An Analysis of Teachers' Insight on Continuous Assessment Practices

Amna Saleem
Lecturer, Department of Education, the Women University, Multan
amna.6105@wum.edu.pk

Dr. Farah Deeba (Corresponding Author)
Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan
farahgillani@bzu.edu.pk

Dr. Muhammad Aqeel Raza
Assistant Professor, Department of Education, NCBA & E, Multan Campus
Razaaqeel06@gmail.com

Iqra Shaheen
Ex-M.Phil. Scholar, Department of Education, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan
Shaheeniqra7@gmail.com

Abstract

The role of students' continuous assessment is crucial for the improvement of their performance. Therefore, it is vital for teachers to have a firm belief in conducting a robust continuous assessment of their students. The present study aimed to gauge the teacher's outlook regarding their students' continuous assessment. The objectives of the study were to investigate the level of teachers' perception regarding the practices of continuous assessment and examine the difference between the teachers' perceptions on continuous assessment concerning their demographic variables. A simple random sampling technique was used for the collection of the data. The data were collected from public sector college teachers of Multan district. For the collection of data, a Likert type scale was used. The study sample consisted of total 300 teachers comprising 114 male and 186 female college level teachers. For the analysis of data, mean score, percentage, standard deviation, z-test, and ANOVA statistics were employed. Data analysis revealed that continuous assessment improves students' learning skills and has positive effects on learners. On the basis of findings, the study recommends that valid and reliable criteria for continuous assessment should be provided to all the teachers in colleges to be taken as a benchmark by the teachers and that teachers should employ new teaching methods in their classrooms for a better understanding of their students.

Keywords: Assessment, Continuous Assessment, College Teachers

Introduction

In an education system, the process of assessment is necessary. The students' performances must be assessed regularly to make improvements in their learning. When this process is carried out continuously by the teacher, then it is called continuous assessment. Continuous assessment does not just include checking students' progress but also works on check and balance of the teaching strategies, teaching techniques, and the reflection of knowledge upon the students' behavior. The teacher in the classroom performs the process of continuous assessment, and the information is gathered by observing the circumstances in the classroom (Zhan, 2020).

In this regard, teachers observe the students' performance, their level of understanding, and the level at which their knowledge is relied upon (Rezaei, 2015). Hence, the process of continuous assessment is conducted by assigning any tasks to the students based on their previous performances, accomplishment and activities performed by the students which are keenly observed by the teachers. So, they can make some decisions to assess the students' performance in the given tasks (Okwute & Musa, 2018).

Similarly, continuous assessment assures the quality of the education system on the basis of which cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains are assessed. It helps the teachers to assess, redesign, and make changes in the teaching strategies and helps them plan new activities, enabling the students to compete in the modern world (Hernández, 2012). The purpose of the continuous assessment is to provide sensitive and detailed information about students' performance and achievement, teachers' teaching strategies and techniques, a curriculum plan and design, and future considerations for both students and teachers. Continuous assessment also provides information about the checking and grading systems of any institution. Decisions about how teachers and other school staff should be trained can be made based on this document (Sanz-Pérez, 2019).

Moreover, continuous assessment is guidance-oriented and goal-oriented, which provides comprehensive and reliable solutions to the problems faced by the teachers and students in the classroom or outside the classroom in an educational setup (Rana & Zubair,2019). Primarily, Watkins (2007) described the process of continuous assessment as curriculum-oriented and curriculum-evaluated. The evaluation happens all the time, which helps the education system improve its weaknesses and strengthen its strengths.

However, changes in the attitude and actions of the students regarding their learning are brought up by the assessment on a daily or regular basis, which helps the students to assess their strengths and weaknesses on their own and make changes according to the demands of the modern world (Kirylo, 2015). In the same context, the students' performance is highly assessed, which causes anxiety and disturbance in their studies too. When the students are always thinking about the results and the outcomes rather than learning, their abilities may also be hindered, and they might be moving backwards in their studies (Graeme & Naidoo,

2004). Therefore, assessment is necessary to be informed about the performances of both students and teachers. However, this process must be moved on in a controlled setup where too much assessment does not make the students more conscious of their marks and grades than their learning.

In contrast with the previous studies, the present study provides the data about the effects of assessment on continuous assessment based on the students' performance, teaching abilities of the teachers and the resources provided by the administration for the activity-based learning. The gaps in previous studies have been tried to cover in the present study as few studies just focused on the teaching methods to improve students' learning by using continuous assessment and the study of Iqbal (2017) focused on the students' attitude towards continuous assessment. Researchers thought appropriate to highlight and focus all the major areas of continuous assessment by collecting teachers' insight on practices of continuous assessment. Therefore, in the present study all the areas and features of continuous assessment have been tried to be covered.

Literature Review

The process of continuous assessment is based on the complete information used to collect data from the students, including all of the sources used in the data collection, the ways and methods used to analyze, interpret, and evaluate the results, and sum of information about the students (Oli & Olkaba, 2020). Moreover, the information gathered and interpreted is used to make changes in the teaching strategies and sources used to deliver the content and monitor the students' performance. Regular assessment makes the students able to learn about the differences between their current and previous performance~~s~~. It also helps them realize their potential to work in teams and individually (Mahmoudi et al., 2014).

In the meantime, the concept of continuous assessment has much importance in the international scenario in the fields of assessment and curriculum-based assessment. According to Yoshida (2020) the process of continuous assessment directly affects the development and design of the curriculum, which covers the basic needs of all students. Hence, the national strategies make the procedures for assessment more precise and give directions to the administrative bodies about what and how to assess the teaching-learning process. It helps the teachers know what to teach and when to change their teaching strategies, and to what extent they need to be changed (Nitko, 2004). Eventually, it also highlights the future considerations for the teachers about the students' achievement~~s~~ and performance~~s~~ (Watkins, 2007).

Features of Continuous Assessment

According to Alufohai and Akinlosotu (2016) continuous assessment possesses various features and characteristics as it is different from the mainstream regular testing system. Significant features of continuous assessment are as under: It is held regularly, and students' performance and teachers' teaching skills are improved. It is an effective tool to determine

the competencies of the students. It is a goal-oriented assessment system. It is a more comprehensive and efficient technique to measure teaching and learning progress. It ensures a quality teaching and learning system. It makes learning more convenient and brings more positive results (Faleye & Adefisoye, 2016).

Purposes of Continuous Assessment

Continuous assessment has the following purposes as under:

Improvement in Students' Learning

The students learn better when they are assessed on continuous basis. As a continuous process, the continuous assessment enables the students to improve their learning skills and their critical thinking abilities to solve their problems by assessing their capabilities and capacities at regular intervals. Previous tests and assignments also provide information about the students' performance and can be used to make future decisions for the betterment of their students (Nsibande & Modiba, 2012). Hence, the teachers have to face and deal with various students in the class, ranging from below average to above average. Teachers should choose a methodology that can satisfy the needs of every student in the class. As the intellectual level of the students varies, so do the teaching strategies, and continuous and regular assessment provide the means to make changes in the ways of teaching and improve teaching skills that benefit the students' learning quality (Yigzaw, 2013).

To Provide Long Term Results

In the same instance, continuous assessment yields accurate, authentic, and correct information, which leads to quality improvements in the system of education and yields long-term effects for future considerations. It provides long-term results to people engaged in the learning process, whether they are teachers, students, other staff members, or parents of the students (Mkimbili & Kitta, 2020).

Improvement in teaching skills

Moreover, the continuous assessment also paves the way to correct the problems that are crucially highlighted in the analysis of the assessment process. Data collected through observations and the previous testing scores are carefully examined and analyzed to make effective and helpful decisions about the future progress of the students. Various teaching remedies are also invented and suggested for the students and their caregivers, including parents, about the learning conditions of the students (Zorio-Grima & Merello, 2020). Somehow, this way of assessment highlights the leading issues that are hidden due to some environmental factors and learning disabilities of the students that cannot be assessed by other means of assessment, such as formative, diagnostic, and summative assessment (Faleye & Adefisoye, 2016). Students and their parents, as well as their caregivers, are also informed

about the students' learning conditions by people who make teaching remedies (Mkimbili & Kitta, 2020).

Day et al. (2018) discussed that the criteria for the integrated assessment could be defined first so that the results are generalized on whole of the population of the students, including teachers, staff, and parents of the students. Generalization of the results taken from the observations and the analysis of the data collected through different sources of information, including students' portfolios, must be justified, and equal chances and opportunities for improvement and participation must be given to the students. Furthermore, the authentic information is taken from the continuous assessment procedures. Moreover, the results are generalizable and help the whole population of students to make changes in their behaviors and actions regarding the learning process (López-Tocón, 2021).

Generally, the concept of continuous assessment helps the teachers know that they easily understand the task given to the students. This happens side by side in the teaching-learning process regularly. Teachers assess the students' knowledge and their level of understanding through continuous assessment techniques before moving on to the next concept or information (Arega, 2014). Day et al. (2018) believe that continuous assessment is a powerful tool that provides authentic information about the students' pace of learning and the teachers' teaching skills. Similarly, the process of continuous assessment monitors and thrives the students' achievement and improves the students' learning quality by polishing their skills of problem-solving and critical thinking.

Most commonly, assessment techniques are used to find out about the current learning situations of students which somehow predict their future progress. However, the continuous assessment technique provides long-term reliable and authentic information, which is helpful for the teachers and the students regarding their teaching and learning, respectively (Holmes, 2015). Furthermore, the continuous assessment provides regular follow-ups to the students and the teachers, which indicates coordination between teaching and learning. It can also improve the students' learning skills in the areas in which they are most commonly taught practical and problem-solving skills. Hidden skills and hidden problems of students are quickly and dynamically found by opting the mechanism of continuous assessment which takes place all the time (Rai, 2019).

To some extent, continuous assessment is different from the other ways of assessing knowledge and data in that it helps the teachers observe the class and the students daily. It helps other ones learn about the potential of the students and their capabilities, which helps them achieve the best scores in future exams, tasks and activities conducted in the classroom (Bjlde et al.,2017).

Adaros et al. (2018) suggested that students' participation in activities can be improved when there is a particular teaching tactic that all teachers can use separately to improve their work pace and intellectual capabilities to understand the knowledge given to them (Byabato & Kisamo, 2014). Hence, the students' potentials are enhanced and polished when they are

assessed continuously. Assessment is a method of bringing teachers and students together while coordinating their efforts to improve the teaching and learning process. The primary objectives of the curriculum are achieved when they are assessed at regular intervals (Abera et al.,2017).

Previously, students' performance was assessed through the various types of class tests and examinations. The primary purpose of these tests and examinations was to assess and evaluate the mental abilities of the students rather than their skills and abilities (Odundo et al., 2020). Hence, the outcomes of the continuous assessment bring positive results in a way that the students can perform better as their critical thinking skills are polished and assessed regularly. With the help of continuous assessment, performance is getting better and intended learning outcomes are achieved at regular intervals by developing better skills.

Therefore, the continuous assessment provides information to the students about their level of achievement so that they can make prior decisions about their career and further studies in the future (Zhan, 2020). As the continuous assessment improves the teacher and student relationships in the learning environment and the students' progress are also improved because they know that teacher will admire their work and reward them for their improved performance. Teacher-student coordination is also improved, and students can participate more confidently in learning activities (Gonzalez et al., 2015).

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were

- To investigate the teachers' insight on the practices of continuous assessment at the college level.
- To examine the difference between teachers' insight on continuous assessment concerning their demographic variables.

Hypothesis of the Study

The hypothesis of the study was as followed:

- There is no significant difference in teachers' insight on the basis of gender, marital status, teaching experience, qualification, designation, and nature of employment.

Research Methodology

This study was undertaken to find out insight of teachers regarding continuous assessment. The nature of the study was descriptive, and a survey design was used to conduct this study. The target respondents of the study were college teachers in Punjab, but the accessible population were college teachers in Multan district. The researchers utilized a simple random sampling technique to draw a sample. Total 11 male colleges and 9 female college teachers were selected. So, the data were collected from 186 female and 114 male college teachers by

using a questionnaire. A self-developed questionnaire was utilized to collect data from respondents by employing the 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire had 30 statements related to continuous assessment. To examine the validity of the research instrument (questionnaire) for the study, researchers got help from a panel of experts to identify the questionnaire's stability and faults and improve the tool. The researchers also ensure the tool's reliability with the help of SPSS by using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The value of the reliability coefficient was 0.73. Quantitative data analysis has been done with the help of descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Researchers picked, Mean Score, Standard Deviation, Frequency, and Percentage under Descriptive Statistics and used the z-test and one-way ANOVA for inferential statistics.

Table 1

Descriptive analysis of Demographic detail of study participants

Gender	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Male	114	38
Female	186	62
Marital status		
Married	272	91
Unmarried	28	9
Designation		
Lecturer	219	73
Assistant professor	72	24
Associate professor	09	3
Teaching experience (Years)		
0-5	73	24
6-10	123	41
11-15	104	35
Qualification		
M.A/M.sc	149	50
M.Phil./MS	141	47
Ph.D.	10	3
Nature of job		
Permanent	269	91
Contract	31	9

Table No. 1 shows the detailed percentage distribution of respondents (teachers) according to their gender, marital status, qualifications, designation, nature of job, and teaching experience. The table value revealed that 62% of respondents were female teachers and 48% were male teachers, with a permanent ratio of 91% and a contract ratio of 9%. Designation

was divided into three groups: lecturer, assistant professor, and associate professor, but most of them belong to the lecturer group (73%), and the ratio of married people is higher (married 91%) than unmarried (unmarried 9%). The table showed that teachers' qualifications were divided into M.A./MSc, MS/M.Phil., and Ph.D. groups, and most of them belonged to M.A./MSc (50%) groups more than MS/M.Phil. (47%) and Ph.D. (3%) groups. Teaching experience was divided into four groups, and most of the teachers fall into the (11–15) years of teaching experience group (41%).

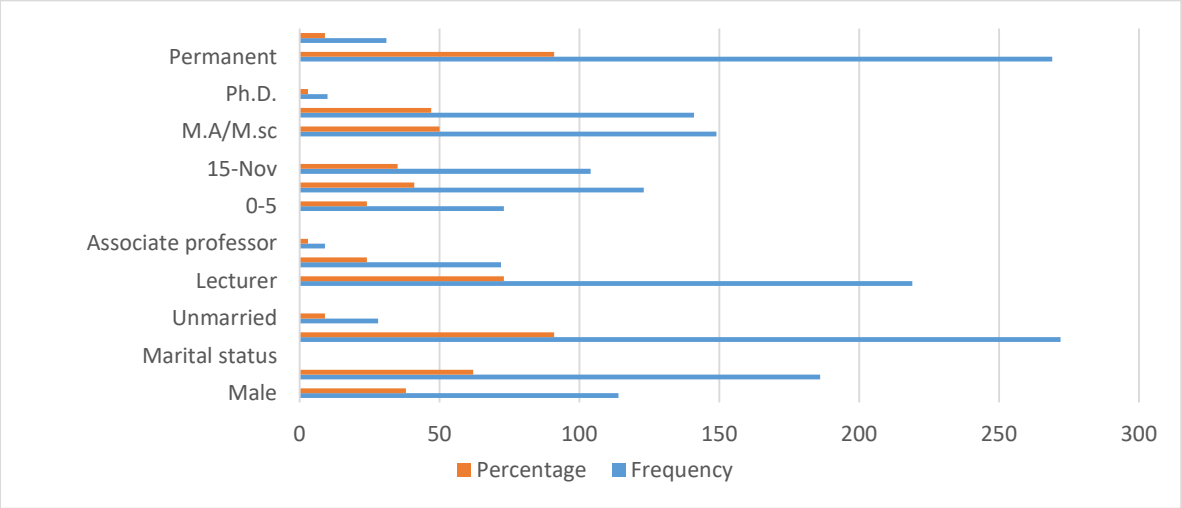

Figure 1

Table 2

Descriptive analysis of the Statements

Statements	**Mean**	**S.D**	**Skewness**		**Kurtosis**	
Development of students' personality by continuous assessment	3.99	1.04	-1.176	0.141	0.941	0.281
Improvement of teaching and learning process.	4.47	0.51	-0.122	0.141	-1.489	0.281
Identification of students' weaknesses.	4.49	0.53	-0.488	0.141	-0.123	0.281
Mastery in the content by students	4.44	0.62	-1.403	0.141	5.168	0.281
Revision of content from time to time.	4.41	0.61	-1.069	0.141	3.003	0.281
Better utilization of questioning techniques	2.20	0.87	-1.28	0.141	1.567	0.281
Interaction with other teachers.	2.06	0.99	-0.961	0.141	1.729	0.281
Assistance in development of the learner.	4.33	0.83	-1.295	0.141	4.65	0.281
Burden on secondary schools' teachers in the shape of extra work.	3.94	1.12	-0.975	0.141	-0.085	0.281
Sources of quality education.	4.26	0.88	-1.602	0.141	2.973	0.281
Identification of students' problems in mastering skills.	4.28	0.87	-1.766	0.141	3.807	0.281
Provision of opportunity to identify students' strengths and weakness.	4.21	0.78	-1.591	0.141	4.224	0.281
Problem-solving skills among learners.	4.30	0.85	-1.972	0.141	5.149	0.281
Improvement in students learning skills.	4.36	0.77	-1.974	0.141	6.156	0.281
Improvement in student's result.	4.27	0.79	-1.815	0.141	5.232	0.281
Provision of regular feedback on students learning.	2.94	1.11	-1.27	0.141	0.926	0.281
A time-consuming process.	4.13	0.96	-1.272	0.141	1.268	0.281

Positive effect on learners.	4.14	0.94	-1.196	0.141	1.19	0.281
Improvement of pupils' learning in their class room.	4.26	0.81	-1.473	0.141	2.995	0.281
A student evaluation system that uses a variety of assessment techniques.	4.12	0.95	-1.355	0.141	1.773	0.281
Deep insight on the performance of the learners with traditional assessment techniques.	4.03	1.04	-1.382	0.141	1.601	0.281
Reliable criteria of assessment	4.18	0.83	-1.258	0.141	2.163	0.281
Helps learners to seek remedial assistance.	4.03	1.03	-1.58	0.141	2.404	0.281
Difficulty in assessment of large classroom	4.11	0.90	-1.416	0.141	2.475	0.281
A fair process for students' assessment.	4.28	0.84	-1.738	0.141	4.029	0.281
Important for the development of our education system.	4.28	0.83	-1.664	0.141	3.689	0.281

The table shows that participants agreed upon most of the statements, but they also show disagreement regarding some aspects. They disagreed that with the help of continuous assessment and better utilization of questioning techniques, they were able to interact with other teachers. They disagreed that continuous assessment provides regular feedback about students' learning. Both skewness and kurtosis can be analyzed through descriptive statistics. Skewness values between 3 and +3 are acceptable, and kurtosis values between 10 and +10 are acceptable (Brown & Greene, 2006). It shows that all the values of statements fall within an acceptable range, which also shows the normality of the data.

Table 3

Descriptive analysis of the Statements regarding teachers' personal attitude towards continuous assessment

Statements	**Mean**	**S.D**	**Skewness**		**Kurtosis**	
Helps to improve my teaching strategies.	4.28	0.83	-1.664	0.141	3.689	0.281
Makes learning skills more meaningful.	4.27	0.83	-1.422	0.141	2.282	0.281
Helps to evaluate my own teaching.	2.42	0.66	-1.635	0.141	5.841	0.281
Provides a more suitable assessment environment for learners.	2.15	0.90	-1.481	0.141	2.561	0.281
Observations for the assessment of my students' learning.	4.19	0.91	-1.587	0.141	3.19	0.281
Test from my students as a tool for assessing their learning.	4.24	0.85	-1.699	0.141	3.898	0.281
Assessing my students learning in a traditional test taking manner.	4.09	0.94	-1.24	0.141	1.368	0.281
Use of checklist strategy to assess the learning ability of my students.	4.19	0.92	-1.314	0.141	1.437	0.281
Use of fill in the blanks strategy to determine the level of my students understanding regarding a particular topic.	3.91	1.09	-1.159	0.141	0.78	0.281

The above table showed that, continuous assessment did not help them evaluate their teaching. They also showed a negative attitude towards statements that continuous assessment generally provides a more suitable assessment environment for their learners and makes observations to assess their learning. Both skewness and kurtosis can be analyzed through descriptive statistics. Skewness values between 3 and +3 are acceptable, and kurtosis values between 10 and +10 are acceptable (Brown & Greene, 2006). It shows that all the values of statements fall within an acceptable range, which also shows the normality of the data.

Table 4

Significance of difference between demographics (nature of job, gender, and marital status) for the teacher

Gender	**N**	**Mean**	**S. D**	**z-value**
Female	186	1.189	0.7711	2.324
Male	114	1.117	0.8861	
Marital status				
Married	272	1.1686	0.9839	2.894
Unmarried	28	1.1412	0.8196	
Nature of the job				
Permanent	269	1.1606	0.9215	0.908
Contract	31	1.1464	0.9017	

This table shows that gender and marital status' calculated values were more than the table value of 0.05 (1.96). It shows that the perception of teachers, male and female, was statistically different from married and unmarried participants. Similarly, participants who belonged to different nature of jobs (permanent and contract) did not have significantly different perceptions regarding continuous assessment as the calculated value was less than the table value.

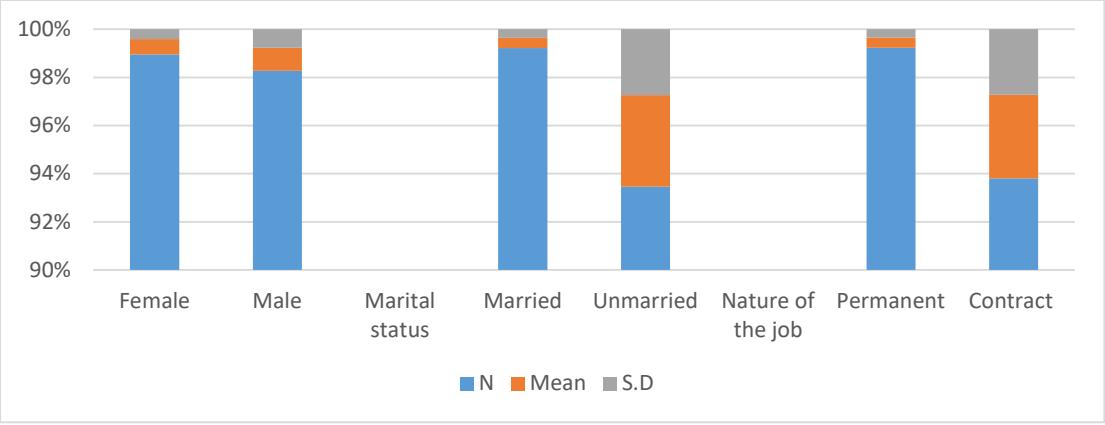

Figure 2

Table 5

Significance of the difference between demographics (age, teaching experience, teachers' qualification, and designation)

		ANOVA				
		Sum of Squares	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Teaching Experience	Between Groups	33.748	57	0.592	1.023	0.439
	Within Groups	140.048	242	0.579		
	Total	173.797	299			
Qualifications	Between Groups	20.539	57	0.36	1.177	0.201
	Within Groups	74.058	242	0.306		
	Total	94.597	299			
Designation	Between Groups	22.927	57	0.402	1.676	0.004
	Within Groups	58.073	242	0.24		
	Total	81	299			

The table results demonstrate that the participants' performance was insignificant concerning their qualifications and experience for the job because the value of significance was greater than 0.05. Nevertheless, their performance was statistically significant with regard to their designation.

Discussion and Conclusion

The process of continuous assessment leads to improved teaching and learning in any system of education. The present study was based on analyzing the teacher's outlook on continuous assessment, which led to improvements in their students' performance and their teaching strategies. Different studies supported the results of the present research work, as Dejene (2019) described the continuous assessment as leading to changes not only in the student's achievements but also in the teacher's teaching skills. Iqbal (2017) holds up the present study results as the continuous assessment ensures quality education, the utilization of questioning techniques becomes better, and student-teacher interaction increases as they will be assessed regularly. It also highlights the strengths and weaknesses of the students and develops problem-solving techniques in them. When students are tested all the time, they can emerge in a new way and be able to meet the needs and standards of the modern world.

Likely, as the present study shows that in the traditional education systems, the students were assessed monthly and somehow every year, which made it stressful to work hard without knowing the results for a long time, and the feedback from the students on the teachers' teaching and the lessons was also not in the proper form. Nevertheless, in the continuous assessment system, feedback from both the teachers and students is given on the spot. It makes the teaching and learning processes more reliable and unbiased. Students become

more confident about their learning practices when they are assessed continuously. They give feedback to the teachers and improve their critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

In the same instance, Abejehu (2016) cites the present findings as the continuous assessment compares the differences between the previous and present performances of the students, teachers, and the whole education system as well. Improvements occurred based on the results of continuous assessment. Teaching skills are polished and improved while they are assessed and evaluated continuously. Due to continuous assessment, teachers and students can switch over to the modern world and make changes in the traditional methods of teaching and learning.

In the same context, the students learn from their weaknesses and make decisions about their future performances. In the era of technical education, amendments to the process of education and the ways of assessment are also needed. Regular assessment of the teaching and learning process is needed to highlight the weaknesses and strengths of the education system and its positive effects on the achievement of the objectives. While comparing the present study with the study of Shukla (2019) in which he discussed how the changes in teaching strategies are also implemented while they are assessed continuously and when the old strategies did not give any positive or better results, the present study shows that the old strategies are collaborated with the new ones to make effective results in schools. Continuous assessment enables the teachers to know about their students' learning problems and difficulties and provide them with assistance to develop critical thinking skills.

Hence, Rai (2019) showed in his study that in the testing system of the continuous assessment process, the teachers mostly used the traditional testing methods and procedures to interpret students' performances and evaluate them in the traditional manner. Nevertheless, by using these traditional testing methods, the students' learning becomes more reliable and improved. Therefore, the teaching skills of the students are also improved and became better and better day by day. Feedback and the students' responses are collected on the spot, and the students' performance also occurs side by side. When teachers give their students feedback and show them their results right away, the students feel more confident and secure. This makes their learning more authentic and reliable and has a long-term effect on their grades.

In the same way, the criteria for evaluating the student's performance are reliable and free of bias, and they give the same results on a regular basis. Iqbal (2017) discussed in his study that the students believed in the standards of their assessment, and they performed confidently. Problem-solving skills are developed in students, which improves the education system, as compared to the Iqbal's study the findings of the present study included that the activity-based teaching and learning are the needs of the modern world, and their regular assessment is necessary for improvements in the education system. When the whole education system is assessed continuously, the quality of education will improve. The ranks of the education system of any country's education have improved and become high. Social teaching and learning environments are cultivated in modern education systems. The use of continuous assessment also helps the students learn from their mistakes in a fun way.

Moreover, the study's findings showed that continuous assessment has some opposing sides, too, as it is a time-consuming process and sometimes more resources are used in this process. When students are assessed continuously, it might cause some anxiety in them, and it may hinder their abilities and skills to try and experience new things without any hesitation. Students' main focus might be on the results rather than improvements in their skills. Outputs are becoming more rigorous due to continuous assessment. Somehow, the students become more conscious of their results, and the teachers' comments about their performance put their skills on their back and try to be first throughout their educational career (Holmes, 2015).

On the whole, the findings of the present study, following the other research studies, explain the need for continuous assessment in our present education system for quality education and making students able to cope with the challenges of the world outside. Critical thinking and problem-solving skills are also developed in the students when they are continuously assessed. Teaching skills become better day by day, and teachers can select the most suitable teaching strategies that deal with the needs of every student in the classroom. Continuous assessment practices improve the education system through the accomplishment of intended learning outcomes and make sure that students get a good education.

Recommendations

- Valid and reliable criteria for continuous assessment should be provided to all the teachers, and teachers should evaluate their students' performance as per the criteria in their classrooms.

- For better understanding of their students, the teacher should use new teaching methods along with latest assessment techniques in the classroom. They should also work on their observation skills so that they can better use continuous assessment.

- Proper time should be given to teachers to implement continuous assessments in their classrooms, and teachers should develop positive interaction with their colleagues.

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