THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN SOME SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN METEKELE ZONE OF BENSHANGUL GUMUZ REGIONAL STATE, ETHIOPIA

Shumetie Agonafer\(^1\)
Research Scholar, Debre Markos University, Ethiopia
Email: shumetiea@gmail.com

Wondemu Tadesse\(^2\)
Assistant Professor, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

ABSTRACT
The purpose of this study was to assess the implementation of continuous assessment in physical education in some selected secondary schools in Metekel of Benshangul Gumuz regional State. The method of the study was descriptive survey research. The subjects in this study were 482 students and 4 physical education teachers. Data were collected through questionnaire, interview and observation check lists. Percentages were used as the main method of analysis even though qualitative data were analyzed qualitatively. The results indicated that the implementation of continuous assessment in physical education in the sample schools have not fully practiced because of the following major challenges: a) students’ negative attitude towards physical education; b) time constraints; c) large class size; and shortage of instructional materials. To overcome these challenges, the following recommendations have been forwarded. These are: teachers should practice what they teach to curl up the negative attitudes of students; the zone needs to organize on job training to physical education teacher so as to upgrade their practice of continuous assessment; the zone and other concerned bodies should strive to reduce large numbers of students per class; and reconsider the period allotted per week for physical education and the zone and school administrators should also allocate enough budgets to purchase cheap sports facilities and equipment.

Keywords: Physical Education; Challenges; Implementing; Continuous Assessment

INTRODUCTION
In modern society, education is viewed as the primary means of solving social, economic and political problems. Indeed, the future welfare of nations has been placed on the shoulders of schools. For example, Lockheed (1992) indicates that, the demand for education has increased worldwide during the last two decades. Developing countries, like Ethiopia, and Kenya, found it extremely difficult to respond to the demand. High population growth rates coupled with unfavourable economic climate are the major setbacks even though there are other factors that have influenced education in these countries. These countries have more children to educate but hardly to invest money in education. In most cases, enrolment can barely keep pace with the school age population.

Today, assessment has become a critical component of education reform. Policy makers, education administrators, families and employers often view assessment scores to hold schools accountable for teacher performance. Continuous assessment, an alternative or supplement to high stakes testing of learner achievement, offers a methodology for measuring learning performance and using those
findings to improve the success of learners. Continuous assessment is a classroom strategy implemented by teachers to ascertain knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitude attained by students. In line with the above assertions, Reece and Walker (2003) defined assessment as the process of obtaining information about how much the student knows. This suggests that continuous assessment is a process and is much more than an examination of pupil achievement. A powerful diagnostic tool enables pupils to understand the areas in which they have difficulty and to concentrate their efforts in those areas (Madus and Kelleghan, 1993).

The trend of using tests and examinations at the end of a semester/year as a mere mode of assessment does not by itself prove the learners’ excellence in different aspects. In this respect, Mulu (2005) suggested that a onetime final examination or test does not bring a complete or true picture of students’ performance including the higher order thinking skills. That is to say, examinations cannot measures all that the student learns because their effectiveness is limited to assess the entire complex learning out comes. To overcome this, it will be much more helpful if the assessment is employed on a continuous basis using different strategies.

Continuous assessment is apparently getting momentum. It is believed to be more valid, reliable and motivating than the traditional one-off examinations. These days, advanced nations such as England, Spain, Australia and others are applying continuous assessment partially or wholly in their educational system Heaton (1990). Similarly, the newly designed TESO program has placed emphasis on the employment of continuous assessment in our country as it is one of the component of the program which deserves attention, like learning and Higher Diploma Program (HDP). This shows how an attempt is made to address the issue of continuous assessment at different levels of the educational system as part of a shift in paradigm.

In line with New Education and Training Policy, the practical task of implementing the new curriculum at school level requires continuous assessment as part of the curriculum in general and the instructional process in particular MoE (1994). This shows that enough attention is given towards the implementation of continuous assessment in Ethiopia, too. Accordingly, few researches have been conducted on implementations of continuous assessment. For instance, Birhanu (2004) conducted a research on teachers’ assessment of student’s performance with emphasis on continuous assessment at high school level. Moreover, Desalegn (2001) carried out a research on the evaluation of adequacy of the syllabus of teacher training institutes in preparing trainees to implement continuous assessment in the 1st cycle primary schools. In addition, Tamene (2007) conducted a research on the status of continuous assessment and factors affecting its implementation in technical vocational education and training at college level. Similarly, Hassen (1998) conducted a research in continuous assessment in general framework and implementation strategy.

Therefore, I believe that assessment is a way of finding out what learners know, understand and can do. And also assessment helps for the teachers to gather information informally by observing or formally by assigning students specific activities related to the curriculum and by analyzing the student performance on those activities. However, assessment of students in physical education is often seen as being a little different from way of assessing other subjects in the secondary school curriculum. Rather than always having a written permanent record that occurs in many other subjects, a lot assessment in physical education is of movement and bodily actions that only occur for a brief second. It is therefore, not an easy task for the physical education teacher because his judgment and interpretations have to be instantaneous and occur during the teaching of a lesson.

However, none of the studies was related to subject level and the findings did not reveal what has to be done with each subject. Thus, with these all considerations and the unique features of physical education assessment...In view of the vastly different skill levels of students entering physical education classes, practical and theoretical aspects of the subject and also the teachers’ involvement is
expected to be high in following students’ overall participation that the researcher is motivated to carry out this research.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The teaching learning process requires continuous follow-up. This is specially so in secondary school where the development pace of a learner is rapid. Therefore, the educational progress of the learners needs frequent assessment. The various dimensions of the learning activities of the learners should be assessed by different methods.

Teachers and students need to have profound knowledge of the application as well as the theoretical concepts such as types, forms, purposes and methods of continuous assessment in order to utilize it effectively. Moreover, secondary school teachers have to use progressive pedagogical and psychological practices in order to assess the educational progress of their students.

On the other hand, not all desired outcomes can be assessed with paper and pencil tests. E.g., psychomotor skills and affective characteristics. Concerning this, Desalegn (2004:21) underlined that giving tests every month and accumulating pupils’ marks for final grading is an insignificant aspect of the assessment packages. Continuous assessment is a demanding task that requires the use of various assessment tools in order to assure the achievement of curriculum objectives. In addition, Spandel and Stiggins (1990) in Mulukken (2006) asserted that continuous assessment could promote students’ learning by building their confidence and their understanding if it is effectively planned and monitored. Continuous assessment also affirms higher order and critical thinking because it enables teachers to assess the cognitive, affective and behavioural outcomes of learners.

Considering all these things, the researcher wants to identify, the challenges of implementing continuous assessment in physical education in some selected secondary schools in Metekel zone of Benishangule Gumuz Regional State in localities with which the researcher is familiar. The experience of the researcher in the zone promoted him to do the study. From that experience, the researcher feels that the implementation of continuous assessment in physical education in Metekel zone secondary schools is inadequate.

Based on this statement of the problem, the following basic questions are set to guide the study.

1. What are the major challenges that affect the implementation of continuous assessment in physical education?
2. How do physical education teachers determine whether the participants have achieved the stated objectives?
3. What is the experience of implementing continuous assessment in physical education subject in some selected secondary schools of Metekel Zone?
4. What are the impacts of challenges towards implementing continuous assessment in physical education?

**SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The findings of this study are significant in identifying the challenges of implementing continuous assessment in physical education subject and as a result will make aware policy makers and practitioners to the challenges which are facing physical education to implement continuous assessment. It will indicate the extent, to which continuous assessment is used, and to create the prevailing attitude and awareness of teachers and students towards continuous assessment. Moreover, the finding is significant to other researchers who are initiated to undertake further research in the area at national level.
RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

General Objective

This study was aimed at investigating the challenges of implementing continuous assessment in Physical Education in some selected secondary schools in Metekel Zone.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study were to:

1. To find out the major challenges that affect the implementation of continuous assessment in physical education;
2. To identify the method that physical education teachers employ to assess students learning;
3. To determine how continuous assessment is practiced in the field of physical education and,
4. To provide suggestions to improve continuous assessment implementation in physical education.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

For the successful completion of this study, a descriptive survey method was employed to determine the challenges of implementing continuous assessment in physical education in some selected secondary schools in Metekel Zone of Benishangul Gumuz Regional State.

DATA ANALYSIS

Based on the nature of data collected, both quantitative and qualitative analytical procedures were employed. In conformity to this, Flick (2002) suggested that quantitative and qualitative methods should be viewed as complementary rather than as rival camps. Types of Continuous Assessment Methods Used by Physical Education Teachers

As shown in the tables 2, observation, skill tests, written tests, group projects and parental reports were agreed upon by the respondents as types of assessment techniques frequently used by their physical education teachers to know their performance. However, with regard to student portfolios, surveys, and student journals the respondents disclosed that these assessment techniques are not even partially
employed to assess the degree to which students have achieved in the intended outcomes in physical education.

To sum up, the majority of the respondents have agreed that in assessing the pupils’ the presence of powerful intervening variables in the instructional process, severely hampered the efforts of the teachers to institute continuous assessment approaches in the sample secondary schools. Factors such as overcrowded classes and restricted facilities, equipments, lack of time, and student related variables often minimize the viability of continuous assessment in physical education. Moreover, such variables listed later often challenge to implement continuous assessment in physical education were also identified in table 8 as a major barriers: student negative attitude towards physical education subject, lack of sufficient time, large class size, and shortage of instructional materials.

CONCLUSION

From the findings of this study, the following conclusions can be drawn Among the many challenges that affect the implementation of continuous assessment, are found to be practical factors such as pupils’ negative attitude towards physical education, large class size, shortage of time, in adequacy of materials and teachers’ inadequate knowledge due to lack of on job-training. A substantial number of physical education teachers in the sample schools considered continuous assessment as simply giving series of tests for students.

It was also found out that physical education teachers do not use various assessment methods to check the students’ mastery of the desired knowledge, skills and attitudes. On the other hand, assessment focuses on grading.

RECOMMENDATION

In the light of the findings of the study, it appears reasonable to suggest the following recommendations:

• To curb the negative attitude of students; physical education teachers should “practice what they teach” serving as a role model to their students. Being fit and exercising regularly, perhaps some times with students in their classes, could be a powerful testimony to consolidate the importance of physical education.

• To raise the level of awareness of physical education teachers in the implementation of continuous assessment, there should be training in the form of workshops, seminar and in

• Service programs. In addition to this, continuous assessment guidelines and workbooks should embrace marks to be assigned to each continuous assessment, their timing and different types of assessment methods that are relevant to assess practical skills, knowledge and social development of the students.

• The zone government and other concerned bodies are expected to make an out most effort of reduce the large number of students in a class so that the class size will be optimal.

• Period allotted per week for physical education should be reconsidered in order to implement continuous assessment effectively.

• Shortage of materials and equipment were among the main challenging factors in the implementation of continuous assessment in physical education. Thus, the concerned bodies in the zone should do more and the school to allocate enough budgets to buy locally made cheap sport materials and equipment. Again, schools should be encouraged to generate their internal income using different means such as, recreational centres, community contributions, donations ….etc.
Physical education text writers should be aware of the challenges of facilities and equipment and they should be advised not to include complex sports’ involving many different types of facilities and equipment.

REFERENCES


