that teachers who knew about formative assessment methods tended to use them only during specific situations because they faced practical difficulties. The studies demonstrated that private schools maintained a continuing obstacle which stopped them from using the curriculum policies established by their educational authorities.

Research Gap

The research literature from international and national sources demonstrates strong support for authentic formative assessment methods which should be used in integrated learning environments that follow constructivist learning principles. The existing research evidence from private schools in Nepal remains inadequate. Most Nepali studies focus on curriculum implementation or public-school settings which prevents them from showing how assessment practices are understood and performed in private schools. The study requires development because private schools need research that examines their assessment methods through leadership and teacher capabilities and their existing limitations. The Integrated Curriculum assessment research gap for Grades 1 to 3 assessment practices in a private school located in Morang Nepal.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researchers conducted a qualitative research study through a case study method to investigate assessment methods used in the Integrated Curriculum assessment system for Grades 1 to 3. The

researchers chose a qualitative case study because it helps them study assessment practices through their actual application in institutional settings while observing how participants understand their surroundings and their assessment methods.

Research Site and Participants

The research took place in a private educational institution which operates in the Morang District of Nepal and uses Integrated Curriculum methods to teach its early-grade students. The researchers selected this school because it officially implements integrated curriculum assessment methods. The participant group included:

- School leadership (principal/academic coordinator), and
- Teachers involved in teaching Grades 1–3 under the integrated curriculum.

The research team used purposive sampling methods to choose participants who worked directly with assessment planning and assessment execution and assessment practice evaluation. This method ensured that the collected data represented both knowledgeable and practical viewpoints.

Data Generation Methods

The research team used multiple qualitative sources to create data which they used for triangulation to establish credible results. The primary methods included:

- Semi-structured interviews with school leaders and teachers to explore their understanding, experiences, and challenges related to assessment practices.
- Document review, including student portfolios, assessment rubrics, feedback records, and remedial plans, to examine how assessment was documented and operationalized.
- Informal classroom observations, which focused on assessment-related activities that included feedback practices and project work and remedial support.

The research team used these methods to conduct a detailed study of both reported assessment methods and actual assessment methods.

Data Analysis

Data analysis employed thematic analysis method. Researchers read the interview transcripts and observation notes and documents multiple times to achieve deep understanding of the material. The researchers developed initial codes which they organized into three main themes that represented assessment practices and contextual influences and constructivist principle implementation.

The research used the study's conceptual framework to interpret themes according to curriculum objectives and leadership and teacher competency and student achievement. The researchers conducted a detailed analysis to compare how classroom practices differed from the established policy goals.

Trustworthiness of the Study

The research team used multiple techniques to establish trustworthiness:

- The study used three data sources which included interviews and documents and observations to create triangulation.
- Member checking involved sharing key interpretations with participants to obtain their confirmation.
- Thick description provided detailed context which enabled readers to better understand the study and apply its findings.

The researchers established credibility and dependability and confirmability through these research measures.

Ethical Considerations

The study maintained strict adherence to its established ethical standards throughout its entire duration. The study obtained informed consent from all participants who chose to take part in the research. The research maintained participant anonymity and confidentiality through the use of

pseudonyms and the exclusion of all school and participant identifying information. The academic institution used the data exclusively for research purposes.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The study examined assessment methods used in basic-level private schools which serve students from Grade 1 to Grade 3 through three research methods: classroom observations and teacher and principal interviews and portfolio evaluation. The analysis includes five main themes which organizers use to structure the study: Portfolio Management, Thematic Integration, Soft Skills, Rubrics, and Feedback & Remedial Practices.

1. Portfolio Management and Documentation

The school maintained effective structural backing that supported its portfolio assessment approach. The principal provided storage solutions and instructional documents and organized training sessions to help teachers execute their required tasks. The purpose of portfolios was to document students' academic development while demonstrating their progress in critical thinking and problem-solving and educational achievements.

Teachers experienced difficulties with their work because they encountered actual problems. The management of portfolios required extensive time commitments because students stored their portfolios at home which created difficulties for staff members who needed to track student progress. The research revealed inconsistent methods for recording student progress which resulted in some students with low performance not receiving required assessments because schools failed to implement their policies.

Interpretation: The school demonstrates its dedication to comprehensive evaluation through its portfolio system, which suffers from execution problems and insufficient teacher assistance, resulting in decreased effectiveness for monitoring student progress and enhancing their learning results.

2. Thematic Integration and Collaborative Planning

The principal established weekly meetings with teachers and coordinators for collaborative planning which helped them create lessons that followed shared themes. The classroom observations which included "Hamro Serofero" lessons and "Me and My Family" projects demonstrated how different subjects were taught through interdisciplinary activities. The teachers established collaborative relationships through peer learning and their monthly inter-grade sharing activities.

The process of integrating subjects across different classrooms showed implicit connections which resulted in inconsistent alignment to curriculum learning outcomes.

Interpretation: The implementation of collaborative thematic planning methods leads to improved learning outcomes while fostering interdisciplinary study. The educational system requires systematic curriculum alignment to achieve effective subject integration between different fields of study.

3. Soft Skills Development

The classroom activities integrated soft skills development which included communication and collaboration and empathy and reflective thinking. The observed practices used storytelling and role plays and group work and real-life problem-solving tasks. The activities which included condolence visits and environmental projects helped to develop emotional and social skills of the participants. The assessment system together with soft skills documentation system restricted our ability to track student progress throughout the assessment process.

Interpretation: The school intentionally incorporates soft skills in learning, which creates an environment that supports complete student development. The school needs to establish assessment tools that work systematically and create documentation processes to assess their effects while maintaining operational uniformity.

4. Rubrics as an Assessment Tool

The educational system used rubrics as internal assessment tools because they provided transparent and equitable evaluation methods. The teachers used rubrics to evaluate students according to their

ability to express ideas and their innovative skills and their precise work and their capability to carry out tasks. The assessment system faced problems because parents reported assessment unfairness and teachers used rubrics inconsistently at first. The teachers developed greater confidence in their rubric design and implementation skills after completing the training sessions.

Interpretation: Rubrics improve assessment results through their ability to provide clear evaluation standards which ensure fair treatment of students while enabling predictable assessment outcomes. The system will function properly when teachers receive training to apply standardized methods which will enable them to implement the system consistently.

5. Feedback and Remedial Practices

The team delivered instant feedback through both spoken and written channels and organized special classes for students who failed to meet their academic performance goals. Portfolio analysis showed that feedback culture existed in the organization, but there were gaps in follow-up procedures and documentation processes, and the organization did not consistently re-assess students who were performing below the expected standards.

Interpretation: Student-centered learning receives support through feedback and remedial practices which assist in resolving learning gaps. The absence of a structured follow-up system together with the lack of standardized record-keeping procedures restricts both long-term impact and accountability for the project.

Table 1

Key Findings and Interpretation

Theme	Key Findings	Interpretation
Portfolio Management	Structural support via racks, materials, workshops; portfolios sometimes stored at home; inconsistent reassessment	Commitment to holistic assessment exists, but implementation gaps reduce effectiveness.

Theme	Key Findings	Interpretation
Thematic Integration	Weekly collaborative planning; interdisciplinary projects; peer learning; integration often implicit	Promotes holistic learning; needs explicit alignment across subjects for full curriculum integration.
Soft Skills	Storytelling, role plays, group tasks; empathy and collaboration observed; limited documentation	Intentionally embedded; structured assessment required for consistent evaluation.
Rubrics	Used for clarity, creativity, accuracy; initial inconsistencies; improved with training	Enhances transparency and fairness; requires consistent teacher application and professional development.
Feedback & Remedial Practices	Immediate feedback; remedial classes for low achievers; inconsistent follow-up and documentation	Supports student-centered learning; structured follow-up and record-keeping needed for impact and accountability.

School A exhibits a robust dedication to holistic assessment methods through both its structural framework and its cultural practices. The program achieves national integrated curriculum standards through its implementation of portfolio management, thematic integration, soft skills development, rubrics, and feedback mechanisms. The study identifies multiple areas that require improvement because the actual classroom practices do not match the established policy guidelines and the classroom practices lack consistent tracking methods and use of indirect subject integration and only limited methods for documenting soft skills and show inconsistent implementation of rubrics and remedial strategies. The implementation of teacher training needs to be improved through systematic follow-up practices and dedicated documentation methods, which will help achieve better results and maintain student-centered assessment methods.

Discussion of the Findings

Classroom observations, and document analyses (including students' workbooks, portfolios, and teachers' planning diaries). The research results show how internal assessment is conducted in practice because they are discussed according to relevant theories and curriculum guidelines.

Assessment Practices from a Constructivist Learning Perspective

The integrated curriculum requires internal assessment to focus on formative and diagnostic assessment and continuous feedback and holistic learning and remedial teaching (CDC, 2019; Black & Wiliam, 1998). The system supports ongoing assessment which measures competency instead of focusing on exams. Assessment tools include rubrics and project work and portfolio management and thematic integration and the development of soft skills.

The findings show that School A follows these components, but their implementation shows different levels of execution. The main components of portfolio use, and rubric application and theme-based assessment and remedial instruction show incomplete implementation according to CDC guidelines.

Portfolio-Based Assessment Through a Constructivist Lens

The assessment method used in integrated curricula requires portfolio management as its main assessment method because it helps educational institutions develop student learning through their existing teaching practices. Portfolios enable students to demonstrate their development while supporting their active learning process.

At School A, students kept their portfolios as required but found them to be an extra task. The study faced two main problems because parents refused to participate or buy required materials and because student portfolios were created according to subjects which interfered with the curriculum requirement for integrated student documentation (CDC, 2019). The system required students to update their portfolios only at the end of the learning period, which resulted in minimal progress monitoring throughout their study. The findings support earlier research which identified

issues related to portfolio administration in private schools located in Nepal (Shrestha, 2025; Dhungel, 2024).

Rubrics and Soft Skills in Constructivist Learning

The educational framework established by Vygotsky and Panadero helps students develop their learning abilities while using grading frameworks to assess their progress. Rubrics provide students with two benefits through their design which enables students to grasp learning objectives and work together while teachers guide their learning activities.

The CDC integrated curriculum requires rubrics to assess student knowledge because they also help develop essential abilities such as communication and critical thinking and teamwork skills (Andrade & Heritage, 2017; Andrade & Cizek, 2010). The lesson plans at School A included soft skills instruction but their implementation across thematic units showed that teachers only used them inside their classroom instruction.

Feedback and Remedial Teaching: Supporting the Zone of Proximal Development

Students require feedback together with remedial teaching in integrated curricula because these methods help educators find and fix student learning deficiencies while they help students who need extra assistance with their studies. Vygotskian theory describes how remedial instruction functions through the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) because teachers deliver scaffolding to assist students in achieving tasks which they cannot yet complete (Vygotsky, 1978).

The study shows that School A maintains feedback and remedial teaching policies through classroom observation, workbook review, and targeted remedial sessions but the school fails to implement these constructivist principles according to their full potential. The assessment process in private schools shows different levels of assessment quality, which makes it difficult to apply formative and scaffolded assessment methods throughout the assessment process.

SUMMARY

The research shows that School A is trying to put constructivist assessment methods into practice through its use of portfolios and rubrics and thematic instruction and soft skills development and

feedback-based tutoring. The implementation of constructivist principles remains incomplete because the system has implementation problems and it cannot monitor activities throughout the day and its practices only partially follow CDC guidelines. The school assessment practices will become more effective when the existing gaps receive their solution through structured teacher support and systematic portfolio management and explicit soft skills integration.

CONCLUSION

The research demonstrates how authentic assessment works in Nepalese private schools because its effectiveness depends on three factors which are principal leadership, teacher capacity, and parental involvement whereas the government provides insufficient support to private educational institutions. The research addresses gaps in understanding how integrated curriculum policies are applied in practice and underscores the persistence of an exam-driven culture.

The study found that authentic assessment exists only in a partial institutionalized state. School A uses portfolios and rubrics and classroom observations and project-based activities to evaluate both academic performance and soft skills development. The practices connect with integrated curriculum objectives because they show alignment but complete implementation fails because the methods of re-assessment and systematic record-keeping and theme-wise portfolio organization still need development. The successful implementation of authentic assessment depends on three main elements which are leadership capabilities and teacher training programs and parental involvement.

IMPLICATIONS

The study results provide crucial benefits to research studies, educational institutions, teaching staff, and all other involved groups. The study demonstrates that researchers must conduct additional studies which examine authentic assessment methods used in private schools throughout Nepal. The study advises school administrators to focus on teacher development programs while building collaborative lesson development methods and establishing necessary resources for executing integrated curriculum assessments. The teaching staff can enhance their classroom methods through these findings which show them how to handle student portfolios and teach soft

skills while delivering structured evaluations and re-assessment and formative assessment processes that will help them close the specific learning gaps between their classroom and School A. The study demonstrates that principals, teachers, and parents must work together to establish a student-focused school environment because parental involvement decreases the tendency to focus excessively on final assessments while helping students achieve complete learning progress.

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