

Measurement and evaluation



In this assignment we seek to bring out the definitions of assessment which is later broken down to continuous assessment and coursework. The substantial similarities and differences are highlighted in the essay on ways to differentiate continuous assessment and coursework. Various advantages and disadvantages will be highlighted and explained of how continuous and coursework are useful to the student and the teacher.

Assessment can be seen to affect the three different domains as put forward by Bloom, which are the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domain.

Cognitive domain in assessment is associated with the process of knowledge and understanding. While the affective domain applies to the characteristics such as attitude, motives, interests and other personality traits.

As for the psychomotor domain in relation to assessment involves assessing the learners' ability to use his or her own hands for example in handwriting, construction and projects Continuous assessment is based on a radically different premise namely that the best and the fairest way to assess students' performance is to assess each stage of courses as soon and after it has been completed as possible or in some cases while the work is actually being carried out according to Anthony (1996).

Certainly the continuous assessment approach fits in well with three current trends in tertiary education namely the move to make assessment a more integral part learning process (assessment for learning) , the shift from assessment of ' content' to assessment of process as embodied incompetence based and vocational qualification based education and the increasing unitisation and modularization of courses. By definition

continuous assessment is a regular evaluation of coursework done during the course, where the marks achieved count towards the final result which may or may not include an examination this is according to Gordon (1997).

More so George (1996) defines continuous assessment as the daily process by which you gather information about students' progress in achieving the curriculum learning targets. It is a classroom strategy to ascertain assessment in a variety of ways over time to allow them to observe multiple tasks and to collect information about what pupils know, understand and can do. In the table below is an example of a spread sheet of assessment

ASSESSMENT WEIGHTING				NAME :	SURNAME :
Curriculum:	Mark	Percent	Subject :	BUSINESS STUDIES	2000
1 Written Papers	100	5.0	Management Accounting	100	5.0
Principles of Environmental Science	100	5.0	Properties + Uses of Business Proposals	100	5.0
Structural Economics	100	5.0	Examination Aggregate	400	20.0
2 Coursework	100	5.0	Business Theory	100	5.0
Information Technology + Mathematics	50	2.5	African Studies	50	2.5
3 Studio Project work	200	10.0	Project 1	50	2.5
Project 2	50	2.5	Project 3	50	2.5
Project 4	50	2.5	Project 5	50	2.5
Projects 1-5 Aggregate	200	10.0	Project 6	200	10.0
Project 7	200	10.0	Project 8	200	10.0
Project 9	600	30.0			

People make use of continuous assessment for formative purposes that is it is done at the beginning to assess the learners progress since it is universally recognised thus providing students with regular feedback it has they are doing an essential part of the education process.

One of the most widely used forms of continuous assessment is to set students a regular series of short tests as they proceed through a course of study, with the results being used either for formative or summative purposes. The tests themselves can take a variety of forms including class quizzes delivered by the teacher, short written papers based on objective or short answer questions. With the continuing spread of new information technology into virtually all aspects of education computer-based assessment seems certain to play an increasingly important role in continuous assessment over the coming years. Highlight the part on some of the different forms of continuous assessment.) Continuous assessment as defined by Grange (1998) is the ongoing assessment of learners' knowledge and attitude in terms of the learning outcomes that they are required to achieve over a period of time. Planning for continuous assessment is related directly to the learning experiences that the learners are required to engage in. For example, an outcome states that learners should be able to explain the meaning of a poem.

To achieve this outcome learners may be required to read this poem and discuss the related certain questions. Continuous assessment thus involves the assessment of the whole learner on an ongoing basis over a period of time where cumulative judgments of the learners' abilities in specific areas are made in order to facilitate further positive learning. Continuous assessment also does the following: i. It provides feedback on the learning outcomes that learners have achieved, and those that have been achieved ii.

It assists with identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the learners iii. It encourages communication between teachers and learners iv. It works hand in hand with evaluation and therefore provides important information about curriculum issues like teaching methods and the relevance of learning outcomes and resources. On the hand coursework is a term which is commonly used with regard to post graduate study. It refers to a mode of study which is largely or wholly subjective. Coursework is the name for work carried out by students at high school, middle, secondary and university.

It is then based on a specific subject or area to which the student has to recover information of the title given. Sax (1996) views coursework as a percentage of an end of year course or the overall result which can add up to the exam mark. Coursework is normally usually done to improve the knowledge of a topic and to induce learning According to Grange and Reddy (1998) Coursework is work assigned to and done by a student during a course of study usually it is evaluated as part of the students in the coursework. William (1993) defines coursework as assigned to and done by a student during a course of study, usually it is evaluated as part of the students' grade in the course. Njabili (1993) defines coursework as a generalized term for the required participation of a student during a high school or college class. It involves written papers, laboratory, projects, speeches and practical demonstrations. It is then the principle means by which a student is educated and standard adult.

He goes further to show that coursework may be obligatory to satisfy the specific requirements of the major fields to study or an elective nature.

Coursework and continuous assessment are similar and can be used hand in

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hand to achieve certain learning outcomes in many ways however, they have their differences. As continuous assessment is the going process whilst coursework is the actual work in the form of daily work assignments and projects. The table below highlights some of the differences ;

CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT	COURSEWORK
Provides information in context as feedback on how learners are	Provides isolated marks of percentages to show how learners have
changing. E. g. increase in grade from a C- to B+	change
Takes place during the learning process when it is considered	2. Takes place after the learning process at dates and times previously
necessary (formative) E. quizzes	decided on (summative) E. g. End of term , semester or year exams
It is used to inform the learning process through which learning	It is used to decide whether or not the learner is promoted to the
outcomes are acquired next grade	It is made up of variety of assessment methods that can be formal(
It is many made up of written examinations that take place in formal	in-class test) and informal(presentations)
setting (ZIMSEC or Cambridge exams)	

As indicated above continuous assessment has a number of educational advantages as well as a number of disadvantages both to the teacher and students as noted by Purvis (1990). Since continuous assessment can be used to test a correspondingly wider range of skills, including non – cognitive skills of various times. It thus makes it easier to match the assessment methods with the learning outcomes being assessed and to set assessment through different levels.

Continuous assessment makes it possible to assess qualities that are of assessed in coursework and provides the teacher with complementary

information. Also a variety of assessment methods are possible. Continuous assessment has less emphasis placed on memory work and in her e the examinee stress that usually accompanies formal written examinations is alleviated. Continuous assessment can provide much more extensive syllabus coverage than coursework; indeed, in some cases (e. g. competence-based courses) it covers virtually all aspects of the students' work, thus greatly increasing the face validity of the assessment process and permitting the use of tools appropriate to the workplace. Continuous assessment places less emphasis on pure memory (particularly comparatively short-term memory) than coursework, and correspondingly more emphasis on worthwhile learning in the deepest sense of the word. True education has been described as ' what is left after the facts have been forgotten', and continuous assessment certainly facilitates such education.

As we have seen, continuous assessment encourages regular, systematic study and discourages last-minute cramming, thus rewarding students who work steadily and conscientiously throughout their courses. It also reduces the domination of both teaching and learning by the requirements of the final examinations. It is like a film, rather than a single snapshot. By enabling on-going monitoring of student performance to take place, continuous assessment can provide early warnings of which students are having problems with a course, thus enabling appropriate remedial help to be provided in time for it to do some good.

Continuous assessment can provide early indicators of the likely performance of students, something that can be of great help to the students themselves – e. g. , in recognizing that they have made a mistake

in their choice of course and would be better transferring to another, or in helping them to make informed choices of routes and options. Such assessment also provides an on-going picture of how individual students develop and mature as they work their way through a course, something that can again be of considerable use to both students and staff.

It can also provide evidence of exactly what has been learned by a particular stage of the course. Continuous assessment also constitutes an extremely useful vehicle for on-going course monitoring and evaluation, providing course subject teachers with early warning of any problems or weaknesses, thus enabling them to take appropriate measures to improve matters. It is generally agreed that continuous assessment reduces the intense stress that many students experience when preparing for and sitting for examinations – particularly so for dyslexic students or in the case of honors degrees.

Continuous assessment generally provides a more natural assessment environment that is better matched to the situations in which students will find themselves working in later life, particularly if the assessment is of the ‘open-book’ variety. However in light of the listed advantages the following disadvantages have been identified. One disadvantage of continuous assessment there is possible increase in both teacher and learner workload in the seen that for teachers there is extensive record keeping and monitoring of individual learners while for students there is a requirement to consciously and constantly assess their own work.

As a result of this teachers may experience stress associated with stress.

When projects are done at home, for example the possibility collusion among

learners and assistant from experienced persons may occur hence the assessment is not an accurate reflection of the learners' abilities. To add onto this continuous assessment is not applicable with large classes because it takes time to assess individual learners authentically. Different schools may adopt different approaches to continuous assessment and this may impact on the transfer of teachers and learners from one school to another.

Students undergoing continuous assessment may feel that they are continually under surveillance, and that every error that they make along the way can count against them. This can give rise to a different type of stress from that which students experience as a result of terminal assessment. Indeed, to quote Rowntree (1996) of the Open University, "Continuous assessment ensures that students now have ulcers as well as nervous breakdowns".

Unless continuous assessment is carefully planned and coordinated, there is a very real danger that students may be grossly over-assessed – particularly at certain times of the year, when several teachers and lecturers are asking simultaneously for assignments to be handed in. Attempts to broaden the scope of a course may be frustrated by students gearing their study solely to the requirements of the assessment procedures, thus putting students who carry out extension studies or 'read round' their subject at a disadvantage.

By itself, continuous assessment does not prevent either 'strategic' or 'surface' learning. Continuous assessment can, if not properly managed, adversely affect the relationship between students and their teachers, with the latter being regarded with suspicion and (in some extreme cases) enmity

and occasionally even introducing malpractice, as in imposing penalties for seeking help. Students may suffer from unequal availability of resources in different geographical areas, something that is becoming increasingly important now that they are carrying out much of their work on personal computers or 'at a distance'. For example for a school with its only class under a tree serving for form 1 through to 6 and another that relies wholly on virtual classrooms and computer ratio is very low. With continuous assessment, there is the perennial problem of enforcing uniform procedures such as completion dates and dealing with students who do not comply with these in a way that is seen to be fair without being either too draconian or too lax.

Continuous assessment requires just as much planning as coursework if not more. To sum up the discussion at hand in view of these various advantages and disadvantages, the question that arises is "Continuous assessment and coursework worthwhile in the school curriculum?" In most cases, the answer is probably 'yes', there is a greater appreciation of continuous assessment and coursework to a learners' progress in learning. Coursework and Continuous assessment complement each other and fit like a hand to a glove.

The advantages outweigh the disadvantages and are rather beneficial to the student and the teacher to keep track of their academic progress and achievements. The disadvantages can be overcome or obviated by careful planning and good teaching practices. Bibliography 1. Grange, L. (1998). Continuous Assessment An Introduction and Guidelines to Implementation. Cape Town; Credar Communications Eppindust. 2. Gronlund, N. (1985).

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QUESTION: A. DEFINE TO DEFFERENCIATE BETWEEN CONTINUOUS

ASSESSMENT AND COUSREWORK B. DISCUSS THE ADVANTAGES AND

DISADVANTAGES OF CONTINOUS ASSESSMENT TO 1. STUDENT 2. TEACHER