PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT AS PERCEIVED BY SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN ANAMBRA STATE

Anachuna, Obinna Nonso
Department of Educational Management and Policy,
Faculty of Education,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria
Phone: +2348063260029, +2348186527332.
E-Mail: Obillywest4christ@Yahoo.Com

Obiamalu, Amaka Raymonda
Department Of Library and Information Science,
Faculty of Education,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State Nigeria
Phone: +2348135189497
Email: Amaka.Obiamalu@Yahoo.Com

Abstract
This paper examined the problems associated with implementation of continuous assessment as perceived by secondary school teachers in Anambra state. Five research questions guided the study. A sample of one hundred and ninety five teachers was selected for the study in the six education zones in the state through a stratified random sampling technique. Questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection, while descriptive survey design was used. The research questions were answered and analysed using simple percentage. It was found out among others that many problems such as; over population of students, teachers inefficiencies, non standardization of test instruments, and high frequencies of testing militate against effective implementation of continuous assessment in Anambra state. Recommendations were made based on the findings of the study.

Keyword: Continuous Assessment

Introduction
The inculcation of skills, attitudes, knowledge and values in learners which will be of positive value to them and enable them to contribute positively to the society in which they live is done
through education. To achieve this primary aim of education, students have to be evaluated and different assessment techniques are used in measuring the quality and quantity of learning that has taken place during the teaching-learning process. Before the advent of western education in Nigeria, education was oral and informal. Consequently, it was evaluated through careful observation. On the introduction of western education, the use of a single shot test or examination is usually conducted at the end of a course of study to evaluate the amount of learning that has taken place. This all important one shot examination as was reported by Ilorah (1996) resulted in the students making frantic efforts to pass the examination by fair or foul means. Consequently, this led to frequent examination malpractices and certificate racketeering which engulfed Nigeria educational system in a serious crisis. The conduct of examination then was jaundiced and people began to clamor for a more objective and a satisfactory assessment technique, hence, continuous assessment became imperative. Consequently, continuous assessment was introduced in Nigeria’s educational system at the various level of education (primary, secondary and tertiary). This was clearly stated in the National Policy on Education (2004) thus:

“At the end of the three years following primary education, the junior secondary leaving certificate will be based on state examination and continuous assessment method. The certificate will be issued at the end of the second three years course (senior secondary), a formal examination will be given but the performance during the three years will be weighed and taken into account for certificate purposes. Certification would be based on 60% final assessment and 40% continuous Assessment”

Continuous assessment therefore, replaced the one shot-examination and is being portrayed as a process which emphasizes the gradual building up of a cumulative judgment of each student towards the attainment of specified objectives in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. This involves consistent observation and assessment of the ability and scope of students on assigned task in order to provide authentic evidence in judging an overall behavior of student by keeping a continual up to date judgment about the students.
The implementation of continuous assessment lies in the hands of the classroom teachers as it places teachers at the center of all performance-assessment activities. It encourages more teacher participation in the overall grading of the students. Adedibu (1988) in concurrence to this stressed that continuous assessment will enable the teacher to be very much involved in the overall assessment of his students; be more flexible and innovative in their instruction; reduce the "threat" factor in examination and promote punctuality and regularity in attendance to school. Ipaya (1984) also maintained that continuous assessment will enable the teacher to carryout imaginative teaching knowing that his assessment of the students' performance within the context of changes he initiates in the syllabus and his imaginative teaching will form part of the final assessment.

A lot of problems may be encountered in the course of the implementation of continuous assessment by the school administrators, the students, and most importantly the classroom teachers. In the light of this, Nwige (1983) noted the possibility of some schools awarding high marks to mediocre students, while another teacher or school is strict with marks.

Statement of the Problem
The implementation of continuous assessment lies heavily on the teacher. In fact, the success or failure of any evaluation (continuous assessment) technique depends on the extent to which the teachers implement the policy because they (teachers) are the coordinators of classroom activities and the ones who translate theories into actions and educational plans and policies into practice. Therefore, knowledge of continuous assessment, devotion, quality and effectiveness of teachers are of utmost importance in the implementation of continuous assessment. Obviously, the teachers may encounter some difficulties in a bid to successfully implement continuous assessment. The responsibilities demanded of secondary school teachers in implementing continuous assessment seems to make many of them to perceive it (continuous assessment) negatively in contrast with the way which the government and the educational policy makers perceive it. Many secondary school principals on the other hand seem not to fully understand what continuous assessment is all about. Most of them see it as a way to punish teachers and keep them very busy. This attitude often
manifests itself in students’ booklets, where many teachers do not even make any remark, while some remarks when made may be contrary to the student’s performances. While some teachers use it as a forum to write against the students they do not really like.

Furthermore, the recent student population explosion in Anambra state secondary schools seems to be affecting adversely the effective implementation of continuous assessment because it may obviously increase the number of students a teacher can handle, thereby making it boring and burdensome for teachers to teach, observe, assess and record effectively. Thus, many teachers seem to refrain from assessing students continuously, while some may even award marks ordinarily. There seems also to be no clear cut as regards the method of assessment, what to be assessed, uniformity and standardization of continuous assessment. Also, there seems to be favouritism in assessment by teachers.

If these problems go on unabated, and continuous assessment conducted in such a way it will yield a valid and reliable result, people may tend to lose confidence in it as was the case with the earlier one shot-final examination and the make objective of which continuous assessment is set to achieve as was stated in the National policy on Education come to nullity. It is in light of these problems that the researcher intends to find out what problem really is associated with the successful implementation of continuous assessment as was perceived by secondary school teachers in Anambra state.

**Purpose of the study**

The main purpose of this study is to find out the problems associated with the implementation of continuous assessment as perceived by secondary school teachers in Anambra state. Specifically, the study is set to:

1. Find out if teachers attend enough workshops and seminars that will facilitate effective implementation of continuous assessment.
2. Find out if there is a uniform standard of continuous assessment in Anambra state.
3. Find out the actual class size in Anambra state secondary schools.
4. Find out if the present class enrolment in Anambra state secondary schools is conducive for the effective implementation of continuous assessment.
5. Find out teachers’ attitude towards the implementation of continuous assessment.

Research questions
The following research questions guided the study:
1. How often do secondary school teachers in Anambra state attend workshops and seminar that will facilitate effective implementation of continuous assessment?
2. Is there a uniform standardization of continuous assessment in Anambra state?
3. What is the class size in Anambra state secondary schools?
4. Is the present class size in Anambra state secondary schools conducive for effective implementation of continuous assessment?
5. Do secondary school teachers in Anambra state see effective implementation of continuous assessment as excessive workload?

Research method
The researchers adopted a descriptive survey design for the study. This they found to be appropriate as Ali (1996) maintained that a descriptive survey describes events as they are without any manipulation.

The area of the study is Anambra state, Nigeria. Anambra state is one of the states in the south-east of Nigeria. The state is bounded on the north by Kogi state, on the south by Imo state, on the west by Delta state and on the east by Enugu state. It comprises twenty-one local government areas which are submerged into six educational zones.

The population of the study consisted of the five thousand, six hundred and sixty five teachers in the two hundred and fifty seven state government owned secondary schools in Anambra state. The sample of the study consisted of one hundred and ninety five teachers. This was drawn through a stratified simple random sampling technique. This was used in order to make sure that schools from each six education zone in the state are being represented.
Questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection. The questionnaire used is a structured fixed response type that comprised two sections: A and B. While section A deals with the personal data of the respondent, section B contains fifteen items in which the respondents were expected to tick to the option that suits them.

The reliability of the instrument was established using one hundred public secondary schools teachers in Enugu state. The cronbach Alpha method was used to compute the reliability coefficient of the instrument. It was found to be 0.86 which indicated a high reliability index.

The instrument was administered to the respondent by the researcher with the help of three other research assistants. Out of the one hundred and ninety five copies of the questionnaire distributed, only one hundred and ninety were properly filled and returned, thus recording a 97% return rate.

The data collected were analysed using simple percentage. To answer the research questions, any response below 50% was rejected while any response of 50% and above was not rejected.

Results
The results of the data are presented in the tables below in accordance with the research questions.

Table 1: Number of times Teachers have attended conferences/workshops/seminars on continuous Assessment
How often have you attended conferences and seminars on the implementation of continuous assessment?

Table 1 shows the number of times teachers in Anambra state have attended conferences and seminars on implementation of continuous assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Number and Percentage of Teachers</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Junior secondary</td>
<td>Senior secondary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrice</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 above shows that majority of the teachers indicated that they either have never attended any seminar or have attended only once seminars and or conferences as regards implementation of continuous assessment. This is represented by 84.72% of all the respondents and is therefore not rejected.

Table 2: Uniformed standard in the administration of continuous assessment
Table 2 shows teachers’ response on whether there is a uniformed standard in administration of continuous assessment in Anambra state secondary schools.

Is there a uniform standard in the administration of continuous assessment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Number and Percentage of Teachers</th>
<th>Junior Secondary</th>
<th>Senior Secondary</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 above shows that all (100%) the respondents were of the opinion that continuous assessment tests are not standardized.

Table 3: Number of students in a classroom
Table 3 shows the number of students in classes in Anambra state secondary schools.

How many students do you have in your class?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Number and Percentage of Teachers</th>
<th>Junior secondary</th>
<th>Senior Secondary</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>52.63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 &amp; above</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>35.26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table three indicated that 87.89% of the classes in Anambra state secondary schools has a student population of 40 students and above.
Table 4: Class size and effective implementation of Continuous Assessment

Table 4 shows teachers’ response on whether their present class size allows for effective implementation of continuous assessment.

Do your present class size allow for effective implementation of continuous assessment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Number and Percentage of Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Junior Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the response in table 4 above, majority of the respondents (78%) concurred that their present class size does not allow for an effective implementation of continuous assessment.

Table 5: Teachers’ attitude towards continuous assessment

Table 5 shows teachers’ responses on their attitude towards the implementation of continuous assessment.

Do you think that continuous assessment is adding to your workload?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Number and Percentage of Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Junior Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table shows that majority of the respondents believed that continuous assessment is adding to their workload and a way to punish them, this is represented by 51% approximately.

Discussion of the findings

From the findings of the study as was presented in the tables above, it was established that many problems militate against the effective implementation of continuous assessment in Anambra state secondary schools as was perceived by secondary school teachers. According to the findings as was presented in table one; it was found out that majority of secondary school teachers in state government owned secondary schools in Anambra state have not attended enough seminars and or workshops on effective implementation of continuous assessment. This becomes obviously
a hindrance towards effective implementation of continuous assessment because one cannot give what he or she does not have. Eresimadu (1996) in support of this finding holds that some secondary school teachers do not fully understand what continuous assessment is all about. This is manifested in the type of entries they make in the students’ report booklet.

Another problem of effective implementation of continuous assessment as was presented in table two was that continuous assessment administration was not standardized, thereby posing problems of comparability of scores. This finding was in consistent with Holmes and Lawnreye (1969) who maintained that it is most impossible to equate continuous assessment grades awarded in one situation with those of others. They stressed further that each has its own currency with no agreed rate of exchange and that kind and generous teachers are easily influenced and this affects awarding of marks. This most at times makes it possible for teachers to award marks ordinarily and use continuous assessment to victimize students they don’t really like. In agreement with this finding, Nwigwe (1983) noted the possibility of school awarding high marks to mediocres while another school is strict with marks and warned that unless continuous assessment is conducted in such a way as to yield valid and reliable results, the whole exercise comes to nullity.

Furthermore, another problem identified in the study as was presented in table three is that which results from the over population of students. According to the findings, majority of classes in secondary schools in Anambra state has an average of 40 students per class and this raises the student-teacher ratio. This adversely affects the effective implementation of continuous assessment as majority of the teachers as was seen in table four has it that their present class size is not encouraging the effective implementation of continuous assessment. This makes them to spend much time on assessment which involves marking and recording the students’ scores. This finding is in affirmation with Adedibu (1988) who holds that teachers’ role in continuous assessment becomes so complex to such an extent that he would be spending more time on record keeping to the detriment of his primary assignment which is teaching.

The findings of the study also show that teachers’ negative attitude on continuous assessment poses a big problem to the effective implementation of continuous assessment as according to
the data presented on **table five**; majority of the teachers sees continuous assessment as an excessive workload and a way of punishing them. This in no doubt will affect the implementation of continuous assessment adversely. Nduka (1996) in support of this opined that teachers’ attitude affect the way he presents the material to the students which also affects students’ achievement. Okoye (1996) also in support noted that the reliability of scores awarded in continuous assessment becomes questionable. Arinze (1996) also noted that some teachers inflate the scores of students in order to achieve excellent performance of students which determines their teaching effectiveness.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher made the following recommendations towards ensuring effective implementation of continuous assessment in Anambra state:

1. The government should as a matter of urgency organize compulsory seminars and workshops for every secondary school teacher in the state for proper orientation on the implementation of continuous assessment. This should be organized at a more regular interval.

2. Efforts should be made by the appropriate body in charge of education in the state to standardize continuous assessment if possible; this will help to make it more authentic and realistic in comparability of performance across the various schools.

3. More schools and classrooms should be constructed by the government, the NGO, the PTA as the case may be. This will help to decongest the classrooms as it will help to reduce the number of scripts the teacher marks and records, thereby making continuous assessment objective and at the same time allows for effective teaching.

4. More teachers should be recruited to reduce the high student-teacher ratio.

5. Teachers should be sensitized on the rationale behind continuous assessment, pointing it out to them the need for continuous assessment and as such part of their job as a classroom teacher. This will help to inculcate in them that it is not a way to punish them, rather it is a means of achieving the goals of education.
6. A separate or special committee to be set up to oversee the effective implementation of continuous assessment in each school.

Conclusion
A lot of problems have been associated with the implementation of continuous assessment. These problems according to findings include among others; lack of proper orientation to teachers via seminars and workshops, non-standardization, overcrowded classrooms etc. If these problems go on unabated, it may as was confirmed by Nwigwe (1983) lead to nullity the aims and objectives it is set to achieve. The researchers to this end made some recommendations towards the effective implementation of continuous assessment and they (the researchers) are very optimistic to the fact that if the recommendations will be given apt attention and implemented, it will lead to achieving the aims of introducing continuous assessment most especially as it concerns the secondary schools in Anambra state.

References


