

## Full Length Research Paper

# Investigation of the Potency of Continuous Assessment in Promoting Academic Excellence among Students of Federal University Wukari

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**ABSTRACT:** The role of continuous assessment in encouraging student academic achievement can be measured by making frequent observations and collecting information from specific assignments assigned to students during their learning process. The current study sought to investigate the effects of continuous assessment on the academic brilliance of Federal University Wukari students. For the Experiment, sixty students were chosen from various faculties and departments across the University. These students were enrolled in a variety of courses in Agriculture, Science, Social Sciences, Medicine, and Law. The post-test design was used for both the control and experimental groups. GST, a directorate for all students to undergo CA assessment, provided information on C/A scores of student performance. A questionnaire schedule, however, was also employed to obtain information from responders. As a test of significance, the independent sample t-test was performed. It was concluded that continual assessment improved pupils' academic performance. It was suggested that teachers who are well-versed in evaluation and assessment techniques be encouraged and their expertise used to improve students' academic excellence at federal university Wukari.

**Keywords:** Investigation, potency, continuous assessment, academic excellence, Federal University Wukari

## INTRODUCTION

Learning assessment is a continuous process, not a one-time event. It is the process of checking on, reflecting on, and altering learning processes in a systematic and cautious manner. Continuous assessment occurs when the teacher conducts assessment in the classroom on an ongoing or continuous basis (Prouty and George, 2003). Observations are made from time to time throughout this process to collect data to determine the degree of pupils' knowledge, understanding, and performance. It is accomplished by assigning specific assignments to pupils based on their previous performance in the classroom. The teacher monitors students' actions to determine their level of performance in class. It also assists them in determining what the learners have learned. Continuous assessment is an integral aspect of the instructional process and should be seen as a critical instrument in the effort to ensure educational quality (Abejehu, 2016). According to Airasian (1991), continuous assessment as an approach should show the whole range of sources and methods that teachers might use to gather, interpret,

and synthesize information on pupils. His information also assists teachers in understanding their students, planning and monitoring their instruction, and creating a viable culture. According to Baker and Stites (1991), continuous assessment should involve a frequent examination of students' emotional structures and motivation, in which they will need to communicate their determination, work force readiness, and skills in team or group performance background.

## Literature review

According to Watkins (2007), in countries with clearly specified national curricula, continual, impactful assessment is often focused on goal and linked directly to the goals for the curriculum designed for all students. National assessment plans may describe what needs to be examined and how it will be assessed. The key aspect of countries that use this system is that creating and

implementing assessment is mostly the responsibility of traditional schools and class teachers. This is in accordance with the assessment's objective of informing judgments about the next steps in an individual student's learning (Watkins, 2007).

The goal of continuous assessment is to allow teachers to monitor how well their students are learning across all three cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. In particular, knowledge and understanding, procedural knowledge (making comparisons and estimates, performing calculations, and applying formulas), problem solving, and other higher order skills should be monitored closely. Information regarding each student's development and learning status is one of the purposes served by continuous assessment.

Teachers benefit from having knowledge about and plans for modifying instruction to meet the needs of the pupils. It provides diagnostic information on the students' learning capacities, covering both their advantages and disadvantages. It also provides teachers with feedback for altering textbook goals and curriculum objectives. It provides guidelines for kids and their parents as well as standards for grading and advancing pupils. It aids teachers in grouping children for learning through a range of activities. It selects a program's, faculty's, or staff's approach to teacher preparation (Gipps, 1990).

Continuous evaluation in the classroom, where the majority of pupils who are enrolled in school are given the opportunity to attend, benefits children's skills by taking a holistic approach. Using the outcomes of earlier examinations, only the top students were advanced to the next level. Although continuous evaluation is considered as a way to guarantee that every student has an opportunity to succeed in school, many countries now place a great focus on each student's accomplishment. Most classes have a range of intelligence from slow to average to rapid learners.

The lecturer or tutor modifies his or her teaching approach based on the needs of all learners through continual assessment to ensure that every student has the opportunity to learn and accomplish. The teacher can secure each student's success by regularly observing the learner's aptitudes, or what they know and can do. Everyone has an opportunity to succeed when it is used wisely (Prouty and George, 2003).

Because continuous assessment comprises long-term data collection, it is advantageous for educators, parents, learners, and teachers because it is guidance-oriented. It produces more accurate data, which prompts teachers to change their pedagogical approach. If properly secured in what is occurring in the classroom, this may play a dynamic role in identifying the remediation areas of the student's weakness.

Performance of learners is accurately evaluated. A strategy to maintain overall student performance is continuous assessment. Tutors and authorities are in charge of evaluating students' performance and fixing

any issues that they identify (Alausa, 2004). In continuous assessment, the instructor remains in the spotlight while evaluating all of the student activities set up in the classroom. It encourages more teachers to participate in the evaluation and grading of their students (Paris et al., 1991). Teachers have the ability to integrate assessment with their instructional practices by incorporating assessment activities into instructional practice. Teachers are expected to incorporate a substantial portion of the assessment learning framework and to offer evidence about how assessment information is used to advise and steer the selection of teaching style for individual learners. According to Lewis, teachers must use continual assessment to help them educate, and they must discuss criteria for successful learners' work with their colleagues and parents. According to Lewis (1997), all pupils must have the opportunity to excel in school.

### **Statement of the problem**

Over the years, there has been widespread student failure in continuous evaluation in tertiary institutions. As a result of their poor performance, fewer students graduated with First Class and Second Class Upper degrees. This study looked into the impact of continuous assessment on academic excellence among students at Federal University Wukari in Taraba State, with the goal of proposing methods to increase academic excellence in agriculture, science, social science, medicine, and law.

### **Objectives of the study**

The broad objective of the study is to investigate the potency of continuous assessment in promoting academic excellence among students of Federal University Wukari. However, the specific objectives are to:

1. find out the potency of continuous assessment on academic achievement of school students in various faculties.
2. explore the effect of continuous assessment on the retaining level of top scorers in Sciences, Social sciences, Agriculture, Medicine and Law.
3. highlight the impact of continuous assessment on the retaining level of low scorers in Sciences, Social sciences, Agriculture, Medicine and Law.

### **Research questions**

The following were the research questions undertaken in the study:

1. What is the potency of continuous assessment on academic achievement of school students in various faculties?

2. How can one explore the effect of continuous assessment on the retaining level of top scorers in Sciences, Social sciences, Agriculture, Medicine and Law?
3. How can one highlight the impact of continuous assessment on the retaining level of low scorers in Sciences, Social sciences, Agriculture, Medicine and Law?

## METHODOLOGY

The experimental design, post-test only, was used for the study. The students of Federal University Wukari were the population of the study. Sample consisted of 60 students across various faculties and departments. Sampling was done keeping in view the results of students in GST and their respective department's annual examinations which was conducted, marked and assessed. One section out of two were selected for the study. The rationale behind the selection of one full section was that researchers wanted to make a comparison between the achievements of experimental and control groups. If all students were selected from all the sections that were taught by different tutors, then the effect of different teaching methodology would be a confusing variable. To avoid this confusion, both the experimental and control groups were selected. There were sixty students in the study population. The pupils were separated into two groups: experimental and control. The scores of students in the control group were used to equal the groups of students in the experimental part. Four teachers with comparable academic qualifications (M.A., MSc Ed, MSc, and M.Ed.) and experience were randomly allocated to control and experimental groups. As data collection instruments, an achievement exam and a questionnaire were utilized. Prior to data collection, pilot testing was carried out. Prior to administering the post-test, the test was validated by a panel of four experienced teachers. SPSS was used to examine the information.

## RESULTS

Independent sample *t*-test was used to compare mean scores of experiment and of control group. The data analysis has been presented as follows: Table 1 shows that the value of *t* (58) =4.572. *p*=0.000 is significant at  $\alpha=0.001$ . This means that mean scores of experimental group (M=59.60), SD=10.807) are significantly different from mean scores of control group (M=46.10, SD=12.02) of the same students in FUW. Table 2 indicates that the value of *t* (28) =3.762. *p*=0.000 is significant at  $\alpha=0.001$ . This means that mean score of Excellent performers of experimental group (M=67), SD=9.18) is different from mean score of high achievers of control group (M=56.2,

SD=6.25). Table 3 reveals that the value of *t* (28) =6.395. *p*=0.000 is significant at  $\alpha=0.001$ . This means that mean score of low performers of experimental group (M=51.73), SD=6.97) is different from mean score of low performers of control group (M=36, SD=6.49).

## Findings

Based on the analysis of the data, the following findings were made:

1. It is found that continuous assessment is very potent on the academic excellence of experimental group.
2. It is therefore inferred that continuous assessment had significant effect on the academic excellence of high performers of experimental group.
3. It is also revealed that continuous assessment had significant impact on the achievement of low performers of experimental group.

## DISCUSSION

The experiment revealed that continuous assessment has positive effect on students' learning and academic excellence. Significantly, excellent performance of experimental group in the subject of agriculture, sciences. Social Sciences. Medicine and law shows that Continuous assessment does affect the students' academic excellence. This concept has also been discussed in a previous study done by Abejehu (2016) in which he discussed that continuous assessment affects secondary school students' performance in WAEC and NECO Examinations. Another researcher Nxumalo (2007) supports the finding of this study as also emphasized on the importance of continuous assessment as means of informing educators and learners about the learner's progress which would ultimately benefit the learning process. Baker (2010) also discussed this method as an alternative assessment method which was initially used in education systems in 1991 and after continuous reforms, it evolved into continuous assessment. The study further reveals that the excellent performers and the low performers of experimental group showed significantly better performance as compared to the high performers and the low performers of the control group. The difference between the means of the low performers of both the groups is greater than the mean difference between the high performers of both the groups. It means that the low performers were benefitted more from this approach. This finding is also supported by a study conducted by Bayo (2005) who was of the view that continuous assessment has the potency to motivating and focusing learner's attention on the lesson. As a result, students with learning issues like lack of focus and motivation can be benefitted from this method. It highlights that if the teachers use continuous assessment in teachings, all the students have chance to

**Table 1:** Comparison of Experimental and Control Groups on Post-test Scores of FUW Students.

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	t-value	p-value
Experimental Group	30	59.6	10.81	2.953	4.572	0.000
Control Group	30	46.1	12.03			

$\alpha = 0.001$

**Table 2:** Comparison of Academic excellence of Experimental and Control Groups on Post-test Scores.

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	t-value	p-value
Excellent performers of Experimental Group	15	67	9.18	2.871	3.762	0.001
Excellent performers of control Group	15	56.2	6.25			

$\alpha = 0.001$

**Table 3:** Comparison of Low performers of Experimental and Control Groups on Post-test of FUW Students.

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	P-value
Low performers of Experimental Group	15	51.73	6.974	2.46	6.395	0.000
Performers of control Group	15	36	6.492			

$\alpha = 0.001$

learn and succeed. Almost similar conclusion has been drawn in number of researches. As cited by Inyan-Abia (2004), continuous assessment plays the most significant role in students' effective performance. Continuous assessment motivates all learners for active participation in learning process. It also provides constructive and rapid feedback to all students. Significantly better performance of low performers of experimental group on retention test is its evidence.

The responses of the students of experimental group revealed their liking of this approach. They opined that continuous assessment techniques promote better understanding of the content and it develops confidence and self-evaluation attributes. This finding closely correlates with a study conducted by Frederickson (1992) in which he emphasized the importance of assessment as a means of developing self-confidence of students. Students get insight into misconceptions and proceed at their own speed. The difference between the means of the high achievers and low achievers of both the groups on retention test is greater than the difference between means on post-test. It indicates that both the high and the low performers of the experimental group better understand the concepts been taught by lecturers than the control group. This is the evidence that continuous assessment focuses on students understanding rather than memorization. The findings of present study are same as those of James and Folorunso (2012) who conducted a study in Nigeria and found a significant effect of treatment on students' achievement in mathematics.

## Conclusion

It is concluded that continuous assessment had critical potency and or role to play on academic excellence of students in FUW. One can draw a curtain that the treatment of continuous assessment had significant impact on academic excellence of high achievers at various stages of learning across various faculties and departments in FUW. Similarly, the treatment of continuous assessment had significant impact on academic excellence of students even among the low performers across levels, faculties and departments in FUW.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are hereby made on ways to improve the situation:

The findings of the study reveal that continuous assessment techniques are very effective in promoting academic excellence. It is therefore recommended that lecturers should be given training in using continuous assessments in teaching.

This approach of continuous assessment should be enhanced at all levels of education for teaching all subjects.

Practical training in using continuous assessment should

be provided to lecturers. For this, appropriate guidance should be provided to all lecturers at every institution of higher learning.

Teachers who are well versed in evaluation and assessment techniques should be encouraged and their expertise should be utilized for the said purpose.

Workshops should be conducted to provide practical training in using continuous assessment.

In-service lecturers should be given training in developing and using continuous assessments through refresher courses. There is the need to develop a new culture for enhancing continuous assessment in teaching.

Further researches should be conducted to assess the role of continuous assessment in teaching different subjects at different levels of education.

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