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Implementation of Continuous Assessment and Its Effectiveness in Adwa College of Teacher Education, Ethiopia

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Abstract: The main purpose of this study was assessing the implementation of continuous assessment and its effectiveness in Adwa College of Teachers Education. The study explored the effective implementation of continuous assessment based on the format of college and implementation difference among departments. Moreover, the mark score difference among subjects and mean score among group work, individual work, short test, mid exam and final exam were explored. The study employed census method to achieve the purpose of the study because the population was manageable. Questionnaire and document analysis were employed as an instrument. Data from questionnaire were collected from 52 instructors. Mark lists from all sections or subjects were collected and analyzed it through t-test in order to analyze the mean difference of marks among subjects and among techniques of continuous assessment. Almost all teachers gave individual and group assignment to their students but students did not reflect their individual assignment because of time shortage. Even though students reflect their group assignments, teachers are less satisfied with the answers provided by the group members. The main factors that impeded teachers to implement continuous assessment effectively are large class size, shortage of time and low readiness of students. Based on the paired sample t-test result, the significant value of individual work and all exams (short test, mid exam and final exam) is 0.000. Moreover, the significant value of group work and all exams (short test, mid exam and final exam) is 0.000. This indicated that there is significant difference between the mean gained from individual work and exam or group work and exam. However, the significant value of short test with mid exam and mid exam with final exam is 0.249 and 0.723 respectively. This indicated that there is no significant difference between the mean of short test and mid exam, and mid exam and final exam. The significant value of practicum and other subjects is 0.000. Therefore, there is significant difference between practicum and other subjects. The average grade of practicum based on this study is "A-" while other subjects are "B+". Therefore, department heads should watch the mark list of their teachers critically early and they should make serious follow up on the individual and group assignments provided by teachers.

Keywords: Continuous Assessment, Effectiveness, Implementation, Adwa College

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Education is the foundation for optimal utilization of resources through development of human capital. To achieve effective education in one country continuous assessment is important. Assessment consists, essentially, of taking a sample of what students do, making inferences and estimating the worth of their actions [6]. The fundamental role of assessment is to provide authentic and meaningful feedback for improving student learning, instructional practice and educational options [10]. Continuous assessment can be seen as a means of carrying an assessment formally and informally within the classroom, yet at the same time make valid judgments about a given students' progress within a particular subject area [1].

Continuous assessment occurs on a regular and continuous basis, it is an ongoing formative and summative process, involves the monitoring of pupils, is integrated with teaching,

involves a systematic collection of marks or grades into a final score, may be used to determine the candidates' final grades, reflects students' abilities over a period of time, allows for improvement, takes care of students' learning in the three domain of educational objectives, and it is a cumulative process [2].

Continuous assessment is a factor to assure education quality in colleges and universities. The teaching learning process of higher education needs assessment in order to accompany it with quality and bring changes on students' performance. Therefore, continuous assessment needs careful implementation in order to sustain quality of education and mold effective citizens all over the country. The process of continuous assessment is not only examination of pupil achievement but also it is a powerful diagnostic tool that enables pupils to understand the areas in which they are having difficulty and to concentrate their efforts in those areas and it allows teachers to monitor the impact of their lessons on pupil understanding and modify their pedagogical strategies [11].

Effective school based continuous assessment can be an answer in eliminating the element of risk associated with a single examination, and providing authentic and meaningful feedback for improving student learning and hence giving a valid indication of student achievement [10]. Of course, assessment in education is a challenge for students and teaching staff alike [6]. Moreover, continuous assessment is a demanding task that requires the use of various assessment tools in order to assure the achievement of curricular objectives by each and every student [1].

However, one of the expected advantages of continuous assessment lies in its being guidance oriented [3]. The importance of continuous assessment is not only pedagogic functions, i.e. 'to provide students with feedback', 'to meet the learning outcomes' and 'to motivate students to study' but also it provide academics with more control over the assessment within the classroom rather than leaving it in the hands of the central system [7]. Continuous assessment has the potential to support student learning through feedback and to increase students' motivation for learning [7]. This could play a vital role in diagnosing and remediating areas of learners' weakness if properly anchored in what occurs in classroom [3]. In order to produce feedback that is relevant and informative and meets students' needs, teachers themselves need good data about how students are progressing [4].

The disadvantage of continuous assessment is teacher overdependence on measuring students' progress in the cognitive domain in a school-based assessment with total neglect of the affective and psychomotor domains of learning [2]. This problem is more serious in the higher or tertiary institutions where little or no effort is made to assess the students' affective domain of behavior [2].

The Ethiopian government has introduced continuous assessment as a mechanism to quality of education in higher institutions and other education sectors with the education policy of the country. The aim of the new policy of continuous assessment in Ethiopian context is to bring a paradigm shift from old aged traditional system of assessment that is a judgmental role in its orientation to developmental role [6].

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Continuous assessment motivates students to learn on an on-going basis and it provides opportunities to get feedback on their learning [7]. Continuous or ongoing assessment gives both the student and the lecturer detailed up-to-date information on the students' development and learning requirements, and the formative nature of this assessment gives students feedback on their progress during semester when they still have time to modify their practice [5]. This strategy provides a level of flexibility to the lecturer, in that it gives them time to implement pedagogical changes before semester scores are completed [5]. Since continuous assessment involve data gathering over a long period of time, it will yield more accurate data reaching the teachers early enough to modify instruction and it place teachers at the centre of all performance assessment activities [3].

Ethiopia has been introduced new education policy in 1996 to make reform on the education system in the country. In Ethiopia assessment method in higher education was based on one-shot exam until recent years. However, the government understands that such kind of assessment system is traditional and degrades students' performance. As a result, higher institutions introduced continuous assessment as a framework in their education system.

Nevertheless, findings of study in Tanzania as in reference [10], reveals that teachers' showed to have little capacity in assessment practices especially in the use of table of specification in constructing test items, transforming score into standard scores for uniformity purposes as well as incorporating continuous assessment scores in the annual assessment of students. However, teachers have to pay more serious attention to the continuous assessment of students [9]. Therefore, assessing the implementation and practices of continuous assessment in this area is important because there may be factors that hinder teachers to implement it appropriately. Thus, the researcher intends to assess the implementation and practices of continuous assessment in Adwa College in order to see its status.

1.3. Research Questions

This study has tried to answer the following research questions:

- What do looks like the practices of continuous assessment in the study area?
- How much effective is the implementation of continuous assessment in the study area?
- Are there challenges that faced for teachers to carry out the continuous assessment successfully?
- Is there result difference in exam and individual or group work on students?

1.4. Objective of the Study

1.4.1. General Objective

The general objective of this study is assessing the practices and effectiveness of continuous assessment in Adwa College of Teachers Education.

1.4.2. Specific Objectives

- Examine the practices of continuous assessment in the study area.
- Assess the effectiveness of continuous assessment implemented in the study area.
- Identify the main challenges which obstruct teachers to implement continuous assessment effectively in the study area.
- Compare results of students' exam with their individual and group work.

1.5. Significance of the Study

Education is the basement of overall development in any country since it develops human capital. It is impossible to imagine that change has come in one country without expansion of education. Moreover, education needs continuous assessment to develop capacity of students. Therefore, a study on practices and effectiveness of continuous assessment is one important area on education. The study could render the following advantages to the study area and other areas with similar problems.

- Introduce better perspectives that problems on implementing continuous assessment effectively have adverse impact on quality of education.
- Assist concerned bodies to education in the area to integrate relevant objectives of problem solving based on the findings in the study.
- Inspire future research activities over crucial factors focused on the study in relation to continuous assessment.
- The research would provide relevant knowledge and information to the college about the implementation of continuous assessment.
- Teachers would be informed of the way continuous assessment could be implemented effectively.

1.6. Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study specifically focuses on practices and effectiveness of continuous assessment in the study area. The specific study area is Adwa College of Teachers Education which is found in Adwa town. Accordingly any of the analysis and the findings of the study are specific to the study area. Therefore, the findings of this study may not represent or correspond to other colleges of the region. Thus, because of the scope the findings of the study are limited to that college only. Methodologically, the research employed both qualitative and quantitative method to analyze the collected data. The content scope is practices and effectiveness of continuous assessment. Therefore, conclusions and recommendations are limited to the practices and effectiveness of continuous assessment. The study area is selected due to the current knowledge of the researcher about the practices of continuous assessment in the college.

2. Methodology

2.1. Data Type and Sources

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative data. In this research basically, primary data source was employed to gather first-hand information to achieve the objectives of the research. Secondary source was also considered for gathering certain secondary information in order to consolidate the first-hand information. Data obtained from respondents through questionnaire and focus group discussion were the sources of primary data.

Thus, the primary data was gathered through the use of the following methods.

I. Questionnaire: the total population is 72 teachers. Thus, the researcher takes all these teachers using census study. Based on the list of teachers in the college, the researcher distributed the questionnaire appropriately to every teacher. However, 60 questionnaires were distributed for the respondents because around 10 teachers were not found on time and are not willing to fill it. The structured questionnaire was employed to collect quantitative data from the college teachers.

II. Document Analysis: documents were collected from each department in the college. Mark lists from all sections were collected and analyzed it through t-test in order to analyze the mean difference of marks among different subjects and different mark scores.

Furthermore, to articulate the problems as well as building logical frame works, journals-articles and related researches with the study were again analyzed.

2.2. Research Strategy and Design

Totally there are 72 teachers in Adwa College of Teachers Education. The total populations of this study are 72. Since the population is manageable, it is census study. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative method. In the data collection the study used individual unit. The study employed cross-sectional study.

2.3. Data Collection

Information regarding all aspects of education quality, continuous assessment, class size and students' academic performance was mainly gathered from the focus group discussions and the questionnaire with different subjects. Background information for discussions on conceptual issues, conditions of education quality and continuous assessment was gathered from secondary sources in order to consolidate the first hand information.

To collect data through questionnaire, the researcher distributed the questionnaire himself to the college teachers. Since the respondents are manageable and found in a one working place, the researcher did not hire enumerators at all.

Data was collected on the month of January in the study area. The researcher had arranged time schedule for focus group discussion and conducted it after data was collected from the teachers through questionnaire.

2.4. Data Processing and Analysis

The information collected from data sources was organized and statistical computations were made to explore the inherent relationships among the different variables. The qualitative data obtained through focus group discussions and open-ended questions from the questionnaire is described qualitatively in sentence form. Responses from the teachers are fed into a computer and analyzed using SPSS version 20.0 software. Simple quantitative analysis techniques such as percentage and frequency distributions are employed. Moreover, t-test also employed to compare mean of different results of students from different continuous assessment techniques. Finally, the results are summarized into tables so that the analysis and meaningful interpretation of results are made to draw conclusions and implications.

3. Results and Discussion

This chapter analyses and discusses the major findings of the research based on the survey collected in the study area. Even though there are 72 teachers legible to fill this questionnaire, 60 questionnaires were distributed because some teachers are not willing to fill it. Based on that 60 questionnaire were distributed to those teachers who are willing to fill it. Finally, 52 questionnaires are returned. The results and conclusions are drawn based on the data obtain from these teachers and data obtained from students through focus group discussion. This chapter presents the result using tables and percentages to show the practices and effectiveness of continuous assessment.

3.1. Continuous Assessment

Table 1. *Teachers' perception in college continuous assessment format and individual assignment.*

Indicators	Responses (%)		
	Yes	No	Sometime
College continuous assessment format is easy to implement	36.5	63.5	-
Give individual assignment to all students	94.2	5.8	
Students reflect/present their assignments	42.9	55.1	2
Teachers can administer individual assignments appropriately	38.0	58.0	4
Teachers have sufficient time to assess students' individual work and to present	19.2	80.8	
Students can do their individual assignments by themselves	11.8	88.2	
	Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Less satisfied
Satisfaction of teachers in students individual assignment presentation	0.0	36.4	63.6

Table 1 shows that college continuous assessment format is difficult to implement in the ground. Majority of the teachers responded that college continuous assessment format is difficult to implement practically with the given time.

Moreover, it shows that most of the teachers give individual assignment to all their students but majority of them (55.1%) do not let their students to reflect or present what they did. The main reason which teachers mentioned is shortage of time.

From the total teachers 42.9 percent of them make their students to present their individual assignment. However, most of the teachers (63.6%) are not satisfied with the presentation of their students. This indicates that students are not doing their assignment themselves and their academic performance is week.

Even though majority of teachers give individual assignment to their students, most of them (58%) do not believe individual assignment is administered appropriately. Most of them believed that with the average of 52 students in one class, it is impossible to administer appropriately. Moreover, most of the teachers (80.8%) agreed that there is no sufficient time to assess students' individual work and to present it. Thus, shortage of time is another constraint that hindered to administer appropriately. The study conducted in the same area by reference [8], found the same result.

Furthermore, almost all teachers (88.2%) believed that students cannot do their individual assignment by themselves. The main reasons that teachers explained are language barrier to translate from English, weak reading habit to search from library, carelessness of teachers during correcting assignments and shortage of reference materials [8]. Moreover, these are also the main reasons in this study.

Table 2. *Teachers' perception on group work and attendance.*

Indicators	Responses (%)		
	Yes	No	Uncertain
Give group work for your students	100	0	
Students reflect/present their group works in classroom	65.4	34.6	
Ask questions for all members of the group	66.7	33.3	
Take attendance in classroom	92.3	7.7	

Indicators	Responses (%)			
	Yes	No	Uncertain	
	All members	Network leaders	Randomly selected	
Participants in group presentation	16.7	20.6	64.7	
	Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Less satisfied	
Satisfaction of teachers with students' answer	0.0	32.4	67.6	
Occurrence of taking attendance	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely
	20.8	33.3	39.6	6.2

Table 2 shows that all teachers in Adwa College Teacher Education give group work assignment to all students and majority of them agreed that they let their students to reflect/present the group assignments. However, all group members did not present the group work rather randomly selected individuals did it.

Furthermore, majority of the teachers (66.7%) agreed that they asked questions to all group members to assure whether the students are involved in the group work activities or not. But, most of the teachers (67.6%) are less satisfied with the answer students replied. This indicates that group assignment is done by particular students and most of them are not involved in doing the group work. The study conducted in the same area by reference [8], found the same result.

Furthermore, most of the teachers (92.3%) agreed that they take attendance in classroom. But most of the teachers do not take attendance daily rather it is occurred sometimes. This indicates that teachers do not identify students who miss frequent classes. Beyond that, there is no identical attendance taking among teachers in the study area.

3.2. Factors of Implementing Continuous Assessment

Table 3. *Perception of teachers on factors of implementing continuous assessment.*

Indicators	Response%					
	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
Large class size	3.8	1.9	1.9	17.3	75.0	4.58
Negative attitude of students towards CA	25.5	17.6	13.7	31.4	11.8	2.86
Shortage of time	0	7.8	2.0	45.1	45.1	4.27
Lack of awareness (knowledge)	29.4	21.6	19.6	19.6	9.8	2.59
Shortage of teaching materials	19.2	23.1	11.5	34.6	11.5	2.96
Negative attitude of teachers towards CA	32.7	32.7	11.5	19.2	3.8	2.29
Low readiness of students	9.6	15.4	3.8	34.6	36.5	3.73
Lack of teachers' commitment	17.3	26.9	19.2	26.9	9.6	2.85

1=Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Uncertain, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree

Table 3 shows us factors on the implementation of continuous assessment. It is calculated and determined based on the mean result of each question. The mean is calculated based on 5 likert scale. Therefore, the mean score less than three represents 'not factor' while a mean score above three is considered as a 'factor'. The mean score equal to three indicates 'neither factor nor non-factor' in this study.

Therefore, large class size (mean score 4.58), shortage of time (mean score 4.27) and low readiness of students (mean score 3.73) are the main factors that hinder to implement continuous assessment appropriately. However, negative attitude of students towards continuous assessment, lack of awareness (knowledge), shortage of teaching materials, negative attitude of teachers towards continuous assessment and lack of teachers' commitment are not factors to implement continuous assessment.

3.3. Effectiveness of Continuous Assessment

The mean difference among the subjects in each technique is analyzed using t-test.

Table 4. *Effectiveness of continuous assessment based on subjects.*

subject		1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Amharic	Mean	9.863	6.422	8.569	4.157	11.608	31.676	72.294
	Std. D	1.1004	.4168	2.3174	.6745	3.4210	5.4192	9.7868
Biology	Mean	13.489	9.011	8.378	4.044	15.833	35.111	85.867
	Std. D	1.9024	.7499	1.1685	1.1472	3.8139	4.2318	8.7181
Geography	Mean	14.500	8.970	6.450	3.990	14.560	29.810	78.280
	Std. D	1.0302	.9281	2.0360	.9394	3.9804	5.6432	10.9307
HPE	Mean	12.320	5.920	6.560	3.240	17.880	18.480	64.400
	Std. D	2.9822	2.9989	2.0429	1.2342	6.3332	6.5136	14.4164
Peda	Mean	13.467	9.522	5.467	4.222	17.578	28.978	79.233
	Std. D	.5780	.3837	1.9754	1.1607	1.8646	4.7266	6.9197

subject		1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Physics	Mean	15.000	10.000	6.660	5.000	13.940	21.680	72.280
	Std. D	.0000	.0000	2.0958	.0000	2.5905	5.1168	8.2314
SNE	Mean	7.656	12.094	8.194	4.638	15.275	26.794	74.650
	Std. D	1.7382	1.6189	.8942	.6601	3.3416	7.3192	11.1754
Tigrigna	Mean	8.833	8.729	4.938	13.708	13.333	24.135	73.677
	Std. D	2.7315	.6520	.2446	1.1478	2.6605	4.6788	8.0870
Chemistry	Mean	11.904	8.500	7.000	4.566	11.885	16.336	59.436
	Std. D	1.8439	.5327	2.1877	.4817	2.9030	6.2629	12.0729
civics	Mean	12.623	8.528	6.811	4.943	14.226	30.981	78.113
	Std. D	1.7757	.7558	1.7215	.2117	2.3729	5.6090	8.2431
history	Mean	9.532	9.021	4.138	4.426	8.947	26.043	62.106
	Std. D	3.4694	.6672	1.9801	.4998	3.4676	6.5705	12.6933
Integrated	Mean	13.756	10.000	7.622	5.000	16.800	28.133	81.311
	Std. D	1.0035	.0000	1.4228	.0000	2.8131	3.5967	6.1128
Maths	Mean	15.000	8.745	7.657	5.000	15.167	34.431	86.000
	Std. D	.0000	.4401	1.6956	.0000	2.0166	3.8627	5.9548
psychology	Mean	10.354	6.198	4.604	3.063	10.062	20.104	54.385
	Std. D	2.7405	1.4207	2.4298	.8850	3.3032	5.2450	11.5225

1 = individual work, 2 = group work, 3 = short test, 4 = attendance, 5 = mid exam, 6 = final exam

The main techniques of continuous assessment that are employed in the college are individual work, group work, short test, attendance, mid exam and final exam. In the above table in all subjects the standard deviation of individual and group work is less than the standard deviation of short test, mid exam and final exam. This indicates that the average mark which students score in group and individual work is different from the exams. Therefore, students result in group and individual work is either the same or similar in most of the subjects.

In another way there are some mark lists which are not fill based on the college format rather it is calculated out of 100 percent based their own format. Beyond that in single mark list the researcher found out that the result of students have been calculated and graded out of 105 which exceed 5 marks out of the normal measurement.

Table 5. *Mean Difference among the Techniques of Continuous Assessment.*

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	individual work	12.340	564	2.8475	.1199
	group work	8.857	563	1.6707	.0704
	short test	6.784	564	2.3262	.0980
	mid exam	13.798	564	3.9468	.1662
	final exam	27.743	563	7.5420	.3179
	Total out of 100	67.118	199	13.9823	.9912
	practicum	83.751	199	3.9167	.2776

The above table shows the paired sample statistics of all forms employed in the continuous assessment format of our college. The standard deviation of mid exam and final exam is greater than that of individual work, group work and short test. When the standard deviation is increasing, students are far from the mean. This indicates that there is great mark score difference between individual and group work and result of exam.

Moreover, the mean and standard deviation of practicum and other subjects is quite different. As indicated in the table the standard deviation of practicum is 3.91 that far from other subjects with 13.98 standard deviation. This indicates that the result of students in practicum is revolved on the same area. The average grade of practicum based on this study is "A-" while other subjects are "B+".

Table 6. *Significance Values between the Different Techniques of Continuous Assessment.*

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Group- final	7.68295	9.77313	.41189	6.87392	8.49198	18.653	562	.000
Pair 2	Group - mid	3.90142	4.07946	.17193	3.56372	4.23912	22.692	562	.000
Pair 3	Group work -short t	2.0639	2.6573	.1120	1.8440	2.2839	18.429	562	.000
Pair 4	Individual – short t	4.32668	8.32362	.35049	3.63826	5.01511	12.345	563	.000
Pair 5	Individual- short t & mid	4.20878	6.76440	.28483	3.64931	4.76824	14.776	563	.000
Pair 6	Individual, group &attendance - short & mid	4.99470	4.75057	.19968	4.60249	5.38691	25.013	565	.000
Pair 7	Short test-Mid	-.22647	4.66099	.19644	-.61231	.15938	-1.153	562	.249
Pair 8	Mid-Final	-.11989	8.03583	.33867	-.78511	.54532	-.354	562	.723
Pair 9	Other subjects-practicum	-16.632	13.9812	.9911	-18.5871	-14.6782	-16.782	198	.000

As it is shown in the above table the significance value of all pairs in the exception of pairs 7 and 8 is 000. This indicates that there is significant difference between the mean gained from the results of different measurements. Moreover, test and exam result of students is less compare with the result of individual and group works. Therefore, marks given for individual and group assignments are inflated in the college. However, there is no significant difference between the mean of short test and mid exam, and mid exam and final exam as indicated in the above table.

Moreover, the results of practicum and other subjects have been compared their mean as it has been shown in the above table. There is significant difference between the mean of practicum and the mean of other subjects. Result of practicum is higher than other subjects and it is highly inflated.

4. Conclusions

In average there are 52 students in one class. This is a great number and it deters teachers to apply the continuous assessment format in the college.

Even though teachers give individual and group assignments to their students, teachers do not let their students to reflect their assignment. The main reason is there is no sufficient time to do this with the large number of students in one class. However, few teachers try to let their students to present their individual and group works but they are not satisfied with the presentation. Students are week in presentation and they are not doing their assignments themselves. Moreover, group work is done by network leaders and presented by randomly selected students. In this way teachers are not sensitive on controlling students' work and providing appropriate feedback.

In general large class size, shortage of time and low readiness of students are the main factors that hinder to implement continuous assessment appropriately.

In continuous assessment there is mean difference in the items. The standard deviation of individual and group work is less than the standard deviation of short test, mid exam and final exam. This indicates that the average mark which students score in group and individual work is different from the exams. Therefore, students result in group and individual work is either the same or similar in most of the subjects.

In another way there are some mark lists which are not fill based on the college format rather it is calculated out of 100 percent based their own format. Beyond that in single mark list the researcher found out that the result of students have been calculated and graded out of 105 which exceed 5 marks out of the normal measurement.

Moreover, the mean and standard deviation of practicum and other subjects is quite different. The result of students in practicum is revolved on the same area. The average grade of practicum based on this study is "A-" while other subjects are "B+".

In the continuous assessment of each item there is significant difference between the mean gained from the results of different measurements with the significant value of .000. Moreover, test and exam result of students is less compare with the result of individual and group works. Therefore, marks given for individual and group assignments are inflated in the college.

Moreover, the results of practicum and other subjects have been compared their mean. As a result there is significant difference between the mean of practicum and the mean of other subjects. Result of practicum is higher than other subjects and it is highly inflated.

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