

## APPRAISAL OF THE SOCIAL IMPLICATION OF TESTS AND TESTING AS A BASIS FOR IDENTIFYING STRATEGIES FOR POSITIVE LEARNING ASSESSMENT IN NIGERIA.

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### Abstract

*The paper appraised the social implication of tests and testing, consequence of mismanagement of test situation and test results. The critical importance of assessment and its type in teaching -learning was highlighted. Among other several objectives, it requires teachers to determine whether learning has taken place and to what extent. The need for tests and testing in school system was explored with particular mention of the empirical evidence it avails teachers for modifying their teaching strategies and measuring learners' progress and potentials. Some of the ugly social implications of tests and testing highlighted include the following: untrue test of knowledge, encourages malpractice of different kinds, over-emphasis on paper qualification, causes high drop outs rate from failing, use of tests' results for labeling students, corruption, capable of killing talents and other grievous effects as identified in the paper. Some measures were outlined as a way of ameliorating these negative effects. Assessment must be seen as both fair and competent; and perceived as legitimate and credible by all stakeholders involved.*

**Keywords:** Appraisal, Tests and Testing, Positive Learning Assessment, Strategies

## ÉVALUATION DE L'IMPLICATION SOCIALE DES TESTS ET DES EXAMENS COMME BASE POUR IDENTIFIER DES STRATÉGIES D'ÉVALUATION POSITIVE DE L'APPRENTISSAGE AU NIGERIA.

### Abstrait

*Cet article évalue l'implication sociale des tests et de l'évaluation, les conséquences d'une*

*mauvaise gestion de la situation et des résultats des tests. L'importance critique de l'évaluation et de son type dans l'enseignement et l'apprentissage a été soulignée. Parmi d'autres objectifs, elle exige des enseignants qu'ils déterminent si l'apprentissage a eu lieu et dans quelle mesure. La nécessité des tests et de l'évaluation dans le système scolaire a été explorée, avec une mention particulière des preuves empiriques qu'ils fournissent aux enseignants pour modifier leurs stratégies d'enseignement et mesurer les progrès et les potentiels des apprenants. Certaines des implications sociales néfastes des tests et des examens ont été mises en évidence, notamment les suivantes : contrôle erroné des connaissances, encouragement de différentes sortes de malversations, importance excessive des qualifications sur papier, taux d'abandon élevé dû aux échecs, utilisation des résultats des tests pour étiqueter les étudiants, corruption, capacité à tuer les talents et autres effets néfastes identifiés dans le document. Certaines mesures ont été décrites comme un moyen d'améliorer ces effets négatifs. L'évaluation doit être considérée comme équitable et compétente, et perçue comme légitime et crédible par tous les acteurs concernés.*

**Mots-clés:** *Évaluation, Tests et examens, Évaluation positive de l'apprentissage, Stratégies*

## **Introduction**

Educational systems in different nations of the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are bedeviled with multifaceted concerns on best mechanisms of determining, measuring and monitoring educational access, teaching-learning quality and learning outcomes. Decisions relating to the assessment of students' learning and educational outcomes are tasks considered to be as important as teachers' other duties. As posited by Uwah, Magnus-Arewa and Bokolo (2020), determining the extent to which learning has taken place and or is taking place has become one of the major concerns of teachers and educational evaluators over the years. Before students can be adequately assessed, teachers and curriculum evaluators have to specify learning outcomes expected of students to master as a result of their exposure to some learning contents and activities (Wakjissa & Dadughun, 2020). This process involves obtaining information about learners' level of mastery of some curriculum content areas that they have been exposed to and using the results obtained for making decisions about the learners. The intention to ascertain or measure test-takers' abilities in different domains of education spanning across cognitive, affective and psychomotor subject-matters and themes is of importance to educators. Attributes such as knowledge, skills, aptitude, intelligence, perception, attitudes, interests, abilities,

classification and physical fitness among other characteristics deserve to be assessed in learners.

Though, it is a source of anxiety to the teacher, knowing how best to assess students in order to improve instruction is a core principle of effective teaching (Anikweze, 2019). Measurement and assessment skills required of a teacher, according to Allahnana, Aku and Vintse (2020) include: test planning and construction, grading, interpretation of test results, use of assessment results to inform teaching and learning, interpretation of standard tests and communicating results to relevant stakeholders. If there is no laid down procedure and processes put in place to systematically evaluate educational programmes and learners' performance, the entire educational system will end up as fruitless efforts (Uzoho, 2015). The 21<sup>st</sup> century is characterized with techno-scientific era of dynamic positivism in all spheres of human endeavour including the educational sector of which educational assessment is a critical component. The new millennium demands high quality education that is of practical and functional relevance to the contemporary society. The century is in dire need of teachers who can design both classroom and external assessments that can contribute in steering up deeper and qualitative insights into what students think they have learnt to do. Assessment in the 21<sup>st</sup> century demands that students' works are judged based on what the students can do in terms of knowledge application, abilities and attitudes acquired in the classroom, then, being able to translate same into real life situation (Anikweze, 2014).

### **Difficulties in Classroom Learning Assessment**

Problems and difficulties in assessment may be due to little or no experience in tradition of evaluation. The challenge may be as a result of systems being unprepared to undertake large-scale evaluation resulting from limited professional expertise of those with responsibility to evaluate (Gratz, 2014). Other sources of limitation in assessment may be a sense and feeling of unfairness by those being evaluated, pressure of bureaucracy on schools, lack of fund to carry out tests and testing policies or poor dissemination of evaluation results by the media. Apart from some identified negative effects of tests and testing on education, the process has been regarded as one of the most stressful parts of classroom activities being undertaken by schools,

teachers and learners. It was observed by Adikwu, Obinne and Amali (2014) that problems in educational assessments have to do with ethical and legal issues. Such problems associated with assessment arise from the techniques, the environment situation, poor funding, reservations on validity and reliability and lack of trust among the key players.

In the Nigerian context, as observed by Uwah, Magnus-Arewa and Bokolo (2020), the difficulty is that of matching a reliable, appropriate and valid learning assessment methods and tools to all course learning objectives. Moreover, appropriate learning assessment methods may not exist for some specific learning objectives. In addition, adapting learning assessment tools that are appropriate, fair and easily understood by both students and teachers is a serious problem in assessment. Other criticisms of standardized tests are that they are culturally insensitive and may not accurately represent the abilities of children in the geographical area under consideration. For instance, English Language is alien and not the first language of a typical African student. Tests scores obtained in the midst of language barriers and cultural differences are bound to be misleading. Also, one instrument cannot be used to evaluate all students and get the correct results. Students and educators erroneously focus their efforts on test scores instead of real content learning in the theme or subject-matter. The assessment of children is challenging given the rapid changes in growth experienced during childhood. Observer biases and inconsistencies have been identified in the assessment procedures. The expectations of the observer conveyed directly or indirectly through body language gestures and other subtle cues may influence how the child performs and how the observer records and interprets his or her observations. This observer bias can influence the outcome of an assessment.

### **Meaning of Educational Assessment**

Educational assessment involves the process of using the results obtained from measurements to take relevant decisions about the programme being assessed. It is the process of documentation, usually in measurable terms, of knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs manifested by individuals who are passing through the system of education (Anikweze, 2019). Students need

to develop their own capacities to self-assess, reflect on and take an active role in managing their own learning. New technologies can also help to support the development of learner self-regulation. It is critical in the teaching-learning process and requires teachers to determine whether learning has occurred and the extent of learning occurrence. By implication, according to Akande (2020), assessment helps in taking certain critical and relevant decision about the scores obtained from testing. Assessment involves the process of determining the worth and value of something through diverse sources of measurement. Essentially, assessment is regarded as a tool for making both formative and summative judgments of students' achievements. The Process of assessing, testing and measuring are subsumed into a concept called evaluation which constitutes making value judgment on measurement.

### **Forms of Assessment in Nigerian School System**

Among other provisions, the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014) prescribed the central guidelines for states and schools in the nation on mode and type of assessment instruments that can be adopted to achieve the ideals and objectives of continuous assessment. It stipulates that educational assessment and evaluation be liberalized by basing them in whole or in part on continuous assessment of the progress of individual learner. In the Nigerian educational system, assessment for learning is often described as formative assessment and takes the form of continuous assessment, while assessment of learning is often classed as summative assessment. Many schools' assessments are formative in nature, mostly conducted in the classrooms and intended to track students' progress and are useful for remedial purposes. Assessment in the classrooms aims at allowing teachers to identify the gaps in students' learning and to adopt appropriate teaching strategies to bridge the identified gaps. Assessment results of learners are often reported on weekly, mid-term, term/ semester and yearly bases depending on the purposes. Summative assessment is a type of assessment that judges the extent to which students have attained mastery of some programme curriculum contents in various disciplines (Wakjissa & Dadughun, 2020). Examples of summative assessments are external assessments conducted by subject specialists and test experts

(developers) outside the school system. Results obtained from these external assessments are used for certification, placement and for making other key decisions about the learner and the quality of teaching-learning outcome. Examples of examining bodies in Nigeria entrusted with the tasks of tests and testing include the following: West African Examinations Council (WAEC), National Examinations Council (NECO), National Business and Technical Examinations Board (NABTEB), Joint Admission and Matriculations Board (JAMB), States owned Educational Resource Services (ERS) for Basic Education and Certificate Examinations (BECE) etc.

Another form of assessment is referred to as innovative assessment. It is innovative assessment because emphasis is laid on reforms and innovative programmes centred on reframing what is taught, how it is learned and how it is being evaluated in an insightful ways to help personalize learning (Price, Pierson & Light, 2011). It has to do with making learning experience to be student-centred, also equipping students to practically execute tasks. Innovative assessment, as affirmed by Anikweze (2014) is focused on how learning is done with and by the learners instead of what is being taught or done to the learners. Innovative assessments stimulate students' involvement in the process of instruction and facilitate the development of worthwhile and self-initiated attitudes in the learners.

### **Need for Tests and Testing in School System**

It has become imperative to institute tests and testing into the school system considering their importance in measuring learners' ability and potential. Outcome of tests and testing helps to evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum, the syllabus and the methods of teaching with the aim of making adjustments (Allahnana, Aku & Vintseh, 2020) and ensure that the diagnosis of learning needs are carried out (Frery, 1982). Tests and testing enable teachers to have empirical evidence for modifying their teaching strategies as considered suitable to various categories of learners and the individual school's potential (Anikweze, 2019). Educative assessment in form of tests and testing is also necessary for obtaining regular feedback to stakeholders such as the school, the teacher and the learner for the purpose of determining

the progress of learning during a course of instruction. Learners can be rightly placed or classified on courses they have skill and potential to pursue and suitable for them based on their strengths and weaknesses obtained through tests and testing (Al-Juboury, 2000). Furthermore, tests and testing can be used for improving learners' performance through remediation (Anikweze, 2018). Competition among learners with their classmates for the highest grade has a positive effect of encouraging diligence and striving to excel in learners. Tests and testing are found to be demonstrably effective at improving learning and memory in both younger and older learners, even better than re-studying (Nebel, 2017). Several other needs make tests and testing a component of good teaching and learning in both the educational practice and the research communities. When tests and testing are properly conceived, designed and implemented, they act as positive influence on, and even facilitate the attainment of the learning objectives that teachers set for students.

### **Tests and Testing**

Assessment test or examination is a systematic effort in measuring the learning outcome of an individual student, programme or activity (Uwah, Magnus-Arewa & Bokolo, 2020). Test is a type of data collection strategy and (or) an educational research instrument used to measure some specific attributes or traits such as subjects' knowledge, skills, aptitudes, intelligence, performance/ achievement, interest, attitude, abilities and other characteristics in a learner or an individual using a set of questions, tasks or problems presented in a uniform manner (Ameh, 2020) and (Obadiah & Adamu, 2020). Test, as affirmed by Anikweze (2014) and Obadiah and Adamu (2020) must be systematic, formal and based on certain contents, particularly cognitive-related questions, tasks or problems. These tests are used to gauge students' learning outcomes and hold schools and teachers accountable for students' performance or success. Issues pertaining to standards of test construction, according to Ameh (2020) which include user qualification, security of test content, confidentiality of test results and the prevention of the misuse of tests and test result are to be considered and treated serious. A good test should be valid, reliable and usable in that order of critical importance. Valid, reliable and usable tests have to satisfy the characteristics of appropriateness to the level of testees, of

subject-matter being tested, of consistency in time and location and of comprehensiveness of the content.

Features expected of a good test include validity, reliability, usability, objectivity and fairness. Anastasi and Urbina (2007) affirms that the validity of a test is the extent to which a test measures what it claims to measure (what the test measures and how well it does so). Test reliability, according to Obadiah and Adamu (2020) is the consistency with which a test gives the same result over different times of measurement. A test is usable when it can conveniently be used by teachers and administrators without undue expenditure of time, money and energy (Ugodulunwa, 2008). It is also usable when the test-takers understand the items and can complete the test without experiencing fatigue, stress or boredom. Objectivity of a test refers to the extent to which test results are not influenced by beliefs and prejudices of the scorer (Obadiah & Adamu, 2020). Fairness of a test means the test item should not have any biases and does not put group of test-takers at advantage over the others. All test-takers have an equal opportunity to learn and demonstrate their knowledge and skill. Also, teachers have developed appropriate learning goals, provide content and lessons to match those goals and choose assessments that reflect the goal, content and lessons.

Testing is the procedure of administering and scoring a set of uniform questions (known as instrument) on individual(s) with the aim of measuring a sample of behavior or gathering of information (Akande, 2020). For example, testing takes place when 40 multiple choice questions (objectives) set on Basic Science and Technology subject are administered to 25 students by a classroom teacher. Whatever numerical value scored by a student out of the 40 objectives becomes measurement. Evidence shows that testing improves memory for tested concepts and materials. Decision on tests and testing according to Uwah, Magnus-Arewa and Bokolo (2020) relate to a wide range of issues such as assigning grades to students, evaluating the suitability of textbooks, assigning students to appropriate classes in a given programme, deciding on the design and content of the classroom tests and testing. It becomes necessary that teachers are acquainted with different assessment instruments and techniques.

### **Ugly Social Implication of Tests and Testing**

Despite the noble aims and objectives of classroom assessment, there has been an outcry against its use. The possible pitfalls associated with testing sometimes referred to as the negative testing effect according to Nebel (2017) is that in some situations, test-taking can actually hurt learning instead of benefit learning. Tests and testing do not always measure learner's intended learning experience or outcome as purposed. Unsavoury outcomes have often followed the mismanagement of either testing situations, test objectives or the interpretation of test results (Anikweze, 2014). The ugly social implication of tests and testing cuts across different stakeholders and institutions such as schools, teachers, students, educational system planners, curriculum, policy makers and larger society, even with possible political angle. The other side of tests and testing often being criticized are grouped under two broad headings, namely: mismanagement of test situations and mismanagement of test results and their associated problems (Anikweze, 2014). Some educators, as posited by Frary (1982) argue that students study for test only at the end of the term or semester and once the test has finished, students forget all that is learned.

### **Ugly Social Implication from Mismanagement of Test Situation**

Many educational institutions and teachers appear to be unaware of the ugly social implications emanating from unwise use of tests and testing situations; and of the urgent need to guard against these effects. Schools spend larger amount of time teaching students how to take tests rather than focus on teaching core subjects' contents in the schemes and curriculum. Meaningful learning is not encouraged in learners; rather, learning is reduced to memorizing solely for the purpose of passing tests and examinations. This becomes a herculean task for some students who cannot learn in a rigid and structured manner. A student may be doing well in learning desirable experience and succeeding in other areas of life's endeavour, but may not be good at taking tests. The time students are supposed to use practicing and rehearsing innovative skills and ideals for speed and accuracy is used in learning how to take tests (Hughes, 2017). There are certain valuable traits in the modern society which tests and testing cannot measure as observed by Alfie Kohn in Hughes (2017).

Students' creative problem-solving abilities, spirit of innovation, collaborative skills, initiatives, creativity, imaginations, conceptual thinking, curiosity, judgments, commitment, goodwill and ethical reflection cannot be accurately assessed using tests and examinations. Instead of encouraging real learning and retention, tests and testing have encouraged students to memorize. Though considered the best method for evaluating mental ability, the reality of the situation is that test and testing fail to exemplify the true ability of individual students and teachers, at the same time making negative impacts.

When tests and examinations are not properly managed, irregularities and problems of different kinds are bound to take place (Anikweze, 2014). Teachers should not trivialize supervision of tests so that learners don't become used to indulgence in malpractices. Examination malpractice occurs in different forms ranging from copying, "giraffing", planned collaboration, leakages of examination questions, smuggling of ready-made answers "micro-chips" into the examination hall and pre-arranged collusion among learners. Malpractice can be in form of smuggling of forbidden items such as programmable calculators and mobile GSM sets into the examination hall and sometimes mass cheating involving students, teachers, school authority and security personnel posted to guard and monitor examinations' conduct at a particular centre. There are other common forms of irregularities and compromises which tend to undermine the integrity of tests and examinations.

Students' minds toward tests and testing sometimes are over flowed with anxiety, fear, anger and stress through perpetual over testing. Test anxiety or performance anxiety, according to Lyness (2007) is a feeling someone might have in a situation where performance really counts and there is the pressure to do well. Test anxiety interferes with learners' concentration and hinders their best on tests. Worrying about doing poorly can generate test anxiety. The danger is that learners are less motivated to learn constructively and the tendency to develop hatred for tests and testing cannot be ruled out. Negative attitude towards tests also manifest in students through loafing, truancy, stress, also inhibiting their success. It is difficult to achieve proper measurements in a contemporary day classroom that is focused on tests.

Mismanagement of test situations can also manifest when tests and testing procedures are poorly timed. Timing of tests is supposed to be based on the type of test, difficulty level of the test and demands of the questions or problem items from the testee/ test takers (Anikweze, 2014). For example, essay-type tests require more time than objectives or structured response tests. Tests with high difficulty level tend to be more stressful on candidates thereby requiring more time for thinking out solutions to the problem. Another way test situations are grossly mismanaged is the use of test as punishment on learners. When learners are threatened with tests, wrong information or impression is passed and created about the significance of test in teaching-learning.

### **Ugly Social Implication from Mismanagement of Test Results**

Opponents of tests and testing procedure consider their use for evaluating students and teachers a terrible mistake of the educational system. The notion that high test scores reflect effective teaching and competent student has been proven to be inaccurate. It is difficult to have a test that correctly reflects each student's academic standing and achievement, moreover, considering that every learner demonstrates academic experience acquired in different ways.

Tests and testing, as posited by Hughes (2017) have often subjected schools, teachers and students to a tremendous amount of stress. School management staff and teachers place emphasis on necessity for high scores and good grades within the classroom and school setting. These reservations become pronounced with the attachment of high stakes on the outcome of test scores and grades leading to schools being under pressure. Schools with high outcomes get praise and financial rewards from the states, while schools with low outcomes may receive sanctions. Schools' recognition tone and teachers' professional disposition are several times judged by their students' scores and grades gotten from tests and examinations. This stress and pressure mounted on schools and teachers are incredibly transferred to students. State Ministries of Education have often used the performance of learners in external examinations as criterion for promotion of teachers. It is unfair, to judge a teacher's productivity essentially on the success of his/ her

pupils or students in examination. This is capable of killing talents both for teachers and for students alike.

The problem of stigmatization of poor performers is part of the consequence of mismanagement of tests results. Failing students have had damaging psychological and physical effect and caused anxiety towards tests and the procedure. For example, labeling a “never-do-well” or “idiots” on learners who constantly come last in tests results could be demoralizing. The use of high praise languages or words such as “My darling” for students who score high in a test can be miss-interpreted and result into damaging consequence. Students with low scores may be held back from being promoted to the next grade/ class ahead. This has led to loss of confidence in school work and increase of dropouts. Such a learner gradually degenerates from hatred for the teacher, hatred for school work and frustration with life generally and sometimes having the thoughts of the committing suicide.

Some evaluations in education have been methodologically inflexible, uncertain and misguided leading to dissatisfaction with the intended usage and role. It was found by Popoola (2012) that scores gotten from the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examinations (UTME) conducted by the Joint Admission and Matriculations Board (JAMB) and used as a correlate of the Post – UME screening scores of Federal Universities in the six geo-political zones of Nigeria meant for admission into Nigerian Universities considered as predictors could not correlate with criterion scores obtained from the cumulative grade point averages (CGPA) of 100-level semester examinations of the students used. Low correlation and very low strength of relationship were reported in that study between predictors and criterion scores. Results from these examinations have remained a controversial issue.

When the outcome of the evaluations cannot be relied upon by stake-holders to make certain decisions that should have improved learning, it becomes a snare to the educational system. In 1988, according to Anikweze (2019), Robert J. Sternberg, an educational Psychologist at Yale University, in New Haven, Connecticut presented evidence of conventional assessment

measures missing critical abilities essential to academic and professional success. He observed the need to go beyond tests to obtain more valid and reliable prediction of scholastic aptitude among learners. In addition, it has been noted that the predictive validity of some tests declines when their outcomes are used for forecast in later life, for example, in gaining employment, job performance, salary placement and some other critical uses.

Another ugly social implication of mismanaging tests results is unhealthy rivalry and hostility among learners. Over-emphasis on tests' results, especially using rank-ordering has encouraged unhealthy ambition aimed at topping the class outside passing the test. Unhealthy competition, according to Anikweze (2014), unhealthy competition may lead to bitter enmity among students who admire the high scoring students. Another cause of hostility among learners is the consequence of using test scores and grades as criteria for appointment of Class or School Prefects and School Functionaries and other similar consideration such as bursary awards and scholarships.

Other ugly social implication of mismanaging test results is the undue emphasis on certificates. Over emphasis on paper qualification is one of the snares to the fallen standard of education in Nigeria. Rather than using practical evidence of merit and adequacy of productive skills in assessing candidates for employment, salary placement and other considerations, the society has often used "paper qualification". Disappointment and frustration have been the end results for both the employer and the employee many a times because of failure of performance by the certificate carrying employees who may later be found to be incompetent and unable to do assigned jobs commensurate to the certificates they possess. In Nigeria today, this phenomenon is largely responsible for unemployability among many graduates of Universities and other tertiary institutions.

Corruption may be introduced in the school system where learners resort to all kinds of maneuvers towards gaining undue favour from the teachers for the purpose of passing examinations. Rather than channel genuine efforts at working hard to succeed in tests and examinations for merit, some learners

resort to use of gift items, cash sorting, use of sexual overtures and other forms of corrupt and demeaning acts to woo teachers and gain advantage over other learners. Cases of clandestine maneuvering between female and male teachers and students in form of sexual harassment which are often reported in institutions of learning are partly consequences of mismanagement of tests results. On the other hand, the teachers can be the one initiating and perpetrating the corrupt practices due to pressure of one form or the other from beyond him. Sometimes, it is done even at the threat of his job.

Another ugly social implication of tests and testing is the controversy and bias caused by quota system of admission into Nigerian Federal Institutions. Some group of students who score above the average requirements are often denied admission into Federal Schools due to the geopolitical zones from which they came which have been tagged and considered as educationally advanced or educationally advantaged zones while their counterparts who have scores below the average requirements are preferred and considered for the same admission positions simply because they hail from states tagged "educationally disadvantaged states. This treatment meted to students from the educationally advanced states in a country that claims to promote unity in diversity is not only unfair and demoralizing, but makes mockery of the tests and its outcome.

### **Strategies for Remediation of Situation**

In order to ameliorate the problems arising from misuse and mismanagement of assessment situation and its attendant outcomes, the following strategies are recommended:

- 1) Government and administrators of educational institutions and other relevant stakeholders are expected to hire only qualified teachers who are duly certified by the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria. Training and re-training of teachers in test construction, administration, scoring, grading and interpretation of results should be carried out on regular basis. For example, in test administration, teachers and school authority can make tests less intimidating by taking time out to explain to the students the purpose of the test, focusing on the positive effects it will have on them and ensuring

that they are adequately informed ahead of time. They should also organize revision classes beforehand. Conducive environment must be created for test administration. Teachers should learn to supervise tests and ensure that classrooms are well inspected to eliminate sources of irregularities such as textbooks hidden under desks, pieces of paper, charts/ posters and any other written materials related to the test items. Teachers can alter the sitting arrangement during tests as a way of eliminating or neutralizing any pre-arranged collusion among learners. Proper searching of pockets and palm of candidates can complement efforts towards discouraging examination malpractice (Anikweze, 2014). To make the search thorough and gender-sensitive, boys should be searched by male teachers while girls are searched by female teachers.

2) An assessment tool being used for measurement and evaluation of a particular system/ programme and group of learners must be appropriate for the goal being anticipated (Uwah, Magnus-Arewa and Bokolo, 2020). Decision on which of the evaluation tool to be used in a defined situation depends on the purpose or goal of the assessment. Different purposes for which assessments are required include: diagnosis of learning needs, ranking purposes among learners, purpose of feedback on levels of students' achievement, purpose of determining the retention capacities of students over contents learnt, purpose of motivating students by recognizing and rewarding good performance, purpose of assessing need for remedial education, purpose of evaluating students for class placement or for ability grouping among others. Assessment tools are grouped into either traditional assessments or alternative assessments.

3) The assessment process must be seen as both fair and competent. It must be perceived as legitimate and credible by all relevant stakeholders involved. Leach and Sabatier in Uwah, Magnus-Arewa and Bokolo (2020) pointed out that trust comes from two sources. One source is shared values and beliefs. The other source is predictable behavior in an environment where deviant behavior is penalized. Because multiple individuals are involved in assessment process, trust must be established and be sustained. The assessment process must be fair and adequate, legitimate and credible to

pass the trust need of assessment. All views in the process are given serious consideration with the outcomes based on rules seen as acceptable to all participants determined by thoughtful deliberation of individuals involved.

4) Proper funding of the assessment process must be ensured. Government and all relevant stakeholders in the educational sector are to make financial provisions available during the process of assessment.

5) One way to counteract the negative testing effect is to provide explanatory feedback to students, though may not be done right away (Nebel, 2017). It is wise that after the release of the results to students, teachers should go through the answers fairly and quickly, highlighting areas of difficulty. Students can assess the tests by proffering answers to questions about the tests. Examples of questions to students to evaluate the test include: Were the instruction clear enough? Do the test items cover what has been taught? Was a non-threatening atmosphere created during the tests? It is also expected that students' assessment be taken in a manner that is consistent and made available for future use. Valuable information on how to improve the process of evaluation is gotten from feedbacks after tests.

6) Apart from tests or alongside tests, there are other alternative criteria and tools for assessment. Sternberg in Anikweze (2019) preferred the use of tests that can measure creative and practical thinking abilities in addition to the conventional memory and analytical abilities. This procedure has effectively aided the prediction of course grades for high school students. Choosing a combination of assessment methods is the fairest and most logical approach. The other alternatives to testing includes the use of: (a) Continuous assessment in which teachers give grades for a number of assignments done over a period of time; and final grade is decided based on the combination of these assignments (Frery, 1982). (b) Portfolio assessment which is a collection of or a cumulative record of students' accomplishments over time (Stetcher, 2010). In portfolio assessment, a student collects a number of assignments, projecting and presenting them in a file which is used as basis for assessment. (c) Performance (authentic) assessment which involves students performing some tasks resembling what apply in real world experience using skills or work habit and ideas that

engage students meaningfully in knowledge construction. (d) Self assessment in which students evaluate themselves based on criteria that must be carefully chosen beforehand. (e) Innovative assessment which supports students' learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century by making a demand on students to be able to apply in real world experience what they have learnt in the classroom. Some of the innovative assessment techniques include: Technology-based (Computer based) assessment, also referred to as Technology-supported assessment(TSA) or Computer-based testing (CBT) which is a strategy that uses computers to administer and score tests and examinations. They are less expensive and have given rise to more innovative and feasible applications of the gadgets [National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM), 2016].

7) It is suggested by Obot (2015) that the goal of assessment be made known to all stakeholders involved in the process including students, parents, teachers, counselors, administrators and policy makers in the education matters. Students can be told ahead of time that their work on the course as well as the test results will be taken into account.

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