

**CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT AS APPRAISAL TOOL FOR RECULTIVATING
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN
ABI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA**

BY

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Abstract

The paper examined continuous assessment as appraisal tool for recultivating academic achievement among secondary school students in Abi Local Government, Cross River State. The ex post facto design was adopted by the researcher since the major variables under study were not manipulated by the researcher in the course of the study. Simple random sampling technique was applied in the selection of two hundred (200) senior secondary school students as study sample. A twenty (20) item researcher-made instrument titled continuous assessment and academic achievement questionnaires was used in the collection of relevant data. Two hypotheses were stated to guide the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The result of data analysis revealed that continuous assessment is a reliable tool for enhancing secondary school student's academic achievement. It was recommended amongst others that, continuous assessment as appraisal tool should be used to recultivating student's academic achievement. Finally, students should update their knowledge about continuous assessment to boost or improve their learning process or ability.

Keyword: Continuous assessment, appraisal, recultivating, academic, achievement, secondary, school, students.

Introduction

In order to reform the educational system, the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2004, reviewed the National Policy on Education. One of the highest points in the policy instrument was the emphasis laid on continuous assessment in various levels of education and programmes. Before continuous assessment was introduced in secondary schools, the old system of assessment was summative, that examination was done only at the end of the year. Also, the summative system of assessment only made use of class test, while take home assignment, class assignment and project were hardly used in assessing a learner. In

the old system only the cognitive domain was assessed, that is, only the intellectual ability was examined. The affective domain, interest, attitude, feelings, emotions of the learner were ignored in the assessment. Also, the psychomotor domain was not considered, at all continuous assessment was introduced in schools following the adoption of 6-3-3-4 system of education.

The intention was to make assessment of the learner more reliable, valid, objective and comprehensive. Since the emphasis is on the totality of learning, it becomes necessary to evolve and use an assessment system that will consider all aspects of teaching, an effective continuous assessment produces and reduces such incidence as do or die affair, owing to the fact that assessment is summative, learners are tempted doing everything within their reach to ensure their promotion to the next class thereby increasing the rate of examination malpractice. Continuous assessment emphasizes more on comprehensive information on the cognitive, affective and psychomotor measures of an individual if well implemented. This will also make learning more meaningful to the children and essential for independent living and meaningful contribution of the effective life of the society. The old system of assessment was single and teachers never encouraged the implementation of continuous assessment because to them it was burdensome and time consuming. Also there is a problem of unqualified personnel to implement and operate the continuous assessment method. Therefore, this impression on the system of education has induced the researcher to investigate teachers' continuous assessment practice and achievement of students in secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area of Cross River State.

In the Nigerian educational system, two sets of assessments are used on evaluate the level of students' achievement. These are the continuous assessment (periodic course assessment) and the final examination assessment. This replaced the one short system of assessment, which was observed to have several shortcomings (Michael and Odeno, 1994). Some of the shortcomings are lack of diagnostic and guidance oriented properties, creation of emotional problems, low context coverage and high rate of examination irregularities.

According to Danjuma (2004), Continuous Assessment in the educational system serves several purposes, which include the following:

- i. To provide more valid and reliable assessment of the student overall ability.
- ii. To enable teachers to be more flexible and innovative in their teaching.

- iii. To provide basic guidance for students.
- iv. To reduce examination malpractice, and
- v. To aid students performance and achievements.

The Continuous Assessment policy requires that students be assessed through both Continuous Assessment and terminal assessment to evaluate in the progress and growth of students.

Odie and Ajuar (1995), asserted that Continuous Assessment takes account of all the child's performances in tests, assignments, projects and other educational activities during a given period of term, semester, year or during the entire period of an educational level. Teachers often take crucial decision on the promotion of students to the next class, identification of students who need remedial help and for grading and certification of students. Therefore, Continuous Assessment directly affects students' achievement and was why the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Technology trailing the same pathway of the exercise of Continuous Assessment and encouraging its practice observed that assessing the teaching/learning process is an integral part of the curriculum in which the teacher must be fully involved.

Therefore, Continuous Assessment practice by teacher is a way of obtaining the most value assessment of the capabilities of a student. This is because it is an aggregate of all the achievement of a student from the beginning of the course to the end of it, which determines the final achievement.

Continuous Assessment is mainly teacher-oriented, that is why in some countries, and it is referred to as "Teacher Assessment Federal Ministry Of Education (2005).

The objectives of a lesson have been categorized into three broad areas called domains. There are cognitive domains, the affective domain and the psychomotor domain. The cognitive domain is concerned with knowledge and its use. The affective domain deals with emotional responses such as interest, appreciations, attitudes, feelings and values that one may attempt to teach through the lessons. The psychomotor domain is concerned with physical, motor and manipulative skills (National teachers Institute, 2006).

- A. Test: The major and the most useful instrument for the assessment of cognitive behaviour, which are tests are written down questions to be answered by students.

According to Nitko (1994), testing and examining are the most formal assessment methods. Learning experience is represented by quantitative marks. It could come in the multiple choice or essay form, which students are expected to answer, it is their responses to the questions that give the measure of the level of achievement of performance. Measurement is the process of assigning the marks.

- B. **Assignments:** These are specific tasks meant to complete within a short time. They are usually meant to reinforce a previous lesson or to prepare for a forthcoming one. According to Ango (2007), assignments provide students the opportunity to practice an independence work. The objective of assignment must be stated, and then assignment will follow the same procedure as for other written works. The objective of assignment must be stated and then assignment will follow the same procedure as for other written.
- C. **Observation:** This is a very important procedure for psychomotor and affective domains, the teacher can learn a lot about the child's interest, attitude and ability to accomplish a particular task through observation. It is a technique of gathering information; the teacher will be better disposed to include such information in the students' report. Federal Ministry of Education (2005) pointed out that the technique has the advantage of giving a record of actual behavior of the child, which would be free from teacher's bias interpretation.
- D. **Interview:** This technique provides for direct observation, the student is confronted by the observer, councilor or teacher and this confrontation could result in students being more cautious in the way they answer questions than they will normally be. According to Nwaeze (2008), interviews may be either structured or unstructured. In the structured interview, the interview schedule, which contains set of questions to be asked in specific order are used. The answers are written down or recorded while in the unstructured interview, the order and the context form of the questions are not specified but the general idea of what is expected is known by the interviewer. The interviewer encourages the interviewee to expand on his answers by asking leading questions.
- E. **Checklist:** Checklist consist essentially of the listing of steps, activities, behaviours' or statement associated with a given behavior of students traits that observer records

when incidents occur. With checklist, a teacher can determine whether or not a particular behavior trait or characteristics are present or absent. Checklist can be utilized effectively in assessing affective and psychomotor domain or behavior of students towards their achievement in school.

- F. **Projects:** This is another instrument used for measuring achievement. Projects can be used for the measurement of achievement in the cognitive affective and psychomotor domains according to Barday and Breheny (2001); “project work involves collection and analysis of data, engaging in open-ended experiments. Identifying and endeavoured to solve problems in biological concept of learning and investigation underling concepts and principals.
- G. **Questionnaires:** Questioning students orally in a formal situation make them anxious. They may be worried about why they are being questioned, what they are expected to say and how their responses will be interpreted. Questionnaires are instruments that present information to respondent in writing or through the use of pictures and then require a written response, a tick, a circle, a word, a sentence or several sentences (National Teachers Institute, 2006).

According to Emmanuel (2003), questionnaires can be structure or open-ended. In the structured questionnaire, the respondent is required to select one or more responses from alternatives. The open-ended format gives the respondent freedom to answer in his own words. Teachers can get information relating to students’ attitude, interest, studying habits and personal characteristics with the use of questionnaire and as determine students’ achievement.

Statement of the Problem

Continuous Assessment is one of the new concepts introduced in the Nigeria educational systems with the new national policy on education in short it is an in rural part of the new system of education otherwise, educational process. A teacher must make some measurements of the extent to which the learning experience of students have enabled them, achieve the stated objectives if the course of study. It is also believed that the changing needs and attitude of individual children call for a continuous evaluation of such needs and trials in order to enable the children understand themselves better. Scholars have looked at the issues of the attitude of students towards assessment in educational system and have

seem that the success education will ever offer is seriously tied to the facilities relevant to it. Continuous Assessment was meant or designed to predict future student's performance in the final examinations and the possible success of individuals at the work place or on a particular job, but it is worrisome that the reverse is the case that teachers no longer see Continuous Assessment as a tool for final judgment in examination.

The research work is designed to investigate the attitude and competence of teachers to conduct Continuous Assessment in selected secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area of Cross River State. This study will examine the problem of the implementation of the Continuous Assessment encountered by teachers in our secondary schools and the useful suggestions to relevant authorities.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine Continuous Assessment as appraisal tool for re-cultivating among secondary school students in Abi Local Government Area of Cross River State, the study attempted to achieve the following objectives:

1. Examine the method teacher's use in assessing student.
2. To find out how Continuous Assessment as appraisal relate to student's academic achievement.

Research Questions

The researcher formulated two (2) research questions to guide the study: The questions include:

1. To what extent does method of assessment relate to students academic achievement?
2. To what extent does teachers' view of Continuous Assessment as appraisal relate to students achievement?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between method of assessment and students' academic achievement.

2. Teacher's view of Continuous Assessment as appraisal tool does not significantly relate to students achievement.

Methodology

The research design chosen for this study is survey research design. According to Isangedighi (2004), survey research involves the collection of data to accurately and objectively describe the existing phenomena. Studies that make use of this approach are employed to obtain a picture of the result conduction of a particular phenomenon. Smith (2001) described the survey research as that which is directed towards determining the nature of a situation as it exists at eth time of investigation. Ndiyo (2005) went further to described it as a type of research design that studies large and small populations to discover the relative incidence, distribution and interrelationship between sociological, technological and psychological variables whether tangibles and or construct.

This research study is conducted in Abi Local Government Area Of Cross River State. Abi is in the Central Senatorial District of Cross River State; it is located Across the Cross River in Cross River State; it is bounded in the east by the Ikwo Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, in the North by Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State, in the South Biase Local Government Area of Cross River State, and in the West by Afikpo Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. The people of Abi come from mainly three different ethnicities such as Agbo, Bahumono and Ima-bana from which the name "Abi" becomes an acronym.

The population of this study is majority senior secondary schools (SS2 and 3) biology students of private and public secondary schools in Abi Local Government Area of Cross River State. This population is estimated to be about 2000 students in Abi Local Government Area Education Authority (2015). Out of the secondary schools chosen via, community secondary school Adadama; Agbo comprehensive secondary school, Eboronyi, Edanafa comprehensive secondary school, Ediba; comprehensive secondary school Imabana, community secondary school, Itigidi. These were chosen among the three ethnicities via Agbo, Bahumono and Imabana.

Purposive sampling technique is a non probability sampling method and it occurs when "dements" selected for the sample are chosen by the judgment of the researcher. The

researcher believed that he can obtain a representative sample by using a sound judgment, which will result in solving time.

The major instrument used for data collection was questionnaire designed by the research title: Continuous Assessment Appraisal Tool and Secondary School Students Achievement (CAATSSSA).

These items constructed to collect information to examine Continuous Assessment As appraisal tool for re-cultivating academic achievement among secondary school students. The instrument is developed by considering variables involved in the study. Each questionnaire was given scale point of one (1) for “Yes” and Zero (0) for “No” for the 10 items, the number of items that comprises each of the four variables are: method of continuous assessment on achievement of student’s teacher’s view of continuous.

The questionnaire was administered personally by the researcher through a strict permission or authority of the principal of the chosen school with the help of biology teachers. The items were distributed to senior secondary schools II and III students in each of the school, the completed questionnaire were retrieved from students after filling. Analysis of data was done with a statistical tool called Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis. With this, student’s responses were counted and the number of respondents calculated for each variable. The analysis was base on hypothesis-hypothesis presentation. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance, 198 degree of freedom and 95% confidence interval. Summary of data analysis is presented in table 1 and 2 below:

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation of the relationship between teacher method of continuous assessment and students’ achievement

Variables	$\sum x$	$\sum x^2$	$\sum xy$	Cal. R –value
Teacher method of continuous assessment (x)	2672	38212		

38299 000*

Students' achievement (y) 2770 40728

*P<0.05, df=198

Table 1 show that the significant level of 000 was less than the P-value 0.138 at 0.05. Also the r-coefficient value of 0.530 implies a positively high relationship, with this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that teachers' method of teaching has significant.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation of the relationship between teacher's perception of continuous assessment and students' achievement (N=200)

Variables	$\sum x$	$\sum x^2$	$\sum xy$	Cal. R –value
Logistics for continuous assessment (x)	2704	38432	38192	352*
Students' achievement (y)	2770	40728		

*P<0.05, df=198

The statistical analysis in 4.2 above showed that at .05 level of significant, the null hypothesis was rejected. That calculated r-value also indicates (strong) and positive relationship between logistics for carrying out continuous assessment and academic achievement of student.

The results of findings can be summarized as follows:

- i. There is significant relationship between teacher's method of continuous assessment and achievement of student.
- ii. There is significant relationship between teachers' view of continuous assessment on achievement of students.

Discussion of Findings

This research work is aimed at determining continuous assessment as appraisal tool and secondary school student's achievement in Abi Local Government Area of Cross River

State, two hypotheses were stated and tested on the response obtained from the instrument. Data obtained from table 1 were analyzed in accordance with the stated hypothesis.

Result presented in table 1 revealed a significant difference in academic achievement of students exposed to different methods of continuous assessment.

That student's exposed to different method of continuous assessment performs significantly better than those not exposed to methods of continuous assessment. This might be due to the fact that exposure to continuous assessment motivates the students to read harder as they have to spend time to prepare for each of the continuous assessment.

The result is in line with the findings of Ango (2004) and Nweaze (2008), who reported that student's tend to perform better when exposed to more drills.

Result from table 2 revealed that their relationship between teacher's views of continuous assessment and academic achievement among secondary school students. Here, teacher's view continuous assessment as a work tool which provide more valid and reliable assessment of the student's overall ability. It enables teachers to be flexible and innovative in their teaching. According to Yoloye (2008), in his recommendation stated that teacher's were expected to shoulder the major responsibilities for continuous assessment since teacher's were closer to the student's in and outside the classroom as a result they stood a better chance of assessing the overall development.

Recommendations

The Ministry of Education should put in place regulations, checks and balances to ensure that different continuous assessment strategies are used both in government funded and privately owned secondary schools. A uniform policy on this practice should be emphasized so that all schools benefit from it.

Higher institution of learning should train teachers on how to use continuous assessment strategies for their implementation in secondary schools. It was found out through interviews and focused group discussions that teachers complained of the many problems they found as they attempted to implement continuous assessment. Therefore, the training should focus on how teacher can carry out continuous assessment in different teaching and learning stations with ease.

Finally, given the complexity of classroom assessment and evidence relating to teachers skills and practice in this area (biology), there is an obvious need for development of an infrastructure equipment with laboratory apparatus to support improvement of it quality. Therefore, regular practical, field trips etc. be constantly organized for students and teachers to update their knowledge of the process involved in the implementation of continuous assessment to further boost the realization of learning and achievement of students lesson.

Conclusion

Drawing on teachers' and students' perception, there were many continuous assessment strategies used in other to have a positive relationship in students' achievement in final examination. This is because through continuous assessment, teachers tend to realize their own weakness in teaching their students and strive to ameliorate them. Good application of continuous assessment using different strategies would be of help in moving towards accomplishing learning objectives and restoring greater confidence within the students. Enhance achievement of students and culminate the reduction of the incidence failing and/or examination malpractice or pay money to gain promotions, as students would have been well prepared for examination through continuous assessment.

However, the contribution should not only be looked at as improving students achievement but also as determining students' current level of knowledge, skills or understanding of content.

Educational Implication

Teacher in making effective teaching learning process should use continuous assessment to stimulate and maintain interest of learners as well attract their attention in details, creates learners willingness to participate in classroom activities, and out-of-class activities e.g. collection of materials, excursion trips etc. develop ability to handle delicate objects and instrument/equipment with care, and ability to inquisitiveness and assiduity by repeatedly test and assignment on areas of prime relevance. This will also enable active participation on part of students and as well as achievement.

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