



School Based Assessment: Implication for National Development

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Abstract

Activities within the school are organized within classes and good quality classes are needed to attain educational goals which can be established through assessment. Assessment is at the heart of education. This paper examines school based assessment which is one of the types of assessment and its implication on national development. The concept assessment is defined by various authors in different ways. Assessment is a process of collecting and interpreting information about learning and achievement of student. School based assessment is explained and its characteristics are pinpointed. The rationales for school based assessment are stated. Also problem of school based assessment is mentioned. Concept of national development and its implications are X-rayed and conclusion drawn.

Keywords

Assessment, School-Based Assessment, National Development

Subject Areas: Education

1. Introduction

The dynamic nature of society brings with it social change, challenges and concerns which must be tackle and one of the ways of handling these is through reforms in the education sector (Okobia [1] 20 Education was often recognized as the prerequisites for quality manpower development and creation of wealth. Oyekan in [1] argued that, functional education remained the veritable instrument and strength of positive change for sustainable national development since education was the bedrock of societal development, the level of development of any society couldn't be isolated from its quality of education (Ajayi [2]) The author points out that every society strives to invest huge resources in education in order to enhance socio-political, economic and technological advancement that will put it on a pedestal to compete favorably in the global arena.

On this conceptualization, it is predicated by the support of Education For All (EFA) by the United Nations

(UNDP, 2008 in Anikweze [3]) believing that achieving that EFA goals is critical for attaining all the eight millennium Development Goals (MDGS) partly due to the direct impact of education on child and reproductive health, as well as the fact that (EFA) has created a body of experience in multi-partners collaboration toward the 2015 targets.

Being certain about the fact that education is the foundation on which national development and growth is hinged, the Federal Republic of Nigeria [4] states that “Education in Nigeria” is an instrument “for excellence” for effecting national development.

To realize the said objectives, there is a need for the learner’s performance to be assessed in the educational system. This is because assessment of students’ learning outcome is cardinal to the realization of the objectives of education in any economy, because it provides information about learning that can be used to: diagnose learner strengths and needs; provide feedback on teaching and learning; provide a basis for instructional placement; inform and guide instruction; motivate and focus learner attention; provide a basis for learner evaluation and gauge programmed effectiveness (Onuka & Akinyemi [5]).

Odiba in Orubu [6] submits that the school is essentially a social system consisting of well defined boundaries within which individuals inter-relate in the performance of activities for the purpose of attaining educational goal. In order to determine the effectiveness of those attainments, the learners must be assessed.

Educational assessment is a process of documenting, usually in measurable terms, knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs. Assessment can focus on the individual learner, the learning community, the institution or the educational system as a whole (Okonkwo, [7]). The author maintains that high quality assessments are considered those with a high level of reliability and validity. Reliability generally relates to the consistency with which the instrument achieves the same results with the same cohort of students while the valid assessment is one which measures what it is intended to measure. A well planned assessment can help to answer this question; to what extent have objectives been achieved? The issues of assessment have continued to receive a great deal of attention from individuals across all levels of education: Federal, State, District, School and Classroom (Danner, [8]). The author emphasizes that educators, administrators and parents are concerned with quality, types, purpose and uses of assessment in the classroom. Among the types of assessment are: traditional assessment, authentic assessment, national assessment, classroom assessment, external assessment and school based assessment. These types of assessment can be categorized into two main types namely; School Based Assessment (SBA) and Externally-Based Assessment (EBA) or External Examination (EE) according to [6]. School Based Assessment is the type conducted at the school level while EBA or EE is usually conducted by public examination bodies such as West African Examination Council (WAEC), National Examination Council (NECO), and Junior Secondary Certificate Examination (JSCE) etc. This paper focuses on school based assessment, procedure, and its implication for national development. It is a position paper.

2. Concept of Assessment

Assessment has been described in several ways by scholars; Assessment according to Okoro in Ifeanyieze and Aneke [9] means an evaluation that use collected data to estimate the quality of a programme. In the view of National Teacher Institute in the same book, assessment is perceived as the process of developing and organizing test data obtained from observation, examinations, test or questionnaire into interpretable forms on a number of factors that include a variety of technique to determine achievement in the cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains.

Ukwuije cited in Ukwuije and Opara [10] opined that when assessment is applied to education, it is an all embracing term covering any of the situations in which some aspects of pupils’ education are measured by the teacher and the success of their instructional practices. Assessment subsumes testing, measurement and evaluation of the cognitive, psychomotor and affective skills.

Baku as discussed by [5] assessment is a mean of determining the extent to which education has achieved its goals and objectives while Rust [11], sees it as appraisal of students’ learning outcome. According to him, assessment involves making judgment about student’s performance as well as indentifying the strengths and weakness of students in a particular subject. Assessment is the only means through which teachers can measure students learning performance or achievement after they have been exposed to course of instruction. It serves as a means of controlling the quality of education, its progress and product. Assessment in the classroom is intended to be a vehicle for change, by getting learners to notice the gap between their current performance, and

the target performance. The effectiveness of any assessment depends on how well it has succeeded in measuring the knowledge acquisition level of an individual from a global and comprehensive perspective of that given individual.

The term assessment, in its widest meaning, denotes a process of collecting and interpreting information about learning and achievement of students that are used to provide information to students and their parents about the progress in acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes. Assessment is also used to provide support to teachers to modify their instruction and learning activities of their students. Furthermore, assessment to provide information to other stakeholders that makes decisions about educational policy related to students (for example, decisions about promotion of students' involvement in particular educational programs and types of practices).

Assessment highlights two major points, namely collection and analysis of information and use of such information for decision-making.

Assessment is the systematic basis for making inferences about the learning and development of students. It is the process of defining, selecting, designing, collecting, analysis, interpreting and using information to increase students learning and development (Erwin in Brown [12]). Through assessment the teacher constructs a comprehensive picture of the short-term and long-term needs of the child and plans future work accordingly (Oyebola, [13]) (Figure 1).

The diagram is explained as follows:

- 1) Formulating statements of intended learning outcome describing intentions about what students should know understand and be able to do with their knowledge when they graduate.
- 2) Developing or selecting Assessment measures: deals with designing or selecting data gathering measures to assess whether or not the intended learning outcome have been achieved.
- 3) Creating experiences leading to outcome: this ensures that students have experiences both in and outside their courses that help them achieve the intended learning outcomes.
- 4) Discussing and using assessment results: the result is used to improve individual student performance.

3. School Based Assessment

School Based Assessment according NTI in [9] is a type of assessment that incorporates different categories of people (teacher, parent and peers) into the process of determining learning outcome in other to support and motivate a child to become interested in learning and make a steady progress. This form of assessment permit the learner to get support from people and help him to participate in his assessment thereby enhancing individual learning in the class and at home.

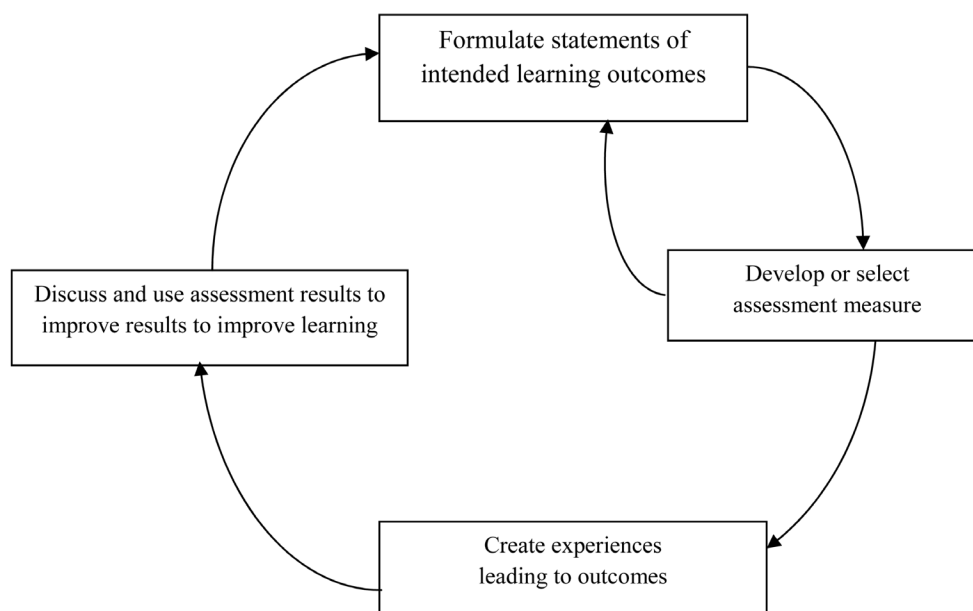


Figure 1. Fundamental components of assessment. Source: Adopted from Huban and freed [14].

School based assessment has a major role to play in the education and National development. Students spend the best part of their young lives in school and it is through the teachers assessment and their abilities can be better understood. To rely solely on the one time examinations as is common practice in the final decision making is to obscure the vision of a teacher. The role of school based assessment in the final grading of students in Primary School Leaving Certificate (PSLC) and Senior Secondary School (SSS) needs to be given an uplifted face.

NPF [15] emphasized on acquisition of basic competencies and skills for learners and in the education system to criterion-referenced testing. This was seen as a necessary move to equip school leavers (primary school leaver, SSS and University graduate) with skills necessary for survival and world of work (Tsheko, [16] Undated). The author emphasized that the focus of the move is to measure students' skills and competencies against a set of criteria to indicate levels of performance rather than relative standing in a group. In Botswana, the importance of such move is more informative assessment system going beyond ordering students by performance as emphasized by Somerset as discussed by [15].

School based assessment is comprehensive, systematic, continuous, diagnostic and integrative teacher-directed assessment procedure. It originates from the classroom situation requiring active participation and involvement of pupils/students with emphasis on learning rather than importance of scores and grades (Oviawe and Ojo cited by 10). Okpala, Afemikhe and Anyanwu [16] argued that school assessment is a complex one involving the use of different modes of assessment procedures to gather and/or provide information for decision making on education-related matter.

School Based Assessment involves the continuous assessment of student at intervals in the three domain of leaning-cognitive, affective and psychomotor using different instrument such as test, assignment, observation, interview, questionnaire and project.

School Based Assessment could be formative, summative, performance, authentic and so on. Formative assessment deals with learners' learning progress during instruction. The purpose is to provide continuous feedback to both the learners and teacher concerning the teaching and learning process (Alonge [17]).

Diagnostic assessment is concerned with the pupils persistent or recurring learning difficulties that are left unresolved by the standard corrective prescription of formative evaluation.

Summative assessment involves assessing students' performances at the end of given period through testing or examination. It is an evaluation at some logical and terminal points. It usually comes at the end of course of instruction.

Performance assessment is the other most common term for summative assessment. It focuses on achievement. It is defined as performance-based with no reference to authentic nature of the task [11].

Authentic assessment is a process-oriented means of evaluating communicative competence, cognitive abilities and affective learning, using reflective learning forms of assessment in instructionally relevant classroom activities. Is a means of collecting information about learner's progress and the social environment in the classroom?

4. Characteristics of School Based Assessment

School Based Assessment has a numbers of important characteristics which distinguish it from other forms of assessment as stated below.

It involves the teacher from the beginning to the end from planning the assessment programme, to identifying and/or developing appropriates assessment tasks right through to making the assessment judgments. It allows for the collection of a number of samples of student performance over a period of time. This is carried out in ordinary classroom.

The assessment is conducted by the student own teacher and the students are more actively in the assessment process especially if self and / or peer assessment is used in conjunction with teacher assessment.

The assessment stimulates continuous evaluation and adjustment of the teaching and learning programme. It also complements other forms of assessment, including external examination.

5. Rationales for School Based Assessment.

The following are the rationale for the school based assessment:

To continuously assess students in a pressure-free environment;

- To reduce reliance on one-off public examination;
 - To improve reliability of assessment it occurs by having more than one assessment by a teacher who is familiar with multiple collection of test for judgment;
 - To reflect the standard and ability of students;
 - To foster teaching and learning;
 - To reinforce learner's autonomy and independent learning;
 - To empowers teachers to make part of the assessment mechanism.
- It allows the teachers to give immediate and constructive feedback to students.
- Feedback: student can receive constructive feedback immediately after the assessment has finished, hence improving learning feedback is usually a grade at the end of the course.
- Improve validity: it improves validity through assessing factors that cannot be included in public exam settings.
- Promote professional development: it builds teacher assessment skills, which be transferred to other areas of the curriculum.

6. Principles of School Based Assessment

Assessment, primarily, is aimed to improve students' learning and achievements. It provides complete information about student achievements and it is a complementary part of the teaching process (of learning and teaching).

The assessment is based on making use of multiple different methods, fair, transparent, valid and reliable.

7. Steps in Carrying out School-Based Assessment

Assessment package has processes to be considered when developing quality units of work.

Identifying curriculum: selecting the essential learning's, school priorities and the context for learning.

Sequencing learning: planning learning experiences and teaching strategies to respond to the needs and interests of learners.

Developing assessment: planning a variety of assessments to collect comprehensive and meaningful evidence of learning.

Making judgments: considering how judgments will be made about the quality of learning, using the evidence in student responses.

Using feedback: considering how and when to provide feedback to students.

8. School-Based Assessment Planning

Assessment methods should comply with the aim and the context of assessment.

SBA should be planned in the school development plan and in the school year program of work.

SBA in complementary part of the work plans of the teachers' professional schools comities and of the school professional service (pedagogue-psychologist-sociologist).

Teacher should plan SBA as a complementary part of their year, theme and daily work plans.

9. Selection of Assessment Methods and Development of Instruments

Various assessment methods should be selected and adequate instruments should also be developed.

Assessment methods and adequate instruments enable collecting valid data about learning and about the achievements of every student.

In making selection of methods and selection/development of instruments, the purpose of their use should be taken into consideration.

10. Conducting the School-Based Assessment

The following principles should be followed in conducting the School Based Assessment.

Assessment should start from the curriculum aims and should take into consideration the ways of teaching and learning.

Students should be provided with an explanation why their achievements are checked and assessed and how the obtained results would be used.

Monitoring students learning and the formative assessment should occupy the central place of instruction.

Assessment should be conducted in conditions that are adequate to the assessment purpose and method used.

In performing the assessment, all students should be subject to fair and consistent treatment.

The process of estimating and scoring students' achievement should correspond to the assessment method and should be conducted upon set-up procedures and instructions.

The process of judging and scoring should be conducted according to previously developed instructions.

11. Problems of School-Based Assessment

Below are the problems of School Based Assessment.

It is carried out most of the time by unprofessional-teachers and this approach requires that teachers have significant professional development so as to be able to replicate the highest standard in testing.

It usually generate a total score (a percentage) and/or a rank-order score such as position in class or position relative to a numbering sample (e.g. percentile or stanine). These scores do not lead to strong educational decision-making in the classroom. The percentage correct score is always a poor indicator of what a student knows. Real ability depends on the difficulty of the task answered correctly; not the proportion of questions answered correctly.

12. National Development

The pride of any government is the attainment of higher value level of development in such a way that its citizens would desire natural attachment to governance.

Development is essential and critical to growth and sustenance of any county. In other to successfully enhance meaningful development, effective strategies like assessment must be evolved. Gboyega in Lawal and Abe captures development as an idea that embodies all attempts to improve the conditions of human existence in all ramifications. It is reasonable to know exercise, but also involves both socio-economic and political issues and pervades all aspects of social life.

National development according to [18] is described as the overall development or a collective socio-economic, political as well as religions advancement of a country or nation. This is best achieved through education. In order to attain educational goals there is need for the learners' to be assessed.

13. Implication for National Development

School Based Assessment has the following Implication for National Development.

Since education is the foundation in which national development growth is hinged, there is the need for the learners' performance to be assessed. This is because assessment of students learning outcomes is central to the realization of the objectives of education in any economy.

School based assessment will provide information about learning that can be used to diagnose learners' strengths and weakness, provide feedback on teaching and learning, provide basics for instruction placement, motivate and focus learners attention. All these will culminate in programme effectiveness thus enabling the attainment of educational goals for national development.

Since educators, administrators and parents who are stakeholders in education are concerned with quality, types and uses of assessment in the classroom, school based conducted at the school level has to be high quality in order to bring out capable youths that can hold the future of the country.

Valid and reliable school based assessment should involve developing and organizing test data obtained from observation, examination into interpretable form or a number of factors that include a variety of techniques to determine achievement in the cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains which in a holistic evaluation of the individual that make him useful to the society.

School based assessment is a systematic base for making inference about the learning and development of students. It is the process of using information to increase students learning and development. The students are the future leaders of tomorrow, thus their development will enhance the growth of the nation.

Teachers are the drivers of education, therefore, through assessment, the teacher constructs a comprehensive

picture of the long term and short term needs of the child which is the need of the society and plan future work accordingly.

Students spend the best part of their young lives in school and it is through the teachers assessment that their abilities can be better understood. Thus to rely solely on one-shot examination as in common practice in the final decision making is to obscure the vision of the teacher. The role of school based assessment in the final grading of students in primary school leaving certificate and senior secondary school needs to be given urgent attention.

School based assessment is a necessary move to equip school leavers (Primary School leavers, Senior Secondary School and University graduate) with the skill necessary for survival and world of work.

School based assessment provides professional development, it builds teachers assessment skills which he transferred to other areas of the curriculum and teachers are the main; actors in fostering education for national development. Furthermore, teachers and students are empowered because both of them are part of the assessment process, collaborating and sharing of expertise within and across.

14. Conclusions

It cannot be over-emphasized that the mode of assessment dictates the nature of the educational experience and the quality of the relationship between teacher and students. It is not something separate, and is a tool by which education may be evaluated; it acts upon the educational system so as to shape it in accordance with the assessment demands.

Thus school based assessment is comprehensive systematic, continuous, diagnostic, interpretative and teacher directed procedure. It originates from the classroom situation requiring active participation and involvement of pupils/students with emphasis on learning rather than score and grade.

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