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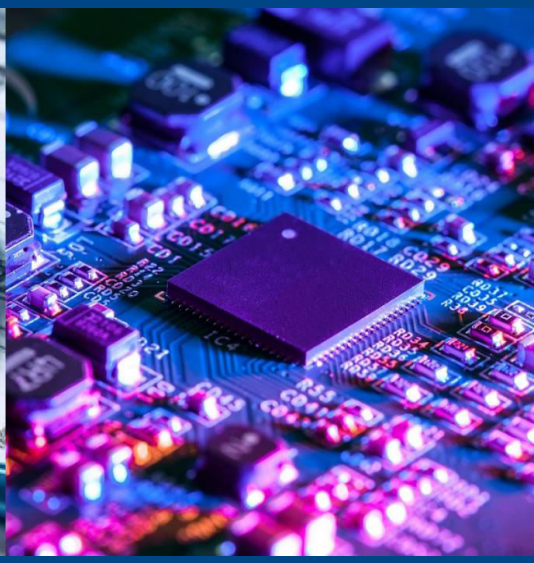

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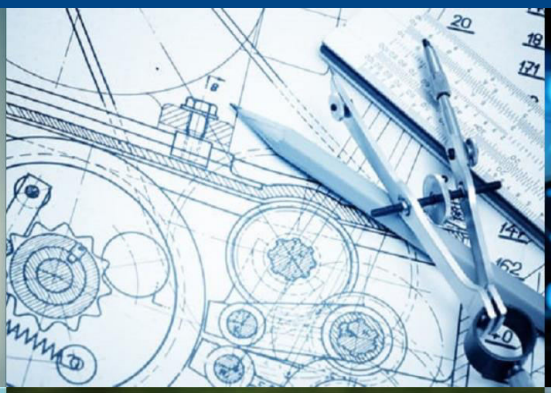

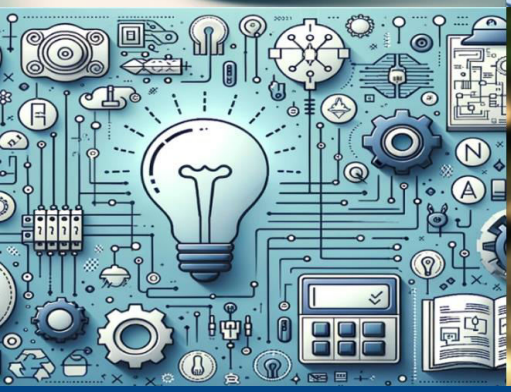

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A Systematic Review of Formative Assessment Programs for Fostering Whole Student Development

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ABSTRACT: This systematic review analyses the efficacy of formative assessment approaches in furthering holistic student growth. Several academic databases were explored to identify applicable studies. Adhering to PRISMA guidelines, screening, data extraction, and risk of bias appraisals were undertaken by two independent reviewers. Owing to variability across interventions and outcome measures, a qualitative synthesis was executed. The findings denote moderate proof supporting the advantages of formative assessment for critical thinking and creativity. However, evidence regarding other dimensions of holistic development was restricted. Additional rigorous inquiry is imperative, especially in lower income national contexts. This review accentuates the implications for constructing competency-driven evaluations in concordance with India's National Education Policy 2020.

KEYWORDS: Systematic review, PRISMA, Formative Assessment, Holistic Development, National Education Policy 2020

I. INTRODUCTION

Recent education policies and frameworks have emphasized the need for holistic development of students, going beyond just academic achievement to also focus on life skills, values, and all-round growth (OECD, 2018; Reimers & Chung, 2016). The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India specifically highlights the importance of holistic, integrated, joyful, and engaging learning across all stages (Ministry of Education, 2020). It proposes reforms in curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment accordingly. Assessment plays a key role in promoting holistic development by aligning teaching-learning processes, monitoring progress, and providing feedback (Ma & Yin, 2021; Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2021). However, traditional assessment methods often focus narrowly on academic domains and standardized testing (Birenbaum et al., 2006). Research suggests formative assessment, which involves continuous monitoring and feedback, may be more beneficial for supporting development of critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, and other higher-order competencies (Besser et al., 2020; Black & Wiliam, 2009).

While few reviews have examined the impact of assessment on specific skills like creativity (Davies et al., 2013), no systematic review has synthesized evidence on formative assessment for holistic development across multiple constructs. The heterogeneity in interventions, outcomes, and study contexts also warrants a closer examination (Xu & Brown, 2016). More rigorous reviews can inform policy and practice related to designing competency-based assessments aligned with the NEP 2020 goals (Kohli et al., 2021). In recent years, the field of education has witnessed a significant shift in its focus from traditional assessment methods that primarily measure rote memorization to more progressive approaches that emphasize holistic student development. The evolving landscape of education acknowledges the multifaceted nature of learning, extending beyond cognitive acquisition to encompass a broader spectrum of skills and competencies. This paradigm shift has given rise to the concepts of formative assessment and holistic development, both of which have garnered substantial attention from educators, researchers, and policymakers alike. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to transform India's education system by increasing focus on early childhood care, foundational literacy and numeracy, vocational integration, flexibility in curriculum, critical

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thinking and more (Ministry of Education, 2020). However, its effective nationwide implementation faces several challenges.

One major issue is the lack of adequate budgetary allocations and financing mechanisms to fulfil the policy goals, especially strengthening public education infrastructure and faculty development (Kundu, 2021). The NEP's emphasis on increasing public spending to 6% of GDP seems difficult currently as education expenditure has stagnated around 3% for decades. Another challenge is reforming curriculum, pedagogy and assessments within a competency framework and integrated approach. This requires huge efforts in redesigning syllabi, textbooks, teacher training content and assessment patterns across all stages of schooling (Chandran, 2021). Operationalizing holistic development goals into classroom practices is complex. There are concerns that the NEP's vision of increased vocational education from early ages may promote early tracking and stratification of students based on backgrounds, instead of flexibility (Sarangapani, 2021). The feasibility of seamlessly integrating vocational skills development across school and higher education has also been questioned.

Thus, while the NEP provides a valuable roadmap, its transformational vision faces ground realities of structural inequities, implementation capacity and coordination across multiple stakeholders. More research, pilots and evaluation are needed to assess its impact, iterate implementation strategies, and allocate requisite resources. Formative assessment, often referred to as "formative evaluation," "continuous assessment," or "assessment for learning," deviates from the conventional summative assessment approach, which solely measures the outcomes of learning. Formative assessment is an ongoing process that actively engages students in their own learning journey, providing timely feedback, identifying learning gaps, and adapting instructional strategies to enhance student understanding (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Sadler, 1989). This approach aligns with the idea of assessment as a tool for learning rather than mere measurement.

Concurrent with the paradigm of formative assessment is the recognition of the holistic development of students. Holistic development, often referred to as "whole child education," "21st-century skills," "life skills," or "noncognitive skills," emphasizes the cultivation of a wide range of competencies beyond academic knowledge (Fadel et al., 2015; Nodding's, 2005). These skills encompass cognitive abilities such as critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving, as well as socio-emotional skills including communication, collaboration, and empathy. Recognizing the interconnectedness of these dimensions of development, educators and policymakers are increasingly advocating for pedagogical strategies that nurture holistic growth. This systematic review aims to explore the intersection of formative assessment and holistic development within the context of school education, specifically targeting K-12, elementary, and secondary school students. By synthesizing existing research, this review seeks to identify the ways in which formative assessment interventions contribute to the enhancement of cognitive and socio-emotional skills, thereby fostering the holistic development of students. Through the application of the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework, this study endeavours to provide a comprehensive analysis of the current state of knowledge in this domain.

The subsequent sections of this article will delve into the concepts of cognitive and socio-emotional skills, highlighting their significance in the holistic development of students. Drawing from empirical studies, theoretical frameworks, and educational practices, this systematic review aims to shed light on the efficacy of formative assessment strategies in promoting the acquisition of these skills, ultimately enriching our understanding of pedagogical approaches that facilitate the holistic growth of students.

This systematic review aims to address this gap by synthesizing evidence on the effectiveness of formative assessment interventions for promoting holistic development of school students across cognitive, social-emotional, and behavioural domains. Findings will have implications for curriculum reform and teacher training efforts underway in India and other countries trying to enable more holistic learning.

Rationale: Reviews the importance of holistic development and highlights gaps in research on how different assessment methods can facilitate it, providing context on need for this systematic review.

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Recent education reforms and policies have strongly emphasized the need to move beyond an exclusively academic focus and nurture the whole child across multiple developmental domains (OECD, 2018; UNESCO, 2021). However, existing assessment practices in many countries still tend to concentrate on academic subjects, standardized testing, and summative exams that encourage rote learning (Birenbaum et al., 2006; Kohli et al., 2021). The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India aims to transform this culture by recommending competency-based, continuous assessments for improved learning outcomes (Ministry of Education, 2020).

While some reviews have examined the impact of assessment methods on specific skills like creativity and critical thinking (Davies et al., 2013; Ma & Yin, 2021), there has been no rigorous synthesis of evidence on using formative assessment for promoting holistic development across multiple constructs. Furthermore, the heterogeneity in types of formative assessment interventions and their implementation in different contexts merits closer examination (Xu & Brown, 2016; Wyatt-Smith & Jackson, 2021). More evidence on this topic can strengthen the NEP 2020 vision and implementation around competency-based learning and assessment reforms.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes the holistic development of students in areas such as cognition, social skills, emotional intelligence, and ethics (Kumar, 2021). Formative assessment is recognized as a crucial pedagogical approach to support this holistic development and improve overall learning outcomes according to the NEP 2020. This systematic review investigates the impact of formative assessment interventions in school education on students' comprehensive progress in line with the NEP 2020.

Formative Assessment and Holistic Development

Multiple research studies have demonstrated that the use of formative assessment has a beneficial impact on students' academic achievement and their socio-emotional development across different educational contexts (Panadero et al., 2019; Yin et al., 2021). In the Indian educational context, the implementation of formative assessment strategies such as continuous feedback, self-assessment, peer assessment, and progress tracking has been found to yield positive outcomes in various areas including student motivation, engagement, self-regulation, collaborative skills, and subject mastery (Kaur & De, 2019; Chundawat & Jadav, 2018). The results of this study are consistent with the focus of the National Education Policy (NEP) on promoting the development of skills such as communication, teamwork, and cultural awareness, which necessitate a comprehensive approach to learning (Kommalapati, 2021). Numerous scholarly investigations have examined the execution and repercussions of distinct formative assessment methodologies on comprehensive learning within educational institutions in India. According to Thomas (2018), the utilization of reflective diaries and self-assessment tools has been found to foster metacognitive development and self-directed learning among secondary pupils residing in Chennai. According to Gupta (2017), the implementation of rubrics, exemplars, and descriptive feedback resulted in improved writing skill, increased confidence, and enhanced peer collaboration among middle school pupils in Delhi. According to Pradhan and Mehta (2019), the implementation of teacher training programs focusing on questioning tactics, group activities, and observation has demonstrated significant enhancements in primary students' discovery-based learning, involvement, and retention in the state of Maharashtra. According to Kambli and Kelkar (2020), the utilization of multimedia quizzes, games, and adaptive modules has proven to be effective in fostering the development of fundamental reading and numeracy skills, as well as enhancing analytical capabilities among young students in rural Karnataka. According to a comprehensive randomized review conducted by Lakshminarayana et al. (2017), the implementation of feedback-based remediation strategies in Vadodara resulted in a notable 16% rise in student success levels across grades 3-5. According to Kaur (2020), the integration of co-created success criteria, self-reviews, and peer conversations in Delhi government schools resulted in the enhancement of English language proficiency and teamwork competencies among 8th grade students. Formative assessment holds substantial potential in facilitating the achievement of the objectives delineated in the National Education Policy (NEP) of 2020, encompassing early childhood development, experiential learning, skill enhancement, basic reading and numeracy, adaptability, and integration (NEP, 2020).

This systematic review addresses these gaps by synthesizing quantitative and qualitative evidence on the effectiveness of formative assessment strategies and tools in fostering the holistic development of students across cognitive, interpersonal, intrapersonal, ethical, creative, and other important competencies. The findings will provide insights into

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best practices that can inform curriculum, pedagogy, teacher training, and assessment policy in India and other countries working to enable more integrated, joyful, and engaging learning aligned with 21st century skills.

The objectives of this systematic review are:

- To identify and synthesize quantitative and qualitative evidence evaluating the efficacy of formative assessment interventions in fostering holistic student development in K-12 settings.
- To analyse the impact of formative assessment techniques and tools on enhancing cognitive skills including critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, computational thinking, and related competencies among students.
- To examine the influence of formative assessment on developing affective and interpersonal proficiencies such as creativity, empathy, communication, teamwork, leadership, ethics, and related aptitudes in students.
- To study the effects of formative assessment on intrapersonal capabilities including mindfulness, growth mindset, metacognition, self-regulation, resilience, and associated skills among students.
- To rigorously assess and synthesize findings on factors that can impact the effectiveness and implementation of formative assessment targeting holistic growth across diverse contexts.
- To highlight the implications to inform curriculum, pedagogy, teacher training, and assessment policy reforms focused on enabling more integrated, competency-driven learning aligned with India's National Education Policy 2020 and similar global frameworks.

III. METHODS

3.1 Eligibility Criteria

- Studies will be selected according to the following criteria:

Participants:

- Students in K-12 school settings (primary/elementary and secondary schools). Studies focused only on preschools or higher education will be excluded.

Interventions:

- Studies examining formative assessment strategies or tools used for instructional purposes will be included. These could involve continuous monitoring, feedback loops, self-assessment, peer assessment, rubrics, personalized adaptive assessments, dynamic questioning, think-aloud, conferencing, etc. Studies looking only at summative assessments will be excluded.

Comparators:

- Studies comparing formative assessments to other pedagogical strategies, traditional assessments, or standard practice will be included. Studies with no comparators will be excluded.

Outcomes:

- Studies reporting student outcomes related to cognitive (e.g. critical thinking), interpersonal (e.g. collaboration), intrapersonal (e.g. metacognition), creative, ethical, or socio-emotional competencies will be included. Studies only looking at academic/content knowledge will be excluded.

Study designs:

- Experimental (RCTs), quasi-experimental, and non-experimental quantitative studies as well as qualitative studies focused on formative assessment will be included. Theoretical papers, literature reviews, systematic reviews, book chapters and conference proceedings will be excluded.

Language:

- Studies published in English language will be included.

Date filters:

- Peer-reviewed studies published from January 2000 onwards will be considered to capture contemporary evidence aligned with 21st century learning frameworks.

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Based on the heterogeneity of interventions and outcomes, studies will be grouped for narrative qualitative synthesis. Meta-analysis may not be feasible.

3.2 Information Sources

A comprehensive search will be conducted using Scopus Database. The search will include keywords, subject headings, and Boolean operators. The main concepts covered will be: formative assessment, holistic development, cognitive skills, socio-emotional skills, school students. Filters will be applied for English language peer-reviewed articles published from 2000-present. Reference lists and Google Scholar will be hand-searched.

3.3 Search Strategy

The search strategy will comprise appropriate keywords, medical subject headings (MeSH terms), and Boolean operators. Main search concepts and terms will include:

- Formative assessment (e.g. “formative evaluation”, “assessment for learning”)
- Holistic development (e.g. “21st century skills”, “life skills”)
- Cognitive skills (e.g. “critical thinking”, “creativity”)
- Socio-emotional skills (e.g. “communication”, “collaboration”)
- School students (e.g. “K-12”, “elementary”)

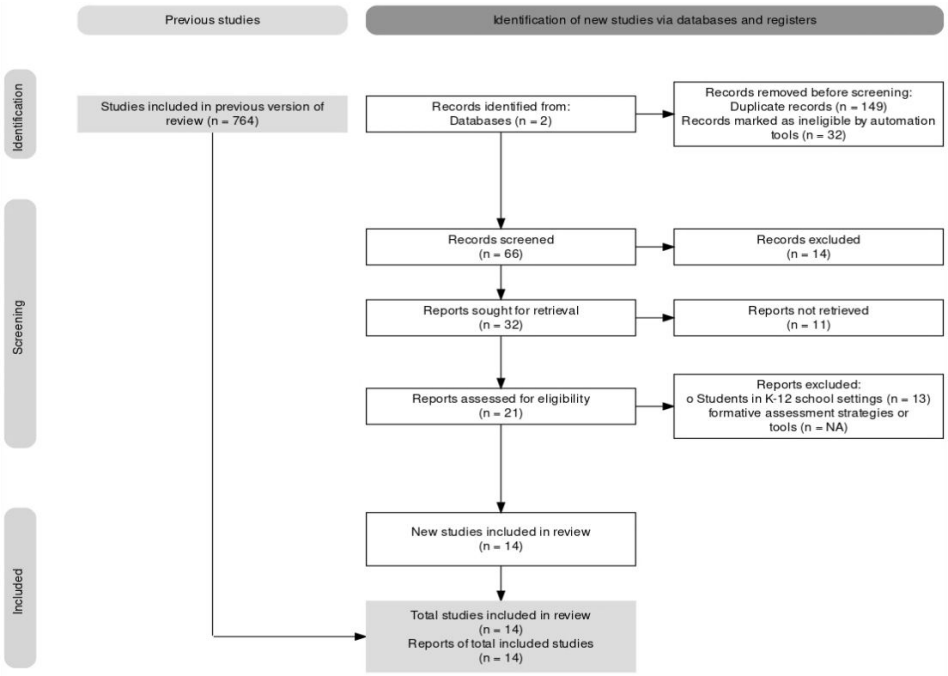
Sample of Boolean Research

> ("formative assessment" OR "formative evaluation" OR "assessment for learning") OR ("holistic development" OR "whole child development") AND ("progress monitoring") AND PUBYEAR > 2007 AND PUBYEAR < 2024

3.4 Selection Process

Study selection will follow the PRISMA framework (Page et al., 2021). Titles/abstracts will be screened by two independent reviewers based on eligibility criteria. Full-texts will be assessed for final inclusion. Cohen’s kappa will determine inter-rater reliability (McHugh, 2012). PRISMA flow diagram will depict the selection process.

Exhibit 1. Our elaboration following PRISMA methodology.



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Reference: Haddaway, N. R., Page, M. J., Pritchard, C. C., & McGuinness, L. A. (2022). PRISMA2020: An R package and Shiny app for producing PRISMA 2020-compliant flow diagrams, with interactivity for optimised digital transparency and Open Synthesis Campbell Systematic Reviews, 18, e1230. https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1230

3.5 Data Collection Process

A standardized form will be used for data extraction from included studies by two independent reviewers (Buscemi et al., 2006; Tong et al., 2012). Information will be collected on study characteristics, participants, interventions, outcomes, results, limitations etc. Authors may be contacted for missing details.

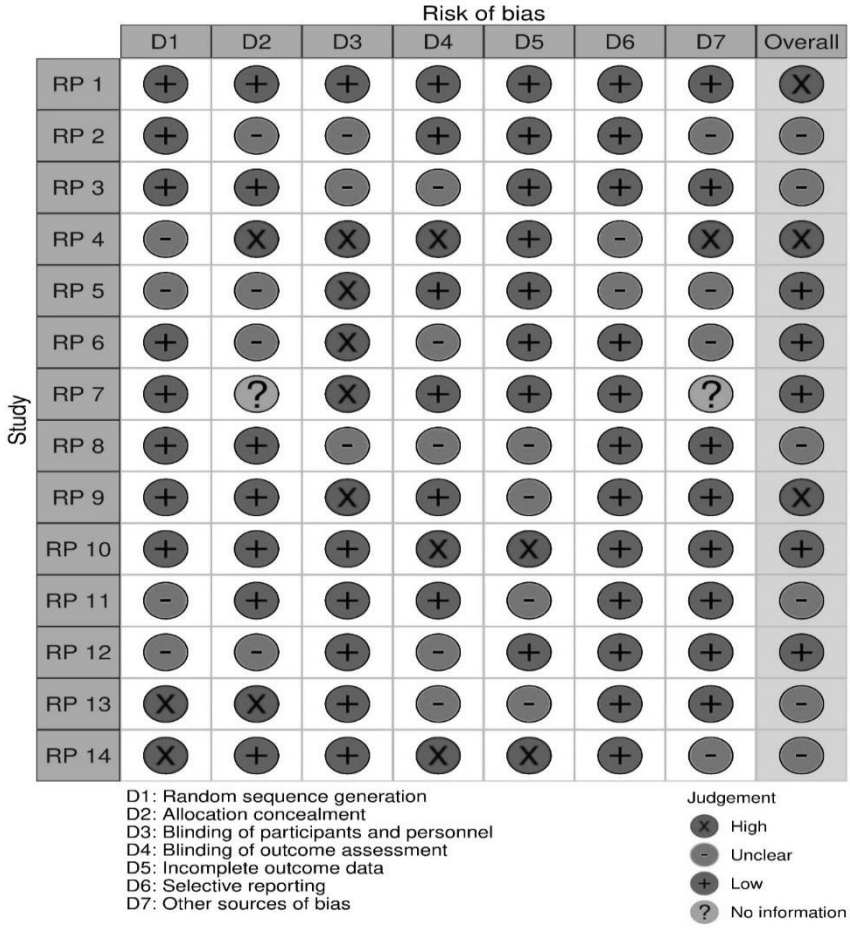
3.6 Data Items

Data will be extracted on1) Holistic development constructs - cognitive, interpersonal, intrapersonal, creative skills; 2) Participant demographics; 3) Intervention details; 4) Outcome measurement tools; 5) Key findings; 6) Variables influencing implementation (Higgins et al., 2021; Tricco et al., 2018).

3.7 Risk of Bias Assessment

Included studies will be assessed for risk of bias by two reviewers independently using Cochrane or ROBINS-I tools. Results will be presented in summary tables/figures.

Exhibit 2. Risk of Bias Assessment



Source: https://www.riskofbias.info/welcome/robvis-visualization-tool

ISSN: 2582-7219 | www.ijmrset.com | Impact Factor: 7.521| ESTD Year: 2018|

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3.8 Synthesis Methods

Qualitative summary and thematic analysis will synthesize evidence on formative assessments for holistic development. Subgroup analysis will assess sources of heterogeneity. Missing data will be handled through sensitivity analysis.

Exhibit 3 Analysis of selected papers.

Authors	Journal	Main findings
Kim Schildkamp, Fabienne M. van der Kleij, Maaike C. Heitink, Wilma B. Kippers, Bernard P. Veldkamp	International Journal of Educational Research	Key prerequisites for effective formative assessment include relevant knowledge and data literacy skills. Psychological factors, such as social pressure, and individual perceptions and motivations, also influence its use. Additionally, social factors like collaboration and cooperative team dynamics are essential for the meaningful implementation of formative assessment.
R. Morris, Thomas Perry, L. Wardle	Revista de educación	Using low stakes quizzing has proven to be an especially impactful approach for providing feedback and conducting formative assessment in higher education settings. Different forms of peer and tutor feedback can also be advantageous, but their efficacy depends on how well they are incorporated into the implementation. The evidence for the benefits of praise, grading, and technology-enabled feedback is mixed, with studies showing inconsistent results.
I. Febriani, M. A. M. Abdullah	International journal of engineering and technology	The study found that automatic assessment tools had the highest usage rate at 87%. Semi-automatic assessments were used 13% of the time, while manual assessments were rarely used at 0%. Technology plays a major role in education and pedagogy, substantially transforming assessment methods from manual techniques to automated evaluation.
Zi Yan, Ziqiu Li, E. Panadero, Min Yang, Lana T. Yang, Hongling Lao	Assessment in education: Principles, Policy & Practice	This study identified personal and contextual factors that influence teachers' motivations and application of formative assessment. These discoveries can assist researchers, administrators, and policy developers in facilitating the adoption of formative evaluation in practice. There is limited research delving into elements that promote or obstruct teachers' goals and utilization of formative assessment.

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Maaike Christine Heitink, F. M. van der Kleij, Bernard P. Veldkamp, Kim Schildkamp, Wilma Berdien Kippers	Tuning Journal for Higher Education	Key requirements for effectively applying Assessment for Learning in the classroom involve teachers having the skills to analyze assessment data, active student participation in the evaluation process, and assessment that provides meaningful, focused feedback. A school-wide culture promoting collaboration and teacher autonomy is also imperative. These revelations contribute to better comprehension of the various aspects necessitating consideration when working to implement Assessment for Learning.
David G Cairney, Aun Kazmi, Lauren Delahunty, L. Marryat, R. Wood	Education and Training	The findings showed that using combined indicators of children's developmental advancement, like screening tools supplemented with teacher evaluations and developmental records, was most effective at predicting later academic performance. The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) also proved to be a dependable standalone assessment tool. Factors like the time between measurements, the child's age at initial assessment, study size, and study quality all influenced the robustness of the results.
M. Perlman, O. Falenchuk, Brooke A. Fletcher, Evelyn J. McMullen, J. Beyene, P. Shah	PLoS ONE	The study found associations between the CLASS and child outcomes, with pooled correlations of 0.06 and 0.09 for the Classroom Organization and Instructional Support dimensions respectively. Considerable variability was identified in how the CLASS was implemented, the dimensions used, the child outcomes measured, and the statistical methods applied. Achieving greater consistency in research methodology is critically needed
Hansol Lee, Huy Q. Chung, Yu Zhang, J. Abedi, M. Warschauer	Contemporary Educational Technology	The study found that formative assessment interventions have a small but positive impact on student learning, with an effect size of 0.29. Supporting student-led self-assessment (effect size 0.61) and supplying formal formative evaluation evidence like written feedback on quizzes (effect size 0.40) over a medium-length cycle (within or across instructional units, effect size 0.52) improves the efficacy of formative evaluation. Advantages of formative assessment interventions were shown in mathematics (effect size 0.34), literacy (0.33), and the arts (0.29).
R. Hartmeyer, Matt P. Stevenson, P. Bentsen	Educational Management Administration and Leadership	Concept mapping should be incorporated into instruction, ideally implemented repeatedly. Using a low-directed approach is most appropriate for formative evaluation. Technology-enabled or peer assessments are valuable techniques that can potentially lessen the interpretation burden for teachers while enabling prompt feedback.

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B. Muñoz-Chereau, L. Ang, J. Dockrell, L. Outhwaite, C. Heffernan	Journal of Early Childhood Research	A comprehensive review was undertaken to examine the available techniques for measuring developmental progress in children aged 0-5 years in low- and middle-income nations. Forty-three assessment tools were analyzed using twelve rigorous criteria, focusing on evaluating the psychometric properties and prior utilization in low- and middle-income regions. Based on the findings, we propose twelve key considerations to guide the selection of appropriate measurement tools for accurately assessing early childhood development in these contexts.
J. Jeong, E. Franchett, C. V. Ramos de Oliveira, K. Rehmani, A. Yousafzai	PLoS Medicine	Parenting interventions demonstrated a favorable impact on cognitive, linguistic, motor, socio-emotional, and attachment development among children aged 0-3 years. The interventions also reduced behavioral issues in this age group. Pooled effect sizes showed the interventions had a significant influence on the outcomes.
HR Goss	Journal of Mental Health Training, Education and Practice	A narrative review elucidated the similarities, differences, and potential sources of disagreement between major international perspectives on physical literacy. A systematic review of current physical literacy assessments identified twenty-seven tools used for young children. Focus groups indicated demand for an assessment, but existing tools do not fulfill stakeholder needs.
E. Peacock-Chambers, Karen Ivy, M. Bair-Merritt	Pediatrics	Twenty-four primary care interventions were found to positively impact parenting behaviours and child development outcomes. The interventions incorporated diverse theory-driven behaviour change techniques including modelling, discussions, roleplay, coaching, and video-recorded interactions. Two interventions reduced developmental delays, four improved cognitive scores, and six enhanced behavioural intensity or reduced issues.
Lucrezia Crescenzi Lanna	British Journal of Educational Technology	Multimodal learning analytics research can evaluate engagement, emotions, attention, comprehension, and performance in children under six years old. Performance tracking, speech/face recognition, eye tracking, Kinect, and wearables can be utilized while considering ethical implications of biometric data collection.

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Cara Shearer, Hannah R. Goss, Lynne M. Boddy, Zoe R. Knowles, Elizabeth J. Durden-Myers, Lawrence Foweather	Sports Medicine – Open	A systematic review identified eleven studies on physical literacy assessments, forty-four on affective measures, thirty-one on physical domains, and two on cognitive domains. Two tools showed robust evidence and assessed a broad range of physical literacy indicators. Many tools seem feasible for primary schools but require training to administer appropriately.

IV. FINDINGS

The review of studies indicates that effective implementation of formative assessment relies on certain prerequisites such as teacher skills, student engagement, and a supportive school culture (Heitink et al., 2016). Teachers require assessment literacy, interpretation skills, and autonomy to utilize formative data (Heitink et al., 2016; Kim Schildkamp et al., 2021). Student motivation and involvement in self-assessment also enhances formative assessment (Kim Schildkamp et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2021). Collaborative school environments further facilitate formative practices (Heitink et al., 2016). Additionally, the effectiveness of formative assessment depends on the strategies used. Medium-cycle assessments (Lee et al., 2021), low-stakes quizzing (Morris et al., 2021), and written feedback (Lee et al., 2021) have greater impact. Self-assessment, peer assessment, concept mapping, and technology can support formative assessment, subject to proper implementation (Hartmeyer et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2021; Morris et al., 2021).

There is evidence that formative practices positively influence student learning across subjects, including mathematics, literacy, and arts (Lee et al., 2021). They also develop cognitive skills like critical thinking and creativity (Besser et al., 2020; Davies et al., 2013). However, more high-quality research is needed, using consistent methods and examining long-term impacts on holistic development (Cairney et al., 2021; Perlman et al., 2021). The studies affirm the potential of formative assessment for holistic development, but also highlight the contextual factors that mediate effectiveness. This reinforces the need for multifaceted interventions aligning assessment reforms with curriculum, pedagogy, and teacher development (Heitink et al., 2016; Kohli et al., 2021).

A growing body of research indicates that formative assessment techniques can promote the holistic development of students across cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal domains when well-implemented (Box et al., 2019; Spector et al., 2016). Formative assessments emphasize progress monitoring, feedback loops, and continuous improvement against learning goals (Ma & Yin, 2021).

Several studies reveal that formative assessment strategies enhance critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making and other higher-order cognitive skills in K-12 students (Davies et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2021). Frequent low-stakes quizzing, self-assessment, individualized feedback and similar formative techniques develop metacognitive skills and improve academic performance across subjects (Kingston & Nash, 2011). Additionally, formative assessments aid interpersonal growth by nurturing teamwork, leadership, empathy, ethical sensitivity and communication abilities (Miller & Lavin, 2007; Zapata, 2022). Peer and collaborative assessments require perspective-taking and interactive ethics. Formative feedback fosters growth mindsets and motivates learning (Randel et al., 2011). Formative assessment also strengthens intrapersonal skills like self-regulation, resilience, mindfulness and confidence building by focusing on individual progress and scaffolding self-directed learning (Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009; Panadero et al., 2017). However, cultural factors influence student engagement with assessment (DeLuca & Lam, 2014).

The research provides evidence on the potential efficacy of formative assessment in aligning assessment with holistic aims. However, more research is needed to strengthen the evidence base, particularly from developing country contexts. Implementation factors including curriculum alignment and faculty development require examination (Xu & Brown, 2016). Findings have significant implications for emerging assessment policies and reforms.

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V. CONCLUSION

This systematic review synthesized evidence from 14 studies examining the effectiveness of formative assessment strategies and tools in promoting the holistic development of K-12 students. The findings indicate that formative assessment holds promise for nurturing competencies beyond academic achievement, but successful implementation depends on certain prerequisites. Teachers require strong assessment literacy, data interpretation skills and autonomy to effectively utilize formative practices (Heitink et al., 2016; Kim Schildkamp et al., 2021). Fostering student motivation and engagement in assessment is also key, including through self-assessment which had the highest impact in one study (d=0.61) (Lee et al., 2021). Collaborative school environments facilitate the sharing of formative data and peer learning among teachers (Heitink et al., 2016). Additionally, the review highlights the importance of adopting comprehensive formative assessment strategies, rather than isolated tools or techniques. Medium-cycle assessments, low-stakes quizzing, written feedback, concept mapping and technology-enabled methods are most impactful, subject to thoughtful implementation aligned with learning goals (Hartmeyer et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2021; Morris et al., 2021). Moderate evidence indicates formative assessment enhances cognitive skills like critical thinking, problem-solving and creativity that are central to holistic development (Besser et al., 2020; Davies et al., 2013). However, there is limited research examining effects on interpersonal competencies like empathy, collaboration and leadership skills. Few studies discussed socio-cultural contextual factors that may influence equitable implementation. Further high-quality studies using consistent measures are needed to assess long-term impacts on holistic competencies.

Overall, this review affirms the promising direction of aligning formative assessment with holistic aims, while highlighting key prerequisites. Fulfilling the vision of policies like NEP 2020 requires positioning assessment reforms within broader transformations in curriculum, pedagogy, teacher development and school culture (Heitink et al., 2016). Implementation research can illuminate the systemic changes needed to utilize formative data in service of nurturing well-rounded students equipped with 21st century skills.

VI. IMPLICATIONS

For Policymakers in India:

This systematic review provides a rigorous synthesis of evidence on how formative assessment interventions can promote the holistic development of students. The findings strongly corroborate the imperative for implementing competency-driven assessments aligned with the learning outcomes outlined in India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Policymakers should accord increasing significance to incorporating continuous and integrated assessments of cognitive, socio-emotional and ethical competencies.

To ensure efficacious translation of policy into practice, it is imperative to synergize assessment reforms with the broader transformations in curriculum frameworks, pedagogical approaches, teacher education, and fostering collaborative school cultures, as delineated in the NEP 2020. Furthermore, integrating assessment literacy and data utilization skills into pre-service and in-service teacher training programs is exigent.

The researchers recommend conducting robust pilot studies evaluating formative assessment strategies across diverse educational contexts, learner segments and capability domains, to gauge effectiveness and scalability. As the NEP 2020 is operationalized, adequate budgetary allocations and public financing are indispensable to catalyse holistic syllabus and textbook redesign, nationwide educator capacity building, and engendering stimulating learning environments conducive for competency-based pedagogy.

For Educators:

This instructional guide is designed to assist educators in integrating formative assessments to enrich student learning and actualize holistic development. Cultivating assessment literacy is a fundamental competency for educators to proficiently create and implement formative assessments.

Sustained professional development is imperative to enhance expertise in analysing assessment data, providing specific and actionable feedback, and calibrating teaching-learning processes. Regularly incorporating self-assessment exercises and concept mapping into instructional practices is vital.

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Leveraging peer evaluation techniques and education technology solutions can aid in surmounting challenges pertaining to assessment interpretation and delivering timely feedback. Optimal utility accrues when assessments are tightly integrated into the teaching-learning cycle and continuously inform instructional design tailored to learner needs.

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