

## Assessing the Adequacy of Formative Assessment Practices in Colleges of Education In South-western Nigeria: Implications for Quality Assurance

**Blessing Temitope DICKSON-OMOGOYE (Ph.D.)**

Department of Counselling Psychology, Bamidele Olumilua University of Education,  
Science and Technology, Ikere-Ekiti

### Abstract

*Formative assessment practice is an important aspect of quality assurance in teacher education, but its sufficiency in Nigerian Colleges of Education has not been sufficiently studied. This research examined the practice of continuous assessment in the colleges of education in southwestern Nigeria through a systems theory framework and a concurrent explanatory mixed-method design. There were 445 second-year students, institutional administrators, and expert assessors. Tools: Assessment Quality Rubric ( $r = 0.83$ ), Continuous Assessment Record Checklist, Interview and Focus Group Discussion Guides. Results showed that there were severe deficiencies: 100 per cent lack of assessment schedules in all institutions; 44.4% to 100% sufficiency in record-keeping; 50 per cent of periodic testing performance was rated as requiring improvement; nearly complete failure in the feedback provision, with students reporting never receiving continuous assessment scores until final results. These are key violations of NCCE standards. Such recommendations as the creation of standardised assessment schedules, systematic feedback protocols, digitisation of records, assessment literacy and compliance monitoring enhancement are offered. The paper provides empirical records of continuous assessment sufficiency, uses the systems theory to examine the assessment analysis, and draws the relationship between the insufficiency of assessment practice and the issues of teacher quality.*

**Keywords:** *Formative assessment, Continuous assessment, Quality assurance, Colleges of Education, NCCE standards, Teacher education, Nigeria.*

### Introduction

The quality of teacher education is one of the fundamental determinants of the outcomes of the educational system. Colleges of Education in Nigeria grant the minimum teaching qualification, the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), since changes in the 2004 National Policy on Education eliminated Grade II certificates. These institutions were laid down by the Ashby Commission (1959) and resulted in eight Advanced Teachers Colleges (1962–1968) that became present-day Colleges of Education controlled by the National Commission of Colleges of Education (NCCE).

The third quality indicator of NCCE prescribes that there should be sufficient continuous assessment processes in frequency and effectiveness, and these are associated with pre-service teacher standards. Although such an assessment is necessary, there is limited systematic implementation and evaluation, which hinders the ability to effectively measure and improve pre-service teacher standards. Assessment practices have two functions: formative (guiding learning) and summative (certification evidence), generally weighing 30-40 points toward end grades.

## The Nature and Function of Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is the continual feedback during instruction that is used to gauge student and instructor achievement (Hanna and Dettmer, 2004). In contrast to summative assessment which assesses cumulative learning, formative assessment, under grading, is used to determine areas of improvement during instruction when it is still possible to take an intervention. Beneficial qualities are the non-graded nature, timely, specific feedback, correspondence with learning objectives, and the main objective of facilitating learning quality.

In Nigerian colleges of education, the main form of formative mechanism is the use of continuous assessment. According to Shukla (2019), it is widely used in tertiary education in Nigeria. Mwebiza (2010) contends that it includes all classroom decisions that lead to success, which go beyond test-giving. According to Patrick and Uvietesivwi (2018), it facilitates holistic development evaluation in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains using a variety of approaches: tests, assignments, experiments, and projects. Nevertheless, positive results can only be obtained when the implementation is sufficient, frequent, undergoes the right processes, is systematically documented, and substantial feedback is given. Mendex and Sarmiento (2011) stress that the real assessment needs to be done through constant monitoring and with instant corrections. This immediacy differentiates true formative assessment by recording scores for future aggregation without providing actionable feedback.

## Statement of the Problem

Although the role of formative assessment is crucial and there are obvious standards of NCCE, there is little empirical data on the adequacy of the implementation of continuous assessment in practice in Nigerian colleges of education. Past studies have focused on teacher competence, curriculum guidelines, test standardisation and teacher attitudes, but not enough systematic focus was given to thorough assessment of adequacy along the multiple dimensions: frequency, content of feedback, record-keeping and consistency with outcomes.

The fact that NCE English language programme enrolment is declining and employers are unhappy with the quality of graduate professionals also casts basic quality assurance concerns. If continuous assessment, an essential element of quality assurance tools and important certification evidence, is poorly in use, both formative (guiding learning) and summative (certification) functions are impaired. Formative assessment adequacy is critical in ensuring the relationship between assessment practices and learning outcomes. Poor implementation, inadequacy with regard to frequency, lack of feedback, lack of alignment with goals, and lack of connection to professional competencies, hinders the intended role-playing. This research forms a systematic empirical interventional evidence on the formative assessment adequacy and investigates continuous assessment in a variety of dimensions, as well as the recognition of strengths and weaknesses. It is relevant to focus on applied English linguistics (ENG 212), as it accommodates the four language skills' collective measurement, and it is a core second-year course externally moderated.

## Research Objectives

The specific objectives that formed the basis of this study were as follows:

1. To examine the extent to which continuous assessment practices align with NCCE standards regarding adequacy.
2. To analyse the quality of assessment and identify failures in feedback loops.

3. To explore the implications of these assessment practices on teacher quality and the development of pre-service teachers' pedagogical skills.

## Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

### Theoretical Framework: Systems Theory

Systems theory offers in-depth theory to the assessment as a complex interconnected system. David Easton (1965) claimed that general systems theory offers words and conceptual tools to study organised structures. Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1956) developed a central idea: the whole is complex interdependencies, not the sum of parts. Systems theory can be applied to colleges of education assessment with critical insights. To start with, a holistic view acknowledges assessment as inherent in interdependent variables: curriculum, teaching, institutional resources, policy, and socio-cultural environment. Secondly, it underlines the importance of feedback loops. According to Mallilin (2022), feedback loops detect areas of improvement, which allows the required changes. Properly operating assessment establishes multilevel loops: performance feedback is given to students to adjust their strategy, to teachers to inform instructional decisions, and to institutions to provide aggregated measures of effectiveness to guide programme review. The functioning of feedback loops, however, relies on how well the assessment practices are. Inadequate loops, such as poor implementation (infrequent administration, poor instruments, no feedback, inadequate documentation, and so on), disrupt or break loops, making self-correction in the system impossible.

Also, it demonstrates dynamic adaptive character, where assessment should be responsive to needs and contexts and new knowledge of pedagogy. Fourth, it offers frameworks of complexity management, aiding in identifying patterns, relationships, and unintended consequences. Assessment may create valid scores and simultaneously create a constrained curriculum and stimulate teaching to test, weakening intrinsic motivation, all of which can be revealed through a systems-level analysis.

### Continuous Assessment in Higher Education

Manitoba Education (2006) differentiates three types of assessment: Assessment of Learning (AoL) offers achievement evidence to the stakeholders using diagnostic, formative, summative, norm-referenced, and criterion-referenced forms of assessments in the form of examinations, tests, and observations. Assessment For Learning (AfL) allows the teacher to use performance information to guide teaching and learners to interpret the path to improvement by Socratic method, activity, discussion, assignment and classroom observation. Assessment as Learning (AaL) locates learning within assessment through metacognition, self-assessment, and peer assessment. AoL and AfL are highly used in Nigerian colleges of education, which are characterised by instructor-centred models and models of transmission. The limited implementation of AaL may indicate a cultural background that discourages self-evaluation among students, as well as practical factors like high student numbers.

### The Role of Record Keeping in Assessment Quality

Formative and summative assessment require proper record-keeping. According to Osakwe (2011), school records are official documents that are stored to be used and accessed, and they have essential action and event information. To carry out the assessment continuously, precise records are critical since records should be cumulative over semesters,

courses, lecturers, departments, and faculties, and there should be a standard way in data types and arrangement. Olorube highlights that good recordkeeping goes beyond both short- and long-term benefits and the overall objective of education. Proper records will help in retrieving critical data in operations and decision-making (Durosaro, 2002). There is, however, a risk of instructors not using standard formats, which will pose a challenge to consistency and reliability.

### **Assessment Planning and Schedules**

According to Grey (2020), time must be allowed with proper planning of the best assessment practices that would guarantee meaningful assessment, providing learners with the best opportunity to show off their knowledge, skills, and behaviour. The nature, timing, and interval must be provided in assessment schedules. Assessment is usually planned; without planning, adequacy will not be guaranteed.

The main elements of a comprehensive assessment schedule include specifying the learning plan, detailing the method of assessment for each outcome designation, clarifying the implementation schedule, identifying the individuals responsible for collecting and reviewing the assessments, specifying the time and place of the assessments, and linking the programme goals. Unavailability implies inherent systematic design gaps.

### **Feedback in Formative Assessment**

Liberman and Clarke (2012) determined that effective assessment by teachers leads to high performance gains (nearly half to a full standard deviation) in standardised test performance, with large gains in low achievers. However, meaningful feedback that students can act upon to enhance their learning is essential for realising the rewards. According to Florez and Sammons (2013), the following activities were defined as formative: Socratic teaching, exercises, discussions, assignments, tests, and observations. Nevertheless, formative value is based on timely, specific feedback that leads to better performance. The formative function is completely missed when continuous assessment scores are documented but students are never given feedback, making what is supposed to be learning a data collection on grading.

### **NCCE Quality Standards**

NCCE has developed certain quality indicators of assessment; the third one is clearly related to continuous assessment: Adequate continuous assessment procedures to evaluate students. Frequency and effectiveness attributed to pre-service student-teacher standards of each programme should be provided. The standard reflects three important dimensions: frequency (regular enough for purposeful formative feedback), efficacy (real contribution to learning and effective assessment of competencies), and congruency (specific articulation with pre-service standards of what teacher knowledge and competencies entail).

NCCE standards mirror the larger quality frameworks of higher education with a focus on assessment-outcome relationships. Poor frequency gives a poor number of data points to estimate progress or identify learning difficulty to intervene with. Poor efficacy does not give feedback and learning opportunities warranting inclusion. Absence of alignment can elevate the irrelevant knowledge or skills, thereby compromising the validity of certification decisions.

## Methodology

### Research Design

This study employed a concurrent explanatory mixed-methods design, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches, providing a comprehensive adequacy assessment. The population comprised Federal Colleges of Education in southwestern Nigeria offering applied English linguistics within English language education programmes. Purposive sampling selected institutions meeting this criterion. From selected institutions, proportionate stratified random sampling selected two-thirds of 445 second-year in-training students enrolled in ENG 212. Second-year students were selected because year I results are not typically moderated and no third-year courses allow four basic language skills collective measurement, making ENG 212 optimal for examining assessment practices, including internal evaluation and external review.

Additionally, heads of departments in English language, examination officers, and directors of quality assurance were purposively sampled as key informants regarding institutional assessment policies and practices. Documents containing past continuous assessment records were retrieved and analysed by some expert: These expert assessors, familiar with NCCE standards, were purposively selected, providing professional assessment quality evaluation.

In-depth interview guide structured conversations with heads of departments, examination officers, and quality assurance directors regarding continuous assessment policies, procedures, and challenges. Focus Group Discussion Guide enabled the structured student discussion regarding continuous assessment experiences in terms of frequency, feedback provision, and perceived fairness. A standardized Assessment Quality Rubric ( $r=0.83$ ) was presented to expert assessors to compare the continuous assessment practices with NCCE standards. The Continuous Assessment Record Checklist facilitated systematic availability and documentation of records of more than one academic year and institution. The performance of students in ENG 212 was measured with the help of the Applied English Linguistics Achievement Test ( $r = 0.84$ ), which gave the data on the outcomes analysis with respect to assessment practices. All the quantitative measures were tested in terms of reliability, with Cronbach alpha coefficients of more than 0.80, which is high internal consistency. Qualitative instruments underwent review by educational assessment and English language education professionals that guaranteed content validity and the right fit of a research objective, ensuring that the instruments accurately measured the intended constructs and aligned with the goals of the study.

Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) were used to analyse quantitative data that described the adequacy of continuous assessment practices across institutions and time. Such descriptive analyses presented transparent NCCE standard compliance level documentation and discovered certain areas of strength and weakness in the implementation of assessment.

Qualitative data was thematically analysed based on qualitative data through interviews and focus groups. Transcripts were coded on identifying repetitive themes, patterns, divergent views on assessment practices, challenges, and perceived effects. Thematic analysis was carried out using iterative open codings, axial codings, and selective codings that formed coherent thematic frameworks based on the data. The cross-source triangulation based on evaluations by assessors, institutional records, interviews with administrators, and student focus groups improved the credibility and reliability of findings.

**Findings of the Study**

**1. Adequacy of Continuous Assessment Practices**

Evaluation of the adequacy of continuous assessment in ENG 212 showed that there were serious shortcomings in various facets as seen in Table 1.

Expert assessors evaluated practices based on a five-point scale (Excellent to No Assessable Evidence) and assessed three main components: multiple assignments over time, with the best two being evidence-based; at least 3 periodic tests, with two of them; and continuous assessment, which is 40 per cent of the total assessment.

Table 1: Adequacy of continuous assessment in ENG 212 (Applied English Linguistics)

Items	Excellent		Good		Satisfactory		Needs improvement		No assessable evidence	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Continuous Assessment	-	-	8	66.7	1	8.3	3	25.0	-	-
(a) Multiple assignments are collected over time and the best two (2) are duly recorded with evidences.	-	-	1	8.3	5	41.7	6	50.0	-	-
(b) At least three periodic tests are observed while two (2) are duly recorded.	-	-	1	8.3	7	58.3	4	33.3	-	-
(c) Continuous Assessment constitutes up to 40% of overall assessment. (10 marks for each assignment; 10 marks for each periodic tests)	-	-	1	8.3	7	58.3	4	33.3	-	-

In assignment collection practices, 66.7% of assessors thought moderators' reports were satisfactory, meaning that most of the institutions have collected various assignments over a period. But 8.3% said the practice was satisfactory, and 25.0% said this needed improvement, indicating that even in this relatively good aspect, there was some inconsistency. No institutions got excellent ratings, which points to even higher-performing institutions having room to improve. There were greater inadequacies in periodic testing practices. Assessors rated only two periodic tests as good: the observation of three and the recording of two. The result was only satisfactory (41.7% of those surveyed), but half of them (50.0%) considered it to be in need of improvement. This distribution means that in most institutions, periodic testing was below anticipated frequency and documentation requirements.

With a continuous assessment weighting of 40% of the total assessment, assessors rated practices as good, while 8.3% rated them as satisfactory, and 33.3% rated them as requiring improvement. Whereas the majority apportioned a relevant percentage, a high ratio that needs to be enhanced indicates either a lack of uniformity of weighting application or inconsistent documentation of weighting calculations and application.

**2 Complete Absence of Assessment Schedules**

The most notable observation was perhaps that there was a total lack of assessment schedule in all the institutions watched, as seen in Table 2. Professional evaluators appraised six elements: description of how the learning plan is to be developed; identification of evaluation methods for demonstrating each result; schedules for implementing the plan; identification of the data collection and review personnel; specification of how and when assessments will occur; and connection with program goals or learning outcomes.

Table 2: Assessment schedules for ENG 212 (Applied English Linguistics)

Items	Excellent		Good		Satisfactory		Needs improve-ment		No assessable evidence	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Assessment Schedule	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	100
(a) States how the learning plan will be established.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	100
(b) Specifies assessment method to be used to demonstrate each outcome.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	100
(c) States timeline for implementing plan.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	100
(d) Clearly specifies individuals responsible for the collection/review of data.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	100
(e) States when and where the assessment will take place.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	100
(f) Is built upon the program’s goals or learning outcome.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	100
(g) Specifies the type of measurement to be used (direct or indirect).	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	100
(h) Involves more than one type of measure.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	100
(i) Learning objectives clearly portray who an ideal graduate should be in terms of (knowledge, skills and beliefs and values).	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	100

In all six elements, 100 percent of the assessors reported no assessable evidence. This indicates that institutions relied on course outlines and systematic assessment planning documents. A lack of an assessment schedule implies that assessment was done without prior planning in terms of frequency, timing, methods, and direct connection to the learning outcome. This HOC methodology essentially compromises the adequacy of continuous assessment since there is no structure that provides systematic coverage of competency or proper distribution of opportunities to assess during the instruction period.

**3 Record-Keeping Adequacy**

**Table 3a: Frequency and percentage distribution of availability of continuous assessment records for each academic year observed.**

Year of study	Frequency	Percent
2016/2017	3	16.7
2017/2018	3	16.7
2018/2019	3	16.7
2019/2020	3	16.7
2020/2021	3	16.7
2021/2022	3	16.7
Total	18	100.0

The analysis of the continuous assessment records availability showed that there were records available of every academic year studied in the observed institutions (2016/2017 to 2021/2022). All three of the observed institutions provided records to all six of the academic years, indicating that 16.7% of the records were contributed by each institution per year and that 100% of the records were available; as seen in Table 3a. This implies that institutions have longitudinal records of continuous assessment as time goes by, providing a basis of tracking student performance.

Table 3b: Frequency and percentage distribution of adequacy of continuous assessment records.

Statement	Yes		No	
	Freq	%	Freq	%
2 or more tests recorded on designated sheets	18	100.0	-	-
2 or more assignments recorded on designated sheets	14	77.8	4	22.2
Evidence of attendance record for each lecture	8	44.4	10	55.6
Evidence of each class test questions administered	8	44.4	10	55.6
Evidence of assignment questions administered	8	44.4	10	55.6

As seen in Table 3b, record adequacy was however, very variable. In terms of test recording on specific sheets, 100 percent of the institutions were shown to have sufficient records—the single area where continuous assessment recordkeeping consistently met the standards. To record the assignment, 77.8% of institutions had sufficient designated sheet records, while 22.2% did not meet this requirement.

The majority of problematic areas of recordkeeping all had the same 44.4% adequacy: evidence of attendance records regarding each lecture, evidence of class test questions given, and evidence of assignment test questions given. In both instances, 55.6% of institutions did not have sufficient documentation. This trend indicates a systematic disregard of some documentation, especially the retention of real assessment tools (tests and assessment questions) and student attendance logs.

The lack of documentation for test and assignment questions is particularly concerning because it prevents any retrospective quality evaluation, making it impossible to verify whether there is congruence between assessments and learning objectives, as well as to determine if the assessments actually covered the knowledge and skills that the course is supposed to measure. Likewise, the absence of an attendance record will make it challenging

to interpret student performance: poor performance could be a sign of learning problems that need action, or just a result of not attending school, but with no attendance records, these are indistinguishable.

#### 4 Student Perspectives on Feedback

The discussions in focus groups revealed deep dissatisfaction with the feedback provision, which effectively eliminated the formative purpose of continuous assessment. Students often said they received little or no continuous assessment performance feedback. FGD 1 male student said, “I never see my test and assignment scores, even after the tests. The only examination score is that which we see when they fix it on the notice board.” This evidence shows that continuous assessment scores were unknown to students until the time of final results posting. When formative ones were known, it was time to learn.

The other female student in the same focus group expressed a common belief: “In fact, anyone who does not do a test and assignment will automatically fail, regardless of whether the lecturer marks the script or not. Anyone who fails to write anything in the exam will also fail, but at times, trying your level best, you can pass too.” This situation seemingly affects students because they realised that completing continuous assessments was necessary to pass; however, they were unaware of the assessment criteria being used, and continuous assessments had turned into a compliance activity rather than a learning opportunity.

A FGD 2 male student complained of even more serious issues: “Since I started my studies in the 100 level, I have only seen my continuous assessment results for a few elective courses...Some courses we don’t submit the assignment but we will have complete results after exams.” The ongoing evaluation is often lost, indicating a complete failure of the continuous assessment system in certain courses, where submitted assignments disappear and random grades are assigned. These practices not only do not offer formative feedback, but they, in fact, disrupt fairness and trust in the assessment systems.

The trend among all student focus groups was very homogeneous: students considered continuous assessment something that they must do to avoid automatic failure but received little or no performance feedback, had no chance to learn through errors, and, in some instances, even wondered whether work was graded correctly. This scenario is a pure formative assessment purpose perversion where what is supposed to be a learning tool is turned into another obstacle that must be overcome.

### Discussion

#### 1. The Formative Assessment Paradox.

Results demonstrate a paradox: the form of continuous assessment is a formal element of the grading system, which is taking up instructional time and resources but is not serving the formative end. Assignments are received by institutions, tests are taken, and scores are recorded with varying degrees of adequacy, yet students rarely receive feedback to transform these activities from data gathering into learning opportunities. This paradox indicates what Boud (2009) cautioned against: tertiary education assessment practices that are unlikely to equip students to be lifelong learners.

The situation is a dysfunctional feedback loop according to the systems theory. Constant evaluation produces student learning data, but this data does not make it to the students in a usable form. The system is unable to correct or adapt without working feedback loops, which are essential for informing both students and teachers about learning progress and areas needing improvement. Students repeat the same mistakes because they never learn

from them. Teachers are deprived of a chance to detect the prevalence of misconceptions that signal a need to make changes to instruction, which ultimately hinders their ability to provide effective feedback and support to students in their learning process. The product is a formative assessment tool in the system without awareness of its benefits, which include providing timely feedback to students and helping teachers identify areas where instructional adjustments are necessary.

## 2. The Assessment Planning Deficit

The absence of a complete assessment schedule in all observed institutions is a systematic design flaw. According to Grey (2020), the planning of assessment methods must be comprehensive, ensuring purposeful assessments and providing learners with the best opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and behaviour. Assessment is not strategic and must be reactive; without assessment schedules that indicate what, when, how, and who will be assessed,

Results are consistent with Grey's observation that planless assessments result in inadequate testing in most instances. Weaknesses reported in this study, such as the lack of regular periodic testing, inadequate documentation of the assessment tool, and lack of feedback, are all logical consequences of the lack of systematic planning. Where no timeframe is given indicating three tests will be completed at specific semester intervals, with feedback given within one week and the results being used to inform mid-course instructions, these aspects are left at the discretion of individual instructors and often overlooked under the pressure of competing demands.

Additionally, assessment timetables fulfil a transparency role, which informs students of anticipated assessments and when. This allows students to prepare appropriately and helps establish fairness and predictability, fostering trust in the assessment system. Such schedule absence may contribute to student perception, evident in focus group data, that continuous assessment scores are assigned arbitrarily rather than through systematic evaluation.

## 3. Documentation Gaps and Quality Assurance

While institutions demonstrated adequate test and assignment score recording, poor actual test question, assignment prompt, and attendance record documentation create significant quality assurance challenges. As Ololube notes, proper recordkeeping affects overall educational objective achievement through both short- and long-term benefits. This study's selective record-keeping—documenting scores but not the assessments and attendance patterns that generate and contextualise them—limits record utility for quality assurance.

The absence of documentation of assessment instruments prevents the ability of external examiners to judge the nature of assessments in being able to sample an appropriate domain of course coverage, whether question quality is satisfactory, and whether the assessments relate to articulated learning outcomes. These are the very quality assurance functions moderation and external examination are intended to serve but cannot be performed in the absence of actual administered evaluation access. The result is a moderation process, which can review scores but not assess score-generating assessment validity.

This situation is especially worrying given the fact that attendance records were only kept in 44.4% of institutions when a study by Crede et al. (2010) indicated that class attendance makes a better predictor of college grades than any other predictor known. In the absence of attendance information, institutions are unable to differentiate between poor performance through learning challenges and poor performance through non-attendance,

unable to identify attendance trends that need to be remedied, and unable to consider attendance as an element when interpreting the results of assessments.

#### 4. Compliance with NCCE Standards

Continuous assessment techniques required by the NCCE standard should be sufficient in frequency and effectiveness and associated with pre-service student-teacher standards. This study indicates that there is systematic non-compliance on various dimensions. Only 8.3% of institutions receive a good rating for administering three periodic tests as required, indicating poor frequency. Students never receive feedback that allows them to learn through assessment, resulting in ineffectiveness. There can be no linkage to pre-service standards without assessment schedules clearly mapping assessments to particular pre-service teacher framework competencies.

The non-compliance has far-reaching consequences for the validity of the teacher certification process. If continuous assessment, which usually counts 40% of the final course grades, is improperly implemented, then the large share of certification decision evidence is unreliable. Students can receive NCE certification based on continuous assessment scores that inadequately reflect competence because the assessments were uncommon, poorly designed, poorly documented, or given randomly.

In the systems theory sense, regulatory standards such as NCCE-established ones are intended control mechanisms – they define desired system properties, and they provide performance criteria. However, the standards will only influence the system's behaviour if we monitor and implement compliance. This study's reported prevalence of non-compliance implies insufficient monitoring or punishment for non-compliance, allowing the policy-practice gap to persist.

#### 5. Implications of Teacher Quality.

The wider context of this research is the dropping of enrolment in the NCE English language programme and dissatisfaction of employers with the performance of NCE graduates. While we cannot attribute poor practices in continuous assessment as the sole cause of these trends, the results indicate that they significantly contribute to the issue. The lack of proper formative feedback in training pre-service teachers denies them the opportunity to develop teaching skills and identify areas for improvement.

In addition, poor experience of formative assessment in training can influence pre-service teachers' assessment practices on entering the classroom. In case the experience of their continuous assessment was marked by a low number of tests, lack of feedback, and arbitrary scoring, they will repeat the same poor practice with their students, and this pattern will continue to be a poor practice of assessment cycles in the education system.

Research conducted by Liberman and Clarke (2012) shows that successful assessment practices can enhance student performance by half to a full standard deviation, highlighting what is lost when assessment is not effective. Proper formative assessment would probably result in pre-service teachers having superior competency development, improved course material retention, and more advanced knowledge of using assessment to support learning—exactly what they will require as teachers later.

#### Conclusion and Recommendations

This research shows that there is a high level of deficiency in the formative assessment practices in colleges of education in southwestern Nigeria. Although there is continuous assessment as an element of the formal grading system, the implementation is

significantly below NCCE standards and is not serving in a formative role as it should. Lack of a complete assessment schedule, haphazard assessment. Frequency, inappropriate assessment tools and documentation of attendance, and failure to provide pervasive feedback are all harmful to continuous assessment adequacy.

According to systems theory, such inadequacies are inherent failures in the feedback loops which are expected to interlink assessment, learning, and instructional improvement. Constant evaluation produces information; however, this information does not effectively reach the students as usable feedback, nor does it serve as a measure for instructors that necessitates instructional modification. Consequence is a system using resources to administer tests without achieving learning outcomes to justify these investments.

Implications of quality assurance are far-reaching. Unless continuous assessment, which adds 40% to final grades, is properly applied, then a considerable portion of certification decisions will be invalid. Students can be certified in part based on assessment scores, which are not a true reflection of competence. Additionally, inadequate formative assessment denies pre-service teachers a learning experience and may likely continue with the same assessment habits once the teachers come into classroom service.

To resolve these inadequacies, changes at a number of levels are necessary: institutional policies and practices; instructor professional development; regulatory monitoring and enforcement; as well as systemic assessment culture reform, which includes implementing more effective formative assessments that accurately reflect student competence and promote better teaching practices. A careful consideration of all assessments is only possible.

Colleges of Education can meet the standards of formative assessment practice set by NCCE and achieve the standards for quality teacher education by having system components.

### **Recommendations for the National Commission for Colleges of Education**

1. Standardised Assessment Schedule Templates: NCCE needs to create and issue standardised assessment schedule templates that can be modified to fit individual courses and programmes by institutions. All the necessary elements, such as learning outcomes, should be stated in templates and evaluated; evaluation procedures should be consistent with each outcome, timing and frequency requirements, feedback provision schedules, and personnel. Such templates make the system less taxing on individual instructors and make the essential planning elements covered in a systematic manner.
2. Have Minimum Documentation Standards: NCCE ought to set and enforce minimum assessment documentation standards, which will mean that institutions not only hold scores but also copies of all assessment instruments, attendance data, marking rubrics, and evidence of providing feedback. Accreditation review procedures should involve documentation requirements which include specific non-compliance consequences, such as the potential for institutions to lose accreditation or face financial penalties if they fail to meet these standards.
3. Conduct Periodic Compliance Audits: The NCCE should conduct regular compliance audits with a specific focus on practices of assessment instead of periodic accreditation visits. The audits should include a review of assessment schedules, documentation of assessment instruments, and verification of the functionality of the feedback mechanisms. Findings of an audit must be made public to pressure accountability into improving.
4. Build Assessment Literacy Materials: NCCE needs to build and share professional development materials on assessment literacy among College of Education instructors. Resources must discuss purposes and principles of formative assessment, an effective

feedback strategy, assessment planning and scheduling, record-keeping systems, and alignment of assessment with learning outcomes.

### **Recommendations for Colleges of Education**

1. Mandate and Monitor Assessment Schedule Development: Institutions are advised to make it mandatory that all courses must develop formal assessment schedules at the start of every academic session, approved by the departmental or programme leadership. Courses should contain schedules. Syllabi should be shared with students to promote transparency and accountability. Compliance should be checked by institutional quality assurance units and courses without appropriate assessment schedules should be identified.
2. Instigate Systematic Feedback Protocols: A school should set up and conduct policies that mandate the delivery of all results of continuous assessments to students within a given timeframe (e.g., two weeks) with significant feedback. Feedback should highlight strengths, identify areas for improvement, and provide guidance on how to achieve those improvements. Student assessment and quality assurance inspection must be used to ensure compliance with feedback requirements.
3. Digitise units, Digitise Assessment Records: Institution Digitise. Institutions must invest in digital record-keeping. Institutions must invest in systems that enable round-the-clock assessment in which the necessary documentation, such as assessment tools, student responses, marks, attendance, and feedback is automatically recorded. The digital systems make it easier to monitor and review it externally as well as ease the burden on instructor.
4. Train Faculty on Assessment: Institutions are encouraged to have a compulsory programme on record-keeping. Professional training/development among all teaching staff on good continuous assessment practices must be provided. Training must deal with assessment planning, instrument development, feedback practices, and feedback.
5. Develop Internal Assessment Review Process: This process ought to be conducted by the departments before external moderation: there should be an internal peer review of assessment practice by the departments. Colleagues are expected to go through the assessment schedules, instruments, marking rubrics and feedback practices of their colleagues; orient themselves and colleagues; and establish the areas of strengths and improvement. When the review is internal, there are chances to share effectively with colleagues and effectively. This includes sharing effective practices and identifying issues before presenting them to outside evaluators.

### **Future Research: Effective Research Recommendations.**

1. This paper was based on the English Language Education Programme in southwestern Nigeria. The full language education Future studies should investigate whether similar patterns of poor evaluation of continuous assessment exist in other subject areas and colleges of education across different regions of Nigeria, which would provide a more comprehensive national overview.
2. There is a need to research the relationship between the adequacy of continuous assessment and student learning outcomes. Although shortcomings of assessment practice were reported in this study, experimental or quasi-experimental studies can be used to test the hypothesis that interventions to enhance assessment adequacy result in a measurable improvement in student competency development.
3. Research on obstacles to effective continuous assessment implementation would be of interest to better understand sources of improvement efforts. A resource would be identified

in qualitative research about the views of instructors regarding barriers to implementing adequate continuous assessment.

Interventions must overcome constraints, training needs, workload issues, or systemic factors.

4. Comparative research of the practices of continuous assessment in other African nations or high-performing teacher education systems internationally could help to find out the effective model and practices which Nigerian Colleges of Education could implement in their case.

### Contribution to Knowledge

This paper presents a number of important knowledge contributions. Originally, it offers an empirical record of the sufficiency of continuous assessment in Nigerian Colleges of Education, filling research gaps in the context in which prior research centred on teacher perceptions, as opposed to a systematic practice assessment with respect to standards. Secondly, it is an illustration of Systems theory, showing an analysis of the quality of assessment, demonstrating how weaknesses in one element of the system (feedback provision) jeopardise the effectiveness of the whole system. Also, it determines particular continuous assessment inadequacy dimensions that are most common in the Nigerian context: the assessment schedule, and the lack of an assessment schedule. Lack of, bad instrument and attendance recording, lack of feedback delivery lacks provision of specific data on what can be done to improve. Fourth, it records the discrepancy between the regulatory standards and the practice, which implies the necessity of more rigorous systems of monitoring and enforcement. Lastly, it creates links between shortcomings in assessment practice and more general concerns about teacher quality, indicating that efforts to enhance the quality of teaching should focus on improving formative assessment in colleges of Education.

### References

- Boud, D. (2009). Assessment and learning: Contradictory or complementary? In P. Knight (Ed.), *Assessment for learning in higher education* (pp. 35-48). Routledge.
- Crede, M., Roch, S. G., & Kieszczynka, U. M. (2010). Class attendance in college: A meta-analytic review of the relationship of class attendance with grades and student characteristics. *Review of Educational Research*, 80(2), 272-295.
- Durosaro, D. O. (2002). Management of school records. In D. O. Durosaro & A. A. Ogunsaju (Eds.), *The craft of educational management*. Ilorin: Haytee Press.
- Easton, D. (1965). *A framework for political analysis*. Prentice-Hall.
- Florez, M. T., & Sammons, P. (2013). *Assessment for learning: Effects and impact*. CfBT Education Trust.
- Gray, J. (2020). *Assessment planning in higher education: A comprehensive guide*. Routledge.
- Hanna, G. S., & Dettmer, P. A. (2004). *Assessment for effective teaching: Using context-adaptive planning*. Pearson.
- Lieberman, J., & Clarke, M. (2012). A review of formative assessment in K-12 settings. *Journal of Educational Measurement*, 49(3), 336-356.
- Mallilin, L. L. D. (2022). Systems thinking in educational assessment: A theoretical approach. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 28(4), 567-582.
- Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth. (2006). *Rethinking classroom assessment with purpose in mind*. Manitoba Education.

- Mendez, A., & Sarmiento, A. (2011). Continuous assessment in higher education: Best practices and challenges. *Higher Education Research*, 45(2), 189-207.
- Mwebaza, M. (2010). Continuous assessment and student performance in Ugandan universities. *African Journal of Teacher Education*, 1(1), 78-95.
- National Commission for Colleges of Education. (2012). Minimum standards for NCE teachers. NCCE.
- Ololube, N. P. (2013). Educational management, planning and supervision: Model for effective implementation. Pearl Publishers.
- Osakwe, R. N. (2011). Managing records in Nigerian schools: Problems and prospects. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(2), 109-114.
- Patrick, S., & Uvietesivwi, A. (2018). Continuous assessment practices in Nigerian tertiary institutions. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 9(12), 88-96.
- Shukla, S. (2019). Continuous comprehensive evaluation in Indian education system. *Educational Quest*, 10(1), 1-6.
- von Bertalanffy, L. (1956). General system theory. *General Systems*, 1(1), 1-10.