

Creative-Questions Method: Concerns And Suggestions

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THE much talked-about Structured Questions system will be partially introduced (only for Bangla 1st paper and Religious study) from the Secondary School Certificate examination 2010. It will be applied fully for all subjects from the SSC examination 2011 and from class VI to IX next year. The method will be renamed Creative Questions Method (CQM).

Clarifying the Concept of Creative Questions Method

Before presenting the perception of the different stakeholders, clarifying the concept of the present proposed method may be useful for the readers like me.

During 1950s, Benjamin Bloom, an educationist of Chicago University divided the objectives of learning into three broad domains: cognitive domain, affective domain and psychomotor domain. These domains focus respectively on the knowledge and ability to remember, think and process of logic; attitude, interest, emotion and reflection of understanding; and synchronizing the flow of attention and hands on practices.

Mr. Bloom classified the cognitive learning into 6 categories which arranged from easy to complex learning behavior. These are 1) Knowledge; 2) Comprehension; 3) Application; 4) Analysis; 5) Synthesis and 6) Evaluation. The proposed Creative or Structured-Question method synchronized these six categories in to four that are 1) Knowledge; 2) Comprehension; 3) Application and 4) Higher level of skills. The last category in fact happens to be a combination of analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

An explanation with examples of questions Knowledge

Here knowledge relates to the mental ability of remembering something specific studied earlier or any universal phenomenon. This includes definition, facts, terminologies, process, specific information (like dates, stories, events, personalities and places) rituals, classifications, principles of theory etc. The students will be able to remember the facts and figures, define, identify, find out, describe, select, find similarities etc. This is the lowest level of cognitive learning. Examples: Describe the facts and figures of the liberation war. Describe the

geographical characteristics of Bangladesh. Who was born in the desert of Mecca?

Understanding

This category demonstrates the level of understanding of any stories or text. Under this category the students will be able to explain the information, concepts and principles they learnt from the text. They will also be able to translate, explain with own language, conclude, prove, compare, differentiate, draw, visualize, rearrange, cite example, demonstrate and decide something in relation to the learning.

Examples: Compare the geographical characteristics of Hill Tracts area and Barisal region. Prove that the liberation war was a glorious event in the history of Bangladesh. Prove that the liberation war was the result of a long term struggle and movement; compare the process of separation of Pakistan and India and independence of Bangladesh; Why Hazrat Muhammad(SM) called as Al-Amin?

Application- Here application means the ability of applying the knowledge gained in the real life or practical situation. If this is achieved, the students will be able to classify, illustrate, expand, generalize, reconstruct any learning and solve any problem.

Examples: How the natural resources can be further explored and utilized for the overall development of Hill tracts people and Bangladesh? How Bangladesh can achieve its spirit of liberation war or goal of development? How Faithfulness and truthfulness can play a significant role in the life of human being? Explain on your own.

Higher level of Skills- After achieving this level of skills, the students will be able to analyze and synthesize the different parts of the whole text and establish relationship among the parts. This higher level of skills will include the ability of comparing, proving, summarizing, suggesting alternative; assessing, evaluating, rationalizing and criticizing the text. They will also be able to evaluate other issues and learning utilizing the gained knowledge.

Examples: What is your opinion about the measures taken by Bangladesh Government in order to utilizing the natural resources of Hill Tracts area?

Briefly assess the major steps taken by the Government to uphold the spirit of liberation war or Give your own opinion regarding the reasons and achievement of liberation war? Write 20 sentences on influence of science and technology on the students' life based on your own observation and analysis? Analyze the Human qualities of Muhammad based on the above statement.

Mention worthy, in each set of structured questions a stimulating text will be presented on the top.

Comments from the different stakeholders- I have tried to understand the pulse of the different stakeholders on this decision during the last two weeks through direct and telephonic interactions with them. Although the students, teachers and guardians consider the initiative as necessary, fruitful and creative one, they strongly feel discomfort at the moment as the teachers are not properly trained-up and equipped for conducting such a sophisticated method. I have directly talked to at least 5 trained teachers and none of them could explain the method satisfactorily and everybody expressed their inability and difficulty in complying with this method. Some of them already lost their materials provided to them during the training and even do not repent for that. They considered the two-day training on the method as inadequate and wastage of time and money to some extent. Students are afraid of the new system as because they are not habituated with this from the early stage.

Problems/Challenge to be encountered- The inorganic and unprepared imposition of the method may create the following problems in near future:

The result may fall down, particularly in the rural areas.

There will be crisis of competent examiners to assess the exam papers;

Both the students and teachers will face the crisis of sample of questions as the books are not prepared in congruence with the new method.

As this method may go against the vested interest of the corrupt and in-efficient teachers, they may try to sabotage the whole process which will jeopardize the notion of the method, and as a result the system may be refuted in future;

At the initial stage, the tendency of coaching, private tuition and use of guide books will be increased heavily which will impact on the daily life of poor families.

Suggestions- Based on the interactions with different stakeholders, the following measures can be suggested for the policy makers and implementers:

As suggested by the Review Committee, the method should be introduced fully from the SSC of 2011 with adequate logistical, academic and mental preparations of all stakeholders;

Systematic measures to be taken to prepare the students from class VI at present;

Both the Active Learning Process and Creative Assessment will be introduced;

The teachers will be re-trained and the duration of the training will be at least 8 days which will also include students centers active learning process(ALP);

There should be provisions of regular refresher training;

The books should be much more students-friendly and self explanatory with adequate attractive illustration so that the students can understand and internalize the text by themselves. It should contain examples of structured questions;

The whole implementation should be academically supervised, monitored and assessed by the well equipped school authority and 'guardians forum' as watch-dog;

The whole nation should be sensitized through a state led campaign with the help of civil society and NGOs; TV, radio, print media can be used for this;

A question-bank should be developed with the help of experts in active learning and creative assessment method.

In future, the provisions of the same basic curriculum and question-papers for the examinations to be introduced for all the boards in order to set the equal playing level field.

Conclusion- The method proposed for the nation is highly appreciable and should be introduced from SSC of 2011 with adequate academic and mental preparation of the Education Ministry particularly the teachers and students.

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