Original Research

Instructors' Implementation of Continuous Assessment at Wollega University

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Abstract	Article Information
The objective of the study was to investigate instructors' implementation of continuous assessment. A descriptive survey research design with mixed methods was employed. A questionnaire, focus group discussion, and document analysis were used to collect the necessary data. 218 university students were chosen at random from three campuses using a systematic selection procedure to complete the questionnaire. Twenty-eight instructors and 33 students were randomly selected for a focus group discussion. For the quantitative data, statistical tests were used through SPSS version 21, and for the qualitative data, thematic analysis was employed. The results showed that instructors did not implement continuous assessment as expected due to different factors like lack of awareness, absence of a clear manual on how to make it practical, insufficient materials, and students' limited English proficiency. Thus, it was recommended that designing a guideline, training, revising curriculum, and minimising the number of assessments be mandatory.	

INTRODUCTION

Continuous assessment (hereafter CA) is a mechanism in which judgements about the learner are made continuously throughout and at the end of a programme. According to Ohuche (1989), it is expected that instructors or other stakeholders could find out at any point of the learning process how students know and think and what their interests, emotions, attitudes, and values are. In ascertaining all these from the learner, the emphasis is not placed only on the end-of-programme examination; rather, other assessment instruments like tests, assignments, projects, observation, interviews, homework, etc. are used.

CA has been practiced in western countries such as Australia, Canada, Denmark, England, Finland, Italy, New Zealand, and Scotland (Kapambwe, 2010). Recently, some African countries like Nigeria, Zambia, and Ethiopia have also been practicing it. However, the techniques for practicing it might differ from

country to country. For instance, Zambia was implementing CA gradually from province to province on the basis of the CA instructors' guide and assessment tasks booklet it produced. It implements 100% CA in 1-4 grade levels and 80% CA in 5-8 grade levels (Ibid.). However, nothing is clear about its effectiveness.

The Ministry of Education introduced CA to different levels of educational institutions (schools, colleges, and universities). As stated in our country's Education and Training Policy, the practical task of implementing the new curriculum at the school level requires CA as part of the curriculum in general and the instructional process in particular (MOE, 1994). Since then, the government and other interested parties have worked hard to allow CA to benefit from the conventional test system. Similarly, the assessment method in our higher educational institutions in general and in the targeted university in particular has been based on one-shot exams until recent years.
Nonetheless, the government has understood that such an assessment system degrades students' performance. In this regard, the country's Education and Training Policy Proclamation (MoE, 1994) states that CA in academic and practical subjects should be conducted in order to obtain information on the all-round profiles of students at all levels. Because of this policy, university students are supposed to be assessed using the CA procedure. Furthermore, Abdissa Ayana (2017) states that CA is a very important part of higher education institutions as it ensures that quality education is reflected in real and practical skills.

Internationally, there are a few types of research conducted on the practices of CA. For instance, Patrick (2015), Ovute & Ede (2015), Ebele (2014), and Assad et al. (2016) revealed the low extent to which university instructors implement CA with emphasis on the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of students. These studies also indicated that tests are the most frequently used strategies by instructors to assess students' performance and progress.

Research has also been conducted locally on instructors' implementation of CA in higher education institutions. For example, Teklebrhan and Samuel (2015) and Berihu (2016) reported that instructors were not continuously collecting information about student progress; a small amount of assessment is used in courses, and few instructors give any feedback at all. The other factors that impeded instructors from implementing CA were a shortage of time, large class sizes, low readiness of students and instructors, and students' poor knowledge and negative attitude towards CA.

WU, one of the higher learning institutions in our country, started the implementation of CA in 2007 as soon as it started the teaching-learning processes and has been implementing CA at large on its three campuses. The CA accounts for 70% of the overall students' score, whereas the final exam holds 30% of the marks. However, from their experiences, the current researchers have come to recognise that the assessment issue is a recurrent source of concern. This is because it was informally observed that students' CGPAs were inflated, and some of the graduates were observed to be incompetent, as the university's administrative

body and other stakeholders persistently complained.

The researchers believe that many, if not all, of the instructors might not have adequate awareness to implement CA. The researchers also deem that instructors might understand CA as something students should benefit from without much effort by simply participating in group work. Furthermore, the researchers presume that instructors might interpret CA as continuous testing, which might have resulted in inappropriate implementation. Therefore, it is worthwhile to investigate whether WU instructors implement CA as expected or not.

Research Questions

1. How do instructors implement continuous assessment?
2. What are the strategies instructors use to implement continuous assessment?

Review of Related Literature

Researchers define assessment in different ways for an almost similar concept. Plessis et al. (2003) define it as a way of observing and collecting information, making a decision, and assessing learners to find out what they know, understand, and can do. Assessment is a way in which information about certain human activities and the behaviour of learners is gathered and used for further actions. Though this definition is similar to the above one, it generalises assessment to human activities and behaviours, apart from the particular aspects of learners. However, the concept applies to learning situations since learners' activities are subsets of human activities (Ogduhmuha & Ugwuanyi, 2003; Zeleski, 2015).

The assessment shifted from the situation of its dominance to the present day by testing the individuals. The change was towards a new assessment paradigm in which learning itself is assessed rather than simply learning's measurement (Mugisha, 2010). Nowadays, the concept of assessment has changed the traditional practice of assessing learners solely through tests.

Strategies for Implementing CA

CA by itself is a classroom strategy implemented by teachers to determine the knowledge, understanding, and skills attained by pupils (Emebet, 2015). It occurs frequently during the school year and is part of regular teacher-pupil interactions based on curriculum. Teachers learn which students need review and remediation and which are ready to move on to work that is more complex. Thus, the results of assessments help ensure that all pupils make learning progress throughout the school cycle, thereby increasing their academic achievement.

Teachers can modify their pedagogical strategies to include the development of remediation activities for students who are not performing at the expected grade level and the creation of enrichment activities for students who are working at or above the expected grade level (Berhanu, 2013). Hence, the CA process supports a cycle of self-evaluation and pupil-specific activities by both pupils and teachers.

The intentional use of CA was to implement a proper evaluation of students' learning in the three major aspects: cognitive domain, affective domain, and psychomotor domain.

Thus, it is crucial to use a variety of assessment strategies because a single strategy cannot assess the different domains. Researchers dealt with these various assessment strategies with expressions such as "types of assessment," "kinds of activities," and "CA strategies" (Berhanu, 2013; Plessis et al., 2003; Kasahun, 2004). In this article, it has been generalised as "strategies of CA."

CA strategies are viewed by academics as both formative and summative assessments. Summative assessment gears towards the final exam, whereas formative assessment gears towardss the consolidation of students' performances in the final exams (Onuka, 2006). Performance, according to this context, is defined in terms of results. Here, when CA is linked with performance consequences, it is likely that CA directly affects teaching and learning, so it merits a mechanism for implementation.

CA is also regarded as a specific strategy used by assessors to deliver assessments. These strategies include oral presentations, written tests, projects, home-take assignments, and similar others (Nadia, 2013). Bichi and Musa (2015) list ways of conducting CA as daily class work, course-related projects, term papers, homework, and practical activities, which are further classified into two categories: CA activities and exam and testing activities. When engaging students in CA, instructors need to be aware of the following guidelines (Plessis et al., 2003).

1. Creating a spirit of collaboration among students and instructors
2. Informing them that assessment leads to better understanding and improvement
3. telling students that it is not for marking but for learning;
4. Encouraging them includes strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions for improvement.
5. Learners must know the criteria for assessment.
6. If professional judgements are used for marking, instructors should use them.

Instructors' Roles in CA Implementation

Instructors are responsible for various roles to ensure students' learning. Plessis et al. (2003) contend that the responsibility for change rests with instructors because they are mandated to decide whether or not to apply changes in the classroom. According to Plessis, instructors are agents of change; they need to adapt to their situations.

The decision-making responsibilities of instructors come from several perspectives (Mikre, 2010). These include managing instruction, assessing students' competence, placing students in levels and programmes, assigning grades, guiding and counselling, selecting students for educational opportunities, certifying competence, and so on. Mikre suggests that all the above responsibilities can be discharged through effective assessment procedures. To this end, instructors are required to gather a variety of information and determine students' levels of attainment.

According to Fiseha (2010), instructors are required to create productive learning environments in which they and their students interact. In such a situation, they can experiment, try out ideas, tackle and puzzle over problems, think, reflect, discuss, ask questions, look up information, and surprise themselves and others in the curriculum

operation process (Ibid.). Instructors, particularly those of higher institutes, should be aware of the salient role of assessment among the curriculum components and internalise proper skills of application to implement the curriculum effectively at a course level (Fiseha, 2010).

Despite its advantages, CA leads both instructors and students to an increased workload in terms of record-keeping and monitoring individual learners' work, as mentioned in Awofala and Babajide (2013). By default, particularly, instructors know more about CA than they actually practice it, and they are reluctant to implement it for fear that it imposes a burden on them.

Materials and Methods

In this section, the research design, the participants, the sample size, the sampling techniques, the instruments of data collection, and the methods of data analysis are presented.

The research design

In this study, a cross-sectional survey design based on a mixed-methods approach was used. As a result, a convergent parallel mixed-methods design was used, with simultaneous qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. Equal weights were given to the quantitative and qualitative methods.

Participants

Participants in the study were instructors and students from three campuses of a university. The population of university instructors is summarised in Table 1.

Table 1

The University's Instructors' Population in 2019

S. N.	Campus	Total No. of Instructors			Total No. of Instructors Currently on Duty			Remark
		M	F	T	M	F	T	
1	Campus A	768	109	877	532	90	622	Only instructors on-
2	Campus B	87	7	94	62	5	67	duty were considered
3	Campus C	126	31	157	77	19	96	in the study
	Total	981	147	1128	671	114	785	

Sample size and sampling techniques

Five colleges from the main campus (the College of Business and Economics, the College of Engineering and Technology, the College of Education and Behavioural Sciences, and the College of Natural and Computational Sciences) were randomly selected, and the Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources from campus C and the Faculty of Social Sciences from campus B were purposely selected. Accordingly, 30 percent of the instructors were selected from each campus. The percentage was decided using Gay and Arasian's (2005) probability sample size determination technique. Hence, of the 785 WU instructors, 30% were selected,

which amounts to nearly 235. When this number is proportionally calculated for the three campuses, the main campus becomes 622 x 0.3 = 186. Then, the 186 participants were proportionally distributed among five randomly selected colleges: Campus B (67 x 0.3) = 20 participant instructors; Campus C (96 x 0.3) = 29 participant instructors.

It is known that qualitative data are geared more towards explaining and clarifying issues and concepts than to "representativeness" and "generalizability" to a larger population. On all three campuses, FGDs were conducted with both instructors and students. The purposive sampling technique was used to target potential respondents for FGDs. Accordingly, the number of instructors purposefully selected and participating was 6 from campus B, 10 from campus C, and 12 from campus A. Likewise, the number of students who participated in the FGD was 10 from campus B, 10 from campus C, and 13 (two teams with 6 and 7 participants each) from campus A.

Instruments of Data Collection
Both primary and secondary sources of data collection were used to collect the required data. The primary data was gathered through questionnaires distributed to instructors and focus groups with both instructors and students. Mark lists were collected as secondary data sources from the respective registrar offices of some selected colleges on the three campuses.

Questionnaire
A questionnaire was designed to gather quantitative data about instructors'

implementation of CA. Instructors' implementation of CA was measured using nine items on a 3-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (disagree) to 3 (agree). All three scales were developed by the researchers. A pilot study was conducted on 40 instructors (20 each from campus A and campus B) to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. According to the pilot study, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for instructors' implementation of CA was found to be 0.81, which implies that the instrument is reliable.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)
A focus group discussion was employed with both instructors and students to collect data concerning instructors' implementation of CA and complement the data collected through the questionnaire.

Results and discussion

This chapter addressed the findings and discussion of the data gathered through the questionnaire and focus group discussions. The data gathered through the questionnaire were analysed using SPSS version 21, whereas the data gathered through the focus group discussions were transcribed, thematically categorised, and analyzed. Then, the results were discussed based on the existing literature.

RESULTS

The respondents have given the necessary data on their background information and provided ample data on the extent to which they implement CA and the techniques they use to implement it.

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The Background Data of the Respondent Instructors

The respondent instructors were selected from three campuses (A, B, and C) of the university. Before analysing the responses to the research questions, it would be better if the background characteristics of the respondents were specified, as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2

Background Data of the Respondent Instructors

Background Characteristics		N	%
College/Institute/School	Education and Behavioral Sciences	9	4.1
	Business and Economics	20	9.2
	Natural Science	50	22.9
	Engineering and Technology	64	29.5
	Health Sciences	30	13.8
	Agriculture and Natural Resources	27	12.4
	Social Sciences	18	8.3
Sex	Male	193	88.5
	Female	25	11.5
Service year in WU	< 1 year	60	27.5
	1-5 years	113	51.8
	> 5 years	45	20.6
Academic Level	Graduate Assistant I	19	8.7
	Graduate Assistant II	24	11
	Assistant Lecturer	52	23.9
	Lecturer	111	50.9
	Assistant Professor	11	5
	Associate Professor	0	0
	Professor	1	.5
Mode of study	Applied	155	71.1
	Teaching	63	28.9
Pedagogical Trainings taken	HDP	31	14.2
	Induction	57	26.1
	Both HDP and Induction	99	45.4
	Didn't take training	31	14.2

In Table 2, the researcher put the respondents into six categories: college, sex, service year at WU, academic level, mode of study, and pedagogical training. The background characteristics shown in the table were the number of college-wise questionnaire respondents. According to the sample size, the expected number of respondents would be 235. However, 17 instructors did not return the questionnaire administered to them.

Hence, the number of instructors involved in responding to the questionnaire was nine (4.1%) from Education and Behavioural Sciences, 20 (9.2%) from Business and Economics, 50 (22.9%) from Natural Sciences, 64 (29.5%) from the College of Engineering and Technology, 30 (13.8%) from the College of Health Sciences, 27 (12.4%) from the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and 18 (8.3%) from the College of Social Sciences. Thus, the number of participants who responded to and returned the questionnaire was 218 (92.8%) of the expected respondents.

Regarding sex, 193 (88.5%) of the respondent instructors were males, and 25 (11.5%) of them were females. For ease of data management, respondents' service years in the WU were divided into three categories: less than one year, one to five years, and more than five years. The analysis of the service years shows that instructors who served less than one year in WU were 60 (27.5%), those who served from 1 to 5 service years were 113 (51.8%), and those who served above five years were 45 (20.6%). The result shows that instructors with 1–5 service years were slightly greater than half of the total respondents, whereas instructors with more than five service years have the lowest number.

The academic level of the respondents was categorised into seven categories: graduate assistant I, graduate assistant II, assistant lecturer, lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor. Their percentages were 19 (8.7%) for graduate assistant I, 24 (11%) for graduate assistant II, 52 (23.9%) for assistant lecturer, 111 (50.9%) for lecturer, 11 (5%) for assistant professor, 0 (0%) for associate professor, and 1 (0.5%) for professor. Hence, the result shows that all academic levels except associate professors were involved in the study, with lecturers having the highest level of involvement. Hence, the result shows that all academic levels except associate professors were involved in the study, with lecturers having the highest level of involvement.

The other background characteristic was the respondents' mode of study. It was categorised into applied and teaching modes. Table 2 shows that among the total respondents, 155 (71.1%) were graduates from the applied field of study and 63 (28.9%) were graduates from the teaching profession. This implies that a very high number of instructors have been teaching without having the qualifications that the teaching profession requires.

The issue of having or not having pedagogical training was another concern about the respondents' background characteristics. In this regard, 31 (14.2%) of the instructors had HDP training, 57 (26.1%) had induction training, 99 (45.4%) had both HDP and induction training, and 31 (14.2%) had no such training at all. Hence, the majority of the respondents, 187 (85.7%), took pedagogical training in either or both ways, whereas a small number of them did not take any pedagogical training.

Instructors' Implementation of CA

The first issue the researchers focused on was investigating the extent to which the instructors implemented CA. For this purpose, quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistical tools like frequency and

percentage, whereas qualitative data were analysed from FGD transcripts of instructors and students. Nine questionnaire items were

set up for this purpose, and the data were summarised in Table 3.

Table 3

The Instructors' Implementation CA

No	Item	Rating Scale					
		Disagree		Undecided		Agree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	After assessing my students, I use the achieved results as a feedback to evaluate my work	36	16.5	10	4.6	172	78.9
2	I document all tasks I use to assess my students to give decisions about their achievements	16	7.3	18	8.3	184	84.4
3	I get immediate feedback from the department head on my implementation of CA	47	21.6	36	16.5	135	61.9
4	I assess students using a wide variety of assessment techniques other than continuous tests	22	10.1	20	9.2	176	80.7
5	I assess students several times during a course of study before final examination	10	4.6	4	1.8	204	93.6
6	In constructing test items, I always cover the three domains of learning, e.g. cognitive, affective and psychomotor	21	9.6	30	13.8	167	76.6
7	I take attendance after teaching and use as part of CA	152	69.7	11	5.0	55	25.2
8	I give students assessment papers back after scoring	20	9.2	16	7.3	182	83.5
9	I mark, record and grade students' tests and assignments regularly	10	4.6	14	6.4	194	89.0

In the first item, Table 3, the majority of the instructors, 172 (78.9%), agreed that after assessing their students, they used the achieved results as feedback to evaluate their work. However, 36 (16.5%) of the instructors responded that they did not use the achieved results as feedback to evaluate their students' work. The rest, 10 (4.6%) of the instructors, could not decide whether or not they used the achieved results as feedback to evaluate their students' work.

Regarding Item 2 of the same table, 184 (84.4%) of the respondents reported that they

documented all tasks they used to assess their students' work and made decisions about their achievements, whereas 18 (8.3%) of them could not decide whether they did so or not. The remaining 16 instructors (7.3%) did not document all tasks used to assess their students in order to make decisions about their accomplishments. The result implies that a high number of instructors documented their tasks for decision-making about their students' achievements.

In Item 3, 135 (61.9%) of the instructors agreed that they get immediate feedback from

department heads on their implementation of CA. Forty-seven (21.6%) of them disagreed with the issue of getting feedback from department heads, whereas 36 (16.5%) of them were marked undecided. This shows that a high percentage of the instructors got feedback from their department heads on their implementation of CA.

In Item 4 of Table 3, the use of various assessment techniques in CA implementation, 176 (80.7%) of the respondents agreed that they employed them as expected. Twenty-two (10.1%) instructors responded that they did not use a variety of assessment techniques. The remaining 20 (9.2%) respondents did not decide. Concerning Item 5 of Table 3, 204 (93.6%) of the respondents agreed that they assessed their students several times. Ten (4.6%) of them confirmed that they did not assess their students several times. The rest, 4 (1.8%) of them, could not decide whether they used assessments several times or not.

Concerning Item 6 in Table 3, the instructors were asked whether they covered the three domains of learning when they constructed assessment items. One hundred and sixty-seven (76.6%) of the instructors agreed that they did. In contrast, 21 (9.6%) of them reported that they did not consider the three domains, whereas the rest, 30 (13.8%), were unsure about including the three domains of learning.

In Item 7, Table 3, the respondents were required to uncover whether they considered classroom attendance to be part of CA. In response, the majority, 152 (69.7%), of them declined that they did not do it, whereas 55 (25.2%) of them agreed that they used attendance as part of CA, and 11 (5%) of the instructors could not decide.

In Item 8 of the same table, which is about returning students' assessment papers after scoring them, 182 (83.5%) of the respondents agreed with the idea. However, 20 (9.2%) of them responded that they did not return the students' assessment papers after recording the result. The remaining 16 (7.3% of the total respondents) confirmed that they could not decide whether to return the assessment papers or not.

The last item in Table 3 was whether instructors marked, recorded, and graded students' tests and assignments regularly or not. The result of the analysis shows that 194 (89%) of the instructors marked, recorded, and graded the students' tests and assignments regularly. Nevertheless, 10 (4.6%) of them did not do it. Still, 14 (6.4%) of the respondents could not decide whether they did it regularly or not.

The results indicate that the instructors reported what they should do as instructors but not what they actually did. They positively responded to the nine items, as they did not want to give negative self-reports because that is human nature. Therefore, the researchers critically triangulated the instructors' questionnaire data with the FGD results and the secondary data gathered from each registrar's office. Thus, contrary to the instructors' responses to the questionnaire items, the FGD, and the students assessment results gathered from the registrars, many improper ways of implementing CA manifested themselves in a variety of ways.

The first indicator was the discrepancy between the students' CA score and that of the final exam, in that the majority of the students' CA result was proportionally higher than that of the final exam. For confirmation, while

many students' CA results are above 50/70, their final exam results fall under 10/30. The discrepancy in the results, according to the FGD respondents, is that when instructors assess students in groups, a relatively better student accomplishes group assignments, and most instructors assign equal marks for written works. Hence, whether understood or not, the majority of the students obtain pass marks within the 70% CA and show reluctance to study for the final exam, let alone for knowledge. SSH2 emphasised that the group leader is usually the only one who completes assignments. The leader reports to the instructor that all students have participated, even though they did not, because they favour him with some benefits like pens, tea, etc. SN3 reiterated that the nature of CA implementation in WU is like giving high marks to lazy students. Students can easily get a passing grade with a 70%. Accordingly, they recommended that the university stick to the policy and make the ratio of CA to exams 50:50.

The second indicator of the improper implementation of CA, as reported by the participants, is that WU is generous in giving marks. This data is accurate because many WU students with very high CGPAs during their stay were unable to pass national exams for university lecturer positions. In general, the data analysis result indicated that there is a gap in the implementation of CA in WU for various reasons.

Instructors' Assessment Techniques

Other issues addressed in the study included CA implementation techniques. The FGD results indicated that instructors use different techniques. For example, IG1 reported that he uses tests (e.g., four times), individual assignments, and sudden quizzes. However, the instructor argued that because the assessments were not institutionally standardised, he used his techniques based on his knowledge of HDP. IG2 also asserted that the type of assessment was not standardised, but he reported that he used two or more written tests, a presentation, questions and answers, and group or individual work. He also revealed that instructors consider CA a continuous test because of a lack of training and because they are from the applied field of study. Thus, he suggested that HDP training for such instructors is very crucial because it can give them a theory of the techniques they can use in CA. There is no clear way to evaluate. However, the instructors themselves had contradicting ideas about using different CA techniques. For example, "I worry here. Many instructors implement CA based on old techniques (mid-exam vs. final exam). Others also pointed out that instructors have no training, especially the newly employed ones who implement CA as they like.

Students were also asked to prove or disprove whether instructors use different techniques in CA implementation or not. SG6 stated that there is no follow-up when group work is implemented as a technique. The issue is not knowledge but getting high marks; according to the interviewee, that does not prepare students for effective employment. SSH2 vividly described the techniques used by instructors as quizzes and tests given out of 20% or 30% of the remaining 10% and divided into two or three. Others also added

that group work, as a technique, is simply used for nothing.

Beyond all arguments, the respondents mentioned that they started using the actual techniques, to some extent, after the university set assessment types (1 group work, 1 individual work, 3 tests, and 2 practical/project works, with their weights set at 10% each) on the Students' Information Management System (SIMS). Yet, the researchers are uncertain about judging whether the instructors honestly applied the set techniques. As to them, the assessment techniques set on SIMS have given them clues about other varieties of techniques to implement CA. However, some student respondents and instructors complained that some courses did not entertain some of the set types of techniques.

DISCUSSION

Instructors failed to put CA into practice because, as confirmed by Ogduhmuha and Ugwuanyi (2003), they might not have been professionally trained on CA implementation, which resulted in a lack of knowledge and skills to properly assess students. Therefore, it is possible to argue that instructors should raise the implementation of CA in a way that students can benefit from it as expected. FGD respondents believed that CA increases competition among students, encourages students to take responsibility for their learning, and improves students' participation in their courses. They also claimed that CA is not merely used to promote students from grade to grade; it is an assessment technique from which learners can benefit. In line with this assertion, Angrist, Patrinos, and Schlotter (2013) report that CA is an important and powerful diagnostic tool that enables students

to understand the areas in which they are having difficulties and that provides information about the level of skills, understanding, and knowledge achieved rather than the achievement of certain marks or scores, etc. On the contrary, some respondents claimed that the implementation of CA places a burden on students within a short period of time. Respondents to the FGD also stressed that CA has a role in promoting students' capacity. This implies that the quantitative and qualitative results reports are consistent.

The quantitative result showed that respondent instructors assess their students. It depicted that they used students' achieved results as feedback to evaluate their work, recorded and graded the students' assignments regularly, and gave back the assessment papers after scoring. Black and William (1998) assert that feedback on tests, classwork, and homework should give students guidance on how to improve and an opportunity to work on the improvement. This can be done when instructors meticulously give appropriate feedback to their students. Therefore, the implementation of CA at WU should go beyond giving numerical scores or grades, which may lead students to ignore oral comments because they have seen numerical marks (Black & Williams, 1998).

The findings showed that instructors develop evaluation questions repeatedly, covering the three learning areas. This result conflicts with those of Patrick (2015), Ovute and Ede (2015), Ajuonuma (2008), Ebele (2014), and Assad et al. (2016), who found that university instructors rarely implement CA with a focus on the cognitive, affective,

and psychomotor domains of students' behaviour. Because the study's findings couldn't be confirmed by the existing literature, they couldn't possibly be accurate.

The improper implementation of CA at WU manifests itself in two ways. One student's CA result is higher than that of the final exam. The discrepancy in the results, according to the respondents, is that when instructors assess students in groups, the relatively better students accomplish group assignments, and instructors assign equal marks for written works. Hence, whether understood or not, the majority of the students obtain pass marks within the 70% CA, and they do not bother to study for the final exam, let alone for knowledge. The second indicator of improper implementation of CA, as reported by the participants, is that WU is not condemned in marking; it is generous in giving marks. In general, the data analysis result indicated that there is a gap in the practices of CA at WU for the various indicators mentioned above.

Following Plessis et al.'s (2003) footsteps and the study results, the researchers would like to inform WU in general and academic sector administrators in particular of what is expected of them in realising the implementation of CA. Instructors need awareness, skills, and guidelines for the actual implementation of CA, which is an integral part of the curriculum. Instructors need professional development through in-service training (ibid.).

The techniques used in CA implementation were another area of concern raised by FGD respondents. They explained that they understood the actual techniques to some extent since the university sets assessment types as 1 group assignment, 1 individual assignment, 3 tests, and 2 practical/project work, and their weights are 10% each on the Students' Information Management System (SIMS). Even though the researchers are not sure whether instructors honestly applied the set techniques or not, they confirmed that the assessment techniques set on SIMS have given them clues about some of the varieties of techniques to implement CA.

The summarised CA implementation guideline set by Adaramaja (n.d.) reports that instructors should think of a progressive and integrated CA that complements it with other terminal assessing tools; they should negotiate with students on a CA programme, arrange assessments from simple to complex across time, employ consistent and moderately demanding assessing tools with sufficient time for students to accomplish, and give timely and constructive feedback, which entails taking a decision based on the obtained result. Thus, depending on the results and the existing literature, it can be suggested that there is a knowledge gap in CA implementation at WU.

CONCLUSIONS

The study followed a series of research procedures to conclude CA implementation at WU. As the results indicated, instructors were not implementing CA properly, the reason being that they were not aware of how to implement it. Thus, the researchers could conclude that unless continuous and meaningful awareness-raising training is given to the instructors, the implementation of CA will continue the way it has. The implication is that failure to implement CA should not be attributed only to instructors. The university is

required to take on the mandate of creating a conducive environment in which they can implement CA properly. Another source of concern is the issue of dividing a single assessment into two or four out of ten percent. This needs to prepare strict guidelines for CA implementation. Otherwise, it will become continuous testing, as mentioned in the finding and the review literature.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The results prompted the researchers to forward some recommendations:

1. It is preferable if the university prepares a brief guideline outlining the objectives of CA, responsibilities, and accountability of students, particularly of each member participating in group assignments, in order to reduce the burden on group leaders and enhance the roles of slow learners.
2. Academic units are recommended to set monitoring mechanisms for instructors to implement CA.
3. Instructors need to be honest and reasonable in grading students' assessment results.
4. Instructors are also required to use different CA strategies to implement it as required.

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DECLARATION

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

DATA AVAILABILITY

All necessary data are available from the corresponding author on request.

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