



**A SURVEY ON THE AWARENESS OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT
GUIDELINES AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN KANO
MUNICIPAL EDUCATION ZONE**

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Abstract

This study examines the level of the awareness of continuous assessment guidelines among secondary school teachers in the Kano Municipal Education Zone. Survey research design was employed to conduct the study. The population consists of all the senior secondary school teachers of the zone. Three objectives and three research questions were formulated to guide the study. To find out the extent to which teachers are aware of continuous assessment guidelines. The population consists of 1387 teachers and a sample 280 respondents was selected. The instrument used in collecting data is a self-designed questionnaire. Data collected were analyzed using simple frequency count and simple percentages. The findings revealed that teachers are aware of continuous assessment guidelines. They use teacher-made tests and assignment as the tools to practice continuous assessment. Based on these findings, recommendations were offered. It is recommended that teachers should include other assessment tools for continuous assessment. In addition, school administrators as well as the Kano state senior secondary schools management board should organize refresher courses such as seminars, workshops and conferences or even in-house seminars from time to time for teachers.

Key words; Continuous assessment tools, Guidelines for continuous assessment, Adherence for continuous assessment guideline

Introduction

Continuous assessment is a special type of assessment which involves the classroom teacher to complete records, conduct assignments and tests, mark and grades these tests and assignments at some specific intervals, observe the behavior of learners and take possible judgments. Assessment is very important in classroom teaching and learning. It determines

the readiness to learn, the preparedness to teach and the worthiness of what is going to be learned. It enables teachers to take a decision on such things as the performance of students, the problems students encounter in learning, the problems they encounter in teaching, the relevance of teaching methods and so on. Continuous assessment is as a formative mode of evaluation that is, in ideal form, systematic, comprehensive, cumulative and guidance oriented. Because of these characteristics, continuous assessment is acclaimed to be a progressive and objective method of evaluating the learner's achievement and gains from class instruction and indeed, their general development physically, mentally, socially, morally culturally and spiritually as well as their acquisitions of manipulative and movement skills, particularly where it is properly and fully implemented (Anikweze, 2005). Based on the facts that every individual student is unique and possesses personal ability to learn, make progress and excel in his academic achievement, vocational interest and persona-social concerns, school assessment system should develop the multiple intelligences and potentials of each student. The National Policy on Education (2004), therefore, recommends a change in assessment practices, i.e. Assessment for Learning and Assessment of Learning, in other words, formative and summative assessments. Schools should put more emphasis on assessment for Learning as integral part of the learning, teaching and assessment cycle. It was against this background that a Continuous Assessment component was added to both Basic School Certificate Examination (BSCE) and the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE).

The Concept of Continuous Assessment in Education

Understanding the concept of continuous assessment makes implementation easier. To some, it means a summative mark or score added to the final examination to certify students. Some believe it to be a diagnostic and formative evaluation of student learning. Assessment is the process of setting and planning data for investigating the status of an individual or group usually with reference to expected outcomes (Lawan, 2011). Assessment is also the procedure by which evidence of expected behaviour is collected with the aid of tests and some other tools or methods. It is being done frequently to determine the level of the pupil's achievement (Akinade, 2004). The concept of continuous assessment has been defined by different scholars. In its simplistic way, it can be described as a systematic and regular method of determining what a learner has gained from learning activities (Osuji, 2010). It is a

method of obtaining the final grade of the learner over a given period of time in terms of knowledge, thinking and reasoning, character development and initiatives (Adeloye and Alhamdu, 2005). Continuous assessment is also defined by (Lawan, 2011) as a method of obtaining information on what a student gains from schooling in terms of knowledge, industry and character development. It takes into account students' performance in tests, assignments, projects and other educational activities during a given period like weekly, termly and yearly or the entire period of the educational level. (Ogunniyi, 1990) viewed it as a formative evaluation procedure concerned with finding out, in a systematic manner, the over-all gains that a student has made in terms of knowledge attitudes and skills after a given set of a learning experiences.

A handbook on continuous assessment by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (1988, as cited in Alaebo, 2005) defined continuous assessment as a method of finding out what school children have benefited from learning activities in terms of knowledge, thinking, reasoning character development and industry. Denga (1983) stated that continuous assessment means the total evaluation of the pupil on the basis of their curriculum and non-curriculum activities in and outside school. Denga's view means students are evaluated on the basis of planned and unplanned activities within and outside of the school system. This provides a true assessment of student academic and non-academic achievements. This view gave room to various assessments covering the three essential domains, that is the cognitive, the affective and the psychomotor.

According to Falayajo (Sa'ad, 2010), the continuous assessment of learners progress could be seen as a mechanism whereby their final grading in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of learning systematically takes account of all their performance during a given period of schooling. Assessment in the cognitive domain is associated with the process of knowledge and understanding. The affective domain applies to characteristics, such as attitude, motive, interest and other personality traits. The psychomotor domain involves assessing the learner's ability to use his or her body in games and sports activities (e.g. physical health education). In this view, student performance (academic, vocational, attendance, participation, etc.) is gradual and summarized systematically in the student terminal assessment or report card. Continuous assessment is also defined by Anikweze (2005) as:

A formative mode of evaluation that is, in ideal form, systematic, comprehensive, cumulative and guidance oriented. Because of these characteristics, C.A. is acclaimed to be a progressive and objective method of evaluating learners' achievement gains from class instruction and indeed, their general development, morally, culturally and spiritually as well as their acquisitions of manipulative and movement skills, particularly where it is properly and fully implemented.

Another definition by Airisian (1991) describes it as an assessment approach, which should depict the full range of the sources and methods teachers use to gather, interpret and synthesize information about learners. It is a kind of information that is used to help teachers to understand their learners, plan and monitor the institution and establish a viable classroom culture. Briefly, we can say that continuous assessment concerns not only the cognitive aspect of the development of a child but also the affective and the psychomotor domains tested through various activities that have been systematically planned.

The Techniques of Continuous Assessment

The techniques and modes of assessment largely depend on the classification of the objectives of a particular assessment in which the behaviour of the students to be assessed are stated.

The National Policy on Education has popularized continuous assessment in the light of the 6-3-3-4 system of education has philosophically stated that educational assessment and evaluation shall be liberalized by putting them in whole or parts on the continuous assessment of the progress of the individual, (NPE, 2004: 4).

Adeloye and Alhamdu (2005: 254 - 255) identified the techniques and modes of assessing what is to be assessed. These are:

Psychological tests: These involve the application of standardized achievement and intelligence tests, interest inventories and personality projections. These are administered at predetermined intervals to collect data on learners. Teachers who are trained can use them for placement services. Teacher-made tests: This is almost the only one used by teachers in our schools for continuous assessment. In this technique, students are given tests periodically after a section of the course has been covered. The essay and objective type tests are usually administered. The guidelines governing these tests must strictly be applied if the desired

result is to be obtained. Observational techniques: Some aspects of learner's behaviours cannot be validly and reliably assessed by test methods. Attitude, values relationships and beliefs may be assessed through observation. It may be conducted inside or outside of the classroom. Another integral part of continuous assessment is assignment. Assignments: An assignment is a specific task presented to the learner to be accompanied within a specified short period of time. It could be in the form of library research to obtain specific information, solving mathematical exercise or given answers to particular questions. Questionnaires: A questionnaire is a series of questions presented to the learner in a written form to which answers are used to obtain information about the learner's interests, personality characteristics, work and study habits and home background, among others. It may contain statements to be completed, choices to be made, Yes or No or Agree or Disagree to be answered. It is important to allow for sufficient space for filling information. Interviews: the interview is a face to face interaction between the interviewer and interviewee (teacher and learner). It provides the opportunity for direct observation. Its main weakness is that it may be subjective. The face to face interaction might be intimidating and include emotions, feelings, attitudes, biases and prejudices.

Problems of the study

The present rapid use of assessment tools, such as classwork or homework and the students often saying they have an assignment or will write a test next week in a form of continuous assessment called the attention of the author. The question here is, are tests and assignments the only assessment tools? The honest answer is, no they are not. The problem of this study was to determine the degree to which teachers use different assessment tools in the practice of continuous assessment and also find out the degree of teachers' awareness of the guideline of continuous assessment.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the study:

- 1- To find out the extent of teachers awareness on continuous assessment guideline
- 2- To find out the extent to which teachers use different assessment tools in the practice of continuous assessment
- 3- To find out how frequently teachers adhere to continuous assessment guidelines.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions:

- 1 - To what extent are teachers aware of continuous assessment guidelines?
- 2 - To what extent do teachers use different assessment tools in the practice of continuous assessment?
- 3 - How frequently do teachers adhere to continuous assessment guidelines?

Methodology

Using Survey research approach, data were collected from a sample of the population for intensive study and analysis. A self-developed questionnaire was administered for the subjects. A research questionnaire was designed for classroom teachers, Principals included. Two hundred and eighty 280 formed the sample of the study, as shown by Research Advisors (2006). The study was carried out in the Kano Municipal Education Zone with a population of 1387 teachers. The questionnaire items were reliable at 0.78 (correlated with the Rho test) the using test-retest method and then administered to the respondents of the study. The responses were analyzed through the application of Frequency and Percentage using the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One 1:

To what extent are teachers aware of continuous assessment guidelines?

Table 1: level of awareness of teachers on continuous assessment

SN	Statements	N	AWARE	UNAWARE
1.	Students are to be given an average of 9 periodic assessment per academic session, and 3 end-of-term examination	280	280 (100%)	0 (0%)
2.	Class assessment to be made up of diverse items such as class assessment, projects, assignments etc. copies of such class work are to be kept for inspection.	280	249 (88.9%)	31 (11.1%)
3.	Promotion to the next class should be based on the three terms' weighted scores in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains	280	249 (88.9%)	31 (11.1%)
4.	The minimum pass mark in each of the three domains, should be 40%	280	257 (91.8%)	23 (8.2%)
5.	A pupil must score a minimum of 40% in five subjects in the cognitive domain and at least 40% in either the affective or the psychomotor domain to be promoted.	280	251 (89.6%)	29 (10.4%)
6.	A pupil who scores below 40% will be provided counseling services, while the parents/guardians would be invited for discussion aimed at helping the child to improve.	280	268 (95.7%)	12 (4.3%)
7.	Each term' assessment will be distributed as follows: A. Three CAs which will consist of assignment, projects, tests, etc – 60% of terms' score. B. 40% for term examination scores.	280	251 (89.6%)	29 (10.4%)
8.	For the purpose of transiting from primary 6 to JSS 1, each year' score from Primary 4 to Primary 6 will be weighted as follows: 1. 10% for primary 4 2. 20% for primary 5 3. 30% for primary 6 4. 40% school based exam	280	195 (69.6%)	85 (30.4%)

Table 1 above reveals a high level of awareness of the eight continuous assessment guidelines among teachers; 100% on guideline one, followed by guideline 4, 91.8%, guideline 7, and 5, 89.6%, while guidelines 2 and 3 have the same percentages of 88.9% and lastly guideline number 8 has 69.6%.

Research Question Two 2:

To what extent do teachers use different assessment tools in the practice of continuous assessment?

Table 2: degree of use of different assessment tools:

SN	Use of Assessment tools	N	OFTEN	NEVER
1.	Use of Teacher Made Tests	280	280 (100%)	0 (0%)
2.	Use of Assignment	280	279 (99.6%)	1 (0.4%)
3.	Use of Class work	280	234 (33.6%)	46 (16.4%)
4.	Use of Homework	280	159 (56.8%)	121 (43.2%)
5.	Use of Interviews	280	33 (11.8%)	247 (88.2%)
6.	Use of Questionnaire	280	16 (5.7%)	264 (94.3%)
7.	Use of Rating Scale	280	21 (7.5%)	259 (92.5%)
8.	Use of Psychological Test	280	22 (7.9%)	258 (92.1%)
9.	Use of Observational Techniques	280	37 (13.2%)	242 (86.8%)
10.	Use of Check List	280	47 (16.8%)	233 (83.2%)
11.	Use of Quiz/Oral Tests	280	124 (44.3)	156 (55.7%)

Table 2 above indicates that the use of teacher made tests (TMT) among teachers is 100% followed by assignment, 99.6%, class work, 83.6%, home work, 56.8%, quiz/oral test, 44.3%, checklist, 16.8%, observation, 13.2%, interviews, 11.8%, psychological tests, 7.9%, rating scale, 7.5% and questionnaire, 5.7%. The Table also shows that teachers use teacher-made tests, assignments, class work and home work more often (frequently) than the other tools. Whereas in the use of quiz/oral test, it is 44.3% against 55.7%.

Research Question Three 3

How frequently do teachers adhere to the Guidelines for Continuous Assessment?

Table 3: frequency of adherence to continuous assessment guidelines

SN	Statement	N	FREQUENT	SOMETIME
1.	Students are given an average of 9 periodic assessments per academic session, and 3 end-of-term examination.	280	267 (95.4%)	13 (4.6%)
2.	Class assessments are made up of diverse items such as class assessments, projects, assignments, etc. copies of such class work are kept for inspection.	280	176 (62.9%)	104 (37.1%)
3.	Promotion to the next class is based on three term's weighted scores in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains.	280	115 (41.1%)	165 (58.9%)
4.	The minimum pass mark in each of the three domains, is 40%	280	91 (32.5%)	189 (67.5%)
5.	A pupil must score a minimum of 40% in five subjects in the cognitive domain to be promoted.	280	227 (81.1%)	53 (18.9%)
6.	A pupil who scores below 40% is provided counseling services, while the parents/guardians are invited for discussion aimed at helping the child to improve.	280	78 (27.9%)	202 (72.1%)
7.	Each term's assessment is distributed as follows a. Three CAs which consist of Assignments, Projects,	280	187 (66.8%)	93 (33.2%)

SN	Statement	N	FREQUENT	SOMETIME
	Tests Etc – 60% of terms' score. b. 40% for term's examination score			
8.	Transiting from primary 6 to JSS 1, each year's score from primary 4 to primary 6 will be weighted as follows: - 10% for primary 4 - 20% for primary 5 - 30% for primary 6 - 40% school based examination	280	160 (57.1%)	120 (42.9%)

Table 3 above shows that the adherence of continuous assessment guideline among teachers is 95.4% on guideline No. 1 followed by guideline No. 5, 81.1%, guideline No. 7, 66.8%, guideline (2), 62.9%, guideline (8), 57.1%, guideline (3), 41.1%. guideline No. 4, 32.5% and lastly guideline No. 6, 27.9%. Whereas the Table indicated that guideline No. 6 has the least percentage of 27.9%.

Discussions

The study reveals that classroom teachers are aware of all the continuous assessment guidelines. Particularly Guideline No. 1 (Students are to be given an average of 9 periodic assessment per academic session and 3 end-of-term examination) has one hundred percent 100% awareness among all teachers irrespective of their academic qualification and years of teaching experience. This is because they were supervised to conduct three continuous assessment tests termly. However, the Table indicates 88.9% for guideline 2 and 3, 91.8% guideline 4, guidelines 7 and 5, 89.6% and, lastly, guideline 8, 69.6%. The present study in general shows a high level of awareness on the continuous assessment guidelines.

The findings of present study indicate that there is a high level of conformity with the continuous assessment guideline among teachers. Where guideline No. 1 (Students are given an average of 9 periodic assessments per academic session, and 3 end-of-term examination.) has 95.4%, which was almost the same as teachers were aware of the guideline, followed by guideline 7, 66.8%, guideline 2, 62.9%, guideline 8, 57.1%, guideline 3, 41.1%, guideline 4, 32.5% and guideline 6, 27%. This showed that in spite of the teacher's full awareness on continuous assessment guidelines, they also implement them more especially guideline 3, 4 and 6. Although they were aware of guideline 2, they limited on the use of only teacher made tests, assignments, classwork and homework, which seem to be under the cognitive domain. This unhealthy development will defy the rationale behind introducing continuous

assessment. In this regard Adeloye and Alhamdu (2005) said that there must to be a wide dimension of continuous assessment, that is, teachers should diversify the patterns, hence the continuous assessment should take the forms of tests Quizzes take-home assignments, debates, questionnaire, projects etc.

The study finally reveals that out of eleven (11) assessment tools, teachers in Kano Municipal zone use teacher-made tests, assignments, class-work and home-work in descending order more often than the other assessment tools. In other words, they rarely use interviews, questionnaires, rating scales, psychological tests, observational techniques and checklists. The present result also shows that a considerable percentage of 44.3% use Quiz/Oral tests among teachers. This is a major setback or failure in the practice of continuous assessment, which is aimed to portray the holistic picture of students' performance academically, and vocationally as well as persona-social. The finding of this study agrees with the earlier finding of Sa'ad (2010) that teachers used only assignments and tests in continuous assessment more than the other tools. This also showed that they are not adequately trained to develop other tools in practicing continuous assessment holistically. In this regard, the finding also agrees with the earlier finding of Mbachu (1997) that the majority of teachers did not receive training on how to implement continuous assessment.

Conclusion

From the findings of this study, we conclude that teachers in the Kano Municipal zone are aware of continuous assessment guidelines. They employ teacher-made tests, assignments, class-work, and homework as the most frequently used instrument to obtain continuous assessment data. Lastly, we also conclude that there is a slightly high level of adherence to continuous assessment guidelines.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been made;

- i. Tests and assignments are part of assessment tools and not the entire assessment tools. Therefore, teachers should diversify the pattern. Hence, it has to deal with moral, mental, cultural and spiritual aspects of the learners.
- ii. In addition to the use of teacher-made tests, assignments, class work and homework, teachers should include other assessment tools in the practice of continuous

assessment, that is, interviews, questionnaires, rating scales, psychological tests, observation, checklists and oral tests or quiz and so on.

- iii. For effective practice of continuous assessment, school administrators as well as the Kano State Senior Secondary Schools Management Board should organize refresher courses, such as seminars, workshops and conferences or even in-house seminars from time to time for teachers across qualifications and years of experience to develop the necessary skills to handle continuous assessment tools as well as its techniques to achieve its objectives of good practice.
- iv. Supervisors as well as school administrators should be constantly inspect and check continuous assessment periods and records to ensure that teachers adhere firmly to the rules and regulations governing the practice of continuous assessment.

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