PREPARING TEACHERS FOR EFFECTIVE CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT IN NIGERIAN SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the correlates of preparing teachers for effective continuous assessment in Nigerian schools. The purpose of this study was to identify the basic learning tasks, pedagogical skills and ethical orientations that will ensure adequate teacher preparation for effective and efficient continuous assessment. A 30-item questionnaire was used to collect data from a sample of 378 practicing teachers in Secondary Schools and Colleges of Education in Ondo and Ekiti States, Nigeria. The data were analyzed with relative frequencies, percentages and t-test to verify the veracity of the correlates of preparing teachers for effective continuous assessment. The results showed that professional education and training of teachers, instructional resources and methods, language and competence, ethical orientation and supervision of teachers and periodic assessment of curriculum contents are the preconditions for effective teacher preparation. Hence, it is suggested that effective continuous assessment could be enhanced with adequate funding of schools, provision of functional multimedia resources, regular capacity building programmes on evaluation of student learning, and admission of quality candidates for teacher education. This may improve the capacity of the school for efficient continuous assessment and capability of teachers in instructional delivery as well as effective reading and study skills towards greater students’ academic achievement and credibility of school graduates.

Keywords: Curriculum, Continuous Assessment, Evaluation, Test, Achievement, Teachers, Students

1. Introduction

The greatness of a democratic self-reliant nation depends on effective development and wise utilisation of its human and natural resources for creative empowerment, employment, wealth creation and wellbeing of the citizenry. It connotes the use of schools to inculcate and propagate useful professional competence, industrial experiences and ethical orientations which severally promote effective citizenship, entrepreneurship and wealth of nations. Being a practical activity that involves making rational decisions and imparting relevant competence in learners in a knowledge-based society of the 21st Century, functional education surely requires vibrant evaluation and improvement of students (Oyekan, 2015). Evaluation is a professional responsibility of teachers aimed at determining the students’ academic progress and achievement as well as the worth and effectiveness of educational programme (Kissock, 1981; Oyekan, 2015). This presents the students, teachers and curriculum developers with valuable feedback on their success in achieving the prescribed educational objectives. The teacher is a vital element in the continuous assessment of any educational programme aimed at improving the subject curricular contents, the quality of instructional process and productive competence of learners in their future
workplaces. Really, every child deserves a great teacher whose inclusive preparation in continuous assessment might facilitate good teaching, which can lead to better learning and performance.

Continuous assessment is a mechanism whereby the final grading of a student in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of behaviour takes account, in a systematic way, of all his/her performances during a given period of schooling (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 1985). It involves the use of different modes of evaluation for the purpose of guiding, improving and ensuring meaningful learning, and brilliant performance of students within and outside the school environment. Hence, continuous assessment provides a gradual build-up of a more valid assessment of the child’s inherent talents, creative abilities and scholastic achievement. Its successful implementation requires an extensive professional awareness, quality education and comprehensive training network for the preservice and practising teachers. This could improve their mastery of subject matter, pedagogical skills, professional standards and orientation towards continuous assessment as a sustainable innovation in the classroom evaluation. Practising classroom teachers shall become the potent agents of human engineering, capacity building and prosperous development of nations across the world.

Hence, the teachers who are shouldering the statutory responsibility for imparting useful knowledge, creative skills, and value orientations to nurture and refine the talents of individuals into productive and responsible citizenry are nation builders. Effective continuous assessment of the school curriculum contents will require professionally trained and experienced teachers with in-depth core subject knowledge, the right moral attitudes and proficiency in pedagogical skills to enhance students’ conceptual understanding and achievement (Oyekan, 2000; Essien, 2014; State Examinations Commission, 2010, 2015). The prospective teachers who are being prepared for a professional career in teaching should also be exposed to a network of subject curricular contents, evaluation procedures, statutory instructional tasks and expected behaviour in successful classroom practices. The tendency is to shape the career mission and sharpen the intellectual vision of diligent teachers for the continuous production of competent, responsible and enterprising self-reliant professionals, artisans, and captains of industry. Production of these efficient educated citizens from a comprehensive education and continuous assessment of learning outcomes with credible certification could mitigate the prevailing underachievement, corruption, criminality, indiscipline and underutilisation of capacities in all the facets of human life and national development.

2. Research objectives
The purpose of this study is to identify the basic learning tasks, pedagogical skills and ethical orientations that will ensure adequate preparation of teachers for effective continuous assessment in Nigerian schools. It is envisaged that a crop of instructional leaders should have been exposed to an inclusive professional teacher development imbued with comprehension of continuous assessment, intellectual engagement on basic guidelines for constructing and marking of tests, acquisition of excellent language and communicative competence, learning-enhancement counselling expertise, and adoption of integrated instructional materials and methods.

Efforts were made to advance the quest to improve teacher preparation, the capacity of the school for efficient continuous assessment, and the capability of diligent teachers in instructional delivery as a means toward greater academic achievement, credibility and functionality of the school graduates in their future workplaces. This makes an organised continuous assessment the quality control element in professional teacher education and training of productive citizens.
3. Statement of the problem
Given the harrowing level of poverty and corruption with impunity across the country, institutional and public examinations have severally witnessed gross academic infractions, shaken integrity and loss of confidence in the awarded certificates over the years (Onyekakeyah, 2016; Oyekan, 2000). Causes of failure of students and dropping out of school include poor attendance, perception of the curriculum as irrelevant, low self-esteem, and negative attitude towards education (Tavakolian & Howell, 2012). The teacher remains a viable beacon of hope in diagnosing and rectifying the students’ weaknesses, and adopting effective intervention strategies to increase their retention and graduation rate.

The professional life of educators and teachers as instructional leaders should, therefore, be characterised by consistent combination of exceptional erudition, ingenuity, originality, and clarity of creative presentation of meaningful lessons in organised classroom practices. Continuous assessment could put all students and teachers on the vibrant platform of self-control, self-evaluation and problem-solving competence with caring relationships. Teachers should always provide learning opportunities and skills that will enable students to solve a variety of problems and survive in challenging school, home and community environments (Tavakolian & Howell, 2012). This could facilitate effective teaching, efficient educational measurement and learning guidance with increased retention and inclination for further education.

Tests have been recognised as the most commonly used instrument to measure cognitive attributes of learners. Assessment of non-cognitive qualities in the psychomotor and affective domains is often not given priority attention in classroom evaluation of students’ learning outcomes by the teachers (Oyekan, 2000). Both the affective and psychomotor attributes determine how well manual dexterity and ethical orientation of the students would become the groundwork for ennobled personality and productive creativity of the citizenry. Appropriate strategies (methods, techniques and approaches) of measuring these vital non-cognitive characteristics should be identified and discussed during the preservice and in-service teacher-training schemes.

Social and family environments in which children are raised are the fundamental factors that affect the quality of their education (Zuluaga, 2016). Thus, the children seem to interact more with parents, friends, and the community than with their teachers. Parents would hold a big part of the responsibility of their children’s education as they provide them with the necessaries of education (e.g. books, computers, school fees, uniforms, sandals) and the basic necessities of quality human life (e.g. good house, balanced diet and durable cloths). The teacher-trainees would need to imbibe a culture of effective reading and study habits, scholastic excellence, integrity, and transparency as well as continuous professional improvement imbued with quality assurance. It is imperative for them to assess the effectiveness of national policy on education, identify the critical implementation gaps, proffer practicable solutions and advance new ideas to improve instructional delivery, educational achievement, work productivity and human prosperity.

4. Literature review
The society entrusts the selection and assessment of viable learning experiences within the context of our cultural heritage to the professional teachers and educators (Lawton, 1975). On this premise, assessment becomes an integral part of teaching-learning process. It connotes that the teacher should impart knowledge and skills with a combination of instructional methods and materials, encourage effective reading and study habits, and assess the learning outcomes to ascertain the progress and achievement of the students. The National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of
Nigeria, 2013) stipulates that educational activities shall be learner-centred for maximum self-development and self-fulfillment. During a given period of schooling at all levels of education, continuous assessment can be used for a comprehensive appraisal of the cognitive, psychomotor and affective qualities of learners towards their total development. It confers a greater responsibility upon the classroom teachers: good teaching, regular assessment, immediate feedback and appropriate guidance towards better performance of the students (Oyekan, 2000). This involves continuous renewal of subject curriculum contents, materials, methods and assessment procedures to improve learning and achievement among learners.

Any activity that nurtures the growth of humanity and society should be examined periodically to ascertain its performance, cost-effectiveness and relevance to its living community. Preparing teachers for a changing world should be anchored on a common core of foundational knowledge of the subject matter, pedagogical skills, child and adolescent development, and professional standards that incorporate global best practices for teaching in today’s heterogeneous classrooms (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2016). Being a practical activity that involves making rational decisions on human capacity and nation building, the school curriculum deserves periodic assessment of its prescribed objectives, contents, and implementation strategies with a variety of measuring instruments. Generated data from continuous assessment should be documented for effective learning guidance, career choice, curriculum revision, and funding of the school. Expectedly, the pervasive beneficial characteristics of continuous assessment make it to be a formative, systematic, diagnostic, comprehensive, cumulative and guidance-oriented activity that strengthens the intellect, morality, and ability of the students to learn, achieve and succeed beyond the school setting.

Continuous assessment is a formative and systematic activity that requires an operational plan to engage learners on periodic appraisal of learning contents, on weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis by subject teachers. As an ongoing assessment, continuous assessment enables the teacher to track any instructional improvement required by learners as teaching-learning progresses, and give more support with appropriate guidance (Wikipedia, 2014). Formative assessment can reduce academic dishonesty and the temptation to cheat by students as they focus more on learning and understanding instead of grades.

Diagnosis of learning difficulties acting as barriers to meaningful learning, understanding and retention of basic concepts and processes is effected with the use of integrated measuring instruments, which include teacher-made tests, observations, assignments, projects, practical works, and interviews. Such identified students’ weaknesses can be rectified as teaching progresses. This diagnostic remedial teaching (DRT) strategy reduces the impediments to meaningful learning, anxiety and frustration that might make students want drop out of schooling.

The comprehensive nature of continuous assessment emanates from the use of many different types of instructional materials, learning strategies, and measuring instruments to secure an all-round assessment of the cognitive, psychomotor and affective qualities in the learners. It is intended to accommodate individual differences associated with variation in the backgrounds, characteristics, needs and aspirations of learners. Continuous assessment will assess various components of learning in the knowledge acquisition and thinking processes, development of sound attitudes and best practices, and manual dexterity in creative entrepreneurship. Such a continuous holistic appraisal of learning tasks will enhance total personality development of learners.
In the same vein, continuous assessment is cumulative as it takes into account many previous results of educational assessments to make rational decisions for academic, personal, and career guidance. This requires a meticulous keeping of accurate records on each student. Emerging data on the quality of students’ performance shall provide viable information to encourage and guide the learners towards attaining greater educational heights in life. Such valuable results become a vital database for the choice of subject combinations and life-time vocations as well as the awards of grants and scholarships on merit.

The education and training of teachers is a major priority in nearly all African countries (Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2007). Preparing the beginning teachers for a changing world should be anchored on a common core of foundational knowledge of the subject matter, pedagogical skills, child and adolescent development, and professional standards that incorporate global best practices for teaching in today’s heterogeneous classrooms (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2016). Promoting and using up-to-date communication technologies with a rich source of materials and guidance Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA) programme is aimed to improve the working lives of teachers across the continent, and to raise the quality of all aspects of teaching and learning (www.tessaprogramme.com). Herein teachers should adopt good teaching ingrained with a combination of exciting instructional materials and methods, technological devices with Internet connectivity, and continuous assessment of curriculum contents with learning guidance services to boost students’ academic achievement and inclination towards further education. Such efforts constitute viable ways the teachers assist in tackling the challenges to sustainable development in Africa.

Hence, teachers make up the heartbeat of manpower development and training for prudent management of resources, creative production of durable goods, and efficient delivery of services to enhance quality human life. Accomplishment of educational objectives for effective citizenship, economic diversification and sustainable development of nations is dependent on good teaching and evaluation of all the aspects of student behaviour (Oyekan, 2016). Effective implementation of continuous assessment by strong, well prepared teachers will strengthen the intellect; morality and ability of the students to learn; and achieve and succeed beyond the school setting. Herein continuous assessment shall motivate students to work harder and attain greater achievement scores, keep away from examination malpractices which undermine the validity and reliability of the tests, minimise absenteeism and dropping-out of schools, and strengthen them with credible certification and employable competence. Emerging educated professionals with necessary competence, certification and orientation would assist in resolving varying challenges of socio-economic and technological development.

5. Methodology
A sample of 378 practising teachers in secondary schools and colleges of education was used for the study. An instrument titled Correlates of Preparing Teachers for Effective Continuous Assessment (CPTECA) was developed, validated and utilised as the questionnaire for data collection. The questionnaire was given to the teachers to tick (✓) the appropriate column of the expected professional knowledge, pedagogical skills and ethical orientations required for effective and efficient continuous assessment of subject curriculum contents in Nigerian schools.
One null hypothesis was formulated for this study:
- There is no significant difference between the respondents that agreed and disagreed on the correlates of preparing teachers for effective continuous assessment.
Hence, an item-by-item analysis was carried out of the questionnaires as means to compute the frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviation of practising teachers’ responses. The intention was to elicit useful and usable information as basic components for creative teacher development and training strategy that meet learners’ interests, needs and satisfaction.

The resulting data were analysed by using relative frequencies, percentages, chi-square test and t-test to verify the veracity the above-stated hypothesis on the teachers’ responses. An aggregate of 200 sample respondents was set as benchmark for acceptance in Agree dimension on the Agree-Disagree continuum. The results were tabulated for brevity, coherency and clarity in their interpretation and discussion of implications to qualitative education, creative manpower development and quality human life.

6. Analysis and discussions

The 30 items of the questionnaire, CPTECA, were used to identify the correlates of preparing competent and credible teachers for effective continuous assessment in Nigerian schools. Analysis of CPTECA showed a chi-square test of significance on the relative frequencies of the subjects who agreed and disagreed with each of the 30 items displayed in Table 1. It was discovered that all the items in the CPTECA were found significant and considered necessary in the professional education, training and orientation of teacher-trainees for effective continuous assessment at all levels of schooling. Further t-test analysis of these results also displayed a significant difference in the frequency of the subjects who responded positively or negatively to the CPTECA as carefully shown in Table 2 below.

Table1: Correlates of Teacher Preparation for Effective Continuous Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>X² cal</th>
<th>X² critical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Professional education and training of teachers with-depth core subject Knowledge</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>189</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Acquisition of proficiency in pedagogical skills for teaching effectiveness and conceptual understanding</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>149.33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Adoption of exciting integrated instructional materials and methods</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>165.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Exposition to continuing educational research and skill improvement training programmes</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>171.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Use of a coherent multimedia instructional systems approach which upholds blended learning</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>138.86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Promotion of learner-centred educational activities for maximum self-development and self-fulfillment</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>149.33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Good teaching ingrained with theoretical discussions, explanatory illustrations and practical exercises</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>171.40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Acquisition of excellent language and communicative competence</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>174.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Ethical orientation anchored on moral attitudes, discipline, fairness and worthy character with integrity</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Inculcation of the entrepreneurial spirit of instructional creativity, morality and innovation in the assessment of curriculum contents</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>89.7</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Purposeful leadership and prudent management of educational resources</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Exposure to the practicable ways of ensuring good conduct of continuous assessment in schools</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>96.8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Proactive stimulation for provision of conducive learning and assessment environment</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>96.8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Effective instructional supervision of teachers</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Development and use of different innovative assessment tools which accommodate the diversity of students’ attributes and needs</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Exposure to the basic principles of teaching and best practices in education</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>97.6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Diagnosis and remediation of students weaknesses for achievement motivation</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>92.1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Integration of learning guidance and counselling expertise</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>91.3</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Sensitisation against academic malpractices before during and after examinations</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>95.3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Use of a combination of measuring instruments for cognitive, psychomotor and affective objectives</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Emphasis of assessment as the quality control element in professional development of teachers</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Admission of qualified and capable student-teachers on merit</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Exposure to the basic guidelines for the construction of tests</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Exhortation on quality nutrition, physical exercises and good lifestyles for healthy living</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>87.3</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Familiarity with vital educational records, resources and services</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Exposure to the basic techniques of grading/marking tests</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>91.3</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Encouragement of the culture of reading for pleasure and knowledge acquisition</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>Exposure to educational innovations and regular in-service training programme</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Highlight the reasons for continuous assessment</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Revision of treated topics and effective study skills towards meaningful learning</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Key:**  F: Frequency count of responses, %: Percentage, $X^2_{\text{cal}}$: Chi-square calculated value, $X^2_{\text{critical}}$: Chi-square table value

**Table 2:** T-test summary for agreeing and disagreeing with the correlates of preparing teachers for Effective continuous assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$t_{\text{cal}}$</th>
<th>$t_{\text{critical}}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agreed Respondents</td>
<td>356.4</td>
<td>10.86</td>
<td>754</td>
<td>119.89</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreed Respondents</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>10.77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=378, df: degree of freedom, $t_{\text{cal}}$ = calculated t-test value, $t_{\text{critical}}$ = the critical t-test value in the table, $p=0.05$

The data in Table 1 were analysed with a paired-sample test and goodness-of-fitness chi-square t-test. Since $t_{\text{cal}}$ is greater than $t_{\text{critical}}$, and $X^2_{\text{cal}}$ values are greater than $X^2_{\text{critical}}$, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there was a significant difference between the respondents that agreed and disagreed on the correlates on preparing teachers for effective continuous assessment. It can be deduced that the correlates of teacher preparation for effective continuous assessment could be part of the major components in the professional teacher education programme as a means to produce the required competent and responsive teachers to halt declining students’ achievement.

Emerging results as drawn from Table 1 were categorised into five distinct groups for clarity, interpretation and discussion of their relative implications to quality education.

**1. Professional education and training of teachers**
(i) Professional education and training of teachers with-depth core subject knowledge
(ii) Acquisition of proficiency in pedagogical skills for teaching effectiveness and conceptual understanding
(iii) Exposition to continuing educational research and skill improvement training programmes
(iv) Good teaching ingrained with theoretical discussions, explanatory illustrations and practical exercises
(v) Exposure to the basic principles of teaching and best practices in education
(vi) Diagnosis and remediation of students’ weaknesses for achievement motivation
(vii) Admission of qualified and capable student-teachers on merit
(viii) Encouragement of the culture of reading for pleasure and knowledge acquisition
(ix) Exposure to educational innovations and regular in-service training programme
(x) Revision of treated topics and effective study skills towards meaningful learning

**2. Instructional resources and methods**
(i) Adoption of exciting integrated instructional materials and methods
(ii) Use of a coherent multimedia instructional systems approach which upholds blended learning
(iii) Promotion of learner-centred educational activities for maximum self-development and self-fulfillment
(iv) Purposeful leadership and prudent management of educational resources
(v) Familiarity with vital educational records, resources and services
3. Language and communication skills
   (i) Acquisition of excellent language and communicative competence

4. Ethical Orientation and Supervision of Teachers
   (i) Ethical orientation anchored on moral attitudes, discipline, fairness and worthy character with integrity
   (ii) Effective instructional supervision of teachers
   (iii) Integration of learning guidance and counselling expertise
   (iv) Exhortation on quality nutrition, physical exercises and good lifestyles for healthy living
   (v) Highlight the reasons for continuous assessment
   (vi) Emphasis of assessment as the quality control element in professional development of teachers
   (vii) Sensitisation against academic malpractices before, during and after examinations

5. Assessment of Curriculum Contents
   (i) Inculcation of the entrepreneurial spirit of instructional creativity, morality and innovation in the assessment of curriculum contents
   (ii) Exposure to the practicable ways of ensuring good conduct of continuous assessment in schools
   (iii) Proactive stimulation for provision of conducive learning and assessment environment
   (iv) Development and use of different innovative assessment tools which accommodate the diversity of students’ attributes and needs
   (v) Use of a combination of measuring instruments for cognitive, psychomotor and affective objectives
   (vi) Exposure to the basic guidelines for the construction of tests
   (vii) Exposure to the basic techniques of grading/marking tests

Human capital is the critical factor in purposeful leadership excellence for sustainable development while natural resources are the basic facilitators of economic growth for national development. Effective continuous assessment of the school curriculum contents, therefore, require professionally trained and experienced teachers with in-depth core subject knowledge, the right moral attitudes and proficiency in pedagogical skills to enhance students’ conceptual understanding and achievement. Such a crop of competent instructional leaders should have been exposed to an inclusive professional teacher development imbued with comprehension of continuous assessment, intellectual engagement on basic guidelines for constructing and marking of tests, acquisition of excellent language and communicative competence, learning-enhancement counselling expertise, and adoption of integrated instructional materials and methods. Well nurtured practising classroom teachers would have the audacity of change to profoundly influence the entire educational system, world of work, and prosperity of the society thereby making qualitative education a sustainable gateway to success and quality human life. This requires a diligent admission of qualified and capable student-teachers on merit.

Instructional resources and methods are salient components of creative teaching and effective continuous assessment, credible certification and proven employability of learners in all aspects of humanity. Faculties, Institutes and teacher-training institutions (such Colleges and Universities of Education) should use a coherent multimedia instructional systems approach which upholds blended learning to promote learner-centred educational activities for maximum self-development, academic achievement and self-fulfillment. Competent and committed teachers shall use effective
continuous assessment to enthrone hard work, dignity in labour, merit and excellence in purposeful leadership and prudent management of (educational) resources for national development.

Functional education which produces educated citizens is facilitated through a meaningful medium of instruction. Being a coded system of words, phrases or signs that express feelings and ideas about the world, it seems language is important to logical thinking, cognitive retention and excellent expression of basic concepts, processes or events. A complete guide to the written and spoken English as a language of classroom instruction is the mastery of effective listening and reading skills (Oyekan, 2000). Acquisition of excellent language and communicative competence should be fostered through a sustainable culture of effective reading, meaningful writing, constructive debates and interactive expression of situations with significant others. Hence, teacher’s choice of language must be simple, clear, correct and comprehensive in explaining, illustrating and demonstrating subject curricular contents. The tendency is to improve the students’ interests, meaningful understanding and retention of basic concepts as a platform to enjoy continuous assessment of their subjects or courses of study in schools.

Emphasis of assessment as the quality control element in professional development of teachers should highlight the reasons for continuous assessment as an integral part of teaching-learning process. An ethical orientation anchored on moral attitudes, discipline, fairness and worthy character with integrity will strengthen the classroom teachers to embrace and sensitize their students against academic malpractices before, during and after examinations. When regular effective instructional supervision of teachers is coupled with integration of learning guidance and counselling expertise, emerging good teaching and well organised curriculum assessment, students will derive bountiful joy in schooling, learning and applying their knowledge and skills to resolve issues, conflicts and challenges affecting mankind. Exhortation on quality nutrition, physical exercises and good lifestyles for healthy living shall enhance regular class attendance, cognitive functioning of the brain and retentive memory of learning experiences, emotional stability and greater educational achievement.

Exposure to the practicable ways of ensuring good conduct of continuous assessment in schools will strengthen them with the use of a combination of measuring instruments for cognitive, psychomotor and affective objectives. Development and use of different innovative assessment tools which accommodate the diversity of students’ attributes, interests and needs could promote good classroom management, joyful learning and greater performance. Exposure to the basic guidelines and techniques for the construction and grading/marking tests, observations, projects, practical work and assignments with all their corresponding marking guides will minimise anxiety, frustration, failure rate and examination malpractices. These instructional efforts can be catalysed by proactive stimulation of teacher-trainees to provide suitable learning and assessment environment. Inculcation of the entrepreneurial spirit of instructional creativity, morality and innovation in the assessment of curriculum contents might ultimately provide the learners with great effective teachers who are involved in instructional tasks and remediation of students’ weaknesses as teaching progresses. Teachers would treat their students fairly and justly without any bias or prejudice against their gender, needs, interests and aspirations.

7. Conclusion and recommendations
Education is essential for the development of individuals and growth of the society. Assessment is an integral part of any effective teaching-learning transactions that should be subjected to thorough planning, design and implementation in the course of professional teacher development. Schools
would become the generative learning centres to nurture intellectual development, pedagogical engagements and entrepreneurial initiatives. Good teachers should adopt organised continuous assessment as the instrument of quality assurance in human resource development, effective citizenship and productive workforce for building of great nations. This might require a joyful classroom life that should be spiced with good teaching, effective continuous assessment and efficient revision laced with creative reading and study skills.

Adequate investment in functional education and specialised training of teachers will equip them for their prospective classroom practices. Hence, effective continuous assessment of the school curriculum contents require professionally trained and experienced teachers with in-depth core subject knowledge, the right moral attitudes and proficiency in pedagogical skills to enhance students’ conceptual understanding and achievement. Such prospective facilitators of learning must be exposed to the correlates of preparing competent and credible teachers for effective continuous assessment at all levels of schooling. This will improve the preparation of great excellent teachers that could facilitate quality teaching, meaningful learning, and success of our nation.

Hence, the government, school, parents and public-spirited individuals and organisations should provide more funds, facilities and equipment to promote effective teaching, formative evaluation, and greater students’ achievement. This will help the Nigerian schools to enthronе regular training programmes and educational excellence as competent teachers are seen as symbols of fountain of knowledge, hope for the actualisation of human potential, and the survival base for creative humanity. Furthermore, brilliant and diligent student-teachers can be given appreciable grants, loans and scholarships to lessen their financial burdens, stimulate unleashing talents and boost academic excellence.

8. Suggestions for future research
Evaluation is a professional responsibility of teachers aimed at determining the students’ academic progress and achievement as well as quality and functionality of all aspects of educational programmes. The pervasive functions of continuous assessment demand its incorporation into the continuing professional education and training of teachers.

Hence, there is need to conduct more insightful researches into the modality, utility and essence of continuous assessment in all school disciplines. It is suggested that each of the 30 correlates of preparing teachers for effective continuous assessment should be investigated as strategies to improve teacher preparation and the process of educational assessment in private and public schools. Researches also could be conducted into the attitudes of teachers, students and parents toward continuous assessment. The relative acquisition and use of subject knowledge, skills and values associated with the construction, grading and reporting the measuring instruments should be included in the research works.

9. References


