Assessment is the determination of the value and worth of a thing "and" the process of measuring behaviours and using the results so far obtained in training relevant decisions. "With specific reference to this paper assessment is seen as a way in which information about certain human activities and behaviours of learners are made available and relevant for further actions" (Ogoduhmwa and Ugwuanyi, 2003).

The Concept of Continuous Assessment

Continuous assessment of learner's could be defined as a mechanism whereby the final grading of learners in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of learning systematically takes account of all their performance during a specified period of schooling (Bahago, 2004). Assessment in education takes different faces and therefore involve far more than more test administration, it considers the ways students perform a variety of tasks in a variety of settings and contents and the motive behind their performances. Apart from the formal class test, teachers and parents' observations may be considered as part of the assessment since it is an evaluative, interpretative appraisal of performance relevant for parents, teachers and other school personnel's decisions regarding the learners they serve.

Characteristics of Continuous Assessment

Ugodulumva and Ugwuanyi (2003) identified four characteristics of continuous assessment as explained below:
1. **Systematic Assessment:**
This means that continuous assessment involve an operational plan like what modes of assessment to be adopted by teachers (i.e. what weight to be assign to different kinds of assessment and at what interval, for example.

Two test 30%
One assignment 10%
End of terms examination 60%
Total 100%

This means that assessment is not at the end of the term but at times and as previously there is no uniform systematic plan of assessment across schools thus cannot compared resulted on a common denominator as an assessment plan.

2. **Comprehensive:** When C.A. is said to be comprehensive, it means it focuses on the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of behaviours and it uses many instruments to do it, Assessment in cognitive includes: mastery of concepts, principles and academic achievement in school subjects, affective includes attitudes, interest in learning, feelings, attendance in class and psychomotor include: physical abilities e.g. games athletic, dancing, manipulative skills, musical skills, Assessment of these three domains requires the use of assessment instruments like: test, questionnaire, checklists, interviews, anecdotal records, rating scales.

3. **Cumulative C. Assessment:** This means that repeated measurements of learners is made timely; the results are then used for final grading of the learners. There is continuity of assessment data in each of the set of data adds on the subsequent ones in a given ratio like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First term</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second term</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Term</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the junior Secondary School level the following weighing can be use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First year</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second year</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third year</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior year</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Secondary certificates examination</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. **Guidance - Oriented (Assessment):**
The result so obtained provides guidance for the learners present and future development. Through C.A. students strengths and weakness are known and are communicated appropriately or helped by parents and teachers to remedy their deficiencies, since teachers contained students periodic performance results in the three domains for the period of students
These results provide feedback on the effectiveness of instruction and help provide career guidance, personal, social and educational guidance to the learners for future development. Unlike when there was no C.A. The results were obtained at the end of the term or year and cannot be use for improving instructions or remedy learning problems during the period of schooling.

Principles of Continuous Assessment

As posted by Adeloye and Ahmadu (2005) the following principles must be borne in mind when preparing continuous assessment for students:

1. Continuous as must have a sound operational base. This means that the objectives of the continuous must be clearly spelt out in terms of what is expected to be accomplished within a given time.

2. There must be a variety of the continuous assessment, which means teaches should diversity the patterns of continuous assessment e.g. tests, assignment, debates and so on.

3. Continuous assessment must be spaced, which means it should follow a particular time along side the school timetable. It could be fortnightly, monthly or at the end of the term or semester.

4. The scoring and weighting system must be predetermined by the teacher. In other words, teachers must determine how it will be scored and the ratio of each continuous assessment measure vis-à-vis the final grade.

5. The validity, reliability and usability of the continuous assessment test items must be established.

Why Continuous Assessment in Nigeria

Before the introduction of Western Education in Nigeria, Information education were assessed orally and informal based on careful observation. When western education was introduced, western methods of assessments were introduced in two ways of internal an external examinations (Abiola, 2000). Internal exam was conducted by each institution for its own use in assessing the progress of its learners.

In primary school internal exams as conducted at the end of the school year and at the end of every school term. No matter how often tests were conducted it is the result of the end of the year that will be use for any decision concerning the student and something applied to secondary schools.

In primary schools class teachers handles the marks while in secondary schools it is the subject teachers and decisions concerning the learners are made based on the raw scores provided by the teachers.

Secondly, external exams was conducted by external agencies, these external agencies are not responsible for teaching these students e.g. W.A.E.C single examinations base on cognitive domain, neglecting physical skills,
character and industry of pupils thus cannot get the overall picture of the person assessed. The "one shot" system put emphasis on decisions at the end of the year term or the course hence do not create room for the learners remedial and improvements, but denied teachers, students, parents curricula and administrators the chance for meaningful growth. Both in primary and secondary schools raw scores given by different teachers are added, find the average and rank the student among his classmates. The problem is that marks of different subjects given by different teachers may not have equal weighs. Some may unnecessary down graded or upgraded.

The final certification of the learners is left in the hands of those who do not participate in teaching these learners e.g. WAEC, common entrance etc. Since they are centrally controlled both students and teachers wants to see that the curriculum is covered. The anxiety to pass this very important (i.e. external) exam often leads to examination malpractice.

Nigerians therefore opted for C.A because they believe the introduction of C.A will:
1. Provide greater participation of teachers in the assessment of their students.
2. Make a valid and reliable assessment of overall students ability and performance.
3. Make teachers to be flexible and more innovative and in their teaching.
4. Enable teachers improve their methodology in teaching
5. Provide a way to reduce exams malpractices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruments</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
<th>Affective</th>
<th>Psychomotor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tests</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
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<td>Questionnaire</td>
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<td>Projects</td>
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<td>Observation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socio – Metric</td>
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<tr>
<td>Techniques</td>
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<tr>
<td>Checklist</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


The traditional system of assessment made use of only tests, Here tests include and questioning, class assignments, homework, weekly tests, quizzes, termly and yearly examinations but for C.A. Other instruments in addition to tests are required as seen above,

Nigeria Implementation of Continuous Assessment

According to the federal Ministry of Education, Science and technology (1985). The implementation of continuous assessment demands a lot of commitments
and work at various levels like: Schools, local government, state and national levels.

**School Level**

In the primary school, continuous assessment committee was set up and it comprises the head teacher, assistant head teacher and 3 most senior staff. In the secondary school, the C.A. committee comprises of the principal, school guidance counselors, head of each section, and any members staff with a related training in evaluation or psychology. Both committee objectives were to:
1. Report learners performance to interested persons
2. Identify achievements levels of various groups of learners
3. Diagnose learning deficiencies for the purpose of improving instructions.
4. Evaluate any locally introduced innovations.
5. Assessing special aptitude and interest of students for counseling purposes.

And with these objectives mentioned above, the school continuous assessment committee functions were to:
1. Assigning duties to teachers on continuous assessment
2. Overseeing record keeping
3. Providing guidance to teachers in continuous assessment.
4. Development of timetable for assessment of students
5. Ensuring availability of appropriate material and
6. Facilitating cooperative development of assessment instruments among schools within the same locality.

**Local Government**

The level of the local government depends on (the organizational structure of each state. The coordinating officers will be responsible to:
1. Planning and organizing workshop for developing instruments.
2. Trying out these instruments
3. Acting as a local adviser to the school committee

**State of Level**

Here continuous assessment standardized instruments will be encourage to be in use. The generation of normative data at various schools level based on various instructional objectives. The state specify:
1. Cumulative record folder kept for counseling and C.A. on alt the three domains of behaviour. This record contain record of test, assignment, health, physical development, personally and emotional etc.
2. Report sheet use for recording the learners scores in tests, assignment project and terminal exams, h contains records of affective behaviour like punctuality, class attendance, class participation, neatness, honesty and the psychomotor behaviour like handwriting, public speaking handling of tools, drawing.
painting, games, a copy usually send to parents at the end of the year or term.

3. Transcript which contains the overall summary of the learners performance in cognitive affective and psychomotor domains of behaviour for the period of school. This is often given to learners at the end of course or when transferring to another school.

Problems of Implementation of Continuous Assessment

Denga (2003) identified many problems militating against the successful implementation of FC.A. in Nigeria schools which are as follows:

1. Continuous Assessment make heavy demand on teachers time because of the work and assigned them.

2. Although there is increase in teachers work load through the implementation of continuous assessment but there is no corresponding increase in their need particularly salaries. There salaries are small compared to the present economic situation thus make them vulnerable to corruption.

3. Many parents, uncles, brothers, friends, sister helps their son, brother or sister on projects or assignments. Students sometimes copy other works neglecting the purpose of assessment in schools. It is perceived to be susceptible to cheating.

4. Sometimes some students are given higher scores because of their relationship with teachers while others are not.

5. Misconception of the concept of C.A. by teachers as the continuous testing in cognitive domain only not in affective and psychomotor hence do not give a total picture of students performance as proposed by the National Policy on Education.

6. The problems of comparability of assessment scores or result between classes within schools and across schools. Some teacher are lenient while others are strict and there could be differences in quality of test and other measurement instruments used in different schools hence every teacher will set his own individual standard to the extend that the same scores obtained in different school or subject may not be comparable in terms of standard.

7. There is need for some uniformity in the kinds of records kept and the format for keeping such records.

8. There is no enough adequate instructional materials and equipments that will enable teachers teach effectively.

9. Most teachers do not have enough knowledge of how to assess students as they are not professionally trained on that.

Conclusion

Since the national policy on Education stipulated the use of continuous assessment in Nigerian's education system at all levels, there is need for its proper implementation Moreso, research in
education could also help in providing solutions to the numerous problems facing proper implementation. Moreso, research in education could also help in providing solutions to the numerous problems facing proper implementation of continuous assessment in our schools. Again, the practice of examination which is prevalent in the educational system could be addressed if continuous assessment is appropriately applied. The suggestions given in this paper if considered could be a lasting solution to the problems of continuous assessment.

**Suggested Solution**

In order to solve these problems listed above the following has been suggested:

a. Regular organization of in-service training, workshops, seminars for teachers on assessment of students be made on implementation of C.A.

b. Measurement equipment be made available for teachers to use in assessing students and themselves for a more improved learning process.

c. Principles and practice of C.A. be properly taught in educational evaluation courses offered in our schools in Nigeria.

d. Adequate remuneration of teachers be made to motivate them for proper implementation on C.A. in Nigeria.

e. Continuous assessment Committee should be affectively monitored and supervise al school, local government, state and national levels in order to identify problems inherent in the implementation arid the initiate strategies for solving the attendant problems.

f. Qualitative educational research should be embarked upon to yield accurate data for decision making.

**References**


Continuous Assessment in our School (nd) retrieved from [http://www/edsnet.na/reform%20forum/journal](http://www/edsnet.na/reform%20forum/journal)

