
Probable Practical Evaluation in Visual Arts in Nigeria for Quality Certification

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Abstract

This paper addresses the general outcry on the factors responsible for the unsuitable practical assessment in the Visual Arts for quality certification in a chronological order by discussing the types of assessment as regard practical, non provision of examination materials, insufficient timing of practical examinations, inadequate supervision of practical examination and poor assessment process of practical works. The paper therefore suggests possible resolution to all stake holders that engage in practical assessment of the Visual Arts.

Introduction

Practical examination remains a proficiency test of skills, a test of one's knowledge, ability and aptitude to do something well. In most cases, the student is required to exhibit manual dexterity in a given task as a sign of competence. The nature of the Visual Art programme dictates that more time be devoted to practical learning process while the examinations could maintain good balance between theory and practical. Such balance distinguishes the Fine and Applied Art Students from fellow workshop apprentice. The students in a formal learning environment like ours, are in their area of study, made to undertake some background theory that do not create room for the rather trial and error attitude of the road side artist. They have the in-depth understanding of what they do.

On the other hand, the art students should not just be theoretical persons who would not be able to practically express their ideas. We know it is ideas that move the world and not the products but when such ideas does not relate to products, they die with the owner. So, it is proper to translate all ideas into products through practical perfection of the materials. It means that more time be given the student artist to be practically competent. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has been taken as the key to unlocking the store house of the technological and economic growth of any nation, therefore, attention and time must be given to the conduct of practical examinations leading to the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competences for a quality and credible practical certification.

Assessment of Practical Examination

Hornsby, (2001) defined assessment as the act of judging or forming an opinion about somebody or something while practical is connected with real situations rather than with ideas or theories. Badmus and Omoifo, (1998) opined that it is the process of investigating the status of individual or group, usually with reference to expected outcomes or criteria while assessment to Stake, (1969) involves the direct measurement of performance on important reference tasks. The main objective of practical examination is the assessment of students' manipulative skills, the mastering of related technological information skills, the working habits, safety habits and competence in the use of tools and equipment. Proper assessment procedure in our institutions would enhance the production of special skilled manpower for our workforce. Two important functions are performed when proper assessment procedure is observed; firstly, attention on the student's specific behavioural or attitudinal pattern to work for instance, the attitude towards wastage or otherwise of materials and secondly, it provides a convenient method for recording or judging the perseverance of the student during the test.

If on the spot correction, assistance and assessment cannot be carried out, so also the working and safety habit exhibited by the student during the cause of executing the task could not be known to the lecturer because most practical works are done from home and only the product assessment are observed to the detriment of the process

assessment. At this point, it is worthy to note that some examiners are ignorant of the required process and the various practical assessments that will give rise to their checklist for accurate appraisal. This brings us to the three notable types of assessment which are;

- a. Product assessment
- b. Process assessment
- c. Product process assessment

a. **Product assessment** – This is the procedure of examining the finished practical works using the appropriate checklist. In this case, the finished practical work product must tally with the specification given; the practical art works are taken away from the point of production for assessment.

b. **Process assessment** - This is the process required by the examiner /lecturers to verify the step by step procedures of carrying out the practical works before attainment of finished work in an examination/ workshop. The assessor (lecturer) is expected to be physically present to see every student performing the step by step operation of his or her task and rating of the student is done on the spot (process) with the help of checklist. The finished practical work is not carried away for assessment.

The process assessment requires that the practical work is carried out in the presence of the lecturer. The students' performs the step by step operation of the practical task with the lecturer physically present to rate students' on the spot (Process) performances. The lecturer is able to see the students as they observe the process of work, how they were able to manipulate and master the use of materials. The economy of time and safety habit of the students is also assessed. It involves systematic assessment of work at different stages.

c. **Product Process Assessment** – This is where students are rated based on the practical finished work and the step by step operation of task performance using the checklist. This is where the lecturer physically monitors the processes that lead to the final product of practical work. This might take some days of assessment by the examiner, as such patience is required.

Based on the above types of practical assessment, it is proper to adopt the product-process assessment of students by lecturer because it provides two important ingredients. First it focuses attention on the students psychomotor skill, affective and cognitive domain which has to do with the student's attitudinal and behavioural pattern with response to how student manages the use of materials in order to provide comparative judgment on the finished work.

Quality certification derived from practical examinations would become possible only when such issues as non provision of examination materials, insufficient

timing, inadequate supervision, poor assessment process of practical works, and the likes are handled with caution.

Non-Provision of Practical Examination Materials

Examination is a tool for determining the level of student's ability after the teaching process. According to Adewale, (2001), examination is the series of questions asked in order to determine whether or not the student have mastered what they are supposed to acquire. Practical examination requires that the needed materials are made available before such an examination commences. The non provision of adequate practical examination materials by the leadership of the institutions do not allow students to put in their very best. Teaching aids and materials according to Ughamadu, (1998) make education more productive. It also helps to speed up the rate of student's learning. Group work during practical examination has become the order of the day because practical examination lacks adequate practical materials. Such group works should not be allowed in practical examinations, because, this only allow brighter students to work for the benefit of all and also prevent proper assessment of each student's manipulative skills, mastery skills, working and safety habits, competence in the use of tools and materials etc. When cheap and substandard materials are provided for practical examination works, it removes proficiency from final project and prevents the student's demonstration of craftsmanship. For instance, the use of poster colour as substitute in an examination requiring water colour will definitely not yield the desired transparent effect that the water colour would give on paper. So also is the use of cartridge paper in a painting examination requiring a cardboard paper, the technical skill will suffer. Such provision of inadequate practical materials leads to miniaturization of examination end products, which in most cases are neither useful nor functional. It is therefore proper that adequate examination practical material are supplied as at when required.

What should immediately follow after the moderation of every practical question in visual art is the listing of needed materials (cutting list) that is, the materials required for the examination; this should be prepared and sent to the Chief Executive or Head of the institution at least a month to the commencement of examination. The list should spell out the types of materials, required quantity and quality, and possibly, cost of the items.

Insufficient Timing of Practical Examinations

Time is a major consideration in the proficiency test of students' skills especially in practical examinations. The amount of time allotted to such courses matters a lot. Sufficient time should be given not only during examinations but also during learning so as to devote significant time to preparing the students for practical examinations. Since the time allotted to practical courses in the visual arts is far short of what is desired as a result of the total work load of students, due to the increasing number of General (GNS) courses, practical courses that would ordinarily be class work or studio practise to be completed in the presence of the lecturer are most times

given as take home assignment for lack of an adequate amount of practical hour within the school study period. What most time, would have being seen done by the students and immediately corrected and assessed by the lecturer, are given to students as take home assignment which most probably, are contracted out to external touts.

Poor Assessment Process of Practical Work

Practical work assessment helps to establish student's principles of performing the required action of psychomotor skill which is the only way for the nation's technological breakthrough. In fact, the acquisition of the acceptable, adequate skills, abilities and competences, both mental and physical by the student will equip the examinee to live a self reliant life and contribute to the technological advancement to our great nation. There is no known standard way of assessing student's practical works. What you find is the individual way of practical assessment.

Assessing practical test can better be carried out than it is currently done, following carefully planned and implemented assessment techniques that will ensure that the evaluation processes provide the right information about the student's learning. It is therefore important that Visual Art teachers are familiar with the major objectives in the subject area and to practice these objectives in order to ensure accurate assessment of students' potentials. (Osariyekemwen, 2003)

The latter will be possible if there is a credible practical examination assessment especially in Visual Arts where examiners/lecturer are made to adhere strictly to the checklist/marking scheme as model guard for assessment. Every assessment should have a reference point, which in everyday practice is referred to as the marking scheme, which according to Odili and Oghuvhu (2008) are what the assessor expects from the student. It shows the expected answers and the mark obtainable. This according to Mehrans and Lehmann (1975), should be consistent from one student to another.

Inadequate Supervision of Practical Examination

Most often than not, there is this erroneous belief even by the Visual Artist/lecturers that practical examination requires little or no supervision. Practical examinations just like the essay or theory, requires as much supervision and strictness; examination rules and regulations must be applied to the latter. What you find in most cases in a typical examination is that as soon as question papers are distributed to candidates and attendance taken, the supervisor or invigilator takes leave, only to reappear once or twice and finally to collect the works. This practice has gradually affected the much emphasis on theoretical course. Evidence abound that practical examinations are bedevilled with malpractices or irregularities. One may think that practical examination do not require close supervisions. This is a misconception which we must told because, one of the cardinal responsibilities as worthy examiners is to know and detect all shades of examination malpractice which include

- a) Impersonation- when a person acts in pretence or disguise to sit for an examination instead of the actual person.
- b) Collusion- engaging a colleague to accomplish a task.
- c) Blocking of examiners etc.

Conclusion

This paper has tried to investigate the factors responsible for the non-compliance with credible practical assessment in Visual Arts for quality certification, giving some insight into solutions that will help in stamping out these inhibiting / militating factors against the credible practical assessment in Visual Arts that guarantee quality assurance of our end products (students).

Excellent certification of students without the necessary skills, results in low productivity. The immediate consequence of wrong assessment of students is the wrong placement of grades and positions resulting to acceptance of unqualified, unsuitable candidates in workplaces. When more emphasis are laid on practical courses and standard practical test examination conducted, it will go a long way in solving the unemployment problem observed as possible fallout of assessment methods and emphasis paper qualification at the expense of practical practice which employs hands and brain for the development of our nation

Recommendations

Scoring of Visual Art practical should be standardised and objectively infused to ensure high inter and intra-scorer reliabilities. It becomes imperative that some form of training be put in place to ensure the reliability of scoring during the conduct of practical and that scoring of practical examinations especially in the Visual Arts should not be left to one lecturer to assess since practical test is most often subjective. There is the need for joint assessment for fairness and good judgment.

Throughout the conduct of examination, it is proper to mention here that the conduct of practical test is the sole responsibility of the lecturers. Lecturers should therefore acquire the following for a successful conduct of practical examinations;

- a) Take attendance so as to know those who are dully registered for the examination, those present and absent with students signing appropriate column of the attendance.
- b) In case where the examiners are to examine the process of work, the invigilator is to be present but not take the presence of the examiner as a collegial attitude.
- c) At the end of the examination, invigilators are to make sure that students sign out, all works secured and guarded jealously. This can be referenced or verified in the future for short comings that might crop up.

It is further suggested that Examination Materials be provided at least a month to the commencement of examination, more time should be allotted to practical examinations, supervision of practical examination should be handled with more

seriousness as it is with theoretical examination, and the joint assessment of practical examination works be introduced. Above all it is further recommended that the product process assessment be adopted in Visual Arts.

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