

## SCHOOL BASED ASSESSMENT IN NIGERIAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

### INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, like other countries of the world, acknowledges that education is a vital tool for achieving national development. Consequently, she has joined other nations in their march towards worthwhile educational investments and reforms. The purpose of schooling is to effect changes in children's behaviour by exposing them to specific experiences through systematic presentation of skills, attitudes, concepts and principles. The teacher uses various techniques to observe the characteristics and behaviour of pupils that could promote or hinder learning. He can observe the skills used in problem solving, listen to pupils' answers to questions or their comments to note their difficulties and then adjust teaching accordingly, identify possible misconceptions and take care of them. At the end of the lesson, he checks whether the pupils have mastered the concepts taught. The outcome will tell him whether to slow down, change his method, use more instructional aids, revise previous lessons, re-teach a particular concept or move on to next topic. This process is referred to as assessment. It is therefore part and parcel of the lesson. Teaching can not be said to have succeeded until assessment proves so. Hence Nwana (1979) posits that no matter how effective the teacher, how intelligent the pupils how adequate the audio visual equipment, if no provision is made for some evaluation of progress, the teaching efforts may be completely invalidated. McCormack and Jones (1998) went ahead to outline the relevance of educational assessment to include determining of pupils, progress and helping educators to reflect on their teaching and material, provoking students thoughts and action, encouraging students to ask questions and motivating them to learn.

At the onset of formal education in Nigeria, a summative assessment was adopted. Pupils were assessed through a single examination administered at the end of school year. Teachers gave tests and examinations to pupils but scores obtained from these exercises were only used for purposes of promotion from one class to the other and were not part of the criteria for final certification. This method was grossly inefficient because pupils from similar classes in different schools were tested and scored differently. No provision was made for adequate comparison of standards of performance from school to school.

Following the Government take over of schools in 1970, state and nationally set school examinations like First School Leaving Certificate and Common Entrance examinations were introduced and used as basis for certification at the end of primary six and for admission into post-primary institutions, respectively. This new innovation has

advantage over the class/school tests. At least, it presented the same tasks to members of a group thus advocating uniform testing, standards. Nevertheless, their validity and reliability in the appraisal of each pupil's response to some of the tasks were not purely objective but depended upon the standards and prejudices of the scorer. The use of one-final examination at the end of term to determine pupils, performance is unfair and cannot give a true representation of individual child's ability. Bassey and Idaka (2007) observed that intervening variables like sudden ill-health, accident, inability of the home and other periodic pupil psychological factors could considerably influence this one-short assessment. Critics of this assessment mode Lawal (1997) have highlighted the negative effects on both pupils and teachers such as encouragement of laziness by pupils, lack of interest in their studies, emphasis on reproduction of facts instead of application of learning to real life situations, valuing certificates instead of productive skills, emanating in academic misconduct.

In a bid to find a lasting solution to the above problems and the high rate of failure that characterized public examination in Nigeria, a new system of education, the 6-3-3-4 was introduced and with it came a new form of assessing learning outcomes in all levels of Nigerian education. The Continuous Assessment. This new mode of assessment was therefore believed to take care of all aspects of pupils learning and thus a better alternative to the former method because it will involve the teacher meaningfully in the assessment of his pupils and also create opportunity for the teacher to be more innovative, more creative and exploratory in his teaching (Ohuche: 1998).

Unfortunately, continuous assessment has been subjected to a great deal of abuse and misinterpretations by teachers because most of them appear not to understand the

rational for continuous assessment in the school system. They have misinterpreted the policy to mean administration of monthly and bi-weekly tests in the cognitive domain. Suffer from various vices including lack of validity, and reliability. Studies have also shown that some teachers inflate pupils' scores, thereby making nonsense and negative the predictive comparability between such scores and those of central examination bodies. Consequently, disparity in assessment has been observed from school to school and from rural to urban locations.

The Universal Basic Education is one of the innovative programme of the on-going reform in the education sector. It requires every Nigerian to get basic education at least up to junior secondary school. Thus state set public examinations are no longer tenable. As stated by the National Policy on Education (FRN:2004), Promotion and Certification in the primary school will be based in part or in whole on continuous assessment. This definitely will require an assessment mode, that is more effective and practicable to meet up with the various challenges. This paper is therefore an advocacy for the use of assessment, not only in the cognitive but in the affective and psychomotor domains for vital decision making such as pupils' placement and promotion. To achieve this, the focus on teaching has to be re-examined.

#### What is Continuous Assessment?

Continuous assessment was formally introduced into the Nigerian educational system in 1982. It is often regarded as "Assessment for learning" because the purpose of assessing the child is to help him learn and not to find out if he has satisfied the objectives of learning. In continuous assessment, the pupils are assessed in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains, a number of times and at certain intervals using a

variety of assessment techniques such as tests, projects, assignments, observations, questionnaires, interviews, portfolios, checklist, sociometry etc. The results of these assessments are recorded and kept on a continuous basis for future use in decision-making on the pupils and for guidance purposes. Continuous Assessments is therefore different from former system of assessing pupils at the end of teaching. It is therefore a formative mode of assessment. As the Federal Ministry of Education (1980) reinstates, it is a method of ascertaining what a pupil gains from schooling in terms of knowledge, skills, industry, and character development, taking account of all his performance in tests, assignments, projects and other school activities during a given school period and using his recorded performance to help improve his learning by identifying and remedying areas of difficulties in the learning.

Thus continuous Assessment is sensitive to the needs of the developing child and within an educational environment (Olatunji and Odenu: 1994).

It follows from the above definitions that continuous assessment is

- (1) Comprehensive as it will assess all aspects of learning in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor using all possible techniques in data collection (Anikweze 2005).
- (2) Systematic because every action is planned and well thought of before it is taken (Ojerinde and Falayajo 1984). What to assess, how to assess, time of assessment, time to be spent by the pupils, instrument to be used etc. are determined and planned in advance.
- (3) Guidance oriented:- Since the information obtained can be used as a basis for encouraging pupils effort. Remedial work and improvement of teaching methods.

(4) Cumulative as it involves keeping of accurate records of all measurement taken on the child in a given school year. These records are used to give a true picture of the child at any moment (Afe: 1991),

As stated in the handbook of continuous assessment (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Technology: 1985) if this policy is properly implemented, it would

- Involve the teacher more in overall assessment of the pupils.
- Give a more valuable and reliable measures of the child's overall ability and performance.
- Provide a basis for more effective guidance of the child.
- Help the teacher to improve on his teaching methods.
- Enable the teacher to be flexible and more innovative in their teaching.
- Provide a useful and objective basis for diagnosing pupils' learning difficulties.
- Provide the learner with the knowledge of his achievement in relation to stated objectives.

### **OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES**

For effective implementation of the continuous assessment policy, the Federal Ministry of Education approved five vital documents to be used by primary schools to initiate fundamental reforms in the classroom. These documents are the

- (a) The National Curriculum for primary schools:- This contains all the curricular and non-curricular activities that pupils are exposed to at this level of education in an academic year. They are English language, Mathematics, Science, Nigerian language, Physical and Health Education, Religious Instruction, Creative Arts and Crafts, Practical Agriculture, Home Economics, Logic, Verbal reasoning, Quantitative reasoning, French, Computer, Games etc.
- (b) The Curriculum Modules:- Each subject is programmed into modules to enable all teachers teach the same topic in details while aiming at achieving the same objectives and

practicing the same learning activities. This will in effect remove lack of uniformity in educational practice in the different parts of the country. It also serves as a measure for a pupils progress comparability of standards.

Fig. 1 A model module

Module (a)	Content or subject matter (b)	Content element (breakdown of content into separate units) (c)	Objective (stated in terms of what every pupil is able to do at the end of the module) (d)	Pupil's activities (that will lead to the achievement of the objectives) (e)	Teaching aids (A) Teaching hints (B) (f)	Suggested assessment techniques (g)		Period (h)
24	Time on the clock	reading the hour half-hour, quarter-hour Telling the time to the minute. introduction and use of a.m. and p.m. for the period before and after 12 noon (or after of before midnight) respectively	1.tell the time to the minutes 2. use the term a.m. and p.m. 3. work problems on time	1. practice telling the time. 2. work problems based on time. 3. play relevant games.	a. clock face of clock. b. clock 1. teach the pupils to tell the time, drill them on this 2. explain a.m. and p.m. and how to use them. Note: a.m. is abbreviation of antemeridian (before noon) p.m. is post meridian.	ACT 1 2 3	A/T cd.pw m.dr.. ww. pw.tg.	1 week

Cd = class discussion p.w = practical work. M,dr = mental drill. Ww = written work pw = practical work. T.g = team game.

**Source:** Anambra State Primary Education Modern Primary School Diary

The above diagram shows the content of the module. Thus when used with the diary, it aids the teacher in effective preparation of lessons, writing of good lesson notes, selection of appropriate teaching aids, encourages use of effective teaching methods,

continuous assessment, evaluation of learning outcomes and comprehensive records of pupils' performance.

(c)The Diary:- The diary is very important and the teacher should use it along with the module to ensure effective use of the module as the scheme of work on the various subjects, effective teaching and use of suitable teaching methods, proper continuous assessment of pupils' performances, proper evaluation of learning outcomes, keeping systematic and comprehensive records of what is taught and learnt, keeping detailed records of pupil's performances in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains, using the kept records for final evaluation, assessment and promotion of the pupils. It contains 95 selected assessment techniques which teachers are required to study carefully for mastery and effective use in assessing classroom instructions.

Below is the list of abbreviations of suggested techniques with their meanings, study them very carefully for mastery and effective use.

1. as. – assignment: give pupils assignment and assess their performance in it.
2. ass. – association: find out if pupils can associate objects, person, word or group of words with the objects, person e.t.c.; pupils' ability to make the right association.
3. aw. = art work: assess pupils' performance in the work of art mentioned
4. c. = costumes: assess pupils' ability to make costumes.
5. ca. = calculation: assess pupils' performances in calculation – addition, subtraction, multiplication, division of numbers or combination of any or all of these.
6. cd. = class discussion – assess pupils' contribution to class discussion i.e does a pupil contribute willingly, regularly and sensibly?

7. ch. = choice: assess pupils' performances in making the right choice of words, object, process, person e.t.c.
8. c i. = carrying out instructions: assess pupils' ability and readiness to carry out lawful instructions e.g. bringing necessary materials for lessons or response to simple commands like stand up.
9. cl. = classification: find out and assess pupils' ability to classify or group objects, persons,
10. cmb,= combination: assess pupils performances in making (choosing) the right combination of word, articles, dress e.t.c.
11. co = counting: assess pupils' performances in counting, e.g., in one's, two's, five's, seventh's skip e.t.c.
12. col = collage: assess pupil's performances in collage.
13. com = composition: find out and assess pupil's ability to compose (or form ) some thing e.g. songs, lyrics, essays orally or in writing.
14. con= conversion: assess pupil's performances in converting (changing) one word, phrase, sentence e.t.c. into another, e.g. changing singular to plural, positive to negative, statement to question form etc.
15. cp= comparison: assess pupil's performances in comparing objects, persons e.t.c.
16. cr= creativity: assess pupil's performances in producing new ideas, new objects e.t.c.
17. dc= decomposition: (breaking into parts): assess pupil's performances in breaking an object, statement, word, number into its component parts e.g.  $46 = 40 + 6$ . e.t.c
18. des= description: assess pupils' performances in describing and object, action, scenes etc.



19. dg= design: assess pupil's performances in designing articles, table, patterns e.t.c.
20. di = dialogue: assess pupil's performances in dialogue, asking questions from or replying correctly from each other.
21. dm = dramatization: judge pupils' performances in play acting way of presenting something.
22. dn = dancing: assess pupils' performances in dancing movement of the body, steps of choreography.
23. dp = drawing and painting: judge pupils' performances in drawing and painting.
24. dr = drawing: assess pupils' performances in drawing, e.g. lines, objects, etc.
25. ds = demonstration let pupils' give a demonstration of an act or process and assess accordingly.
26. dt = decision taking: find out whether the pupil is capable of taking a decision, making up his mind etc.
27. en = enumeration: assess pupils' performances in listing or enumerating objects, steps in process e.t.c.
28. e & r = experiment and reporting: assess pupils' on the correct performances of an experiment and the way they report. This also includes doing the reporting.
29. ev = evaluation: assess pupils' performances in passing judgment or evaluating something, person or event.
30. ev.p = evaluation of product, performance or personality. Evaluate or assess the objects produced by the pupil i.e. finished product, e.g. basket, bib e.t.c. or the work done, cleaning of the class room or pupils' personality with regards to cleanliness etc.
31. ex = explanation: assess pupils' performances in explaining words, phrases, ideas e.t.c.

32. fo = formation: assess pupils' performances in forming one word from another e.g. plural from singular, noun from adjective e.t.c.
33. ft = field trip: assess pupils' participation in excursion or field trip.
34. fw = field work: assess pupils' participation and performances in field work i.e. the trip and work done, e.g. collection of specimens, interviews.
35. gd = group discussion: Assess pupils' performances in contributing to group discussions.
36. g.ex = group explanation: assess pupils' ability in enlightening themselves as a group.
37. hw = home work: give pupils home work assess their regularity and punctuality in performing home work as well as the work done.
38. im = imitation: assess pupils' performances in imitating a person's actions e.t.c.
39. in/re = inquiry or research: assess pupils' performances in making inquiry from parents, teachers, resource persons e.t.c.
40. log: logical presentation: assess pupils' performances in logical presentation of materials.
41. mc. = matching of colours: see how well pupils match colours.
42. mcs = making correct sentences (or statements): assess pupils' performances in making correct sentences or statements with given words of phrases about something.
43. md = modelling: Evaluate pupils' performances in modelling.
44. m.dr = mental drill: Evaluate pupils' performances in mental drill.
45. ml = manual labour: assess pupils' willingness to participate in manual labour, and their performances in actual work.
46. mm = mimicry: Evaluate pupils' ability and performances in mimicking.
47. mo = matching of objects: Assess pupils' in matching of objects of equal sizes, shapes or with pictures, writing words, letters or numbers.

48. m & r = memorization and recitation: Evaluate pupils' ability to memorize and their performances in recitation.
49. m.rd = music reading: Assess pupils' performances in music reading e.g. staff and tonic solfa.
50. m.s = making of sounds: Evaluate pupils' performances in making sounds e.g. with various parts of the body.
51. m&sg = memorization and singing: Evaluate pupils' ability to memorize and their performances in singing with the words memorized.
52. na = naming: assess pupils' performances in naming objects.
53. obs = observation: Assess pupils' ability and performances to make keen observations and notice things.
54. oct = oral comprehension test: Assess pupils through oral comprehension i.e. reading texts and answering questions orally.
55. o.dr = oral drill: Assess pupils in oral drill.
56. on. = oral narration: Assess pupils' ability or performance (fluency) in telling a story or relating events.
57. op = opinion: Assess pupils on their performances in forming and boldly expressing their personal opinions, views e.t.c. on every issue.
58. oq & a = oral questions and answers: Assess pupils through oral questions and answers.
59. o & r = observation and reporting: Evaluate pupils' performance in observation as well as in reporting what they have observed.
- 60.or = oratory: Find out if the pupils have the tendency or ability to make good speeches.

- 61.ord. = ordering: assess pupils on how they arrange things in their proper order.
- 62.org = organization: Assess pupils organizing ability or performances in class or group organization.
- 63.ot = oral test: Assess pupils' performances in oral test.
- 64.pb = participatory behaviour: Evaluate pupils' participatory behaviours i.e. is the pupils ready to participate in the type of activity mentioned willingly and regularly?
- 65.pd = practical demonstration: Assess pupils on practical demonstrations of the activity referred to.
- 66.pg = painting: assess pupils' performances in painting.
- 67.pic = picturization: Evaluate pupils' performances in picturization, i.e. forming pictures of objects, scenes and drawing such pictures.
- 68.pl = planning: Assess pupils' ability and performances in planning.
- 69.pmu = playing musical instrument: Assess pupils' performances in playing musical instruments.
- 70.pr. = project: Assess members of the group in the performance of a project.
- 71.pra = prayer of saying prayers: Assess pupils' performances in their abilities to pray.
- 72.p.rd = picture reading: Assess pupils' performances in picture reading.
- 73.pro. = pronunciation: Assess pupils' on their performances on pronunciation.
- 74.pt. Practical test: Assess pupils' performances by practical test.
- 75.pn = punctuation: Assess pupils' performances in the use of punctuation marks.
- 76.pw = practical work: Assess pupils performances in practical work based on the activity.
- 77.re = recall: Assess pupils' performances in the recall of knowledge.

- 78.rd = reading: Assess pupils' performances in reading.
- 79.re= research: Evaluate pupils' performances in research.
- 80.rec = recognition: Evaluate pupils' performances in the recognition of objects, words e.t.c. referred to.
- 81.rep = reproduction: Assess pupils' performance in reproduction (of sounds, words, sentences, pictures e.t.c.)
- 82.rp = role playing: Assess pupils' performances on the roles they play (as fathers, husbands, mothers e.t.c.)
- 83.rh = rhythm : Assess pupils' performances in rhythm (beating time, clapping, moving the body to rhythm or in speech).
- 84.rt = reading test: Assess pupils' performances in reading test.
- 85.s.dr = substitution drill: Assess pupils' performances in substitution drill.
- 86.sg = singing: Assess pupils' performances in singing, sound, pitch e.t.c.
- 87.so = sorting out objects: Assess pupils' ability and performances in sorting out objects and classifying them.
- 88.sp = spelling: Assess pupils' performances in spelling (and dictation).
- 89.spe = speech: Evaluate pupils' ability in speech making.
- 90.ss = social skills: Test pupils' performances in social skills and adroitness (e.g. greeting elders in the traditional way)
- 91.sug = suggestion: Assess pupils' performances in making suggestions, giving their personal opinions on issues, topics, methods of approach e.t.c.
- 92.tg = team game: Assess members of the team of performances in team games.
- 93.tt = telling the time: Assess pupils' acquisition of time skills.

94.wt = written test: Assess pupils' performances in written test of the topic.

95.ww = written work: Assess pupils' performances in the written work in the topic.

The diary is divided into 5 parts to help the teacher keep detailed records.

Part I: In this section the teacher records the schemes and how they were taught in this order – the number of the modules, the date the lesson started and when it was completed, the objectives, the assessment techniques used to achieve each objective, reference to the page in the diary and remarks showing that the work was completed earlier than expected and that all objectives were achieved. The head teacher is expected to append his/her initials or signature and date.

Fig 3

Scheme of work				Record of Work						
Module	Obj	Act	Dates		Dates		Obj	A/T	Ref	Remarks
			Started	End	Started	Completed				
24			3.7.95	7.7.95	3.7.95	6.7.95			p.74	Objective achieved earli
	1	1					1	Cd,pm m. dr		
	2	2					2	Ww		
	3	3					3	pw,		

Source: Anambra State Primary Education Modern Primary School Diary



		AT																
		MO	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	60
1	Ama Ngozi		4	2	3	3	4	3	3	4	2	4	4	3				39
2	Anazo Tochi		2	4	3	2	1											
3	Chukwu Ifeanyi		3	3	2	2												

A/T means assessment technique used.

MO means maximum marks obtained

“S” means summative assessment or end of term’s exam.

Source: Anambra State Universal Basic Education Board Awka (2007)

c) Part III – Records of Pupils’ Physical Development, health and Cleanliness.

The teacher is required to document the name, admission number, sex and age of pupils, measure the height and weight of each child at beginning and end of term, note the number of days a child is absent from school due to ill health, the number of days a child was hospitalized and nature of illness.

See Fig V below.

S/No	Name of pupil	Ad. No	Sex	Age/Years	Height (cm)		Weight kg.		111health		Nature of illness	Remarks
					Beg	End	Beg	End	Days ill	Days Hosp		
1	Dele Ayo	625	M	8	100	104	45	47				Very healthy
2	Ngozi Eze	720	F	7	102	108	48	52	12	4	Dysentery	
3	Musa Adamu	44	M	8	109	114	52	57	3	-	Material	

Furthermore, the teacher should observe and inspect the pupils daily and rate them in terms of neatness, tidiness, proper care of the body, hair, mouth, teeth, finger nails, nose,



ears eyes and uniform. The weekly scores are obtained and recorded using a five point scale. The percentages are recorded in the third term as shown below.

Fig. VI

<b>WEEKS</b>																		
S/No	Name of pupil	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total	%	Cumu Total	Annual %	Remark
1	Edet Okon	4	3	5	5	3	2	4	4	3	5	5	3	46	79			

d. Part IV Record of Pupils' Attendance, conduct and Sports Activities.

The teacher also rates the regularity and punctuality of each pupil and the number of times a child is involved in school activities like sweeping, raking, cutting grass, dusting the classroom, cleaning the chalkboard, picking around the surrounding, fetching water etc. The number of times sports and athletics activities and other organized activities took place are also recorded as shown in fig VII

S/N o.	No of times school opened/Activities held	School activities		Sports and Athletics		Other organized activities	
		Reg.	Pu n	Reg.	Pu n	Reg.	Pu n
1	Dele Ayo	7	8	8	9	6	7
2	Ngozi Eze	8	6	9	9	7	5

ii) Conduct

The child's behaviour is also observed daily and assessed. If he/she shows good or exemplary behaviour, green cards are given and he/she is praised. A child gets red card for bad conduct like fighting, disobedience, disrespect for those in authority and academic misconduct and is warned. At the end of each term, the number of green cards and red cards given to each child is recorded as shown below.

S/No	Name of pupil;	No of reports			Comments
		GREEN (For exemplary conduct)	Deed	RED (For bad conduct)	
1.	Musa Datti	5	Honesty		Praised
2.	Ada Ngabe	4	Obedience	1	Warned

Fig. 8

Any exemplary conduct or very bad conducts exhibited by pupils are communicated to their parents or guardians using a special form shown on the next page:

Fig. 9

..... STATE OF NIGERIA

LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION AUTHORITY

.....

SPECIAL REPORT FORM FOR

PUPIL'S CONDUCT IN

PRIMARY SCHOOLS

SCHOOL.....

...

Ref No

.....

Date.....

Name of pupil .....Class.....

Pupil's Actions.....

.....

.....

Signature of Teacher

Making report

Reward/Action Taken.....

.....

Headmaster's

Comments.....

.....

...

.....

Signature of Teacher making

Report and school stamp

Date.....

Name of

Parent/Guardian.....

Address.....  
...

Please sign and duplicate. Thank you for your cooperation

Parent's/Guardian's signature.....  
Date.....

iii) Sports activities:-

The teacher also records the various type of sports activities a child engages in e.g. (i)

Ball Games – (a) Table tennis (b) Lawn tennis (c) Volley ball

(d) Foot ball (e) Basket ball (f) Badminton

ii) Track Events – (a) 100m (b) 200m (c) 100/120m hurdles (d) 4 x 100m relay, (e) 400m (f) 4 x 400m relay (g) 800m (h) 1,500m.

iii) Jumps – (a) Long jump (b) High Jump (c) Pole vault (d) Triple Jump

iv) Throws – (a) 100m free style (b) 200m free style (c) 100m (d) 200m.

The rating for sports activities is as follows:

Active participation – 1 point

Achievement of standard in any event – 2 points

Representation at class/house level – 3 points

Representation at school level – 4 points

Representation at Local Government level – 5 points

Representation at State level – 6 points

Representation at the national level – 7 points.

If Ngozi Obi plays basket ball in the school team against other schools and represented her house in the finals of the schools inter-house sports in 200m, her performance should be recorded in the diary as shown over leaf:

Fig. 10

S/No	Names of pupil	Ball Game	Track Events	Jumps	Throws	Swimming	Remarks
1.	Ngozi Obi	d 5	b 3	=	=	=	
2.							

e) Part V:- Records of Pupil's performance in Clubs, Youth Organizations etc. (Affective Domain)

The teacher is required to keep records of a pupils' social life, organizations to which he/she belongs, office held and significant contributions. Furthermore, the teacher should observe the pupils very closely during lessons, games, practical, group projects and other school activities to detect their feelings, emotions, attitudes, interest, appreciations, modes of adjustment, self control, perseverance, endurance, respect for law and order, relationship with others, participation in group projects, leadership and team spirit. Others include attentiveness, initiative, carrying out assignments, politeness, organizational ability, honesty, obedience, sense of responsibility and public speaking. The desirable traits are encouraged in the pupils while weak and negative qualities are corrected or adjusted. These qualities are rated and recorded using a five point scale as follows:

Fig 11.

	Names of Pupil	Organization	Office held	Significant contributions													
					4	2	3	5	2	3	4	2	5	4	3	37	67%
1.	Dele Ayo	Boys Brigade	Secretary	Leadership	4	2	3	5	2	3	4	2	5	4	3	37	67%
2.	Ngozi Eze	Girls Guide	Treasurer	Leadership	3	5	4	4	3	2	4	3	2	5	5	40	73%

**d. REPORT CARD**

A child is supposed to carry his report card from primary one through the six years in primary school. This contains a summary of all the scores obtained by the child during the term. It is usually made up of two sections the academic in one section contains scores from the class tests, homework's, assignments, projects and the end of term examination. The second section contains a rating scale dealing with the affective and psychomotor domains. The child is expected to be rated on each of the traits contained in the scale .The table over leaf shows model report card:

**CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT FOR TERM ...**

1. ATTENDANCE

Frequencies	Schools Attendance
No of time school Opened	
No of times Present	
No of times punctual	

2. COGNITIVE ABILITY

--



1.

4.AFFECTIVE AREAS

5 4 3 2 1

PSYCHOMOTOR SKILLS 5 4 3 2 1

Punctuality  
Verbal Fluency  
Games  
Sports  
Handling Tools  
Drawing & Painting  
Musical Skills

**SCALE:**

5 - Excellent  
4 - Good  
3 - Fair

Handwriting  
Neatness  
Politeness  
Honesty  
Cooperation with Others  
Leadership  
Helping Others  
Emotional Stability  
Health  
Attitude to School Work  
Attentiveness  
Perseverance



2 - Poor

Public Speaking

1 -Very poor

Number of Pupils in class: \_\_\_\_\_ Position in class: \_\_\_\_\_

Class Teacher's Comment: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Headmaster's/Headmistress' Comment: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Source of tables

1. Anambra State Universal Basic Education Board. Children's report card

e. The National Policy on Education

This document contains the philosophy of Nigerian Education. The goals of primary level of education, the curriculum, educational services, method of teaching, language of instruction, teacher-pupil ratio and method of assessment are contained in section 4, subsections 18 (A-G) and 19 (A-I).

This document acts as a guide to teachers in their efforts to achieve all round development of the Nigerian child.

Finally each school is to set up a continuous assessment committee, with head teacher, assistant head teacher and three (3) most senior teachers, (one of whom must be in the junior section) as members. They are to co-ordinate and monitor what the teachers are doing in terms of actual implementation of the policy in the classrooms.

#### Current Assessment Practices in Nigerian Primary Schools

The nature of the primary school curriculum offers wide opportunities for achieving comprehensiveness in continuous assessment of all that pupils' leaving yet effective and practical assessment of learning outcomes in this level of education remains a pertinent challenge to teachers. The current assessment practices in most Nigerian primary schools is a far cry from what continuous assessment is meant to achieve, hence its impact is yet to be felt. One major reform introduced is to make assessment

formative, spanning all through the learning process so as to provide pupils and teachers access to feedback which will help improve learning. It is however regrettable that most schools still practice the traditional method of assessing pupils in the summative mode. Many teachers misconceive continuous assessment to imply continuous or repeated testing of learners. Thus tests are the only instrument used by teachers to assess children's learning outcomes. The implication is that teachers and learners have the impression that the purpose of education is to pass tests and examinations. Teachers therefore, do not make genuine efforts to ensure meaningfulness and understanding in their teaching. The learners, on their part cram and perm questions in readiness for paper and pencil tests where they will regurgitate such facts. Very little concern is shown for higher mental tasks, thinking and application skills such as ability to apply the knowledge to real life problems, to synthesize new information based on what is learnt to evaluate the outcome of knowledge applied.

In the Nigerian society, this social importance attached to test results, and certificates has motivated unhealthy ambition aimed at not only to pass by all means, but also to score high marks, hence pupils cheat during tests and examinations using numerous methods such as copying from textbooks, copying from a brighter child by "giraffing" or through planned collaboration of copying verbatim what he/she has written as answers by a weaker child. A child can also write answers to the questions and pass it to another child to copy or a brighter learner will finish writing his answers and take over the scripts of the weaker learner to write for him/her. It is not surprising that a child can finish primary education without the ability to read, write, do mathematics and acquire basic life skills. Consequently, academic misconduct starts at this foundation level and

spreads to other levels of our educational system (Adekola and Chukwura: 2005, Danjuma: 2004)

In most classrooms, assessments are carried out at the end of teaching to identify those that have satisfied the objective of teaching. Teachers do not assess pupils in the course of teaching to identify their difficulties or possible misconceptions and take care of them by adjusting their methodology. Most children may therefore form wrong concepts which are not detected in time, for instance in English. Children's pronunciation and grammatical errors are not corrected and this affects their acquisition of basic language skills in later life. Good testing can be very useful in discovering potentials in learners as well as deficiencies. But there is stigmatization of poor performers after testing in most schools.

The poor performer is regarded as “never do – well” by teacher instead of using his/her scores to diagnose causes of difficulties in learning. Hence most teachers do not make plans to remedy pupils' weaknesses after the feedback to each test. The child therefore loses confidence in school work, becomes mischievous, causing other pupils to equally test failure, develops hatred for the teacher and life itself (Anikweze: 2005)

Assessment today is expected to be more sophisticated than it was in the past. Our assessment practices is characterized by poor assessment/non-use of the affective and psychomotor domains in promotion and certification. This has resulted in the production of “witty criminals and corrupt intellectuals with attendant risk of further producing their type by genetic multiplication”. The end is national under-development, a dreaded disaster (Basse and Idaka 2007). To Anikweze (1987), the aim of educating a child, in addition to intellectualism, is to produce a well-adjusted self-reliant, productive

and sociable citizen that is mentally alert, physically sound, politically conscious and spiritually devoted to the service of God and mankind.

These qualities are hardly found in our children because most teachers do not make genuine efforts to encourage such in them. Since the assessment practice does not encourage practical evidence of merit and adequacy and visible manifestation of productive skills in our pupils, “they are merely schooled and not educated”. (Anikweze: 1995, cited Anikweze 2005).

### Problems of Implementing Continuous Assessment

Observations and confession by teachers show that many teachers, especially at the primary school level still have difficulties assessing levels and components in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. Many of them simply record the cognitive scores and leave other components blank, while others simply mark through the units of the other components based on impulse and not reason. Different reasons have been advanced by scholars to explain the failure of this system of evaluation to achieve its anticipated purposes. Most of these reasons boil down to the method of implementation (Enyi 2002).

Specifically, Iheagwam (1992) identifies the problem of teachers deficiency in statistics which acts as a handicap towards their meeting the challenges posed by evaluation instruments. A study by Joshua and Bassey (2006) revealed that about 44% of primary school teachers in Cross River State admitted incompetence in carrying out continuous assessment. This accounts for mistakes and systematic errors in both marking and recording (Chukwuneke and Nwachukwu: 2007). On his part, Ajayi (1999) remarks that teachers introduce sentiments in their assessment subjective. Other reasons he gave

include victimization of pupils, laziness on the part of teachers resulting in non marking of assignments and projects, and lack of feedback etc. Some teachers with debased character abuse their positions by subjectively awarding undue marks during tests as part of continuous assessment to their favoured pupils to ensure that they ultimately excel and emerge as winners of class prizes. Other pupils who are in their “red book” are denied their merited marks. Expectedly such ignoble development seem to introduce corrupt practices in the school system as pupils direct efforts at gaining favours from their teachers, rather than making genuine efforts to learn. This creates the problems of comparability of standards even among class teachers in the same school. (Anikweze: 2005, Nkemakolam 2002).

Lack of knowledge of the techniques of implementing continuous assessment militates against its success. This conclusion was reached by Nwaogwugwu (2000) who found that test was the main instrument of assessment known to and used by teachers because they know very little of other techniques. Connected to this is the problem of questionable integrity of head teachers, teachers and other school functionaries on whose shoulders lies the responsibilities of implementing continuous assessment. Some head teachers see continuous assessment as a means of enabling even lazy students to pass examinations. Hence they persuade teachers to inflate continuous assessment scores of weak pupils. Anikweze (2005) links this to the unfair policy of using pupils performance in internal and external examinations to promote teachers or rate schools by some state ministries of education. This is one of the factors that accounts for low correlation between continuous assessment scores and examination scores of students who score either high or low in continuous assessment as reported by Lawal (1997).

Furthermore, the frequent use of tests by teachers who misconstrue continuous assessment as “incessant testing” makes learners less motivated. This may lead to unpleasant outcomes if there is mismanagement of either test situations, test objectives or interpretation of test results. Some children may absent themselves from school to dodge test or resort to cheating in order to pass.

The assigning of teachers to specific classes to teach all the subjects is a problem. It will definitely be burdensome for one teacher to do all the setting and marking of the expected continuous assessment testing papers, in addition to construction of teaching and assessment aids, observe all the children, record and collate the results. Added to this is the problem of large classes. Hence marking of tests, assignments and class exercises becomes an arduous task. This has led even dedicated teachers to such practices as arbitrary assignment of scores, use of examination scores to obtain continuous assessment (Ifelunni 2005, Israel, 2007).

Many teachers lack facilities to enable them carry out continuous assessment effectively. This is due to inadequate funding by the appropriate authorities. Hence necessary materials like diaries, notebooks, textbooks, computers, registers, libraries, standardized tests, steel cabinets, flash drives, report booklets etc. are lacking and consequently records of pupils cumulative performance are not well kept.

Finally, lack of incentives in form of regular and enhanced salaries, inservice training, frequent attendance of seminars, workshops by teachers account for lack of dedication and commitment by teachers to effective implementation of the policy. (Onwuka: 1996)

## Continuous Assessment In Nigerian Primary Schools In The 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Way Forward

To all intents and purposes, continuous assessment, if well implemented, will greatly increase the quality of learning, enhance pupils, motivation and enable pupils to apply what they have learnt in school in real life situations. It is disappointing however, that, twenty five years after its inception the impact is yet to be felt in our educational system. Continuous assessment has come to stay. Our concern in this section of our discussion, therefore, is on what could be done to make it achieve its intended purposes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Fortunately the education sector in Nigeria is facing a number of reforms is the adoption of universal basic education which requires every Nigerian child to proceed to junior secondary school.

This new development has serious implications on the current assessment practices in our primary schools. Since every child is expected to proceed to junior secondary school level, it implies that the externally set common entrance examination and first school leaving certificate at the end of six years of primary education will be discontinued. Continuous assessment result will be used to move to the next class. Hence we need a comprehensive assessment of pupils in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains throughout the primary classes. Teachers will no longer assess pupils to reproduce facts for pass external examinations, rather the focus on teaching will be on understanding and learning. We also require cumulative and efficient records of pupils' performance. This calls for a revitalization of the current assessment practices in our schools to make it more practical and effective. The form, means, mode and scope has to be broadened and expanded to facilitate and enhance learning and also reach the

various targets and learning goals of Education for All. (EFA) Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and universal Basic Education.

Based on the issues discussed, the paper recommends as follows:-

The Inspectorate division of each state Universal Basic Education Board and Local Government Education Authorities should increase their efforts in monitoring and supervising schools and insist that they follow the guidelines. They should organize more training workshops to sensitize teachers in assessment techniques, innovative teaching in the core subjects and improvisation of instructional materials. Resource persons should be drawn from universities to groom the teachers during long vocations and attendance to such workshops should be compulsory.

- The Continuous Assessment Committee in each school must monitor what individual teachers do in their classrooms by ensuring that pupils are assessed using various instruments. They should organize in-school based seminars or sensitization workshops, using resource persons outside the school to retrain inexperienced teachers.
- The National Certificate of Education Curriculum should be reviewed to include such topics as test construction, item analysis, standard scores and transformation of scores in the course content of measurement and Evaluation.
- Teachers should build class assessment into their lesson plans and prepare various types of assessment instruments. This will help them to identify pupils' prior knowledge before teaching, discover their difficulties in the process of teaching and remedy them and also assess their understanding or concepts taught after teaching.
- The adoption of Participatory method of teaching, using academic games and simulations for teaching relevant topics will aid the assessment of affective behaviours. As the pupils



obey the rules of the game and follow procedures in their intangible traits such as co-operation, morality, courtesy, sportsmanship good relations with peers, respect for teachers, and for ethical values, honesty and perseverance, manifest and objective qualification of these observed traits using checklist can give an assessment of pupil's typical behaviour.

- In the psychomotor domain, the pupils should be subjected to performance tests. Their inputs in the process of making the product as well as finished products should be assessed. Thus continuous assessment should emphasize several practical or practice sessions. This can be adopted for assessing music, creative arts, primary science, practical agriculture, physical and health education etc.
- Various techniques should be adopted in assessing different subjects in the cognitive domain for instance. In English language, oral tests, class work, home work, written tests, reading comprehension, general attitude and effort of pupils. In mathematics, the teacher can use assignments, oral and written tests, home work, counting and calculation group discussion, memorization and recall, oral questions and answers, projects, modeling port folios.

For primary science – Interviews, demonstrations, observations, anecdotal records, problem solving activities/investigations, and port folios can be used. Finally in social studies, use of easy and objective tests, questionnaires, rating scale, checklist, observation, interviews, anecdotal records, peer appraisal, registers, note books, port folios and process assessment is advocated.

- The government should provide adequate human and material resources and ensure that these are efficiently utilized. Hence grants should be given to schools for designs tests,

and procurement of standardized instruments and other materials for effective teaching and learning facilities like computers, flash drives, steel cabinets, diaries, registers, report book-lets etc. are needed for effective record keeping.

- More hands are needed to lessen the burden placed on teachers. Specialist teachers in the core subjects should be trained. Guidance Counselors, Games masters, should help the form or class teachers in effective assessment, recording and collation of assessment results
- Parents should be part of the assessment base and interact closely with the school to enable the child learn within and outside the school. They should visit the school, attend PTA meetings, help children carry out their homework and projects and also provide their basic needs.
- Teachers should develop close relationships with the pupils and act as models to enable them have better understanding of pupil's emotions. The use of questionnaires, anecdotal records, psychotherapy counseling is recommended.

Assessment benchmarks across all behavioural domains should be set and should be the prerequisites for students progression and promotion from class to class, as well as for certification.

Peer appraisal can be used in assessing affective traits like neatness, punctuality, honesty, leadership and in marking multiple choice true or false, yes or no questions.

### **Conclusion**

Continuous assessment is a laudable programme that has benefits for the teacher, pupils as well as parents. The realization of these benefits depends heavily on what the teacher knows about it, his attitudes to it, and what he does in his lesson plan, his actual

teaching and after teaching. It is important that the teacher fully understands the advantages of continuous assessment for improving the quality of both teaching and learning.

Assessing the child for learning is a worthwhile innovation in the Nigerian educational system but it is definitely an additional burden and time consuming. It requires dedication to duty and determination to preserve cherished integrity and professional ethics on the part of teachers to make it work. Hence the teachers need the moral and materials support of all persons, committed to the all round development and education of the child, for proper and effective implementation of continuous assessment.

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