

# TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING IN QUALITY EDUCATION ATTAINMENT IN OSISIOMA NGWA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ABIA STATE

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## Abstract

*The study sought to gain an understanding of the roles of assessment for learning in teaching and learning in secondary schools in Osioma Ngwa Local Government Area of Abia State from the perspective of teachers. The study design used was of survey type. The population comprised all the eight hundred and twenty-five (825) secondary school teachers in Osioma Ngwa Local Government Area of Abia State. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select four hundred and forty-five (445) teachers from the eight hundred and twenty-five (825) secondary school teachers representing 54% of the total population. Instrument used to collect data was questionnaire titled "Teachers perception of assessment for learning Questionnaire" (TPAFLQEAO). The instrument was validated by three experts in measurement and evaluation. Cronbach-alpha method was used to determine the instrument's reliability, yielding a co-efficient of 0.82. Frequency and percentages were computed with the data generated, and the results indicated that teachers see the use of assessment for learning as having the ability to enhance students' performance as well as improve quality of teaching and learning in secondary schools. It was recommended that schools can benefit immensely by incorporating assessment in teaching and use of assessment should be emphasized in teacher development programme to arm teachers to effectively use it.*

**Keywords** – Teachers' Perception, Assessment for Learning, Quality Education attainment.

## Introduction

Assessment is the process or method used to measure the level of achievement of learners. In education, assessment connotes a wide variety of methods and tools that educators use to measure and also keep record of learning progress, academic readiness as well as educational needs of the learners. The role of assessment in determining the quality

of education is important. In referring to quality education, it is the intended outcomes that are the focus. The intended learning outcomes have to do with what the student knows and able to do, learners dispositions, values that he/she has. Student's assessments are the primary tool for evaluating and improving outcomes. According to Williams (2011), quality is the core of education, and it remains the fundamental determinant of enrolment, achievement and retention. The inclusion of infrastructure and curriculum content in the educational system form one aspect of quality education. Educational processes are equally important as they determine how teachers and school administrators use these system inputs to create meaningful learning experiences for the learners. Teaching methods that are interactive in nature have been found to engage learners with their own learning rather than promote rote-memorisation which has also been found to be an important characteristic of quality education today. The accomplishment of quality education is vital in enhancing human and economic development. In Nigeria, schools are required to provide quality education and to produce experienced and high level human resources suitable for economic development. In agreement with this, it is expected that graduates who are ready for the world and citizenship are produced. Assessment for learning should be an integral component of teaching and learning within the system for schools to achieve their learning expectations.

The learners' behaviour changes admirably through education. Assessment determines the worth and value of those changes in the learners. Classroom assessments are of three types – assessment for learning, assessment of learning and assessment as learning. Assessment for learning is formative in nature and it refers to feedbacks and remedial provided to learners during teaching and learning in classroom. Using classroom assessment to enhance learning is not a new idea in school system. Currently, assessment is being used as a device for estimation and this has diverted attention from the more important and fundamental purpose of assessment which is improving and enhancing students learning. The assessment tool most suitable to guide in enhancing learning are quizzes, tests, writing assignments, projects, oral presentations and others which teachers use periodically in teaching and learning.

The aim of assessment for learning is not just to motivate students to work hard and solve challenging problems but to also motivate them to develop and grow their individuality as accomplished learners. Assessment therefore becomes a very vital ingredient of teaching and learning process, and it requires sound accomplished verdict from teachers as they now decide what learning and skill would be assessed, what strategies would be used and when assessment is appropriate. Uchefuna (2001) envisages one who composes useful feedback in carrying out his/her responsibility as a tutor as teaching and learning are dependent on them.

Afe (2010) stated that teachers have a very strong and significant impact on students' academic performance. This is especially so since, basically, the teacher is

solely and indispensably responsible for the translation of school policies and philosophy into specific actions during classroom interaction with students. The routine of feedback allows learners sort out small problems and issues and then form better connections among ideas which equips learners properly and stops them from losing focus of their objectives.

Integrating assessment in the school system has not been an easy task. It requires schools to design assessment approach to ensure that other programmes do not interfere with its integration. Kwok (2006) observes that teachers' comprehension and knowledge of formative assessment is the paramount part in the integration of formative assessment in classroom as some teachers do not comprehend the idea behind assessment for learning fully but rather interchange it with assessment of learning which is summative in nature. Buck (2015) is of the view that some teachers do not comprehend the concept of formative assessment, its integration and practice has been constrained by various challenges which has made its practice inconsistent in the Nigeria education system. Biggs (2003) believes that large class size interferes with the integration of formative assessment making it difficult for the teacher to integrate new measures and ideas in teaching and learning such as collective teaching and formative assessment as its aim is to improve students' learning drawing feedback from different students' demands. Chen (2015) concludes that it is impractical and stressful for teachers to effectively implement formative assessment class. There is need for more class time and attention in order to ensure quality feedback. Leong (2014) observes that most school authorities do not give teachers freedom to be visionary and creative in their own teachings and this could affect student's performance as most schools focus only on summative assessment which could affect the overall educational attainment of the learners.

Time factor and additional administrative workload on the part of the teachers have become a big hindrance to implementing formative assessment practices in classroom (Leong, 2014). The collaboration between these challenges or hindrances has continuously be creating huge tension in the efforts of the teacher to integrate formative assessment in classrooms in Abia State and these have made teachers to become reluctant to integrate assessment in the classrooms.

This study investigates major challenges that hinder teachers in Osisioma Ngwa local government area from implementing assessment for learning, their perceptions and possible ways of addressing the challenges that has continued to form barriers in realising the educational goals in Abia State.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions are:

1. To what extent do teachers implement formative assessment in secondary schools?
2. What are the constraints in implementing assessment for learning in secondary schools?
3. To what extent are teachers knowledgeable with respect to the concept of “Assessment for learning”?
4. What are teachers' perceptions of assessment for learning in quality education attainment in secondary schools?

### **Methods**

A descriptive survey approach was adopted for the study. This approach was employed because the data involved in the study were collected from the cross section of the population without any manipulation. This survey approach was considered most suitable because the study sought information from a small segment of the population to make a generalisation for all the secondary school teachers in Abia State. The population consisted of nine secondary schools in Osisioma Ngwa Local Government Area of Abia State. There were a total of eight hundred and twenty-five (825) teachers in the nine secondary schools at the time of the study. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select four schools from the nine schools in Osisioma Ngwa Local Government Area. The reason for the four was based on their large population of teachers over others. A sample size of 445 teachers was selected from the four schools based on proportionate to size sampling technique representing 54% of the entire population. The technique was used to ensure that teachers in the entire population were adequately represented in the sample selection.

The instrument used in the study was “Teachers Perception of Assessment for Learning in Quality Education Questionnaire (TPAFLQEAQ) developed by the researcher and was trial tested on 50 teachers in secondary schools in Aba North local government area of Abia state. The instrument is divided into sections A B C D and E which contains 25 items. Section A of the instrument contains teachers' demographic information. Items in section B gathered information on the extent teachers' implement formative assessment in secondary schools. Section C dealt with constraints in implementing assessment for learning in secondary schools, section D dealt with extent teachers are knowledgeable with the concept of assessment for learning while section E contained items that dealt with teachers' perceptions of assessment for learning in quality education attainment in secondary schools. The questionnaire items were weighted on a four point Likert Scale of Very High Extent (VHE = 4) High Extent =

(HE=3) Low Extent (LE=2) and Very Low Extent (VLE=1). To answer the questions raised in the study, the percentage response to each of the response category was computed per item in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was validated by three experts in Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach-alpha method and 0.76 coefficients was obtained. The researcher carried out administration of 445 copies of the instrument, and out of which 425 copies were properly filled and returned. Data were analysed using frequency count and simple percentages.

**Results**

**Research Question 1:** To what extent do teachers implement formative assessment in secondary schools?

**Table 1: Extent of Teachers' Implement Formative Assessment in Secondary Schools**

S/N	ITEMS	RESPONSES				$\bar{X}$
		VHE	HE	LE	VLE	
1	Administer tests to my students	56 13%	40 9%	225 53%	64 24%	2.1
2	Give assignments/projects to students	38 9%	25 5%	260 60%	102 24%	2.0
3	Administer less formal quizzes to my students	51 12%	65 15%	141 33%	168 39%	2.0
4	Apply feedback strategies in class	61 14%	50 11%	96 22%	218 51%	1.9
5	Apply self-assessment by the students in the class	71 17%	52 12%	31 7%	271 64%	1.8
6	Assess oral presentations	61 14%	70 16%	102 24%	192 45%	2.0
7	Assess peer assessment in the class	61 14%	52 12%	192 45%	111 26%	2.1
8	Use and evaluate assessment in the class	58 13%	75 17.6%	260 61%	32 7.5%	2.3
9	Assess interviews	68 16%	99 23%	218 51%	39 9%	2.5
10	Evaluate essays and compositions	91 21%	50 11%	225 52%	59 13%	2.4
	Total mean					22.4
	Pooled mean					2.2

In Table 1, the entire items showed a low percentage in the responses of teachers on the extent teachers implement assessment for learning in classroom. With regard to the statement “administer tests to my students,” 13% of the respondents indicated very high extent, 9% high extent, 33% low extent and 24% very low extent. For item 2 “Give assignments/projects to students”, 9% respondents indicated very high extent, 5% high extent, 60% low extent and 24% indicated very low extent. For item 3 “Administer less formal quizzes to my students”, 12% respondents indicated very high extent, 15% high extent, 33% low extent and 39% very low extent. Item 4 “Apply feedback strategies in class” recorded 14% of very high extent, 11% high extent, 22% low extent and 51% very low extent. Item 5 “Apply self-assessment by the students in the class” with 17% very high extent, 12% high extent, 7% low extent and 64% very low extent. Item 6 “Assess oral presentations “14% indicated very high extent, 16% extent, 24% low extent and 45% very low extent. Item 7 “Assess peer assessment in class “14% indicated very high extent, 12% high extent, 45% low extent and 26% very low extent. Item 8 “use and evaluate assessment in the class” 13% indicated very high extent, 17.6% high extent, 61% low extent and 7.5 indicated very low extent. Item 9 “Assess interviews” with 16% very high extent, 23% high extent, 51% low extent and 9% very low extent. Item 10 “Evaluate essays and compositions” 21% very high extent, 11% high extent, 52% low extent and 13% very low extent. The low percentage response with a pooled mean of 2.1 showed that teachers do not effectively implement formative assessment in classroom.

**Research question 2:** What are the constraints in implementing assessment for learning in secondary schools?

**Table 2: Constraints in implementing assessment for learning in secondary schools**

S/N	ITEMS	RESPONSES				$\bar{X}$
		VHE	HE	LE	VLE	
11	Excess workload affect time for preparing assessment	104 24%	225 52%	40 9%	56 13%	2.9
12	Large class size hinders integration of assessment for learning in class	218 51%	96 22%	50 11%	61 14%	3.1
13	Seminars and trainings on assessment not provided	168 39%	65 15%	141 33%	51 12%	2.8
14	Other assignments and administrative designations affect time for preparing assessment tools	192 45%	70 16%	102 25%	61 14%	2.9
15	There is little support from sponsor/school authorities	271 64%	31 7%	71 17%	52 12%	3.2
Total mean						14.9
Pooled mean						2.9

Items in Table 2 showed high percentage responses of the teachers on the constraints in implementing assessment for learning in the classroom. For the statement in Item 11 'Excess workload affect time for preparing assessment', 24% respondents indicated very high extent, 52% high extent, 9% low extent and 13% very low extent. Item 12 "large class size hinders integration of assessment for learning in class", 51% indicated very high extent, 22% high extent, 11% low extent and 14% very low extent. Item13 "seminars and trainings on assessment not provided", showed 39% respondents very high extent, 15% high extent, 33% low extent and 12% very low extent. Item 14 "Other assignments and administrations designations affect time for preparing assessment tools" 45% respondents' very high extent, 16% high extent, 25% low extent and 14% very low extent. Item 15 "There is little support from supervisors/school authorities" had 64% very high extent, 7% high extent, 17% low extent and 12% very low extent. Pooled mean of 2.9 indicated a high percentage response. This shows that teachers are of the perception that there are constraints in the integration of assessment for learning in the classroom.

**Research question 3:** To what extent are teachers knowledgeable with respect to the concept of Assessment for learning?

**Table 3: Extent of teachers' knowledge of Assessment for learning in secondary sc hools**

S/N	ITEMS	RESPONSES				$\bar{X}$
		VHE	HE	LE	VLE	
16	Assessment for learning is formative in nature	61 14%	71 17%	98 23%	195 46%	2.0
17	Assessment for learning is not a new innovation in the classroom	102 24%	81 19%	98 23%	195 46%	2.3
18	Assessment for learning improve the practice of teaching in the classroom	85 20%	68 16%	91 21%	181 43%	2.1
19	Proper conduct of AFL is cumbersome	71 17%	145 34%	62 14%	147 35%	2.3
20	Teachers' knowledge of the concept of AFL is an import factor in teaching and learning.	93 22%	89 21%	172 40%	71 17%	2.4
Total mean						11.1
Pooled mean						2.2

In Table 3, the entire items showed a low percentage in the response of teachers on the extent of teachers' knowledge of assessment for learning in teaching and learning. Item 16 "Assessment for learning is formative in nature" 14% of respondents indicated very high extent, 17% high extent, 23% low extent and 46% very low extent. Item 17 "Assessment for learning is not a new innovation in the classroom" 24% very high extent, 19% high extent, 23% low extent and 46% indicated very low extent. Item 18

“Assessment for learning improve the practice of teaching and learning. “20% indicated very high extent 16% high extent, 21% low extent and 43% very low extent. Item 19 “Proper conduct of assessment for learning is cumbersome”. 17% indicated very high extent, 34% high extent and 35% very low extent. Item 20 “Teachers knowledge of the concept of assessment for learning is an important factor in teaching and learning”. 22% indicated very high extent, 21% high extent, 40% low extent and 17% very low extent. The low percentage response with a pooled mean of 2.2 indicated low extent of teachers' knowledge of concept of assessment for learning.

**Research question 4:** What are teachers' perceptions of formative assessment for learning in quality education attainment in secondary schools?

**Table 4: Teachers’ perceptions of formative assessment for learning in quality education attainment in secondary schools**

S/N	ITEMS	RESPONSES				$\bar{X}$
		VHE	HE	LE	VLE	
21	Exploring effective classroom teaching methods would enhance practice of assessment in class	192 45%	61 14%	102 24%	70 16%	(2.8)
22	Training / Seminars on assessment for teachers would help in formative assessment practice in class	273 64%	32 7.5%	70 16%	50 12%	(3.0)
23	Extended learning time for teaching and learning in class would improve students’ performance.	104 24%	261 61%	24 56%	36 8%	(3.1)
24	Reduction of class size facilities AFL in school	217 64%	97 22%	53 12%	58 13%	(2.8)
25	Supporting teacher practice in class by school authorities would improve assessment.	169 39%	66 15%	140 32%	50 12%	
		Total mean				14.9
		Pooled mean				3.0

Items in Table 4 showed high percentage responses of teachers on the perception of assessment for learning in quality education attainment. With regard to item 21 “Exploring effective classroom teaching methods would enhance practice of assessment in class”, 45% respondents indicated very high extent, 14% high extent, 24% low extent and 16% very low extent. In item 27 “Training/Seminars on assessment for teachers would help in formative assessment practice in class”, 64% indicated very high extent, 7.5% high extent, 16% low extent and 12% very low extent. For item 23 “Extended learning time for teaching and learning in class would improve students' performance”, 24% indicated very high extent, 61% high extent, 56% low extent and 8%



very low extent. On item 24 “Reduction of class size facilitates assessment for learning in class”, 64% indicated very high extent, 22% high extent, 12% low extent and 13% very low extent. On item 25 “Supporting teacher practice in class by school authorities would improve assessment”, 39% indicated very high extent, 15% high extent, 32% low extent and 12% very low extent. The pooled mean of 3.0 indicated high percentage response which showed that teachers' perception of assessment for learning in quality education attainment is high.

## **Discussion**

The result of the study in table I revealed a low percentage in the responses of teachers on the extent formative assessment is implemented in secondary schools in Osisioma Ngwa local government area. The findings revealed that teachers do not effectively implement formative assessment in their teaching and learning due to their ignorance of the concept of assessment for learning. The result of the study showed that teachers play the greatest role in successful integration of formative assessment as well as enhancing the practice of formative assessment for learning in classroom. In table 3 it was revealed that teachers are not knowledgeable with respect to the concept of assessment for learning and as such have problems on how to implement it in the classroom. In line with Kwok (2006), teacher's knowledge and understanding of assessment remain the determining factor in integration of assessment in classroom. The teacher needs to understand, comprehend and have full knowledge of formative assessment in order to develop assessment instruments that are valuable, worthwhile and sustainable.

In Table 2 the study also found out that teachers' encounter hindrances which do not allow for effective integration of formative assessment for learning in schools the way it should be done. The study agrees with Buck (2015) teachers need to understand that assessment for learning is formative in nature and not summative and must be a part of an on-going effort of teachers to help students learn. It was found out that teachers should make efforts to follow assessment with helpful corrective measures, and allow students have another opportunity to showcase their new acquired understanding and capacity.

Table 2 reveals enormous difficulties that hinder teachers from efficiently integrating formative assessment in schools. One of the obstacles was large class size as it interferes with the efforts teacher make to implement formative assessment efficiently in classroom, also excess administrative workload on teacher poses a serious hindrance to integration of assessment in the schools. The findings support the view of Biggs (2003) who argues that large class size does interfere with teachers efforts to implement educational changes and innovations such as collective teaching as it centers on improving students learning which is anchored on instructions from individual students educational requirements. Excess workload on the 40 minutes time allocated to subjects is another main obstacle in integrating assessment for learning practices in classrooms.

The result of the study agrees with Chen (2015) that integrating formative assessment in classroom is very stressful and that teachers cannot practice it effectively within the limited time of 40 minutes allocated to a lesson. Teachers need additional class learning time and require attention from school authorities in order to provide the most necessary feedback. Although Biggs (2003) claims that large class cannot hinder effective teaching but can hinder the efforts of teachers in administering effective assessment in classroom.

In this study, it was revealed that teachers acknowledged that other administrative designations affect the time for preparing lesson instructions. Teachers apart from teaching, also take part in other extension services and are also involved in other school activities all channeled to enrich the curriculum and to provide relevant quality education. By engaging in other administrative assignments means that a considerable part of the teachers' official time would be encroached into, making it uneasy to implement formative assessment.

Table 4 revealed that teachers agreed to the fact that if other classroom methods be explored effectively by teachers it would greatly enhance formative assessment practices in schools. It was also found out that extending classroom lesson time would enhance the practice of formative assessment as it would help teachers integrate assessment in teaching. The study revealed that teachers are not allowed to be creative and to practice innovative teaching in their classroom. Teachers need support as well as motivation from school authorities to enable them be creative and carryout research projects which could enhance student's performance on summative assessment as well. When teachers carry out regular, reliable and timely formative assessment practices, it becomes the main key to improve learning and also enhance quality of education.

For government to provide a sound quality education it is crucial that they seek to provide a sound assessment policy. Sound formative assessment practices are not practiced the way they should be practiced by teachers for enhancement of quality education because teacher do not have adequate training on the usefulness and importance of formative assessment towards attaining lesson objectives. The quality of education in any system deteriorates and loses its value when teachers do not effectively utilise their assessment practices as an aspect of instruction in class. The assessment of students learning is a continuous process which should be geared towards understanding and improving learning hence an assurance of providing quality education.

## **Conclusions**

The study concluded that the formative assessment practices of teachers' in Osisioma Ngwa local Government area secondary schools play a very crucial role in ascertaining the quality of education in the state. Based on this fact it was concluded that teachers' in

Osisoma Ngwa Local Government Secondary Schools are not incorporating formative assessment effectively in their teaching so as to help realise the full benefit of learning in the classroom and this has affected the quality of education in the state.

### Recommendations

1. Seminars, trainings and professional development programmes for teachers should be a priority to arm teachers to effectively use assessment in teaching and learning.
2. There is need for teachers to actively participate in educational activities that enable them discuss and compare ideas on different conceptions of assessment amongst themselves.
3. School authority should incorporate use of assessment in teaching and learning.

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