

# Perception of Teacher Trainees Regarding the Implementation of Continuous Assessment in National Colleges of Education in Sri Lanka

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**Abstract**— Assessment is considered the process of making judgments about a student's performance on a particular task. It consists of a wide range of methods for evaluating student's performances and attainments including formal testing and examinations, practical and authentic assessments, and classroom-based assessments conduct by teachers. This study examined the perceptions of teacher trainees on the implementation of continuous assessments in National Colleges of Education in Sri Lanka. The selected population of the study was the batch of teacher trainees in the selected National College of Education and the sample for the study was 200 teacher trainees randomly selected from five National Colleges of Education. A questionnaire and interviews were applied to gather data from selected teacher trainees. Quantitative data were analyzed and described using frequency and percentage descriptive statistical tools, and interviews were analyzed qualitatively. The findings of the study have revealed that there is an effective perception of continuous assessment as they have an awareness that continuous assessment develops the knowledge, attitudes, and skills of the teacher trainees. It was recommended that the Academic section of the National College of Education should systematically regulate focusing on whether lecturers implement proper training on continuous assessment methods for teacher trainees in each subject and that sources such as books, magazines, and researches should be provided to study the information needed to write assignments, and the library should be open on weekends as there is no sufficient time on weekdays to use it.

**Keywords**— *continuous assessment, perception, teacher trainee, national college of education*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The National Diploma Teaching course is one of the most popular and highly demanding professional courses conducted by the National College of Education of Sri Lanka for teacher trainees. It

develops their professional skills and competencies. Annually 8000 teacher trainees are recruited to 19 National College of Education, in all three mediums namely Sinhala, Tamil, and English by the Ministry of Education. According to the New Education and Training Policy, the practicality of implementing the new curriculum at the school level requires Continuous assessment as part of the evaluation of the curriculum. This shows that enough attention is given to the implementation of Continuous assessments in the education process. Continuous assessments are used in National Teaching Diploma and paid much attention to the practice it.

Continuous assessment was introduced to the Sri Lankan education system in 1998. The introduction of continuous assessment occurred with the revision of school curricula from grade 1 - 11 The goal of introducing continuous assessment is to assess a broad range of educational objectives, including affective objectives which are to be assessed through assessments and group work. Continuous assessment was introduced for National Colleges of Education in parallel with schools. The following are some of the methods introduced for this purpose.

1. Assignments
2. Open book tests
3. Surveys
4. Listening tests
5. Observations
6. Speeches
7. Field trips
8. Group activities
9. Structured essays
10. Double entry journal
11. Creative work

12. Wall papers
13. Practical work
14. Quizzes
15. Compendium of creations
16. Question and answer books
17. Concept maps
18. Debates
19. Projects
20. Panel Discussion
21. Explorations
22. Seminars
23. Exhibitions/Presentations
24. Prompt speeches
25. Short written tests
26. Role-plays

According to the assessment procedure (Evaluation Procedure-2001) which has been in operation since 2007, the number of continuous assessments varies according to the number of hours covered by subjects in the internal period. The maximum number of assessments per subject should be implemented by the lecturers who teach the subject as a continuous assessment of 25 hours of teaching. All continuous assessments marks are very important for teacher trainees to sit the final examination. Accordingly, 60% of the overall Continuous Assessment Mark is considered for the calculation of the final evaluation marks.

The process of continuous assessing of teacher trainees' performances and progression of learning level is a difficult task. Lecturers have to continuously assess students to identify whether their students have mastered the required skills of the respected course. Smith & Malec (1995) noted that student achievement assessment is subjected to several challenging and emerging socio-economic factors around the world and that these challenges strongly affect the quality of assessment practice. This study wishes to identify the perception of the teacher trainees' in the implementation of the continuous assessment component.

educational institutions have implemented continuous assessments to evaluate learners. According to Arends (1997) assessment is the full

range of information gathered and synthesized by teachers for making decisions about their students. Anderson (2003) also says assessment is the process of gathering information to make informed decisions. According to Earl (1996), he pointed out that assessment must satisfy many goals such as providing feedback to students, offering diagnostic information for the teacher to use, provide summary information for record-keeping, proffering evidence for reports, and directing efforts in curriculum and instructional adaptations. Therefore, assessment can be explained as a process of gathering measurements individually and in groups for decision-making purposes.

A tendency in assessment is the recognition of knowledge and skills should not be assessed in isolation. Knowledge and skills should be assessed together rather than assessed separately. Obemeata and Alause (2006) state that teachers should be able to measure the learners affective and psychomotor attributes such as attitudes, motives, interests, values etc. Continuous assessment is the process of paying close attention to students, observing how students are engaged in learning activities, how they relate to the material and trying to understand what they understand. Faleyalo (1986) point out that a Continuous Assessment of learners' progress could also be explained as a mechanism whereby the final grading of learners in the cognitive; affective and psychomotor domains of learning systematically take account of all the performances during the given period of learning.

Studies have been found the problems faced by teachers and students in implementing continuous assessments. According to Quansah (2005), the current continuous assessment system includes class tests, exercises, and homework, and that problems with implementing continuous assessment include a lack of focus on projects, which are the most important learning strategies available to students, active part of their learning. A study by Kapambwe (2010) found that large class size, shortage of funds to fulfil essential resources, teachers still feel that the continuous assessments take a lot of time for teachers with a lack of adequate training teachers are factors that challenge continuous assessment implementation. A study conducted by Abera et. al. (2017) also revealed that the most challenging of continuous assessment was plagiarism, lack of feedback, large class size, shortage of time and, lack of facilities. The study conducted by Jayathilake (1997) to identify the strengths and weaknesses of

the Continuous Assessment System of the Post Graduate Diploma in Education program of Open University of Sri Lanka, who recommended the needs of the redefining the objectives of using Continuous Assessment as a method of evaluating students' achievements and restructuring the format of assignments. Also, Navaratne and Silva (2013) conducted A Study on The Effectiveness of Continuous Assessment as a Learning Tool. They recommended that it is needed to educate students on how to effectively use Continuous Assessment as a learning tool, especially at the commencement of the program.

The main objective of the study was to examine the perception of teacher trainees regarding the continuous assessment that is being implemented in the National Colleges of Education. Its specific objectives were to:

1. To find teacher trainees' perception of Continuous Assessment methods used in the National Diploma Teaching course.
2. To identify the challenges faced by teacher trainees to complete the Continuous Assessment components of the National Diploma Teaching course.

## II. METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey design has been adopted in this study. The population of the study consisted of all teacher trainees of the National Colleges of Education in Sri Lanka. The sample consisted of two hundred (200) teacher trainees randomly selected from five (5) National College of Education in Sri Lanka. I used a questionnaire to collect information from teacher trainees and mainly contained close-ended items. Depending on the types of questions, choices and rating scales were used in the questionnaire. The interview was one of the tools employed in this study to acquire qualitative data. Then the next step has been analyzing the collected data qualitatively and quantitatively. The close-ended questions and answers obtained from teacher trainees were analyzed quantitatively and interviews were analyzed qualitatively, finally, the major findings of the study were reported and realistic and feasible recommendations were forwarded.

## III. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

This part presents analyzed and interpreted data and major findings of the study.

### A) Teacher trainees' perception of Continuous Assessment methods

Table 1 shows the responses of teacher trainees to the questionnaire provided to reveal teacher trainees' perceptions regarding continuous assessment.

Table I: Teacher trainees' perception regarding Continuous Assessment methods

Item	Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Continuous assessment encourages reading books related to the subject.	158	79	26	13	16	08
Continuous assessment motivates to explore new and updated knowledge.	186	93	14	07	00	00
Continuous assessment Increases our presentation and leadership skills.	140	70	48	24	12	06
Continuous assessment helps to share our knowledge with others.	200	100	00	00	00	00
Continuous assessment helps to do collaborative learning.	135	67.5	65	32.5	00	00
Continuous assessment provides a practical approach to the theory we learned and opportunities to apply theory into practice.	171	85.5	10	05	19	9.5

According to table1, the Majority of teacher trainees (158, 79%) mentioned that continuous assessment encourages them to read books related to the

relevant subject. There is a perception of continuous assessment by reading books to explore information related to continuous assessment. 186, 93% acknowledge that continuous assessment motivates them to explore new and updated knowledge. 7% of teacher trainee hadn't decided that continuous assessment motivates to explore their knowledge. Most of the teacher trainees (140, 70%) responded that continuous assessment enhances teacher trainee presentation and leadership skills. It's said that the Majority of teacher trainees are engaged in continuous assessment and that there is a good understanding of continuous assessment. It is revealed that teacher trainees are accepted as a tool for sharing knowledge by everyone (200, 100%) acknowledging that continuous assessment helps to share knowledge with others. While the majority of teacher trainees (135, 67.5) acknowledge that continuous assessment helps in collaborative learning and that not a single student disagrees with the above statement, continuous assessment tests revealed that there is an understanding continuous assessment helps to create a collaborative learning environment among teacher trainees. From the below table Many teacher trainees have recognized that continuous assessment gives them a practical approach to the theory they have learned and the opportunity to put the theory into practice. It is revealed that teacher trainees have a perception that continuous assessment can be used in practice situations with the theoretical facts which have been learned before, which means the theory comes to practice.

In addition to the questionnaire, an interview was conducted to reveal the perception of the continuous assessment. A summary of the responses given by the teacher trainees is included in Table 2.

Table 2: Responses of teacher trainees on continuous assessment

Responses of teacher trainees
Continuous assessment extends learning.
Continuous assessment means continuous testing.
The amount of continuous assessment tests to be done varies according to the time allotted to each subject.
Continuous assessment tests should be conducted for each subject.
Tools of continuous assessment include assignments, presentations, short written tests, group activities, projects, Field trips, Wall Papers and observations

The above findings from the questionnaire and interview confirmed that teacher trainees have a good perception of continuous assessment. The continuous assessment methods used by the lecturers were given for teacher trainees to choose from the list provided and the responses received are given in Table 3.

Table 3: Continuous assessment methods used by Lecturers

Continuous Assessment methods	Agree		Disagree	
	F	%	F	%
Assignments	200	100	00	00
Group activities	200	100	00	00
Field trips	200	100	00	00
Projects	200	100	00	00
Wallpapers	200	100	00	00
Creative work	193	96.5	07	03.5
Short written tests	186	93	14	07
Exhibitions/Presentations	181	90.5	19	09.5
Structured essays	167	83.5	33	16.5
Roleplays	158	79	42	21
Practical work	149	74.5	51	25.5
Observations	125	62.5	75	37.5
Listening tests	104	52	96	48
Explorations	101	50.5	99	49.5
Compendium of creations	98	49	102	51
Concept maps	85	42.5	115	57.5
Speeches	72	36	128	64
Panel Discussion	70	35	130	65
Question and answer books	45	22.5	155	77.5
Debates	19	9.5	181	90.5
Open book tests	00	00	200	100
Prompt speeches	00	00	200	100
Quizzes	00	00	200	100
Surveys	00	00	200	100
Double-entry journal	00	00	200	100
Seminars	00	00	200	100

According to Table 3, all teacher trainees (200, 100%) are selected to carry out continuous assessment methods such as assignments, group activities, field trips, projects, and wallpapers, revealing that these methods are frequently used by lecturers. In addition, more than 50% of respondents said they do creative work (193, 96.5), short written tests (186, 93%), presentations (181, 90.5), structured essays (167, 83.5), role-playing (158, 79%), practical work (149, 74.5%), observations

(125, 62.5%), Listening tests (104, 52%) and exploration tests (101, 50.5%). Compendium of creations (98, 49%), concept maps (85, 42.5%), Speeches (72, 36%), panel discussions (70, 35%), Question and answer books (45, 22.5%), debates (19, 9.5%) Were also found to be functional to some extent. However, on responses of teacher trainees Open book tests, Prompt speeches, quizzes, surveys, Double-entry journals, and Seminars do not implement by lecturers and it's revealed that lecturers do not provide teacher trainees with training on all continuous assessment methods.

*B) The challenges faced by teacher trainees to complete the Continuous Assessment Component*

Table 4 shows the challenges faced by the teacher trainees in completing the continuous assessment from the questionnaire.

Table 4: Responses of teacher trainees' regarding the challenges in completing the continuous assessment

Item	Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Time management is not difficult due to the continuous assessment tests provided for each subject.	18	09	44	22	138	69
Library facilities are sufficient to search for information for continuous assessment tests.	82	41	43	21.5	75	37.5
The time allotted for using the library to search for information for continuous assessment tests is sufficient.	11	5.5	49	24.5	140	70
Permission is granted to use the computer lab to perform continuous assessment tests.	00	00	00	00	200	100
There is free internet access to search information for continuous assessment tests.	00	00	00	00	200	100

National College of Education has the facilities to print and bind written assignments.	20	10	00	00	180	90
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Table 4 revealed that the majority of teacher trainees (138, 69%) do not agree with the statement that time management is not difficult due to the continuous assessment tests that must be completed for each subject. The National Diploma in teaching course is a residential vocational training course which runs from 5 am to 6 pm. The above statement may not be consistent with the amount of activity that needs to be done during that time. 41% agree with the statement that library facilities are sufficient to search for information for continuous assessment while 37.5% disagree. Also, 21.5% gave a moderate response to the above statement. According to those responses, the teacher trainees may have responded in such a way as they have adequate library facilities in their national college of education. The majority of teacher trainees (140, 70%) responded that the time allotted for using the library to search for information for continuous assessment tests was insufficient. Library facilities are available to some extent, but due to the daily schedule, the time allotted for its use may not be sufficient. The response of the entire sample (200, 100%) to the fact that it does not permit the use of the computer lab for continuous assessment testing reveals that it does not permit the use of computer laboratories for purposes other than teaching and learning and outside of the specific teaching and learning period. Also, the entire sample (200, 100%) has responded that there is no free internet facility in the national college of education to search for information for continuous assessment tests. It is revealed that free internet facilities are not provided for the use of teacher trainees in the learning and teaching process and this is a problem encountered in completing continuous assessment tests. Assignments and a Compendium of creations given by lecturers should be submitted creatively. The necessary facilities for that should be available from the national college of education. The vast majority of teacher trainees (180, 90%) disagreed with the statement made in this regard, revealing that such facilities do not exist in colleges.

In addition to the questionnaire, information was also collected from the interview. The responses received are shown in Table 5.



Table 5: Challenges faced by teacher trainees to Complete the continuous assessment Component

Challenges mentioned by teacher trainees
Assignments to be completed by studying various sources should be completed and submitted within a short period
Failure to provide clear guidelines on how to complete continuous assessment tests
Lack of adequate books and new publications in the library
Lack of facilities to type, print out, photocopy and bind assignments given
Some lecturers conduct personal evaluations some lecturers take a long time to give marks to teacher trainees or do not give marks.
Lack of adequate time for continuous activity assessment trials
Not everyone has the opportunity to do some presentations
Some members of the team did not contribute

The responses from the interview sample summarized above confirm the findings of the questionnaire and also revealed that teacher trainees face other problems.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In general, it can be concluded that the overall implementation of continuous assessment in the National College of Education was good. Also, it can be concluded that there is a good perception of continuous assessment as they have an understanding that continuous assessment develops the knowledge, attitude, and skills of the teacher trainees. Moreover, it can be concluded that the lecturers of the National Colleges of Education do not implement all the continuous assessment methods and provide complete training to the teacher trainees in this regard. Furthermore, it can be concluded that teacher trainees face problems due to a lack of adequate facilities in the National Colleges of Education in completing continuous assessment components.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Academic section of National College of Education should systematically regulate whether lecturers implement proper training on continuous assessment methods for teacher trainees in each subject.

2. Other facilities such as library facilities and internet facilities required to complete the continuous assessment examinations should be increased in the National Colleges of Education.
3. Sources such as books, magazines, and researches should be provided to study the information needed to write assignments, and the library should be open on weekends as there is not enough time on weekdays to use it.
4. Lecturers should be informed about the marks (grades) obtained by the teacher trainees for each continuous assessment test.

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