

Change the way we are nationally assessed

Tribune Editorial

Ideally, what is tested should be based on what is taught in the classroom. Assessments should be driven by curriculum.

In reality, what is taught in the classroom is based on what is going to be tested -- curriculum is driven by assessment. This culture of assessment-driven curriculum influences how things are taught in the classroom as well.

In the case of Bangladesh, the nature of examinations encourages rote memorisation, as simply regurgitating material is sufficient for students to score well in the tests.

Efforts in training teachers to teach differently will be in vain as long as the nature of the examinations remain as they are, especially given that so much importance is placed on scoring well in examinations.

Changing the culture of perceiving examination results with such high stakes is a long-term strategy, but as long as that culture does not change, what can be changed is the nature of the examination.

Accordingly, research must be conducted on figuring out what types of assessments are effective in discouraging rote memorisation in the classroom and instead, encourage critical and creative thought in the classroom. Open-book examinations and activity-based assessments are some strategies, but whatever strategies are chosen, they have to be cost-effective and scalable across the nation.

It is of no surprise that one of the top research priorities for the Australian Council for Educational Research is assessment.

Our education budget should consist of research funds needed to rethink assessments and our local educational research institutions should be mobilised accordingly.

If we change the way we are tested, we can change what we are taught and how we are taught, so that we can attain the skills necessary for the times that are, and times to come.