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Content

Pages

1. Action Plan for Implementing the Strategic Priority Areas of UNESCO's New Literacy Strategy [2020-2025] in Nigeria **1**
Prof. K. O. Ojokheta and Edeh John Onimisi Ph.D
2. Advocating Correctional Centre Reforms for Overcoming Jailbreaks in Nigeria **22**
Williams, Babajide Agboola Ph.D
3. Mobile Phones and Non-Violence Conflict Promotion among Undergraduate Students of University of Ibadan, Nigeria **35**
F.A. Akinkunmi and L. A. Akintola
4. The Perception of Community Security Personnel on the role of Literacy Programmes for Promoting Sustainable Peace in Rivers State, Nigeria **52**
Omeje Mercy Ebere and Prof. Adekola Ganiyu
5. Environmental Adult Education Programmes as Strategies for Combating the Effects of Illicit Oil Activities in Selected Local Government Areas of Rivers State, Nigeria **65**
Bell-Gam, Roseline Soprinnye, M. O. A. Ezimah, PhD and C. L. Eheazu, PhD
6. School Indices as Correlates of Pupils' Motivation towards Learning in Junior Secondary Schools in Lagos State, Nigeria **80**
Ileuma Senimetu PhD and Agboola Olufunke Omolara PhD
7. Effects of Reinforcement on the Academic Performance of Learners of English as a Second Language in Awka Educational Zone of Anambra State, Nigeria **92**
Joy Eyisi, Philomena Elom, Joy Eyisi Jr., Frank Onuh, and Chinonso Okolo
8. The Spread of Online Fake News and Its implication for Reputation Management **111**
Oloyede, K. Esq., Owolabi, S. S. and Oyinadejobi O. S
9. Accessibility, Knowledge Acquisition and Acceptability of Learning Management Systems among Young Undergraduates in University of Lagos, Nigeria **134**
Blessing Egbichi Anyikwa and Samuel Olufemi Adeniyi

10. The Role of Training and Retraining Programmes in
Enhancing the Effectiveness of Facilitators in Adult Literacy
Education Programmes in Nigeria 152
Prof. (Mrs) Caroline O. Olomukoro and S. O. Olawale
11. Economical Use of the News Media by Artisan and
Entrepreneurs for Improvement living standard in Nigeria 171
Prof. A. A. Sarumi and O. V. Adaja
12. Peer Pressure, Time Management and Academic
Performance of Female Secondary School Pupils in
Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria 186
Ukpabi, Ihezue Donatus, Ph.D.
13. COVID-19 Awareness and Preventive Information
Utilisation among Rural Community Dwellers in Ogun
State, Nigeria 202
Adeniyi, A. PhD and Aderogba, K. PhD
14. Comparative Effectiveness of Two Methods of Teaching
Reading to Adult Learners in a Basic Literacy Programme in
Ibadan Land, Oyo State, Nigeria 223
Joseph E. Bassey
15. Integrating Innovative Learning Assessment Approaches in
Nigeria's Tertiary Education System 239
Adegbite, O. O. and Muibi, T. G. PhD
16. Analysing the Elements of Peace Education in Secondary
School Curriculum in Osun State, Nigeria: The Outcome of
a Study 260
Dr. Adeola Ogunrin
17. Effective Use of Radio for Development of Literacy
Education in Nigeria 274
Okemakinde, Sunday O. PhD
18. Exploring the Strategies for Construction of Citizens' -
Targeted Behavioural Change Messages in English Language
in Nigeria. 291
Oladipoo Adeleye Olubodun PhD,
19. Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Family Planning
among Married Women in Akinyele Local Government,
Oyo State, Nigeria 308
U. C. OSU PhD

Integrating Innovative Learning Assessment Approaches in Nigeria's Tertiary Education System

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Abstract

This paper examined the need for integrating innovative learning assessment approaches to improve tertiary education standard in Nigeria arising from the increasing demands for technical competencies, analytical thinking, problem-solving, communication, risk-taking, and entrepreneurial skills. The paper argued that the present adopted learning assessment approaches in Nigeria's tertiary education system are deficient in producing graduates with these skills. It therefore advocated the need for innovative learning assessment approaches in tertiary education system in Nigeria. It began with a discussion of the requirements of contemporary world of work and the need to prepare tertiary institutions students to acquire such skills. It also dissected the learning assessment approaches in tertiary institutions in Nigeria and extensively discussed the deficiencies inherent in the approaches. The paper recommended various innovative approaches that can be adopted to improve Nigeria's tertiary education system and concluded that tertiary institutions in Nigeria should integrate these approaches so as to produce graduates who possess skills required in today's world of work.

Keywords: Nigeria's Tertiary Education System, Innovative Learning Assessment Approaches, Assessment for learning, Assessment as learning, Assessment of learning

Introduction

Education is important for the maintenance and development of human life. Therefore, the world of learning could be viewed as an institutionalized arrangement that aims at equipping learners with skills and knowledge that enable them to contribute positively before and after graduation, in their personal lives and at a workplace and in a society at large (Akarowhe 2018:1). Therefore, education and employment should go hand in hand and thus, school graduation should mark a transition of a learner from the world of learning to the world of work that employs and provides such a graduate with monetary capacity to improve his or her standard of living ((Akarowhe 2018:1).

Despite these observations, there is a general concern that in many educational systems of the world, teaching and assessment have shifted away from the needs in the world of learners. There is a large gap between what learners are engaged in while at school and their needs for real life contexts, in the present or in the future world (Anamuah-Mensah & Towse 1995; Stevenson, 1995; Muskin, 1997; Tabron & Yang, 1997). For example, in one study, Anamuah-Mensah, Asabere-Ameyaw and Dennis (2007) established that the view among students, teachers and parents was that schools put emphasis on the preparation of learners for further education, with the focus on academic knowledge and the pursuit of success in national examinations, and that there was, little emphasis on citizenship and the development of a responsible attitude to life in the community at the local, regional or national level, employment opportunities in the informal

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sector including self-employment but emphasized on employment in the formal sector with its implied emphasis on white collar jobs.

According to Anamuah-Mensah, Asabere-Ameyaw and Dennis (ibid), the mismatch between what learners do at school and their knowledge needs for their real world is particularly observed in the educational systems in the less-developed countries. Akarowhe (2018:1), who also holds the same view, indicates that in the less developed countries, particularly in Africa and Nigeria inclusive, there is a gap between the world of learning and the world of work. As a result, many graduates are unable to apply what they have acquired from the world of learning to perform effectively and efficiently at the workplace. Accordingly, this situation has left many employers in doubt of the capabilities of the world of learning to produce graduates that contribute positively to institutionalized setups (private and public/government organization, establishment, and parastatals) and the Nigerian society. In this case, assessment procedures are germane in the process, therefore, the need for new paradigms for assessing learners' performance in the new normal world towards achieving graduates that are self-reliant, productive and worthy citizens.

The Concept and Importance of Learners' Assessment in Formal Education System

Van den Akker (2003) described assessment as essential component of the curriculum practice. Assessment is a process for obtaining information in curriculum operation in order to make decisions about student learning, curriculum and programmes, and on education policy matters. Because of this, educators strongly suggest that assessment and curriculum integrated in the continuous cycle of curriculum planning, operation, implementation, and evaluation. For example, the attained curriculum both the experienced and the learned are determined by assessment procedures. Assessment procedures in formative ways could also help in the operation of the curriculum. Instructors make a number of decisions. These include managing instruction, assessing student competence, placing students to levels of education programmes, assigning grades to students, guiding and counseling, selecting students for education opportunities, certifying competence and so on.

AlonsoTapia & Garrido-Hernansaiz (2017:171) submit that there are two perspectives about assessment: The test culture, whose main objective is to identify how much knowledge has been "put" in the learner's mind (assessment "of" learning), and the assessment culture, which provides both the teacher and learner with information in order to overcome perceived difficulties and to self-regulate learning (assessment "for" learning). Muskin (2017:15) proposes that continuous assessment comprises a combination of summative (assessment of learning) and formative (assessment for learning) assessments. Assessment should engross learners completely and purposefully in their learning. In addition, "assessment must measure what matters" as "what matters" may vary from one context to the next (Muskin, 2017:15). Assessment methods should enable progress in all important learning goals to be facilitated and reported (Muskin, 2017:15-16). Alonso-Tapia & Garrido-Hernansaiz (2017:171) note that teachers who approach assessment in this manner, who utilize various types of assessment and who offer quality and constructive feedback, will positively affect learners' efforts.

Assessment is a vital and an integral part of the teaching and learning process. It provides feedback to all education stakeholders. It further promotes and monitors learners' learning progress (Curriculum Development Council and The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, 2014:41). Assessment is one of the factors that influence learners' motivation to learn. Since assessment has an impact on learners' interest and effort to learn (Alonso-Tapia & Garrido-Hernansaiz, 2017), it is imperative that teachers be cognizant of the most suitable assessment procedures. In directing instruction, assessment is a means to diagnose learning difficulties; it helps the instructor identify the learner's areas of strength and weakness so that he/she plans instruction to build on the one and remediate the other in formal and informal ways.

Secondly, assessment provides feedback about success of a study programme. Information from the assessment of student learning utilized in program evaluation (Pratt, 1998). Thirdly, assessment reports individual learning achievements or grades for various parties including students, parents, education institutes to which students may apply for admission, potential employers, occupational, and professional licensing bodies. As stated by Nitko (2004), results from classroom learning activities, quizzes, tests, class projects, assignment papers, informal observations on how well the student has attained the intended learning targets can be used to grade students for a lesson, or unit, a marking period, or course.

Moreover, assessment directs students to instructional priorities and influences their approach to experience course curriculum. Informal teacher questions, tests, and examinations indicate students, which parts of the curriculum have priority. For instance, if tests examine trivial information, learners focus becomes on learning strategies aimed at factual recall and recognition of knowledge. Students change their approach of curriculum perception and experience for tests requiring substantive knowledge and deep understanding. Furthermore, assessment is also useful in enhancing student motivation, self-concept, and sense of self efficacy. When assessment, designed to produce real success in student learning and curriculum experience, frequent use stimulates student confidence and willingness to learn.

To ascertain the level of understanding or knowledge acquired by learners, appropriate tools or mechanisms that give a representation of what the learners already know with respect to set instructional aims, goals or objectives must be utilised. Assessment involves the techniques, tools, methods or mechanisms employed by evaluators to measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition, or educational needs of students. It also gives a representation of the existing state of an observable phenomenon. In the classroom environment, the teacher is expected to elicit responses from the students, by way of obtaining feedback as regards the approaches, methods or techniques employed in the class.

Assessment as a major subset of evaluation, oftentimes involves decision making, judgment of worth, amount, number, or value of something. Evaluation is a systematic determination of the merit, worth and significance of something, using laid down criteria governed by a set of standards and usually acceptable by those involved in the decision making process. However, both assessment and evaluation do not exist in isolation; they co-exist. Also, for a decision to be made, an accurate representation of the object, item or commodity to be judged must be measured. Thus, assessment involves measurement, a way of obtaining numerical equivalence of

the worth of an item. Usually associated with measurement is a test, a set of stimuli presented to respondents.

Assessments are often associated with traditional tests typically designed to measure specific elements of learning or instruction. The former can entail evaluating the level of knowledge or skills students already have of what the teacher plans to teach. They may help to identify individual student's weaknesses and strengths either formative or summative. In formative assessment, the teacher is solely interested in the level of knowledge the learners have prior to presentation of a new lesson or it may be for the teacher to get a picture of the effectiveness of an on-going programme. Summative assessments are given at the end of a programme to get feedback about the success levels of a program. Summative assessment has become routine and has influenced the focus and contents of tests. Results from large-scale summative assessments, along with other measures of achievement, are regularly used to determine whether students can advance to the next class, and to judge the quality of schools, instructions and educators. Other forms of assessment include diagnostic, dynamic, synoptic, criterion referenced, teacher-made, standardized, and summative assessment (Oluchi, 2018).

The Present Adopted Learning Assessment Approaches in Nigeria's Tertiary Education System

The present adopted learning assessment approaches in Nigeria's tertiary education system can be regarded as traditional methods of assessing students' learning and mastery of particular courses such as arts, science, social science and education generally involve assembling a series of teacher-made tests with items or questions relating to the subject matter taught and requiring the student to recollect content knowledge in answer to the questions. Depending on the subject, candidates may be required to provide an explanation or to perform calculations. In the main, such tests are either of a subjective essay type sometimes with choice options, or are of an objective structured response type, requiring the students to select an answer from a limited number of choice options (Amuche & Solomon 2015).

In traditional assessment, most teachers set assessment tasks that encourage a narrow instrumental approach to learning emphasizing the reproduction of what is presented, at the expense of critical thinking, deep understanding, and independent activity (Filer, 2003). Also, most teachers, however, do believe and use pencil-and paper tests as the only assessment procedure to be used. Classroom assessment has historically been viewed as an issue more closely aligned with curriculum and instruction than with measurement theory, because measurement professionals are more interested in issues of test development and technical qualities of tests than in classroom assessment. These traditional methods of assessment do not readily measure in a consistent manner the students' reasoning and creativity, nor does the assessment go beyond mere regurgitation of the immediately learned materials. Application of acquired knowledge to new factual situations is a rarity. Perhaps with the exception of promotional tests or certificate examinations, the traditional tests are usually not considered as challenging by students. As stated by Smith (2003) and Shepard (2001), at present, there is a trend of moving away from traditional measures of classroom assessment toward variety of new approaches that are more closely linked to instructional practices and less closely linked to concerns for technical quality of assessment procedures such as reliability and validity.

The Shortcomings in the Learning Assessment Approaches in Nigeria's Tertiary Education System

One of the unfortunate implications of the traditional assessment practices is over-concentration of efforts on cognitive knowledge and perhaps few of psycho-motor skills to the utter neglect of values and other affective details that lead to the education of the total person. The effect on the outputs of education has accentuated rather than stemmed the tide of the persistent problems of the Nigerian society such as inequity, injustice, poverty, unemployment, hunger and disease, violence, bloodshed and terrorism, pollution and degradation of the environment. Therefore, there is a need for innovative approaches for assessing the working knowledge level of students in the subjects they have learned employing readily measurable criteria in a way that retains the students' interest and ensures the objectivity as much as possible of the teacher's evaluation of the student responses.

The traditional assessment perspectives, based on behaviourist theories of learning and conventional psychometric principles conflict with implications of assessment for learning represented by the emerging cognitive and constructivist learning paradigms. According to Wright et.al (1997) Performance assessment, portfolios, authentic assessment, student self-assessment and peer assessment are considered as procedures that align with current constructivist theories of learning and teaching. In order to have salient contributions to the curriculum implementation process, assessment procedures should define what students regard important in the learning, how they spend time, and how they come to see themselves as students.

Often times, students complain on assessment procedures used by their instructors. They reported that curriculum is not shaping the assessment; rather assessment is always shaping curriculum implementation and embodying the purpose of higher education. As a result, students fail to experience the intended curriculum as a whole. Many of students' comments in relation to assessment were about utility of feedback and comments on assessed work, which in most cases fell below their expectations. An investigation made by James (2003) indicated that a number of major effects were associated with the act of being assessed, including serious consequences for students' self-perception and levels of confidence. The investigation also revealed that, for many students, the focus of disappointment was lack of information to base decisions about what they should do differently in order to raise level of their competence and marks in assessed work. For others the concern is in identifying what they should do to achieve high marks. End of course examinations are rarely discussed or made available so that students could use them to improve their knowledge and skills.

As identified by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2009) cited in Arikewuyo (2017) current paper and pencil based tests fall short in several key ways:

- The tests are not designed to gauge how well students apply what they know to new situations or evaluate how students might use technologies to solve problems or communicate ideas.
- While teachers and schools are being asked to modify their practices based on standardized test data, traditional tests are not designed to help teachers make decisions about how to assess their daily instructions.

- Current testing systems are rarely designed to measure a school or district's contribution to a learner's total education history.

Integrating Innovative Approaches in Learning Assessment in Nigeria's Tertiary Education System

Integrating innovative learning assessment approach for Assessing Learners Performance in the 21st Century according to Shute and Becker (2010) asks practitioners to rethink the way assessment is conducted and competencies are defined, particularly placing the assessment process in the context of lifelong learning across the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. Ordinarily, innovative assessment could be any form of assessment which involves the application of a new technique or method. But as argued by Mowl, McDowell and Brown (1996) innovative assessment should be considered in terms of its characteristics and its mission.

It encompasses a whole range of different techniques and methods, not all of which are new inventions but with a new thrust to improve the quality of student learning. Assessment is innovative when it becomes not just something which is 'done to' learners but also 'done with' and 'done by' learners (Harris & Bell, 1990). The emphasis shifts from assessment associated with the end-product of the learning process to formative evaluation of learners' range of skills during the learning process. Doubtless, innovative assessment strategies can facilitate learning on several levels.

Thus, by developing innovative assessment strategies, teachers can simulate real life situations that combine all three domains while developing critical thinking skills and building confidence. It therefore becomes a challenge for Nigerian teachers of the 21st Century to evolve alternative evaluation tools that can, not only alleviate test anxiety and performance anxiety which are instrumental to reliance on examination malpractice but also produce graduates that are self-reliant, productive and worthy citizens (Amuche & Solomon 2015).

This particular innovative is in line with one of the World Economic Forum: Future of Jobs Report 2018 findings stated that "there is the need for reskilling and upskilling that by 2022, no less than 54% of all employees will require significant re- and upskilling. Of these, about 35% are expected to require additional training of up to six months, 9% will require reskilling lasting six to 12 months, while 10% will require additional skills training of more than a year. Skills continuing to grow in prominence by 2022 include analytical thinking and innovation as well as active learning and learning strategies.

Sharply increasing importance of skills such as technology design and programming highlights the growing demand for various forms of technology competency identified by employers surveyed for this report. Proficiency in new technologies is only one part of the 2022 skills equation, however, as 'human' skills such as creativity, originality and initiative, critical thinking, persuasion and negotiation will likewise retain or increase their value, as will attention to detail, resilience, flexibility and complex problem-solving. Emotional intelligence, leadership and social influence as well as service orientation also see an outsized increase in demand relative to their current prominence".

It was also identified in the report the insufficient reskilling and upskilling as one of its key findings where employers indicate that they are set to prioritize and focus their re- and upskilling efforts on employees currently performing high-value roles as a way of strengthening their enterprise's strategic capacity, with 54% and 53% of companies, respectively, stating they intend to target employees in key roles and in frontline roles which will be using relevant new technologies. In addition, 41% of employers are set to focus their reskilling provision on high-performing employees while a much smaller proportion of 33% stated that they would prioritize at-risk employees in role expected to be the most affected by technological disruption. In other words, those most in need of reskilling and upskilling are least likely to receive such training. (Source: The World Economic Forum2018).

Justifications for the Innovative Learning Assessment Approaches into Nigeria's Tertiary Education System in Contemporary World of Work

Based on technological advancements, the teaching and learning processes have gradually witnessed a transition from the traditional teacher-dominated classrooms to the all-inclusive setting. The outcome of the traditional school is a widening gap between the knowledge, skills students are acquiring in schools and the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the increasingly global, technology infused 21st century workplace. While current assessment measures knowledge of core content areas such as language arts, mathematics, science and social studies, there is a comparative lack of assessments and analyses focused on 21st century skills (Oluchi, 2018).

In recent times, students do not fully rely on their teachers for instruction. The presence of digital technology has affected the teaching and learning situation. Lecture notes, study materials, learning resources among others are readily available online. Students can also form study groups over the internet, since distance is no longer a barrier to learning. The emergence of new technologies has been revolutionary by giving people more access, choice and power (Oluchi, 2018).

Social media, also called Web 2.0 based applications, include online chat forums, wikis, blogs, social networking sites, among others. These platforms make knowledge sharing easy and unobtrusive for the user. As opined by Mondahl and Razmerita (2014), the former facilitate communication, sharing of information and online socialization. Web 2.0 users may easily express or share their opinions, 'think by writing', seek others' opinions and feedback and be connected with the others. Furthermore, multimedia production in the forms of audio (for example, podcasting using mobile technology) or video (video-conferencing, YouTube) continues to grow and offer new opportunities for teaching, learning and assessment (Mondahl and Razmerita 2014.)

The digital age presents the educational sector an avenue to utilize learning materials, which were not easily assessable in the traditional era. Teachers are no longer referred to as the sole custodians of knowledge, but as facilitators (Arikewuyo, 2017). Various teaching approaches have been developed to cater for these changing trends in the educational setting, and some of these techniques or approaches include; cooperative learning and constructivism, project/experimentation among others. The emphasis of learning in the digital world is solely

centered on pragmatism, utilitarianism, and experimentation. Thus, hands-on and practical activities are fully encouraged by schools (Oluchi, 2018).

Examples of Learners Assessment Approaches from Other Lands

Based on the comprehensive perceptions and objectives of learning assessment in recent times in the world of work in most advanced countries of the world, it is imperative to recommend that Nigeria government can adopt some of the innovative learning assessment approaches in some of the following countries initiatives:

Australia Initiative

In Australia at the federal level the Curriculum Corporation developed resources although each Australian state and territory adopted its own approach to assessment for learning. Curriculum Corporation also published a practical guide to assessment for learning entitled 'Improving Student Achievement' (Glasson, 2009). This guide highlighted the differentiated roles of the teacher and the student under the assessment for learning umbrella as articulated by Lorna Earl (Earl, 2003). Drawing on classroom examples the collective experiences of international researchers were brought together with the aim of illustrating to Australian teachers the variety of assessment for learning strategies and providing suggestions for teachers' further professional learning. Assessment for learning, assessment as learning and assessment of learning are approaches that can be used individually or together, formally or informally, to gather evidence about student achievement and to improve student learning. (<http://syllabus.bos.nsw.edu.au/support-materials/assessment-for-as-and-of-learning/>)

Teachers in NSW are informed that the common elements of assessment as learning strategies and assessment for learning include self-assessment, peer assessment, strategies for students to actively monitor and evaluate their own learning, and feedback (together with evidence, to help teachers and students decide whether students are ready for the next phase of learning or whether they need further learning experiences to consolidate their knowledge, understanding and skills). It is suggested to teachers that these approaches will help them and their students know if current understanding is a suitable basis for future learning. Specifically, assessment for learning is described to teachers as integral to the teaching and learning process and as central for clarifying student learning and understanding. The use of evidence by teachers regarding students' knowledge, understanding and skills to inform their teaching is considered to be important. The key characteristics of assessment for learning have been interpreted and presented to teachers in NSW as follows:

- a view of learning in which assessment helps students learn better rather than just achieve a better mark;
- involve formal and informal assessment activities as part of learning and to inform the planning of future learning;
- include clear goals for the learning activity;
- provide effective feedback that motivates the learner and can lead to improvement;
- reflect a belief that all students can improve;
- encourage self-assessment and peer assessment as part of the regular classroom routines;
- involve teachers, students and parents reflecting on evidence; and

- inclusive of all learners. (<http://syllabus.bos.nsw.edu.au/support-materials/assessment-for-as-and-of-learning/>).

The centrality of assessment for learning to learning and teaching, and practices that involve the students in the assessment process, are emphasized.

Canada

In Canada, across provincial assessment policies, there is an explicit articulation of the value and benefits of integrating assessment for and as learning into classroom teaching and learning (e.g., Alberta Assessment Consortium, 2005; British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2004; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010a; see www.CAFLN.ca/resources for complete listing). These policies emphasize that assessment for learning supports students' growth toward educational standards while assessment as learning cultivates students' autonomy, self-regulation and general learning skills. Underpinning these policies is the assertion that supporting the ability of students to learn (that is, assessment as learning) will accelerate learning, increase summative assessment results, and contribute to lifelong learning commitments.

However, despite provincial policies aimed at assessment for and as learning, several researchers have noticed gaps in the capacity of teachers to implement rigorous assessment for and as learning programs in their classrooms (DeLuca et al., 2012; Klinger et al., 2012). These gaps are attributed to challenges related to teacher professional learning opportunities in assessment, practical barriers (e.g., time, class size, resources), and limited research on the nuances of integrating assessment for learning in diverse classroom contexts. As a result of these challenges, several Canadian provinces have engaged in various initiatives to support teachers' integration of assessment for learning. For example, since 1999 Alberta school districts have been provided with provincial funding to engage in cyclical professional development projects aimed at improving student learning and performance, with many of these projects focused on assessment for learning. Ultimately, these projects are intended to build capacity in assessment at classroom and school levels with results shared provincial to encourage systemic adoption of assessment for learning (Townsend et al., 2010).

Overall, assessment for learning is taking hold as a key feature of educational assessment programmes in Canada. Classroom assessment policies that integrate and explain assessment for and as learning are evident across the provinces. Significant efforts are currently being made to support teachers and school administrators in interpreting and implementing these policies and assessment priorities. However, additional research is needed on professional learning structures that support teachers most effectively in this process as well as continued research on the ways assessment for learning is operationalized and integrated across curricular areas, disciplines, and diverse student learning groups. Ultimately, there is a concerted effort across the majority of provinces to integrate assessment for learning to support teacher learning and effectiveness, informed school decision-making and district priorities and, most importantly, to enhance student learning across Canada.

Republic of Ireland

Current developments. The agency of the learner, and an intentional blurring of boundaries are two features of the current wave of junior cycle reform. Although this reform was the focus of a year-long consultation process, it effectively began in October 2012 with the announcement by the Minister for Education and Skills of a new Framework for Junior Cycle and the phasing out

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of the Junior Certificate examination by 2020. This Framework for Junior Cycle is noteworthy, as a contemporary curriculum and assessment policy document, for the almost complete absence of any reference to assessment for learning. 'Formative' and 'summative' are used, but as purposes for, rather than types of assessment; and both of these, it is proposed, should serve and promote learning (DES, 2012, p.18). This focus on learning and the exclusion of the assessment for learning label is an attempt to respond, at least in part, to Swaffield's 2009 critique of what she termed the '(mis)interpretation of assessment for learning as a teacher driven mechanism for advancing students up a prescribed ladder of subject attainment' (Swaffield, 2009: 6), and the lack of attention paid to learning and to the central role of the learner in that process. It is also an attempt to move beyond the initial assessment for learning developmental project and its focus on teacher action to reflect the emphasis on student agency in the 2007 Primary Assessment lines.

The intention is to build sustainable assessment cultures in schools whereby teachers develop specific assessment design capabilities as well as informed standards-referenced judgment practice. The latter extends to the use of stated standards (called 'expectations for learners' in the Framework for Junior Cycle) in teachers coming together for professional conversations for moderating student work. In turn, students develop knowledge about and expertise in using standards for self-assessment and improvement purposes. Given earlier discussions about current assessment practice and policy, this is a long term project. It will entail a concerted focus on shifting the assessment gaze of teachers, students and the public away from the terminal examination as the sole or only trustworthy arbiter of quality for junior cycle education. It will also entail a new valuing of teacher judgment, informed by system checks and balances, to maintain public confidence in the education system. In the new junior cycle, all assessment should be for learning, and learning should be for students and for teachers.

Israel

Evolution and impact of assessment for learning on school systems. For over a decade in Israel research group has been studying implementation of assessment for learning in different elementary and middle school contexts in order to identify school-based conditions that support and those that constrain proper assessment for learning implementations. The findings pointed to the critical role of school-based professional learning communities in advancing teachers' assessment for learning practices (Birenbaum et al., 2009, 2011), thus corroborating research findings from the UK and Canada (James et al., 2007; Pedder and Opfer 2011; Earl and Katz, 2006). The research identified similarities between cycles of assessment in classroom (assessment for learning) and in school-based professional learning communities (inquiry into practice) as well as in their respective cultures. Furthermore, they underscored the school's assessment culture as a key component. A forthcoming paper (Birenbaum, 2014) offers a conceptualization of the assessment culture from a complexity framework, viewing it as a complex system in which two other complex systems (student learning and teacher learning) are nested. By means of ongoing reciprocal relations among the three systems learning emerges and a mindset, which they termed 'assessment for learning mindset', evolves. The attributes of this mindset, which were identified in schools with assessment culture where assessment for learning was successfully implemented, seem to define the 'spirit of assessment for learning' that is claimed to be missing from common implementations of assessment for learning, causing into fail to fulfill its potential to promote learning (Marshall & Drummond, 2006).

Moreover, establishing meaningful connections between goals and practices (of instruction, learning and assessment) as well as supporting networking within and between schools including their stakeholders, would advance what Fullan (2011) terms 'systemness' or 'coherent wholeness'. Under such conditions assessment culture is likely to sprout in schools and in teacher and preservice teachers. Respectively, the Ministry of Education has recently issued an outline for a professional development programme for in-service teachers, which consists of three assessments for learning related modules (formal assessment for learning, informal assessment for learning, and school-based professional learning) (Birenbaum, 2013). Likewise, teacher-training institutes enabling assessment for learning to fulfill its potential to promote meaningful learning among students and teachers.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In integrating innovative approaches in learning assessment there is the need to consider the following recommendations in order to achieve the major five assessment components as identified by Wright et.al (1997) Performance assessment, portfolios, authentic assessment, student self-assessment and peer assessment which are considered as procedures that align with current constructivist theories of learning and teaching:

- **Identification of authentic learning needs:** Learning needs that are identified must be real and relevant to the learners' world.
- **Learner involvement:** Learners must be involved in learning experiences which are real and that can solve their life problems;
- **Well-defined problem:** Learners should be involved in challenging tasks that have layers that need to be completed in order to solve the problem;
- **Sustained investigation:** Learners should be given project tasks that require time and that cannot be solved in a matter of minutes or hours;
- **Multiple sources and perspectives:** Learners should use resources that are theoretical or practical, and that require them to judge information for relevance;
- **Collaboration:** Learners should be encouraged to build social connections and networks in the process of task completion and these should be sustained beyond the study project.
- **Reflection:** Learners should be encouraged to reflect on their own learning and challenges they encountered in problem-solving process and make choices of strategies and tools for solving future challenges.
- **An interdisciplinary perspective:** learners are engaged in tasks that were not limited to a single subject or topic, but that made use of knowledge and skills from across disciplines.
- **Integrated assessment:** Formative assessment is woven seamlessly into tasks and activities and was used purposefully by learners and teachers alike.
- **Polished products:** learners' activities and tasks should lead to the creation and completion of a product.
- **Multiple interpretations and outcomes:** learners should be guided to discover that there are many possible solutions and answers to the problem.

Based on all discussion above, it is clear that the main purpose of education system of a particular nation is to provide the right' strategies, conditions and incentives to motivate, equip and guide teachers and other educators to teach to the full curriculum and the entire range of learning objectives and competencies, motivating students to learn to know, to do, to be together and to be within a dynamic SDG world rather than narrowing the curriculum primarily to 'teach to the test' and thereby produce rote learners and consumers of information with limited other competencies. This largely depends on solid systemic capacity, articulating, strengthening and coordinating the interests and impacts of all ministerial units (and even of other sectors) and all concerned the capacity to create and administer learning assessments and to analyze and use the results to improve teaching and learning to the system's success in ensuring that students leave school with the knowledge and competencies that society requires of them. As the world moves further into the 21st Century, the nature of these assets are becoming ever more diverse, complex and important, as reflected in the new SDGs and EFA commitments. Achieving this capacity and using assessment not just as a thermometer but to contribute to rich, precise and relevant diagnoses of what students are and are not learning and how systems can function better to improve these results will require reflection and actions by all education stakeholders in Nigeria.

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