**THE ROLE OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT IN TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ECONOMICS**

**Abstract**

The study was carried out to determine the role of continuous assessment in teaching and learning of Economics in Enugu South L.G.A.  Specifically, the objective of the study include the following (i) To find out the extent of teacher compliance with the continuous assessment standards. (ii) To determine the ways of assisting teachers in improving upon their skill in continuous assessment practices in Economics thereby enhancing the optimum performance of the students.  The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire, which was based on the four research questions. The sample for the study consisted of 133 respondents out of twenty selected schools in the zone.  Frequencies and percentages were employed for analyzing the data collected.

**CHAPTER ONE**

**INTRODUCTION**

* 1. **Background of the study**

The National Policy on Education (NPE) introduced some noble ideas at Channeling Education to the development of Nigeria’s economic, political, sociological and human resources.  One of the innovative ideas in the policy is the liberalization of the Educational assessment and evaluation by using them in part or in whole on continuous assessment of the progress of the individual (Federal Republic of Nigeria F.R.N 2004)

        Prior to the institution of continuous assessment procedure of evaluation, one-short.  Summative evaluation was practice under this system of assessment emphasis is on decision at the end of the term or year.  One short coming of this practice is that it is too late to help pupils or students improve on their learning because most of them would be going on to their classes, courses or topic.  As a result, Education System (including the pupils, the teachers, the curricula and the administrators) is denied opportunity for meaning full growth.  It is unwise and unnecessary to deny the educational system this essential feedback.  The one-short summative evaluation has been rigorously criticized (Mkpa:1986, Igwebuike:1987, Ohuche:1988, Ekwonye:1986) Mkpa:1986 observed that it constituted a threat to learners who saw the examination as the sole determinant of their future academic and career destines.  Ohuche: (1988) also pointed out that teachers could not introduce innovation both in the teaching and evaluation of their students Partly because of the “Straight Jacket” syllabuses followed by the examining bodies and partly because teachers were not meaningfully involved in the evaluative part of their job.

        Therefore the continuous assessment system was aim at correcting the anomalies inherent in the one-short summative evaluation.  Another reason for the adoption of the strategy of continuous assessment is for a careful analysis of the concept of assessment as an integral part.  It is therefore reasonable that the teacher should be involved in the final assessment of the students he or she has taught. If we have a system whereby student earn a substantial part of their final rating from school work.  They will come to realize that passing or failing does not depend solely on performance in final examination.  The National Steering Committee on continuous assessment on the weights to be used in combining school assessment with the final Examination at the end of senior secondary school recommends as follows:

First Year - 10%, Second year - 20%, third year - 30% and Final Exam (WAEC or NECO) – 40%.  It is felt that weights should increase progressively so that test taken earlier in the courses carry less weight than those taken towards the end.  This is necessary for instance, in order not to un-duty penalize a pupil who might be poor at the beginning but has been making a steady progress so that he has reached a high level of performance at the end of the course.  At the same time the system discourages complacency on the part of the initially brilliant students.

There is considerable evidence, which suggest that the implementation of continuous assessment has a number of problems.  Ekwonye: (1987), Nzewi:(1990) and Eze: (1990) observed that problems exist in the implement of continuous assessment in all subject areas.  In Geography for instance, Ewusie, DuruOkpala and Onyekwelu (1988) investigated the practice of continuous assessment among Geography teachers in Awka Local Government Area of Anambra State.  According to them, the problem hindering the practice of continuous assessment in geography is as follows:

“Inadequate supply of teaching aids, dearth of geography teachers.  Heavy teaching loads, inadequate time for test and recording, lack of interest and dodging or test”.

Egwu, Elewa and Shintoho (1989) also pointed out that geography teachers in Benue and Ondo states are unqualified to implement some aspects of the new subject curriculum in which continuous assessment is part.  Other identifiable problems include high pupil/teacher’s ratio.  The makes it very difficult if not impossible for a teacher to assess up to 40 students effectively especially with non-test instrument.

* 1. **Statement of Problem**

Continuous assessment just like any other government policy cannot be implemented effectively if there are underlying problem. (Ortyo-Yande;1988).  Economics as one of the subjects taught in the secondary school also has its own share of these identifiable problems.  An identification of existing problems will provide an insight on the impediment that prevents Economics teachers from complying with the spelt out guidelines on its implementation.

        Most economics teachers lack the skills on process as well as the practice of keeping the records of children’s achievement as they are scored and graded and according to the weightings given to each component area that has been assessed.Another problem most economics teachers face is that of incompetence in developing valid assessment instrument for evaluation of behavioral outcomes in the three domains.  Most economics teachers seem to be confused in the amount of material content that should be covered by each test.  Most economics teachers are of the opinion that each test should include the earlier her and related materials taught before and after each preceding test.To operate continuous assessment effectively, economics teachers need to spend time on each child helping and observing. This implies that the teacher has to teach less number of students per class.  At present, the number of student per class is enormous. This makes it difficult for teachers to teach and evaluate effectively.This research work intends to examine the role of Continuous Assessment in Teaching and Learning of Economics.  (A CASE STUDY OF ENUGU SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA).

**1.3   Purpose of the Study**

        The general purpose of this study is to ascertain the status of the implementation and role of Continuous Assessment by Economic teachers in Agbani Educational zone.

Specifically, the objectives of the studies include the following:

1. To find out the extent of teachers compliance with the continuous assessment standards.

(ii) To determine the ways of assisting teachers in improving upon their skill in continuous assessment practice in Economics thereby enhancing the optimum performance of the students.

(iii) To identify the factors that militates against Economic teacher’s compliance with the laid down guidelines for continuous assessment.

**1.4   Significance of the Study**

The effective implementation of Continuous Assessment (C.A) has beneficial effects to the learners, Teacher’s Parents or guardian and the educational system general.  This is due to the fact that Continuous Assessment is more useful, practical, comprehensive and systematic than the traditional.  One-shot summative examination system (ALI and Akabue:1989) in addition of being guidance oriented. It encourages good study habits among student.  Students will see the need to work continuously at their studies rather than engaging in what may be termed “massed” learning towards the end of the year.  It will also lead student getting feedbacks on their efforts.  This system of assessment will also tend to ensure that on the part of the teacher he will have opportunity of introducing innovative ideas into his teaching.  He too will get feedback about which of his methods are achieving desired results and which are not.To the educational system, continuous assessment provides objective data on whether the standard of education is falling or rising.  Parents/guardians are also afforded of opportunity of being informed of the holistic assessment of their children performance.

**1.5   Scope of the Study**

The study is united to the practices and problems encountered by economics teachers in the implementation of continuous assessment in Agbani Educational Zone.  Only one educational zone will be covered in the study.

**1.6   Research Questions**

        This study sought to answer the following Research Questions.

(i)  To what extent do economics teachers in Agbani education zone comply with the continuous assessment guidelines?

(ii)  In what ways can the economic teachers be assisted to improve on their skills in continuous assessment practice with a view to enhance student optimum performance?

(iii) What factors militate against the effective compliance with continuous assessment standard by economics teachers in Agbani Educational Zone?

**1.7   Limitation of the Study**

Irrespective of the efforts put in the research to make it a reality, there are still some obstacles, which hinderers and delayed the study and made it not to be moving as it supposed.  These setbacks include the following:

(i)    **Time:**There is wastage of time in the study irrespective of other programs at hand, there needs to run ups and down in order to meet up to the needs of the study (ie to make it a successful one)

(ii) **Wastage of Energy**:In making the research, much stress is being encountered in the process thereby making the write-up or creation of the research to be too monotonous to the researchers.

(iii)  **Fund**: This is an inheritable hindrance in the research work.  Money being needed to finance study but fund is supposed to be limitless to the researchers has a very limited fund to finance their work.  Fund therefore, handicapped the research work.

**1.8   Definition of Terms**

The following terms are used in this research work expressly or impliedly.

1. Education: Education in the largest sense is any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind character or physical ability of an individual.

b)  Continuous Assessment: Evaluation of a pupil’s progress throughout the course of study.

c) Innovation:  Act of bringing in new methods, ideas, etc. make changes.

d)  Role:  A person’s or thing’s functions.

**CHAPTER TWO**

**REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

**2.1 Introduction**

Traditionally the evaluation of leamers' progress was based on tests and examinations which focused only on the cognitive aspect of a leamer while other facets were ignored (Jacobs & Gavve. 1996:291). According to Fraser (1993:192) traditional methods of learner assessment have. the following disadvantages:

• The promotion of learners was based and confined to a specific number of tests and examinations during the year sincecontinuous assessment is an ongoing process

• Only tests and examinations were used as determinants of pass or failure of learners.

• Individual educators did assessment only.

• Leaners did not get a chance to realize their strengths and weaknesses and improve on them.

• Traditional assessment methods demotivated weaker learners. Continuous assessment is one of the aspects of the new approach to teaching and learning. Spady (1994) regards continuous assessment as authentic. Its authenticity lies in the fact that it gathers information directly pertinent to the quality of performance that perfectly embodies all the defined aspects of that performance. Torrance (1995) maintains that authentic strategies for assessment would not only consider a learner's memory,but also skills attitudes, knowledge and values. Fraser (1993) sees continuous assessment as a component of the monitoring of educational activities. Effective teaching and learning can only take place if the learner. Educator and content are constantly assessed.

**2.2 CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT**

Webb and Briars (1990) argued that assessment must be an interaction between the teacher and students, with the teacher continually seeking to understand, what a student can do and how a student is able to do it. Yoloye (1991) also pointed out that continuous assessment is only a part of the field of educational evaluation. He further argues that continuous assessment is “a method of evaluating the progress and achievement of students in educational institutions” (Yoloye 1999). This means that continuous assessment could be used to predict future students‟ performance in the final examinations and the possible success at the work place or on a particular job. Indeed, in secondary schools, assessment of students‟ learning in the classroom has been an integral component of the teaching-learning process especially at „A‟ level because there is much effort by the teacher to teach a lot of content to students. However, to Kellaghan and Greany (2003), that kind of assessment is subjective, informal, immediate on-going, and intuitive as it interacts with learning as it occurs. Although the main argument behind the adoption of continuous assessment is to avoid focusing all efforts, time and energy on just one exam, this is not true in Uganda‟s „A‟ level schools. Teachers and students put their focus on final examinations called Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education Examinations (UACE). This is because UACE results are an important determinant of future opportunities for higher education and other life chances. Since teachers‟ assessment of students‟ learning in the classroom plays a central role in the learning process of all students, it merits our serious attention. According to Obanya (1985), assessment involves the systematic collection of data on all aspects of an educational endeavor. This means that the data collected about students‟ academic achievement is used on a continuous basis in a systematic way, to take meaningful decisions on what should happen. Graume and Naidoo (2004) have also indicated that, “in a global economy, assessment of students achievement is changing mainly because in an ever-changing knowledge based society, students would not only be required to learn and understand the basics but also to think critically, to analyze, and to make inference for making decisions.” It is therefore critical that CAs could utilize strategies that are able to measure the changing students‟ abilities and attitudes, and this is why this study was undertaken to find out the different continuous assessment strategies teachers used in O‟level secondary schools.

**2.3 THE CONCEPT OF 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's learning (Ango, 1997). According to Nitko (1994), assessment is the 24 process of gathering information for the purpose of making decisions about education policy, curriculum programmes and about individual students learning. It refers to the process of gathering relevant information. F.M.E. (1985) pointed out that Continuous Assessment is the mechanism whereby final grading of students in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of behaviour systematically take account of all performance during a given period of schooling, such an assessment involves the use of a great variety of modes of evaluation for the purpose of guiding and improving the learning performances of students. Assessment is however a means to an end, not an end in itself. It serves several purposes particularly in decision making whether at primary, secondary or tertiary level (Ijaya, 2002). Assessment refers to systematic collection of data and gives information about individual, (Okwudire, 2005). Continuous Assessment is classroom strategy implemented by teachers to ascertain knowledge, understanding and skills attained by pupils. Teachers administer assessment in a number of ways over time to allow them to observe multiple tasks and to collect information about what pupils know, understand and can do. These assessments are curriculum based tasks previously taught in class. [Lewis, 1997).Yoloye (1984), described Continuous Assessment as a method of evaluating the progress and achievements in educational institution. Yoloye's view aims at getting the truest possible picture of each student's ability and at the same time help each student to develop his or her abilities to the fullest. It is a method whereby the final grading of students considers in a systematic way their whole performances during a given period of schooling. The view expressed by Yoloye, shows that Continuous Assessment is progressive in terms of evaluating the resultant changes in the behaviors of the learner based on his or her academic 25 achievement, character development and manipulative skills. This method of assessment is in contrast with the former method of assessment, which is narrow because it only assesses the intellectual progress of the students. Bajah (1984), views Continuous Assessment as the continuous updating of judgment about performance in relation to specific criteria, which allows at any time a cumulative judgments to be made about performance of these same criteria. This view indicates that certain basic criteria must be present before any assessment can be effectively carried out. Ezenwa and Okoye (1981), defined Continuous Assessment as a systematic and objective process of determining the extent of a student's performance in all the expected changes in his behaviors from the day he started a course of study in a continuous and progressive manner to the end of such a course of study and a judicious accumulation of all pieces of information derived for this purpose with a view of using it to guide and shape the student in his learning from time to time and serve as a basis of important decisions about the students. In effect, Continuous Assessment is seen as a systematic and objective method of determining the extent of a student's performance in all the expected changes of his behaviours throughout the course of study. Denga (1983) stated that Continuous Assessment means total evaluation of the pupils on the basis of their curriculum and non-curriculum activities, which is in and outside the school. Denga's view means students are evaluated on the basis of planned and unplanned activities within and out of the school system. This provides the true assessment of the pupils' academic and non-academic achievements. Examination is not always the true test of one's ability. This is more so in a situation where the examiners are subjective in their judgments or when the students' are 26 faced with one problem or the other during the time of examination. The only remedy to such situation is to have various assessments covering the three essential domains; that is cognitive, affective and psychomotor. Hassan (1994), reported that Continuous Assessment is a systematic collection of marks or grades over a period of time and its aggregation into a final grade. Hassan's view gives the classroom teacher the scope to make use of variety of assessment techniques appropriate to the subject being offered by the students. Such procedures include practicals, projects and fieldwork. All these have their place in the scheme of Continuous Assessment as grades and marks will be awarded on the basis of achievement in each of the methods used for determining the student's performance. Turton (1983), stated that Continuous Assessment is not only the recording and compilation of data, but assessment of the progress of the students which is immediately linked to the instruction they have been given in an attempt to change the behaviour of the student. It includes an in-built mechanism and innovations such as the instructional methods needed by the teacher for his own improvement of teaching. Turton's view enhances learning by the students since assessment involves the use of a variety of modes of evaluation and improving the learning and performance of the students. Andrew (2000), viewed Continuous Assessment as a means of indicating the progress or maturation of the student but it is also used especially for detecting problems. It is therefore, in the interest of the teacher to administer some form of assessment on a continuous basis on his students to evenly cover the material he is teaching.

**2.4 THE CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES IN „O‟ LEVEL SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

According to Onuka (2006:1), there is a need to use a variety of instruments to effectively measure the students‟ traits and their results are used to assist the students to improve 12 themselves. In addition, Lewin (2001) recorded that, over the years, various attempts have been made in many countries to improve the quality of examinations through the continuous assessment provisions. For example, in Tanzania, the National Examination Council for Tanzania (NECTA) in the late 1970‟s established continuous assessment programs to monitor students‟ academic progress in the whole education cycle from lower classes to higher classes. Ezeudu (2005) quotes Shintoho et al (1989) that in Nigeria continuous assessment was used in geography and out of the 30 geography teachers interviewed, 28 percent of them used oral test, 100 percent used written test while 97 percent used assignments and 100 percent also used examinations as their mode of assessment. Like Tanzania and Nigeria, continuous assessment is being practiced in many Ugandan secondary schools. It is not uncommon for teachers to carry out day to day testing of learners. In many schools, regular testing takes place on weekly, fortnightly, monthly, mid-termly, termly and yearly basis. This is further evidenced with what Etienne (2007) noted in Mauritius that, only for purely organizational reasons, some teachers might be brought to do continuous assessment during the beginning of first term. This is similar to Uganda‟s Beginning of Term (BOT) tests in secondary schools. Besides testing, assignments and recap exercises, projects are other forms of continuous assessment strategies sometimes used in „O‟ level secondary schools. According to Farrant (1997), continuous assessment is being used increasingly as a strategy to prepare students for terminal examinations. For instance, the results obtained from continuous assessment can be used to identify the students‟ weak areas so that teachers can give them special support in those areas. Continuous assessment results can also inform decision-making in terms of determining as to whether students should be promoted from one class to another. “Continuous assessment or schools-based assessment should test the total growth of the pupils in the non-scholastic areas and therefore [should] be built into the teaching-learning process” (Graume & Naidoo, 2004:103). This implies that helping students acquire the needed knowledge and skills would require changes in the public examination system and assessment techniques at the schools and classroom levels. In Nepal, Continuous Assessment (CA) is used in the promotion process or as an indicator of school quality (Carnoy, 1999). Continuous assessment is also used to provide teachers with feedback about students‟ performance and achievement. In Uganda, excellence in the national external examination has also become the top priority of teachers and school administrators. Therefore, teachers have had to rely on continuous assessment in order to monitor their students‟ academic progress and performance. This is what Webb and Brairs (1990) argued that assessment must be an interaction between the teachers and the students, with teachers continually seeking to understand what a student can do and how a student is able to do it and then using this information to guide instruction. However, despite the central role of continuous assessment in enhancing the teaching learning process, we do not know a great deal about how teachers continuously assess their students in „O‟ level classes of Masaka District. Yet, Kellaghan, T and Greany, V (2003) further suggested that, there is evidence that the quality of those practices may be deficient in many ways. This might also be one of the reasons why students‟ performance in „O‟ level secondary schools of Enugu has continued to deteriorate. This study attempted to find out what continuous assessment strategies were being used in “A” level secondary schools of Enugu state. In addition, the study was intended also to examine whether there was any relationship between the continuous assessment strategies being used with students‟ academic performance in those schools.

**2.5 CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT STRATEGY AND STUDENT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

According to Omoifo (2006), what is termed “assessment in many schools today is summative, final, administrative, rigorous and content-driven rather than formative, diagnostic, private, suggestive and goal oriented, as such can be regarded as grading.” Summative assessment entails the focus on final examinations by teachers, parents and students. Surprisingly, formative assessment is geared towards the consolidation of students‟ performance in the final examinations rather than inculcating students with problem solving, critical thinking, and life skills. American Association for the Advancement of Science (1998) has categorized the purpose of assessment into internal and external purposes. The internal purposes for assessment include conveying to students expectations about what is important to learn, providing information to students and parents about students‟ progress, helping students to judge their own learning, guiding and improving instruction, classifying and selecting students. The external purpose was to inform the education donors including parents, education departments and ministry about what happened in schools. Performance is defined in terms of results (Madaus 2000). In addition, Kellaghan and Greany (2003) noted that, “when continuous assessment has important consequences attached to performance, they are likely to impact directly on teaching and learning and so merit consideration as a mechanism for improving student achievements”. Onuka (2006) also found out that in Nigeria there was a comprehensive implementation of continuous assessment and feedback for the improvement of the education system for the accomplishment of learning objectives effectively according to students. This concurred with the finding of Onuka and Oludipe (2005) that there was a significant remediation for poor performance as a result of the application of the feedback mechanism resulting from formative evaluation of learners. Furthermore, Etienne (2007) contended that, the protest against final examinations by students in France in May 1968 was the perfect opportunity for students to point at the unfair and risky final assessment in their schools. They made it clear that such examinations merely represented the performance of the moment and not the efforts made throughout the year. Students insisted on the risk that even the best-prepared student could have a problem on the day of the examination and came out in favor of continuous assessment in order to reduce the risks though some difficulties are likely to occur during implementation of the recap exercises as well. Graume and Naidoo (2004:) also noted that up to high school level, the assessment of students is done through terminal, half yearly and annual examinations at the schools. Carnoy (1999) contends that, when continuous assessment tools are applied over a period of time, they give an indication whether improvement is taking place or not. Furthermore, Ogunnyi (1984) noted that CA is cumulative in that any decision made at any time about any student takes cognizance of the previous decision made about him. Continuous assessment also provides the student with maximum opportunities to learn and to demonstrate from time to time the knowledge, the skills and the attitudes that they have during the teaching-learning process. However, in secondary schools of Masaka district, it cannot be over-emphasized that the measurement of these domains, using continuous assessment, makes it a good tool for improving learning objectives and outcomes. This is so because in his research, Kalleghan and Greany (2003) noted a deficiency in the practice of continuous assessment in Africa where Uganda is part. This therefore may account for the variance in performance among schools and students in particular in „O‟ level secondary schools of Enugu. Since there is a need to improve students’‟ performance in our education system as a whole, the need exists to establish what CASs is being used by teachers in secondary schools. The need also exists to investigate whether there is any relationship between continuous assessment strategies being used in secondary schools and students‟ performance in the final examination. Finally, the need exists to find out the teachers‟ perceptions on whether students exposed to numerous CA strategies perform better than their counterparts.

**2.6 PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT**

In the new National Policy on Education, (1998), it was stated that; "educational assessment and evaluation will be liberalized by basing them on Continuous 27 Assessment of the progress of the individual". The above statement is amplified in subsequent sections dealing with primary school education, secondary school and also in the administration and planning of education. The policy stated that Primary School Leaving Certificates should be based on Continuous Assessment results. Selection into secondary schools was to be based on Continuous Assessment and examination results of students. The Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination was to be based on National Examination. In Teacher's Colleges, Continuous Assessment based on a variety of techniques was to be used. The tertiary level and other institutions of higher learning were to introduce Continuous Assessment into their final grading. To ensure the maintenance of common standards, Continuous Assessment would be coordinated by schools, the Universities the Ministry of Education and the West African Examination Council (WAEC). These organizations were expected to meet and work out a common scheme. Ipaye (1982), advised that to carry out the scheme planned by the Federal Government effectively in the National Policy on Education, the daily performance of students should be regularly graded and summarized and reflected in the term summaries. Ipaye made the following recommendations:

• The end of term scores was to be added to the term summaries to give a record of academic achievement of the term.

• The combined scores were to be used on academic and behavioural achievement that is (cognitive, affective and psychomotor) domains, this will form the Continuous Assessment for the student for the term and this process should continue.

• The overall summary for the year was to be calculated from the term scores, the work for each term contributed to the entire year's work. The cumbersome nature of work involved in the process of Continuous Assessment demanded a combined effort of teachers', principals, heads of departments, guidance counselors and ministries of education. Ipaye did not state where the materials for the assessment were to be obtained and how to train teachers to handle the work. Yoloye, et al (1980), in their recommendations stated that teachers were expected to shoulder the major responsibilities for Continuous Assessment since teachers' were closer to the students' and as a result they stood a better chance of assessing the overall development of students' in and outside the classroom. His work is related to this study in the sense that he recommended that teachers role in the assessment of students', which has led to record keeping of Continuous Assessment and examination scores by the teachers'. Their works also fail to recommend the training of teachers and the optimum number of Continuous Assessment instruments that should be given. F.M.E. (1985), pointed out that the rationale for advocating Continuous Assessment is as follows: a. Assessment is an integral part of the teaching - learning process. It is therefore reasonable that the teacher should be involved in the final assessment of the pupils he/she has taught. The teacher is denied the final assessment of the students if a single examination is set by an external body, b. The Continuous Assessment system enables the teachers' to assess their instructional methods from time to time in order to improve their performance. The data from Continuous Assessment provides a feedback to the teachers on the effectiveness of their instructional strategies.

**2.7 CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT**

Based on the concept of Continuous Assessment, it has many characteristics such as:

**SYSTEMATIC**: Continuous Assessment is said to be systematic in the sense that it requires an operational plan, which indicates what measurements are to be made of the student's performance or at what time interval, or times during the school year, the measurements are to be made and the results recorded, the nature of the instrument and tools to be used for the measurement. Ughamadu (1994), stressed that the systematic nature of Continuous Assessment is that its operations requires the working out in advance, a definite programme of the assessment. Thus, an operational plan that indicates or specifies what measurements are to be made, of the students achievement, the time interval when such measurements are to be made, the results recorded and the specific nature of instrument or strategies to be adopted for the measurement are usually decided in advance. This research is aimed at finding out the systematic nature of Continuous Assessment whether frequent administration of Continuous Assessment per semester will yield better achievements or not. Ipaye (1982), stressed that Continuous Assessment is systematic only when the varieties and types of the assessment to be used are specified in advance for the students to know, the students should be, aware of how frequent the Continuous Assessment should be whether on weekly basis or monthly at the end of the semester, he also stressed that students should know who is to be involved in the Continuous Assessment administration especially the teacher. Ipaye's view of the systematic nature of Continuous Assessment is in line with this research. Turton (1983) opined that Continuous Assessment should be planned and be periodic. This indicates that whatever is going to be used in the measurement of the students' achievements such as test - items and instruments should be well planned and the assessment should be made at intervals. This makes Continuous Assessment systematic.

**COMPREHENSIVE:** This has to do with a variety of instruments or assessment procedures used in ascertaining the achievement of students. Bloom (1986) and Ughamadu (1994), stated these instruments to include tests, assignments, questionnaires, interviews, sociometric technique checklist and inventory used in Continuous Assessment system. Therefore, Continuous Assessment is comprehensive because it does not only measure outcome of the instruction in terms of achievement, it also measures other aspects like the affective and psychomotor domains. **CUMMULATIVE:** This occurs when the results of Continuous Assessment are recorded in a progressive manner showing trends and growth pattern over time, each data added on to the previous one and subsequent ones in a given ratio. The fate of the students' lie with the teachers that assess them and are responsible for keeping up to date records of the students achievements. Hassan (1994), stressed that scores are added from the first term through the second to the third term and are considered for grading with the final examination scores for either promotion to the next class or for graduation. Danjuma (2004), pointed out that two sets of assessments are used to evaluate the level of students' achievements. These are the Continuous Assessment (periodic course assessment) marks, which is cumulative and the final examination marks. When two, three or four tests are given in a semester, the scores should be added up to make the final Continuous Assessment, thus making the Continuous Assessment score to be cumulative.

**GUIDANCE ORIENTED:** Guidance oriented Continuous Assessment stressed that areas of students strength and weakness should be communicated to the students to enable them make adjustments. Aliyu and Ngadda (2000), examined that periodic assessments are very effective measures of academic achievements. Turton (1993), opined that guidance oriented Continuous Assessment shows greater validity of the process of Continuous Assessment because of the involvement of the classroom teacher in the assessment procedure. Guidance oriented Continuous Assessment indicates that information obtained is used to guide the students further development. In other words, information obtained from planned and frequent administration of the variety of tests in a Continuous Assessment practice can be very useful in guiding the students in the right part of learning not only in the cognitive but also in the affective and psychomotor areas.

**DIAGNOSTIC:** Another characteristic of Continuous Assessment is the diagnostic function. Ohuchi (1988), states that there are many uses for which assessment data scores may be put in our present system of education. Assessment for placement and/or certification is highly appreciated in Continuous Assessment, which serves as feedback to both teachers and students. It offers the opportunity of taking corrective actions whenever any undesirable trends are observed.

**PROGNOSTIC:** This aspect of Continuous Assessment looks into the future and predicts how well the student will perform on similar tasks or even completely different task in future (Nwaze, 1998). FORMATIVE: Ezenwe (1992), observed that the objective of formative assessment is to enable the students to monitor his progress and with a view to identify his learning problems and correct them.

**SUMMATIVE:** This type of assessment is given at the end of the term, semester or years. It is mostly concerned with decision-making at the end of the term, semester or end of the year and such decision takes into account the results of the formative assessment.

**2.8 TEACHERS ROLE IN ADMINISTRATION OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT**

The classroom teacher, Form Master, Year Group Master, Game Master, Examination Officer are the main implementers of Continuous Assessment systems in schools. This is because they are always with the students whether teaching, counseling or rebuking. They know more about personalities of students and their academic performance; they can from their interactions with students give the most reliable information about students in terms of academic and non-academic capabilities. The quality of Continuous Assessment and instructions depends upon the above categories of teachers vis-à-vis the success of the Continuous Assessment system (Abbas 2000). The teachers should possess the skills of planning and construction of achievement and aptitude tests to evaluate teaming. It is their duty to teach, assess and record the Continuous Assessment scores in all the Continuous Assessment. Yoloye (1984), emphasized that the teacher should possess "skills in record keeping and preparation of report". The teachers do the computations and interpretations of students’ scores. The computation and weighing of student scores demand special skills, for teachers to provide good and reliable results therefore,the teachers' need time to accurately compute the students’ scores. This is why Enaohwa and Eferakaje (1989), reported that most teachers complain of the much time devoted to the computation of test scores, using different statistical tools with the aim of satisfying the requirements of Continuous Assessment. The need to guide students on Continuous Assessment cannot be overemphasized; the students' need to know the significance of Continuous Assessment on their academic achievement. The teachers must stress the importance of Continuous Assessment on the overall achievement of students in all the subjects they offer. It seems also that some teachers do not understand the rational for Continuous Assessment in schools, thus teacher made test suffer from various vices including lack of validity and reliability and non-comparability of standards (NTI, 2006). The setting and grading of students Continuous Assessment score is very important because it is the only way to determine the level of students’ academic achievement. According to Abbas (2000); "The practice in most tertiary institutions is that the teacher is left to handle all matters concerning Continuous Assessment. The teacher is expected among others to take into consideration attendance at lecture (for which he is expected to keep a record), participation in lectures and tutorials, assignment and tests". Depending on institutions, specific points have been allocated to these focal areas in the final computation of Continuous Assessment scores. In the course of administering Continuous Assessment in the classroom, the teachers are able to identify some learning difficulties, which may affect the students, score in the final examination. Using many variables such as punctuality, attendance at class, carrying out assignments, participation in class, the teacher assesses students affective and psychomotor domains. This is a bit difficult especially in tertiary institutions where teachers usually have to contend with high student-teacher ratio. According to Mathew (1997); "It is only when teachers are able to assess students properly that they can make positive decisions that affect students". The foregoing has shown that Continuous Assessment means more work for both the teachers and the student. What determines the success of Continuous Assessment is the readiness of the two to play the game according to the rule. The operation of Continuous Assessment in some higher institutions has been faced with some limitations and irregularities. There is the problem of correlating Continuous Assessment scores with actual examination scores. For instance, a student will have very high scores in Continuous Assessment and an extremely low score in the final examination. Investigations carried out by Hassan (1987), shows that classroom teachers mostly lack the technical knowledge of how to design a valid assessment instruments. Olaitan and Oyedele (1994), pointed out that most of the students today are ready to satisfy any lecturer in cash or in kind in order to get the assessment they desire. A situation like this is a serious threat to the authenticity of assessments in our schools, finally teacher’s integrity is fundamental in the implementation of Continuous Assessment effective use of assessment instruments to report on each student objectively and the teacher requires utilizing the feedback to improve instructions

**2.9 THEORY OF TEACHING ECONOMICS**

**Constructivist Theory**

Constructivism posited the notion that learners create or construct new knowledge (Von-Glassersfeld, 1985). According to Nwike (2011), learning is therefore seen as an adaptive and experimental process rather than a knowledge transfers activity, Richardson (2003), opined that as learners access information through sense, the construction of new knowledge comes from an interaction of new knowledge between their existing knowledge and new experiences and ideas with which they come in contact in the natural world and their culture. This learning theory provides anchor to the present research since it involves creativity and construction of new knowledge.

**The materials-first-rational model**: The materials first-rational model and opportunity model of lesson plan developed by Belland (1981), revised by Ibe-Bassey (2012), which stipulates that the teacher must organize resources which would facilitate learning among the learners. It encourages the use of events of instruction.

**The Opportunity model of lesson plan:** The model states that the systematically designed and produced materials can teach on their own. It helps pupils develop the right habit of performing all learning activities in their logical sequences.

**2.10 CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

Instructional materials have been identified as very important variables in the teaching and learning and that effective learning cannot take place without availability of basic relevant instructional materials. Instructional materials according to Maitarfsir (2003), are the teaching aids that facilitate quick understand of the subject matter in the classroom. Instructional materials, including textbooks, educational media (library 12 media print, nonprint, and electronic resources), computer software, videotapes, films, DVDs, and instructional television programs represent fundamental resources for schools for enhancing instruction, furthering the pursuit of knowledge, and providing experiences of educational significance for class groups or for individual students. It is the shared responsibility of the state and district to provide an adequate number and range of instructional materials and resources in a variety of formats that are appropriate, timely, and essential to the attainment of specified educational objectives. It is also the responsibility of state and district to provide instructional materials that are free of bias, stereotypes, distortions, and prejudices. The importance of instructional materials cannot be underestimated. Instructional materials are a range of materials and equipment which make a visual impression on the students, assist the teacher in his task, helping him increase his effectiveness in the classroom. Instructional materials communicate information effectively, promote the acquisition and longer retention of knowledge, when they are systematically designed, reproduced, used and evaluated. Maitarfsir (2003), states that lack of instructional materials to serve as teaching aids that facilitate quick understand of the subject matter in the classroom is a great impediment to conducive learning environment for STM Education. He went further to put it that for effective STM learning relevant materials such as equipment in the laboratories, charts, diagrams, chemical, models, specimen, and for technology, technological device like computer, tape recorder and video cassette recorder must be made available in the classroom so as to assist students to have a design of what is taught in their mind. Various studies have shown that a proper use of teaching materials will positively enhance the teaching and learning process in science (Dale, 2003). Okebukola (2005), and Johnson (2001) also added that, various reasons have been adduced as major factors among which is lack of necessary teaching materials/aids in schools as responsible for the observed poor trend on students performances for the SSCE for the period 2001 – 2005. (Ajewole 2001 and Ivowi 2001) and Futunbi (2003), put it that laboratory facilities and instructional performance materials to which students have been exposed have contributing factors to the student’s academic achievement.

**CHAPTER THREE**

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

* 1. **Introduction**

This chapter deals with the method used in collecting data required in carrying out this research work it explains the procedures that were followed and the instrument used in collecting data.

* 1. **Sources of data collection**

Data were collected from two main sources namely:

(i)Primary source and

(ii)Secondary source

**Primary source:**

These are materials of statistical investigation which were collected by the research for a particular purpose. They can be obtained through a survey, observation questionnaire or as experiment, the researcher has adopted the questionnaire method for this study.

**Secondary source:**

These are data from textbook Journal handset etc. they arise as byproducts of the same other purposes. Example administration, various other unpublished works and write ups were also used.

* 1. **Population of the study**

Population of a study is a group of persons or aggregate items, things the researcher is interested in getting information for the study the role of continuous assessment in teaching and learning of economics. The researcher randomly selects 200 staff and students of secondary schools in Enugu metropolis as the population of the study.

* 1. **Sample and sampling procedure**

Sample is the set people or items which constitute part of a given population sampling. Due to large size of the target population, the researcher used the Taro Yamani formula to arrive at the sample population of the study.

n= N

1+N(e)2

n= 200

1+200(0.05)2

= 200

1+200(0.0025)

= 200 200

1+0.5 = 1.5 = 133.

**3.5 Instrument for data collection**

The major research instrument used is the questionnaires. This was appropriately moderated. The secretaries were administered with the questionnaires to complete, with or without disclosing their identities. The questionnaire was designed to obtain sufficient and relevant information from the respondents. The primary data contained information extracted from the questionnaires in which the respondents were required to give specific answer to a question by ticking in front of an appropriate answer and administered the same on staff of the two organizations: The questionnaires contained about 16 structured questions which was divided into sections A and B.

* 1. **Validation of the research instrument**

The questionnaire used as the research instrument was subjected to face its validation. This research instrument (questionnaire) adopted was adequately checked and validated by the supervisor his contributions and corrections were included into the final draft of the research instrument used.

* 1. **Method of data analysis**

The data collected was not an end in itself but it served as a means to an end. The end being the use of the required data to understand the various situations it is with a view to making valuable recommendations and contributions. To this end, the data collected has to be analysis for any meaningful interpretation to come out with some results. It is for this reason that the following methods were adopted in the research project for the analysis of the data collected. For a comprehensive analysis of data collected, emphasis were laid on the use of absolute numbers frequencies of responses and percentages. Answers to the research questions were provided through the comparison of the percentage of workers response to each statement in the questionnaire related to any specified question being considered.

Frequency in this study refers to the arrangement of responses in order of magnitude or occurrence while percentage refers to the arrangements of the responses in order of their proportion.

The simple percentage method is believed to be straight forward easy to interpret and understand method . The researcher therefore choose the simple percentage as the method to use. The formula for percentage is shown as.

% = f/N x 100/1

Where f = frequency of respondents response

N = Total Number of response of the sample

100 = Consistency in the percentage of respondents for each item contained in questions.

**CHAPTER FOUR**

**PRESENTATION ANALYSIS INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

**4.1 Introduction**

Efforts will be made at this stage to present, analyze and interpret the data collected during the field survey. This presentation will be based on the responses from the completed questionnaires. The result of this exercise will be summarized in tabular forms for easy references and analysis. It will also show answers to questions relating to the research questions for this research study. The researcher employed simple percentage in the analysis.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

The data collected from the respondents were analyzed in tabular form with simple percentage for easy understanding.

A total of 133(one hundred and thirty three) questionnaires were distributed and 133 questionnaires were returned.

Question 1

Gender distribution of the respondents.

TABLE I

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Gender distribution of the respondents** | | | | | |
| Response | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Male | 77 | 57.9 | 57.9 | 57.9 |
| Female | 56 | 42.1 | 42.1 | 100.0 |
| Total | 133 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

From the above table it shows that 57.9% of the respondents were male while 42.1% of the respondents were female.

Question 2

The positions held by respondents

TABLE II

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **The positions held by respondents** | | | | | |
| Response | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| **Valid** | Principals | 37 | 27.8 | 27.8 | 27.8 |
| Prefects | 50 | 37.6 | 37.6 | 65.4 |
| Teachers | 23 | 17.3 | 17.3 | 82.7 |
| Senior students | 23 | 17.3 | 17.3 | 100.0 |
| Total | 133 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

The above tables shown that 37 respondents which represents27.8% of the respondents are principals, 50 respondents which represents 37.6 % are prefects, 23 respondents which represents 17. 3% of the respondents are teachers, while 23 respondents which represents 17.3% of the respondents are senior students.

Question 3

To what extent do economics teachers in Agbani education zone comply with the continuous assessment guidelines?

Table III

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **To what extent do economics teachers in Agbani education zone comply with the continuous assessment guidelines?** | | | | | |
| Response | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Agreed | 51 | 38.3 | 38.3 | 38.3 |
| Strongly agreed | 31 | 23.3 | 23.3 | 61.7 |
| Disagreed | 23 | 17.3 | 17.3 | 78.9 |
| Strongly disagreed | 28 | 21.1 | 21.1 | 100.0 |
| Total | 133 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

In the table above, the researcher asked the respondent to what extent do economics teachers in Agbani education zone comply with the continuous assessment guidelines, it can be seen that 51 respondents which represents 38.3% of the respondents agreed that teachers comply with the continuous assessment guideline, 31 respondents which represents 23.3% of the respondents strongly agreed that teachers and students comply to the guideline, 23 respondents which represents 17.3% of the respondents disagreed to this fact, while 28 respondents which represents 21.1% strongly disagreed.

The researcher therefore concludes that teachers in Agbani comply with the continuous assessment guideline.

Question 4

In what ways can the economic teachers be assisted to improve on their skills in continuous assessment practice with a view to enhance student optimum performance?

Table 4

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **In what ways can the economic teachers be assisted to improve on their skills in continuous assessment practice with a view to enhance student optimum performance?** | | | | | |
| Response | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Agreed | 55 | 41.4 | 41.4 | 41.4 |
| Strongly agreed | 34 | 25.6 | 25.6 | 66.9 |
| Disagreed | 21 | 15.8 | 15.8 | 82.7 |
| Strongly disagreed | 23 | 17.3 | 17.3 | 100.0 |
| Total | 133 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

In the table above the researcher asked the respondents, are there ways in which economic teachers be assisted to improve on their skills in continuous assessment practice with a view to enhance student optimum performance, it can be observed that 55 respondents which represents 41.4% of the respondents agreed that there are ways of ensuring improvement from economic teachers, 34 respondents which represents 25.6% of the respondents strongly agreed to this fact, 21 respondents which represents 15.8% of the respondents disagreed to this fact, while 23 respondents which represents 17.3% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

The researcher therefore concludes that there are ways of improving economic teachers and maximizing their fool potentials.

Question 5

What factors militate against the effective compliance with continuous assessment standard by economics teachers in Agbani Educational Zone?

Table 5

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What factors militate against the effective compliance with continuous assessment standard by economics teachers in Agbani Educational Zone?** | | | | | |
| Response | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Agreed | 51 | 38.3 | 38.3 | 38.3 |
| Strongly agreed | 36 | 27.1 | 27.1 | 65.4 |
| Disagreed | 28 | 21.1 | 21.1 | 86.5 |
| Strongly disagreed | 18 | 13.5 | 13.5 | 100.0 |
| Total | 133 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

In the table above, the researcher asked the respondents are there factors militating against the effective compliance with continuous assessment standard by economics teachers in Agbani Educational Zone, it was discovered that 51 respondents which represents 38.3% of the respondents agreed that there are factors militating against effective compliance with continuous assessment standards by economic teachers, 36 respondents which represents 27.1% of the respondents strongly agreed to this fact, 28 respondents which represents 21.1% of the respondents disagreed, while 18 respondents which represents 13.5% strongly disagreed.

The researcher therefore concludes that there are factors militating against effective compliance with the continuous assessment standard by economic teachers

**CHAPTER FIVE**

**SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

**5.1 Introduction**

It is important to ascertain that the objective of this study was to ascertain the role of continuous assessment in the teaching and learning of economics.

In the preceding chapter, the relevant data collected for this study were presented, critically analyzed and appropriate interpretation given. In this chapter, certain recommendations made which in the opinion of the researcher will be of benefits in addressing the challenges of teaching and learning of economics in Enugu state.

**5.2 Summary**

The researcher is of the opinion that continuous assessment is a good practice especially for improving the performance of students and in monitoring their progress. Teachers contended that every aspect of performance of a student in „A‟ level on a CA strategy is challenging to the teacher to seek ways of improving it. Teachers also commented that, continuous assessment is not a physical thing, but rather the interaction they also have with their students, material and knowledge while in classroom. To the researcher, this meant that continuous assessment is what actually happens in the classroom and what teachers and students do to measure how much learning is taking place. It was found out that in continuous assessment, learners are not objects to be acted upon/assessed. They have a clear voice in the way that the continuous assessment sessions evolve. The teachers‟ perception here was more on interactions. This means that attention shifts from teaching to learning and assessment to learning itself.

**5.3 Conclusion**

Conclusively, teachers‟ and students‟ perceptions were very many continuous assessment strategies used and these were found to have a positive relationship to students‟ performance in the final examinations. This is because through CA, teachers tend to realize their own weaknesses in teaching and those of their students and strive to ameliorate them. Good application of CA using different strategies would help in moving towards accomplishing learning objectives and restoring greater confidence in the class and school systems. Enhanced performance of students would culminate in the reduction of the incidences of examination malpractices, as students would have been well prepared for the certificates examinations through CA. However, the contribution should not only be looked at as improving student performance but also as determining students‟ current level of knowledge, skills, or understanding of content.

**5.4 Recommendations**

The Ministry of Education should put in place regulations, checks and balances to ensure that different CA strategies are used both in government funded and privately owned „O‟ level schools. A uniform policy on this practice should be emphasized so that all schools benefit from it. Higher institutions of learning should train teachers on how to use CA strategies for their implementation in secondary schools. It was found out through the interviews and focused group discussions that teachers complained of the many problems they found as they attempted to implement Continuous Assessments. Therefore the training should focus on how teachers can carry out continuous assessment in the different teaching and learning stations with ease. Given the complexity of classroom assessment and evidence relating to teachers‟ skills and practice in this area, there is an obvious need for development of an infrastructure to support improvement of its quality.

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**Questionnaire**

**PART A: FOR TEACHERS ONLY**

1. What is your gender?

Female ( ) Male ( )

1. What is your marital status?

Single( ) Married ( )

1. What is your employment status as a teacher?

Full-Time ( ) Part-Time ( ) Student Teacher ( )

1. What is your highest educational qualification?

NCE ( ) B.SC ( ) Master and Above ( )

1. How long have you been teaching Economics?

Below Five Years () Five to Ten Years () Above Ten Years ( ) ,

1. Do you have any professional teaching qualificatibn(s)?

NCE() B.Sc.Ed.( ) PGDE ( ) if any other, please specify

1. What instructional method do you use best in teaching economics? Teacher's centre method ( ) Student's centre method ( )
2. Which method does students' best understand for teaching?

Teacher's centre method ( ) Student's centre method ( )

1. How do you assess your teaching and your students' learning? By observation

( ) By written test ( ) term examination ( )

**PART B, FOR LEARNERS ONLY**

* 1. What is your gender?

Female ( ) Male ( )

* 1. What is the level of your class?

SSI ( ) SS2 ( ) SS3 ( )

* 1. What infrastructural method does your teacher use to teach economics?

Student's centre method ( ) Teacher's centre method ( )

* 1. Which method do you best understand your lesson?

The teacher's centre method ( ) the student's centre method ( )

* 1. Does your economics teacher uses teaching aid and illustrations?

No ( ) Yes ( )

**Part C**

Does economics teachers in Agbani education zone comply with the continuous assessment guidelines?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Response | | Frequency |
| Valid | Agreed |  |
| Strongly agreed |  |
| Disagreed |  |
| Strongly disagreed |  |
| Total |  |

Can the economic teachers be assisted to improve on their skills in continuous assessment practice with a view to enhance student optimum performance?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Response | | Frequency |
| Valid | Agreed |  |
| Strongly agreed |  |
| Disagreed |  |
| Strongly disagreed |  |
| Total |  |

Is there any factors militating against the effective compliance with continuous assessment standard by economics teachers in Agbani Educational Zone?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Response | | Frequency |
| Valid | Agreed |  |
| Strongly agreed |  |
| Disagreed |  |
| Strongly disagreed |  |
| Total |  |