ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY

USMAN NOTES
www.usmannotes.com

Name:

Registration No.:

Course Code: 1697

Program: PGD

Semester: Autumn 2026

ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD

Course: Classroom Assessment (1697/ 5077) • Program: PGD

Semester: Autumn 2026

Assignment No. 1 (Units 1–4)

Total Marks: 100 • Pass Marks: 50

SOLVED ASSIGNMENT GUIDE

(For Study & Reference)

Note: This guide is prepared for study and reference purposes. Students are advised to read the relevant units of the course book and write their assignments in their own words.

USMAN NOTES www.usmannotes.com

Question 1: Assessment for Learning and Assessment of Learning (20 Marks)

Discuss the role of assessment for learning and assessment of learning in classroom teaching.

Introduction

Assessment is an inseparable part of classroom teaching. A teacher teaches, but teaching alone does not guarantee that learning has taken place; it is assessment that tells the teacher what students know, what they can do, where they are struggling and what should happen next. In modern assessment literature, two broad purposes of assessment are widely discussed: assessment for learning (AfL) and assessment of learning (AoL). Although both use similar tools such as questions, tasks, tests and observation, they differ in purpose, timing and in the way their results are used. Assessment for learning is formative in nature: it takes place during teaching and its evidence is used to improve learning while there is still time to act. Assessment of learning is summative: it takes place at the end of a unit, term or course and its results are used to certify achievement, award grades and report progress to parents and authorities. This answer explains the meaning of both ideas and discusses, in detail, the role each one plays in effective classroom teaching.

Assessment for Learning: Meaning and Main Features

Assessment for learning is any assessment whose first priority is to serve the purpose of promoting students' learning. The Assessment Reform Group in the United Kingdom, whose work popularised the term, described it as the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there. Three features stand out. First, AfL is continuous and happens inside ordinary lessons, not only at the end of them. Second, its evidence is used immediately: the teacher adjusts teaching and the learner adjusts his or her efforts. Third, it involves the learner actively, through self-assessment and peer assessment, so that students gradually learn to judge and improve their own work. Questioning, classroom dialogue, feedback without grades, success criteria shared with students, and short ungraded quizzes are its typical techniques.

USMAN NOTES www.usmannotes.com

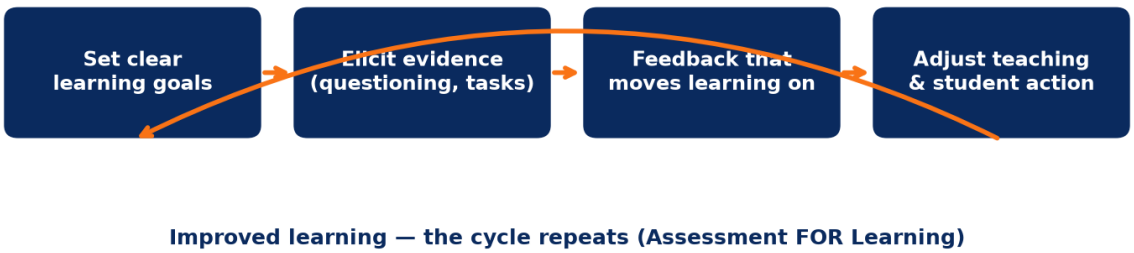


Figure 1: The assessment for learning cycle — evidence gathered during teaching is fed back to improve learning.

Role of Assessment for Learning in Classroom Teaching

1. It diagnoses learning needs in time

Because AfL happens during instruction, it reveals misconceptions and difficulties while they can still be corrected. If a teacher of class three discovers through questioning that most children are confusing the Urdu letters of similar shape, or that in mathematics they are adding the tens column before the ones, she can reteach that point in the next lesson instead of discovering the failure in the term examination, when it is too late to repair. Early diagnosis prevents small gaps from growing into permanent weaknesses, which is especially important in the early grades where later learning is built on earlier foundations.

2. It provides feedback that improves work

Research summarised by Black and Wiliam shows that feedback is among the most powerful influences on achievement, but only when it tells the learner what is good in the work, what needs improvement and exactly how to improve it. AfL turns assessment into such feedback. Comments like 'You have written the beginning of the story well; now add what happened next so the reader knows the ending' move learning forward, whereas a bare mark of 6/10 tells the child nothing useful. Over time, students exposed to descriptive feedback develop confidence and a belief that ability grows with effort.

3. It makes learning goals and success criteria clear

In AfL the teacher shares the learning intention with the class in child-friendly language — 'Today we are learning to write sentences that begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop' — and shows examples of good work. When students know what quality looks like, they can aim at it deliberately. Exemplars, models and checklists convert vague instructions such as

'write neatly' into concrete targets that young learners can actually pursue and check for themselves.

4. It involves students through self and peer assessment

AfL classrooms train students to assess their own work and, sensitively, the work of a partner against agreed criteria. A child who checks her own paragraph against a three-point checklist (capital letters, full stops, sense) is practising exactly the monitoring that skilled writers do. Peer assessment, conducted with clear rules of kindness and honesty, deepens understanding because explaining a judgement to someone else clarifies the criteria in the assessor's own mind. This builds independent learners rather than students permanently dependent on the teacher's verdict.

5. It guides the teacher's planning and pacing

The evidence from AfL is the teacher's planning tool. Exit slips, mini-whiteboard responses, observation notes and homework patterns tell her whether to move on, to reteach, to form a support group or to give extension work to fast learners. Teaching thus becomes responsive: the lesson plan is a starting point, not a script. In large Pakistani classes, quick whole-class techniques such as thumbs up/down, show of fingers for answer options, and sampling a few notebooks daily make this responsiveness practical even with forty or fifty students.

Assessment of Learning: Meaning and Main Features

Assessment of learning is the summative use of assessment: it summarises what a student has achieved at a defined point, usually the end of a unit, term or course, and expresses it as a mark, grade or level that can be reported and compared. Its audience is wider than the classroom — parents, school management, boards of examination and future institutions rely

on it. Its instruments include term examinations, standardised tests and final projects, administered under controlled, uniform conditions so that results are fair and comparable. Where AfL asks 'what is the next step for this learner?', AoL asks 'what has this learner achieved against the required standard?'

Role of Assessment of Learning in Classroom Teaching

1. It certifies achievement and supports decisions

AoL provides the trustworthy record on which important decisions rest: promotion to the next class, selection, scholarships, and the award of certificates. In Pakistan the annual examination and board examination results decide students' educational futures, so the certifying role of AoL cannot be wished away. A teacher's careful summative assessment at class level is the foundation on which these larger judgements are honestly built.

2. It reports progress to parents and the school

Report cards based on AoL communicate a child's standing to parents in a form they understand. A term result shows whether the child is keeping pace with class expectations and in which subjects he is strong or weak. For school heads and education authorities, aggregated AoL results reveal how classes and schools are performing and where resources or training are needed. Without periodic summative assessment, reporting would be mere impression.

3. It creates accountability and motivation

Known summative assessments focus effort. Teachers ensure the syllabus is covered systematically, and students revise and consolidate their learning in preparation. The prospect of a fair final test can motivate sustained study and gives hardworking students public

recognition of their success. Used wisely, this accountability supports standards; used excessively, it can narrow teaching to test rehearsal, which is why balance with AfL matters.

4. It evaluates the effectiveness of teaching

Summative results are also evidence about the teaching programme itself. If a whole class performs poorly on one topic in the final test, the teacher must ask whether the teaching of that topic was at fault. AoL therefore closes the loop of curriculum evaluation: it judges not only learners but the adequacy of content, methods and time allocation, informing improvement in the next term.

Relationship and Balance Between the Two

AfL and AoL are not rivals; they are complementary purposes served by the same assessment system, and good classroom teaching needs both. The difference lies not in the instrument but in the use made of the information: a unit test whose results are analysed to plan revision is functioning as AfL, while the same test filed only as a term grade functions as AoL. Problems arise when the balance is disturbed. In many Pakistani schools, assessment is almost entirely 'of learning' — monthly tests and term examinations whose marks are recorded but rarely analysed to change teaching. The result is that errors are measured but not repaired. The international evidence suggests the greatest gains come when the everyday formative use of assessment is strengthened while summative assessment is kept fair, valid and proportionate. A practical rule for the classroom teacher is: assess formatively every day, summatively at sensible intervals, and let summative results feed back into future formative teaching.

Conclusion

To conclude, assessment for learning and assessment of learning perform different but equally necessary roles in classroom teaching. Assessment for learning is the engine of improvement inside the lesson: it diagnoses needs early, gives feedback that students can act on, clarifies goals, involves learners in judging quality and steers the teacher's next steps. Assessment of learning is the record of achievement at the end of learning: it certifies, reports, motivates and holds the system accountable. A teacher who uses only AoL merely weighs the harvest without tending the crop; a teacher who uses only AfL cannot give an honest account of what has been achieved. Skilled classroom teaching integrates both, so that assessment becomes not an interruption of learning but one of its strongest supports.

Question 2: Evaluation and Measurement: How the Two Processes Differ (20 Marks)

How is the process of evaluation different from the process of measurement as a classroom teacher?

Introduction

In everyday school language the words measurement and evaluation are often used as if they meant the same thing, because both are connected with tests and marks. For a classroom teacher, however, confusing them leads to serious mistakes: a teacher may treat a mark as if it were a complete judgement of a child, or may make judgements without dependable evidence. Measurement and evaluation are related but clearly different processes. Measurement assigns numbers to a performance according to rules; evaluation interprets information, including measurements, and makes value judgements for decisions. This answer defines each process,

sets out their differences systematically, explains their relationship, and shows what the distinction means for a teacher's daily work.

The Process of Measurement

Measurement is the process of quantifying the attributes of a person, object or performance by assigning numerals according to definite rules. When a teacher marks a mathematics test out of twenty and a child scores fourteen, measurement has taken place: the child's achievement has been expressed as a number. The same happens when a teacher records height in centimetres, counts the errors in a dictation, times a reading passage or notes the percentage of attendance. Measurement is therefore descriptive and quantitative. Its quality depends on the instrument used: a good test or scale yields measurements that are reliable (consistent), objective (the same whoever marks) and precise. But measurement by itself is silent about worth. The number fourteen out of twenty does not say whether the performance is good or poor, satisfactory or alarming; it only states an amount.

The Process of Evaluation

Evaluation is the process of collecting and interpreting information in order to judge the value, quality or worth of something and to make decisions. It begins from objectives: what was the learning supposed to achieve? It gathers evidence — test scores, observations, work samples, reports — of which measurements are only one part. It then interprets that evidence against standards and criteria, forms a judgement (for example, 'this child has mastered the unit and is ready to proceed', or 'this teaching method is not working'), and leads to action: promotion, remediation, a change of method, or advice to parents. Evaluation is thus wider than measurement, includes qualitative information, and is essentially judgemental and decision-

oriented. A mark of fourteen becomes meaningful only inside evaluation, when it is compared with what was expected, with the child's previous performance and with the standard required.

Key Differences Between Measurement and Evaluation

Table 1: Measurement and evaluation compared

Basis	Measurement	Evaluation
Nature	Quantitative description; assigns numbers to performance	Qualitative and quantitative interpretation; judges worth and quality
Basic question	How much? How many? To what extent in numbers?	How good? How worthwhile? What should be done?
Scope	Narrow; covers measurable aspects of performance only	Broad; covers cognitive, affective and psychomotor outcomes and all relevant evidence
Use of standards	Uses a scale or scoring key, but makes no judgement of value	Necessarily compares evidence with objectives, criteria and standards
Objectivity	High; same result whoever measures, if the instrument is sound	Involves professional judgement; aims to be fair and evidence-based but is not purely mechanical
End point	Ends with a score, rank or measurement value	Ends with a judgement and a decision for action
Tools	Tests, scales, counts, timings, marks	All measurement tools plus observation, interview, records, work samples and reflection
Example	Ayesha scored 14/20 in the unit test	Ayesha's 14/20, her classwork and her progress since last term show she has achieved the unit objectives and needs extension work in problem solving

USMAN NOTES www.usmannotes.com

A Classroom Illustration

Consider a teacher assessing reading in class two. Measurement tells her that Bilal reads forty-two correct words in one minute and scored seven out of ten in the comprehension quiz. Evaluation begins when she places these numbers beside other evidence: last month he read thirty correct words per minute; his mistakes cluster on vowel sounds; he enjoys stories and volunteers to read aloud; the class benchmark for the term is fifty words per minute. Her evaluation — Bilal is progressing well, is close to the benchmark, and needs focused practice on vowel sounds — is a judgement no single number could supply, and it directly produces a teaching decision. The example shows the proper sequence: measurement supplies evidence, evaluation supplies meaning.

Relationship Between Measurement and Evaluation

The two processes differ, but they are partners, not opposites. Sound evaluation depends on sound measurement: judgements built on careless tests, biased marking or guesswork are worthless and unfair, so the teacher's first duty is to measure as accurately and objectively as possible. At the same time, measurement without evaluation is an unfinished act. Schools that only collect marks — in registers, result cards and files — but never interpret them for decisions waste the effort spent in testing. It can be said that measurement is a part and tool of evaluation: all evaluation uses measurement where measurement is possible, but evaluation also goes beyond measurement to include unmeasurable qualities such as interest, cooperation, creativity and attitudes, which are judged from observation and records rather than numbers.

Implications for the Classroom Teacher

- **Do not mistake marks for the whole child.** A single test score measures one performance on one day. Evaluation requires several kinds of evidence collected over time before a fair judgement about a learner is made.
- **Set objectives and criteria first.** Evaluation is always against intended outcomes. The teacher should know, before teaching, what achievement will look like and how it will be recognised.
- **Interpret results before recording them.** Ask what a score means: Was the test too hard? Was the topic taught well? Is the child improving? The same 50 percent may deserve praise for one child and concern for another.
- **Let evaluation end in action.** If evaluation does not change anything — no reteaching, no feedback, no support plan, no advice — it has not fulfilled its purpose, however accurate the measurement was.
- **Protect fairness.** Because evaluation involves judgement, the teacher must guard against bias, halo effects and first impressions, and must be able to show the evidence behind every important judgement, especially those reported to parents.

Conclusion

In conclusion, measurement and evaluation differ in nature, scope and purpose. Measurement is a technical, quantitative process that answers 'how much' and ends in a number; evaluation is a broader, judgemental process that gathers measurements together with other evidence, interprets them against objectives and standards, answers 'how good and what next', and ends in a decision. For the classroom teacher, the distinction is practical wisdom: measure carefully,

but never stop at measuring. The professional task is completed only when the numbers have been turned, through thoughtful evaluation, into fair judgements and better teaching.

Question 3: Formal and Informal Assessment (20 Marks)

What do you understand by 'formal' and 'informal' assessment. Illustrate with examples from classroom practices.

Introduction

Every day a teacher gathers information about learning in two different ways. Sometimes the assessment is planned in advance, conducted under set conditions, scored by fixed rules and recorded for official use; at other times it happens spontaneously inside the flow of the lesson — a question asked, a face watched, a notebook glanced at. The first kind is called formal assessment and the second informal assessment. Both are essential to good teaching, but they serve different purposes and have different strengths and limitations. This answer explains the meaning of each, compares them, and illustrates both with examples drawn from ordinary classroom practice, particularly in early years and primary classrooms.

Formal Assessment: Meaning and Features

Formal assessment is systematic, pre-planned and standardised assessment conducted according to announced procedures, with uniform conditions, fixed scoring and recorded results. It is usually given at the end of a unit, month, term or year, and its marks enter official records such as result cards and registers. Its main features are: it is announced in advance; every student faces the same tasks, time and instructions; marking follows a key or rubric; and results can be compared between students, classes and schools. Written examinations,

standardised achievement tests, monthly tests prepared from a blueprint, practical examinations and formally scored assignments are examples. Because conditions are controlled, formal assessment is expected to be reliable and fair, and its results carry weight in decisions about promotion, certification and reporting to parents.

Informal Assessment: Meaning and Features

Informal assessment is the unplanned or lightly planned, day-to-day assessment woven into teaching itself. It has no fixed time, no formal scoring key and usually no permanent record beyond the teacher's notes or memory; its results are used immediately to guide the lesson. When a teacher asks questions during explanation and judges understanding from the answers, watches children during group work, listens to a child read, checks a few rough notebooks while circulating, or reads the expressions on students' faces, she is assessing informally. Informal assessment is flexible, natural and continuous. It captures things formal tests cannot reach — participation, confidence, cooperation, language in use, strategies a child is applying — and because students often do not realise they are being assessed, it shows their typical rather than their best examination performance.

Comparison of Formal and Informal Assessment

Table 1: Formal and informal assessment compared

Aspect	Formal Assessment	Informal Assessment
Planning	Planned in advance with set date, paper and rules	Spontaneous or lightly planned within the lesson
Conditions	Uniform for all students; controlled time and setting	Natural classroom conditions; varies from child to child
Scoring	Fixed marking key or rubric; marks recorded officially	Teacher's on-the-spot judgement; usually unrecorded or noted briefly

Timing	End of unit, term or course	Continuous, during teaching and activities
Purpose	Grading, promotion, certification, reporting	Immediate feedback, adjusting teaching, guiding learners
Reliability	Comparatively high and checkable	Depends on teacher skill; can be subjective
Examples	Term examination, monthly test, standardised test	Questioning, observation, discussion, notebook glance, exit slip

Examples from Classroom Practice: Formal Assessment

- **Monthly mathematics test (Class 4).** The teacher prepares a twenty-mark paper from the month's syllabus with a marking scheme, announces the date, gives all students forty minutes, marks with the key and enters the results in the register. Parents see the marks on the monthly report.
- **Annual examination.** Conducted by the school under examination rules, with printed papers, invigilation and result cards; the outcome decides promotion.
- **Standardised screening in early grades.** An early-grade reading assessment administered individually to every child with the same passages and scoring rules, giving the school comparable data on fluency.
- **Formally assessed project.** Students prepare a science model against a rubric shared in advance (concept, presentation, explanation); scores are recorded as part of the term grade.

USMAN NOTES www.usmannotes.com

Examples from Classroom Practice: Informal Assessment

- **Questioning during a lesson.** While teaching subtraction, the teacher asks oral questions of different difficulty, notes who answers confidently and who hesitates, and decides on the spot to revise the borrowing step with two more examples.
- **Observation during play and group work.** In the kindergarten class the teacher watches the block corner, noting which children can build a stable tower, who shares materials and who still works alone — evidence of motor, social and cognitive development no written test could give.
- **Listening to reading.** During guided reading the teacher listens to each child read a few lines, mentally noting fluency and the kinds of errors made, and groups children for the next day's practice accordingly.
- **Quick whole-class checks.** Thumbs up, sideways or down; flashcards shown for instant answers; a one-question exit ticket ('Write one thing plants need to grow') collected at the door — these take two minutes and tell the teacher whether the lesson's point has landed.
- **Anecdotal notes.** The teacher jots a dated line in her diary — 'Fatima helped a crying classmate and explained the puzzle to her' — building an informal record of social development for the parent meeting.

Strengths, Limitations and the Need for Both

Formal assessment's strength is fairness and credibility: uniform conditions and recorded marks make its results defensible to parents and authorities, and it alone can certify achievement. Its limitations are equally clear: it samples only what can be tested in exam conditions, it comes too late to repair the learning it measures, it can create anxiety, and a single paper cannot show

attitudes, skills in action or growth over time. Informal assessment's strength is its immediacy and richness: it informs teaching minute by minute and reaches the whole child, including the affective and social domains. Its weaknesses are subjectivity and evanescence: judgements made in passing may be biased by first impressions, they are hard to verify, and if nothing is recorded the evidence is lost. The wise teacher therefore combines them: informal assessment steers daily learning, while formal assessment periodically verifies and certifies it, and the two together give a fuller, fairer picture than either could alone. In early childhood classes the balance tilts heavily towards the informal, because young children reveal their development best in natural activity; as students grow older, formal assessment gains a larger, though never exclusive, place.

USMAN NOTES www.usmannotes.com

Conclusion

To conclude, formal assessment is planned, standardised, scored and recorded assessment used mainly to grade and certify learning, while informal assessment is the continuous, flexible, judgement-based assessment embedded in daily teaching, used mainly to guide learning as it happens. One provides the official milestones; the other provides the steering. A classroom that relies only on formal assessment knows its students' marks but not their needs; a classroom that relies only on informal impressions cannot prove its standards. Effective teachers are fluent in both, choosing each deliberately for the purpose it serves best.

Question 4: Assessment Methods in Early Childhood Education (20 Marks)

Discuss different assessment methods used in early childhood education.

Introduction

Assessment in early childhood education (ECE) — roughly the years from three to eight, covering preschool, kindergarten and the early primary grades — cannot simply copy the examinations used with older students. Young children cannot show what they know through long written papers; their development is rapid, uneven and expressed through action, play, talk and drawing more than through writing. Assessment at this level must therefore be observational, continuous, play-based and focused on the whole child: physical, social, emotional, language and cognitive development together. Its purpose is not to rank or label children but to understand each child's progress, plan suitable experiences and share information with parents. This answer discusses the principal methods used: observation in its various forms, anecdotal records, checklists, rating scales, portfolios and work samples, interviews and conversations, documentation and photography, and developmental screening.

USMAN NOTES www.usmannotes.com

1. Observation

Observation is the foundation method of ECE assessment. The teacher systematically watches children in natural activities — free play, group tasks, meals, outdoor games — and notes what they do and say. Observation may be unstructured, where the teacher records whatever is significant, or structured, where she watches for particular behaviours such as sharing, counting or letter recognition. Because the child is unaware of being tested, observation reveals typical behaviour rather than performance under pressure. A teacher who watches a five-year-old in the block corner learns about her spatial reasoning, persistence, vocabulary and cooperation in a single episode — information spread across several developmental domains that no paper

test for this age could capture. Planned observation schedules, in which each child is the focus on a rotating basis, ensure that quiet children are not overlooked.

2. Anecdotal Records

An anecdotal record is a short, factual, written account of a single significant incident, noted as soon as possible after it occurs, with the date and context. For example: '12 October, water play. Ahmed filled and emptied three jugs, then said "The big jug holds more water," and poured it into two small jugs to check.' Anecdotes are objective — they describe what was seen and heard, not the teacher's opinion — and when accumulated over weeks they show patterns of growth, interests and needs. Class teachers in Pakistan often keep a diary or register copy for this purpose. Anecdotal records are particularly valuable for parent meetings, where concrete incidents persuade far better than general statements like 'he is improving'.

3. Checklists

A checklist lists specific behaviours, skills or milestones — for example, 'holds pencil with three-finger grip', 'counts objects to ten', 'ties shoelaces', 'waits for turn in conversation' — and the teacher marks each as observed or not observed, usually over a period. Checklists are quick to use, ensure that every child is checked against the same developmental expectations, and make gaps visible at a glance. They suit skills that are either present or absent. Their limitation is that they record only whether a behaviour occurred, not its quality or the context; a checklist is therefore best used alongside richer methods such as anecdotes and work samples, not as the sole record of a child's development.

4. Rating Scales

A rating scale goes one step beyond the checklist by indicating the degree to which a quality is present — for instance, social participation rated as 'always, usually, sometimes, rarely', or a numerical scale from one to four for speaking confidence. Rating scales are useful for qualities that develop gradually and cannot be marked simply present or absent, such as independence, concentration or language fluency. They allow progress to be tracked term by term. Their weakness is subjectivity: two teachers may rate the same child differently, so scales should have clear descriptions for each level and should be completed from observed evidence rather than general impression.

5. Portfolios and Work Samples

A portfolio is a purposeful collection of a child's work over time — drawings, early writing attempts, number work, photographs of constructions — selected to show growth. In ECE, the portfolio is the child's own story of learning: the wobbly first attempt at writing her name in September placed beside the confident writing of April demonstrates progress more honestly than any single mark. Work samples may be dated and accompanied by the child's own comment ('This is my house; the red is the door') and the teacher's short note on what the piece shows. Portfolios respect the fact that young children produce much of their best evidence in products rather than tests, and they delight parents, who can see development with their own eyes.

6. Conversations, Interviews and Language Sampling

Talking with children is an assessment method in its own right. Through conversation the teacher assesses vocabulary, sentence formation, reasoning and understanding: 'Why do you

think the plant bent towards the window?' A child's answer reveals science thinking and language together. Teachers also record language samples — exact quotations of what a child said — to track language development over time. Simple structured tasks in interview form, such as asking a child to count a set of counters, explain how she solved a puzzle, or retell a story from pictures, give dependable evidence about number concepts, problem solving and comprehension without the anxiety of a test situation.

7. Documentation, Photographs and Learning Stories

Photographs and short videos of children at work, displayed with captions describing what the child was learning, form the method known as documentation, widely used in the Reggio Emilia approach. A learning story is a narrative written to the child and family describing a learning episode, analysing what it shows and suggesting what might come next. Documentation makes learning visible to children themselves, who revisit their experiences and talk about them — itself a language and memory assessment opportunity — and it gives parents a window into classroom life. In low-resource settings a teacher's dated notebook sketches and notes can serve the same purpose when cameras are unavailable.

8. Developmental Screening and Standardised Tools

Alongside classroom methods, screening tools check whether a child's development is broadly on track in areas such as vision, hearing, motor skills and language, so that difficulties are identified early and referred for specialist help. In Pakistan, instruments such as the early learning development standards used in ECE programmes, and internationally known tools adapted locally, support this screening. Screening is not diagnosis and must never be used to

label or exclude a child; its proper use is early support. Teacher-made readiness tasks for school entry likewise belong to this family when used to plan help rather than to deny admission.

Suitability and Cautions in the Pakistani Context

Several of these methods fit Pakistani ECE classrooms particularly well because they need no expensive materials: observation, anecdotes, checklists and work samples cost only the teacher's organised attention. The challenges are real — large classes, untrained caregivers in some settings, and parental expectation of written tests and marks from an early age. Teachers must therefore explain to parents, through portfolios and anecdotes, why a page of evidence about their child is worth more than a rank in a class of forty. Assessment in ECE should also be in the child's home language wherever possible, since assessing a Sindhi- or Pashto-speaking child only in Urdu or English measures language barrier rather than development. Finally, all ECE assessment must remain low-stakes: its results guide teaching and support; they should never be used to fail, shame or permanently label a young child.

Conclusion

To conclude, assessment in early childhood education rests on methods that catch learning in action: observation and anecdotal records as its foundation, checklists and rating scales for systematic coverage, portfolios and work samples as evidence of growth, conversation and language sampling for thinking and speech, documentation for making learning visible, and screening tools for the early identification of needs. Together these methods respect how young children actually learn and develop, and they give the teacher and the parents a rich, truthful picture of the whole child — which is the real purpose of assessment at this level.

Question 5: The Portfolio as a Tool for Evaluating Students' Performance (20 Marks)

Portfolio is considered as a very effective tool for evaluating students' performance. Discuss with classroom examples from Pakistani context.

Introduction

A single examination answer shows what a student could do on one day, under pressure, on the questions that happened to be set. Teachers who want a fuller and fairer evaluation of performance increasingly turn to the portfolio: a planned collection of a student's work, gathered over time, that displays effort, progress and achievement. Because a portfolio contains real work produced in real learning — drafts as well as final pieces, early attempts beside later successes — it is considered one of the most effective tools for evaluating performance, especially where written examinations are narrow or unreliable. This answer explains what a portfolio is, the types commonly used, why it is effective, how it is organised and assessed, and illustrates its use with classroom examples from the Pakistani context, before noting its challenges and how teachers manage them.

What Is a Portfolio?

A portfolio is a purposeful, systematic collection of student work that tells the story of the student's efforts, progress and achievement in one or more areas of learning. Three words in this definition matter. It is purposeful: items are selected against criteria, not stuffed at random into a file. It is systematic: contents are organised, dated and maintained over a term or year. And it tells a story: the collection is meant to be read as evidence of growth, not merely stored. In Pakistani schools the portfolio usually takes the form of a card file, folder or bag kept in the

classroom for each child, increasingly supplemented in better-resourced schools by photographs of work that cannot be filed, such as models and charts. A complete portfolio normally contains a title page and contents list, the selected work samples with dates, the student's own brief reflections on some pieces, teacher comments, and sometimes checklists or rubrics used in judging the work.

Types of Portfolios

- **Working portfolio.** Contains everything in progress — drafts, rough work, unfinished pieces. It is the workshop of learning, mainly for the student and teacher's daily use.
- **Showcase (display) portfolio.** Contains the student's best finished work, selected largely by the student to display achievement with pride; often shown to parents and visitors.
- **Assessment (evaluation) portfolio.** Contains work selected by the teacher against set criteria, used to evaluate performance against syllabus objectives for reporting and grading.
- **Growth portfolio.** Deliberately contains early and later samples of the same skill side by side, so that progress itself is the evidence being evaluated.

Most classroom portfolios combine these purposes, but the teacher should be clear which purpose governs selection at any point; confusion between 'everything the child produced' and 'evidence selected for judgement' is the commonest cause of bulky, useless files.

Why the Portfolio Is Considered So Effective

1. It shows growth over time

Evaluation from a portfolio is evaluation of a journey, not a snapshot. When the first and last pieces are compared, improvement — or its absence — is directly visible and cannot be hidden

by one lucky or unlucky examination day. This makes portfolio evaluation fairer to slow starters and to children whose examination performance understates their real ability.

2. It samples performance widely and authentically

A portfolio can hold many kinds of evidence: written work in Urdu and English, mathematics exercises, drawings, project reports, photographs of practical work and records of oral performance. It therefore evaluates abilities that written tests cannot reach — creativity, practical skill, presentation, sustained effort — and it evaluates them in the conditions in which they were actually learned, which assessment specialists call authenticity.

3. It involves the student in evaluation

Selecting pieces and writing reflections ("I chose this story because my sentences are longer now; next I will work on spellings") teach the student to judge quality — the heart of self-assessment. The learner stops being a passive object of evaluation and becomes a participant who understands standards and owns his progress. This metacognitive benefit is unique to portfolios among common tools.

4. It communicates powerfully with parents

A mark of 48 percent tells a parent almost nothing; a portfolio shown at a parent-teacher meeting shows everything: what the child did in September, what he does now, and what the teacher plans next. In communities where many parents have limited schooling themselves, being able to see the work makes the school's judgement credible and enlists the family's support.

5. It improves teaching

Reviewing a class set of portfolios shows the teacher which objectives have been genuinely achieved, which were only superficially covered, and which children need what help. Portfolio review is thus programme evaluation at classroom level and directly improves the next term's planning.

Classroom Examples from the Pakistani Context

Example 1: Language portfolio in a government primary school, Punjab

In a class three of a government girls' primary school in a Punjabi town, the teacher keeps a simple card file for each child containing dated writing samples: the first attempt at writing about 'My Village' in September is a few copied lines with many spelling errors; by February the same child writes a full page in her own words about Eid celebrations, with sentences joined and only a few errors. Alongside are the term's dictation pages and a reading record. At the parent meeting the teacher opens the file and the mother — who cannot read English but follows Urdu — sees her daughter's growth before her eyes. The term's English/Urdu language grade is awarded from this body of evidence using a simple rubric, not from a single monthly test.

Example 2: ECE portfolio in a katchi class

In an early childhood (katchi) class, children cannot be examined in writing at all, so the portfolio is the evaluation. Each child's bag holds dated drawings (scribbles giving way to recognisable figures), name-writing attempts, leaf-print and collage work, and photographs taken on the teacher's phone of block constructions and role play. The teacher adds short anecdotal notes. When the head teacher and parents review development at term end, the

portfolio demonstrates physical, artistic, language and social progress in a way no mark sheet could, and it does so without subjecting five-year-olds to test anxiety.

Example 3: Science portfolio in a middle class, Sindh

A class seven science teacher in Sindh requires a portfolio containing the term's experiment write-ups, a labelled diagram collection, a group project report on water purification in the village, and the student's reflection on which experiment taught him most. Marks for the practical component of the term grade come from this portfolio judged against a rubric announced in advance. Students who perform poorly in timed written papers but work carefully in practical tasks receive due credit — and the teacher discovers that several 'weak' students are in fact competent scientists let down by examination technique, a distinction a paper alone would never have revealed.

Example 4: Portfolio in AIOU and teacher-training practice

The portfolio idea is also familiar in Pakistani teacher education: trainees compile teaching-practice portfolios containing lesson plans, worksheets they designed, reflections on observed lessons and supervisor comments. Allama Iqbal Open University's own practical and workshop components rest on similar evidence-of-work principles. Teachers who have built portfolios as students understand from inside why the tool evaluates performance more completely than a terminal test.

How Portfolio Performance Is Evaluated

For a portfolio to function as evaluation rather than storage, the teacher sets criteria in advance, often as a rubric: completeness of required pieces, quality of the work against syllabus standards, evidence of progress between first and final samples, presentation and organisation,

and quality of the student's reflections. Students know these criteria from the start. The teacher reviews portfolios at fixed points — monthly in brief, fully at term end — records judgements in a summary sheet, and discusses them with the student. Moderation with a colleague, even informally exchanging a few files, checks fairness. The final grade or report comment then rests on documented evidence that can be shown to any parent or official who questions it — a protection for the teacher as much as for the student.

Challenges and Their Management in Pakistan

Portfolios demand time and organisation, and in classes of fifty or more the files are physically bulky; the practical answers are inexpensive folders, a strict limit on required pieces (for example, two pieces per subject per month, chosen against criteria), and review in small batches across the month rather than all at term end. A second challenge is the pressure of the examination culture: parents and managements accustomed to marks may initially distrust portfolio grades, which is overcome by showing the evidence itself at meetings. Third, without clear criteria, portfolios degenerate into scrapbooks; the rubric and the rule 'every piece must earn its place' prevent this. None of these challenges cancels the tool's advantages; they define the professional skill of using it well.

Conclusion

The portfolio earns its reputation as a very effective tool for evaluating students' performance because it evaluates what examinations cannot: growth over time, authentic and varied achievement, effort and reflection, in evidence that students, teachers and parents can all see and discuss. The Pakistani classroom examples — the primary language file, the katchi class bag, the science portfolio — show that the tool needs no expensive technology, only

organisation, clear criteria and regular review. Used with discipline, the portfolio converts evaluation from a verdict delivered at the end of learning into a documented story of learning itself, which is fairer to the student and far more useful to everyone concerned.

USMAN NOTES
www.usmannotes.com