



‘I can literally see the bulb on their head light up! It’s just a question of giving teachers direction because they know their subject.’

Ruchi Sengar, resource person, Central Board of Secondary Education, India

How I am improving assessment in India

Ruchi Sengar explains how she is changing attitudes and assessment in India with the support of a British Council and Central Board of Secondary Education project.

Ruchi has been writing assessments for over six years, but she knows that the teachers she supports lack guidance on how to prepare students for exams that test their true competency in a subject.

After 26 years in the classroom, Ruchi decided to become her own boss as a freelance teacher trainer and test item writer. She got the assessment bug from a UK trainer whose session on writing test questions Ruchi attended three times, ‘I loved it!’ she says. The challenge and creativity of it appealed to her.

Ruchi later joined a competency-based education (CBE) training project led by the British Council and Central Board of Secondary Education and delivered by UK partners Cambridge and AlphaPlus. Ruchi describes the training as ‘fabulous’, explaining that introducing CBE is about changing attitudes.

Learning has to go ‘beyond students just mugging up’ for exams, she says. Schools are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of higher order thinking and competencies such as problem solving – skills that students will need in the real

world. Ruchi puts it simply: ‘They have to be able to think!’

But while teachers are more aware of these terms and ideas, too few know how to apply them in the classroom or have access to suitable resources. Thanks to her training, Ruchi can now help teachers to deliver high-quality competency-based teaching and learning and can write questions that get students to think instead of just recalling information.

But it’s not only about changing attitudes. Ruchi highlights the lack of good practice materials by telling of a student who approached her for advice on where to find relevant practice questions because neither she nor her teacher could find any.

Through the CBE project, teachers will have access to banks of materials. This will further support them to teach core skills like problem solving, preparing students for assessment and a future in the real world.

When asked what the impact of the project will be, Ruchi doesn’t hesitate: ‘Huge!’