

**VISUAL ART TEACHERS AND PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT METHODS IN  
NIGERIAN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

*Bello Usman Amsami*  
*Art Education, Department of Fine Art*  
*University of Maiduguri*

*Yunusa Mohammed*  
*Art Education, Department of Fine Art*  
*University of Maiduguri*

*And*

*Esther Adamu Mazila*  
*Art Education, Department of Fine Art*  
*University of Maiduguri*

**Abstract**

*This paper examines the competencies of visual arts teachers in using performance assessment methods, and to ascertain the extent to which the knowledge, skills and experiences of teachers affect their competence in using assessment strategies in their classroom. The study employs a qualitative research design; an aspect of descriptive survey research aiming at depicting the situation of visual art classroom assessment practices. The population of this paper is the entire visual arts teachers working in the secondary schools in Nigeria. The samples were derived from selected public secondary schools by using purposive sampling technique in order to obtain the targeted participants. Senior Secondary school visual art teachers constituted the sample of this study. The paper did not collect data on its own, rather it reviewed the findings of related empirical studies conducted within and outside Nigeria. To examine the position and problems related to performance assessment, the paper critically reviewed related Dissertations, Thesis and Journal papers conducted in Europe and Africa as well as in Nigeria. The paper found that the competence and use of assessment strategies is determined by the type of professional training attained by teachers. Some of the findings of the studies reviewed showed that most schools laid more emphasis on summative evaluation. Teachers also depended on Objective and Essay tests. They do not have adequate information on authentic or alternative assessment. The*

*study conducted by West African Examination Council across Ghana and Nigeria revealed that most teachers in secondary schools lack the knowledge of using performance-based assessment strategies as their classroom assessment practices. The findings of the study of Amsami (2005) showed that visual art teachers with the knowledge of educational measurement are few across the country; for the fact that most of them were studio oriented teachers. Other studies reviewed indicated the need for training of teachers, generally on the new assessment strategies.*

**Key words:** Process and Product portfolio, Performance assessment, Rubric, Visual Arts education, Evaluation methods.

## **Introduction**

Recent educational developments such as constructivism and multiple intelligence theories as well as society requested new trends for a radical change in traditional approaches of instruction and assessment. For this reason, alternative assessment approaches are needed in assessing both learning process and learning product. Nowadays, one of the alternative assessment techniques used in various disciplines such as mathematics, sciences and social sciences is performance assessment strategy. Performance assessment is a technique designed to measure what the students know and what he or she can do, and to assess students' development. It is an alternative assessment strategy in evaluation systems that take learning and knowledge objects created, ways of thinking, and learning styles into consideration. In other words, it is non-conventional tools or technique to measure what the student knows and what he or she can do, and to assess students' development. In education practices, evaluation aims to assess the level of knowledge and the ability of the student prior to teaching so as to monitor the level of realization of learning targets during teaching, and to produce quantitative data after the teaching on the level of achievement of the targets previously set. Once the process within which the student is going to be assessed is identified, the next step is to identify assessment techniques appropriate for the purpose.

Different methods can be used in the identification of the process within which the student is going to be evaluated and the collection of data following the identification of appropriate assessment techniques. However, in the stage of identifying the appropriate assessment technique, two important issues require the attention of the teacher. These are how to make the assessment "meaningful" and "administrable". For an evaluation to be meaningful, it needs to express the operation and criteria clearly, and produce results that provide clear guidance on how to improve teaching. When commonly used assessment methods are examined, it can be observed that we have a system in which the results or the products are measured to evaluate the achievement of the student, and the individual achievement results are expressed relative to group achievement. The shortcoming of this system is lack of sufficient information that would help the teacher to assess his or her own position and students' development.

The achievement of the student is expressed as a “GRADE”, through combination of written exam scores and the teacher’s subjective evaluation. Such assessment strategy is now traditional method of evaluation, it focuses on measuring the abilities of students in terms of application, knowledge and comprehension but fails to measure higher order competencies. Performance assessment (portfolio and peer/self assessment), which is an alternative evaluation method that measures actual problem solving abilities of the students by focusing upon the performance and upon the process, can serve these needs. Tekin in Dilmac (2006) argues that if education targets include the student following an order of operations, or coming up with a product using any or a specific method in a certain field, then performance assessment is necessary. Performance assessment varies in art education; there are portfolio assessment and self-peer assessment.

In portfolio assessment strategy, the students are not required to come up with a single correct answer, the aim is to evaluate what sort of an impact the new information has on the thinking of the students. Contrary to traditional assessment method, the new method of evaluation provides detailed feedback for the students on their development, and encourages personal growth, creative activities, and social responsibility. From the 1990s onwards, student-centred evaluation based upon information from multiple sources became important, and multiple evaluation methods (performance and portfolio assessment, etc.) and tools (rubrics, checklists, attitude scales, scoring guides, etc.) are being used. In support of the above opinion Lorna, (2003:356) explained that:

Assessment practices that dominate most classrooms in secondary school are the type which teachers take charge of both creating and marking the tests. Teachers use the test to assess the quality and accuracy of students' works and bulk of teacher effort in assessment is taken up in marking and grading. A strong emphasis is placed in comparing students and feedback comes back to them in the form of grades with little direction or advice for improvement, which indicates the students doing well and those not well. He also clarified that assessment for learning has a long history in education. But it has not served us well for the fact that parent and the public worry about the process. That assessment for learning can go a long way in enhancing student learning. Formative assessment is formidable for enhancing learning. In formative assessment the student is the link, student as active, engage and critical assessor; can make sense of information relate it to prior knowledge and master the skills involved; a regulatory process in metacognition .It occurs when students personally monitor what they are learning and use and use the feedback from this monitoring to make adjustment.

Taking note of the need to use formative assessment in schools, the United Nations General Assembly embarked on Universal Declaration of Human Rights to specifically help address problems faced by most of the underdeveloped countries, African countries included. Such problems include illiteracy, poverty, low health status, and poor quality of life. Emphasis was placed on the attainment of Millennium Development Goals because they were seen as critical for human development. These targets include access to basic education for all by 2015, gender equality in access to educational opportunities, eradication of adult illiteracy, as well as an improved, sustainable, and quality education (United Nations Development Program 2002).

In reaction to this, the National Policy on Education of the Federal Republic of Nigeria has stipulated Continuous Assessment in secondary schools. It has also provided sections to help student-teachers undergoing training to become professionally trained teachers. The policy emphatically stressed that the training should be to:

1. Produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient teachers;
2. Encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers;
3. Provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to any changing situation not only in the life of their country, but in the wider world.

This means that the new Nigerian teacher will have to move from traditional roles of an instructor to that of educator. Thus, Nigeria introduced 9 year Universal Basic Education programme (UBE) in 2004 and also stated that educational assessment and evaluation shall be liberalized by their being based in whole or part on continuous assessment of the progress of the individuals. This statement is well amplified in subsequent sections of the document dealing with Primary Education (section 4), Secondary Education (section 5), Tertiary Education and finally in section (12) which deals with Planning, Administration and Supervision of Education (Idowu and Esere 2009:17).

### **Statement of the problem**

Assessment is vital part of quality teaching in the classroom. In order to understand students' knowledge, learning, and process, visual art teachers must provide various valid means of assessment to properly understand their students. Research has shown that most teachers do not have adequate information regarding assessment. It has been confirmed by research that majority of the visual art teachers do not have the knowledge of teaching methodologies, skills and evaluation. It is believed that if visual art teachers are adequately trained, they would learn how to assess in their students in secondary schools. This study aims to examine the competencies of visual arts teachers to use the performance assessment and evaluation tools, which are part of the secondary school curricula. The objective is to discover the teachers' competencies and common difficulties experienced in their application, and to proffer solutions for the problems identified. To this end, answers to the following research question were sought:

1. How are the competencies of visual arts teachers vary in using performance assessment tools like development Portfolio, and Rubrics?
2. How frequently do visual arts teachers use development portfolios and rubrics for performance assessment ?
3. What are the problems encountered by visual arts teachers in assessment and what solutions can be offered?
4. Do the competencies of visual art teachers to use development portfolios and rubrics significantly vary by gender, years of service, and educational background?

### **Review of Related Literature**

To justify discussion in this paper, the following sequence of presentation will be maintained:

- a. Theoretical framework
- b. Teachers and Assessment practices
- c. Assessment and Visual Art Education
- d. Research Design
- e. Findings of Reviewed Related Studies
- f.. Conclusion

#### **A. Theoretical Framework**

The position of this paper is anchored on the theory of Westera (2001). In Westera's opinion, competence is usually associated with highly professional performance and there is a direct link in the field of education and teacher's professional competence. There are two distinct meanings of competence in education. From a theoretical point of view, competence is understood as a cognitive structure that facilitates specified behaviours. From an operational

point of view, competence seems to cover a broad range of higher-order skills and behaviours that represent the ability to deal with complex, unpredictable situations. This operational definition includes knowledge, skills, attitudes, metacognition and strategic thinking, and presupposes conscious and intentional decision making (Westera 2001). Westera sees competence as individual's cognitive structures which contain considerable theoretical and practical knowledge. This knowledge can be made available to the outside world by way of reproductive skills (i.e. speech, writing, pointing, etc.), or can become supportive to skills and the associated skilled behaviour" (p.81). Competent individuals should be able to make the right choice out of a variety of different possible behaviours by anticipating the effects of their intervention. Accordingly, the competence model below identified what constitute teacher's competence:

1. Knowledge reproduction.
2. Skilled (competent) behavior.
3. Attitudes.
4. Knowledge.

The factors listed above are key factors of Westera's model and there are the determinants of human thinking, which are knowing (the cognitive), feeling (attitudes) and doing (skills) (Westera 2001:87).

Considering the model of competence by Westera (2001) , we could deduce that the use of performance assessment techniques and its success depends on the quality of the teacher's knowledge, skilled behavior and knowledge reproduction attained through training; if teacher's capability in teaching is determined by the professional training as stated by Westera, are all teachers teaching in secondary schools professionally trained? Do the training institutions provide teachers' training adequately? These questions might will lead us to look at what has been observed by Nenty (2007) that "in some teachers' training institutions , evaluation courses were seen as optional courses," and other challenging factors are educational administrators' attitude and recklessness on employment of people without teacher education.

On the context of teacher education Ali (1992) argued that the inculcation of teacher education and being a professionally trained teacher is very necessary and crucial but the trained teachers, should also be able to synchronize the theory and practice of their education in their classrooms. To correct such limitations among the professionally trained teachers, Ali, (1992) suggested that in addition to the structure of curriculum, accepted doctrines, concepts, generalizations and values, the following competencies should be developed in Nigerian teacher trainees:

- (i) Competence in the knowledge of subject of instruction; of learner and learning of knowledge delivery systems, and of the school and its purpose, functions and problems.
- (ii) Competence as both an educated person, in order to be able to carry out his role in society as a change agent, and competence as a number of a profession.
- (iii) Before an academic major is declared academically competent by the faculty he or she must demonstrate ability to select and refine materials from the discipline for the instruction of children.

Ali (1992:12) clarified that:

From my experience with student teaching practice, student teachers may know what theories of educational objectives are about but they get lost when it comes to actual construction of these objectives. They must demonstrate the knowledge of questioning and construction in laboratory situation i.e. Model teaching, Micro teaching, Role playing or simulation and video lessons prior to the teaching practice and internship. For all, the possession of knowledge is the ability to put it into use.

Cross examining the opinions of Westera (2001) and Ali (1992) we can deduce that casual training alone cannot make teacher competent in all his academic responsibility. Rather the academic competence is instilled through rigorous and absolutely adequate programme training. The study did not to some extent agree with Westera (2001), for the fact that Westera is categorically showing that knowledge, skilled and attitude, without identifying what type of knowledge or skill or attitude. Competence is the acquisition of quality and ability of teacher to use his knowledge, attitude, and to synchronize theory and practice in education.

### **Teachers and Assessment Practices**

In order to understand what students know or do not know, educators need assessment and evaluation. Classroom assessment is possibly the first and most important part of the teaching and learning process that includes measurement, feedback, reflection, and change. Classroom assessments play an important role as they are essential for generating information used for making educational decisions. Classroom assessments also serve many purposes for teachers such as: grading, identification of students with special learning needs, student motivation, clarification of students' achievement expectations, and monitoring instructional effectiveness (Ohlsen 2007; Stiggins 2001).

In order to use classroom assessment as tools for students' learning, we must transform it into two fundamental ways, "First, the content and character of assessments must be significantly improved, and second, the gathering and use of assessment information and insights must become part of an ongoing learning process (Sherpard 2000:5).

The purpose of classroom assessment is not just to generate information for decision making, but also to foster learning improvement. For this reason, if properly offered on a frequent basis it would help students to refine and deepen their understanding of what they learn. Classroom assessments are also essential for conveying expectations that can stimulate teaching and learning (Wiggins 1998). The more information we have about students, the clearer the picture we have about their achievement, learning challenges and where those challenges emanate. For this reason, there is a need to pay attention to how it is used, as failure to do this may lead to inaccurate assessment of students' achievement and may ultimately prevent students from reaching their full academic potential (Stiggins 2001). Assessment of students also entails the use of high-stakes assessments, such as standardized national examinations. According to the American Educational Research Association:

Many states and school districts mandate testing programs to gather data about Student' achievement over time and to hold schools and students accountable. Certain uses of achievement test results are termed "high stakes" if they carry serious consequences for students or for educators. Schools may be judged

according to the school-wide average scores of their students. High school-wide scores may bring public praise or financial rewards; low scores may bring public embarrassment or heavy sanctions. For individual students, high scores may bring a special diploma attesting to exceptional academic accomplishment; low scores may result in students being held back in grade or denied a high school diploma (AERA, 2000:3).

The opinion of American Educational Research Association also concurred with the advocacy of UNESCO (2005) which stated:

Assessment is the bedrock of an effective teaching and learning environment, and regular, reliable and timely assessment is key to improving learning and enhancing quality of education. Assessment allows those working in the education system to diagnose, monitor and assure the quality of education. This situation in which teachers do not practice assessment to the extent that they themselves deem necessary for the enhancement of quality of education is partly attributable to their lack of training on and understanding of the use of the formative nature of classroom assessment as an effective means of achieving everyday lesson objectives.

To UNESCO (2005), it also reflects the pressure of external summative assessment on teaching and learning. Moreover, effective assessment requires adequate resources, teachers grounded in assessment techniques and relatively small class sizes – requirements which do not fit the realities in many African countries. For governments seeking to improve education quality, a sound assessment policy is crucial. For school-level assessment to be influential, it should be consistent, regular and reliable, part of an overall school development policy and reconcile both formative and summative assessments with a strong focus on providing feedback to the learner and teacher.

### **Assessment and Visual Arts Education**

Teachers teaching in secondary schools vary because of their educational background. The holders of Diploma and Nigeria Certificate of Education irrespective of their areas of specialty teach in Primary and Junior secondary schools, whereas Degree holders, irrespective of their areas of specialty teach in Senior Secondary Schools. The areas of specialization in art education at the degree level included Art Education, Art history, Ceramics Design, Graphics Design, Museology, Painting and Textile Design. Of all these courses only Art Education is designed for teaching and learning in the schools. Art Education provides teaching methodology, skills, curriculum, educational foundations and partially assessment. The issue of assessment in Art Education is contentious that up to this moment problems persist.

In a subject like visual arts, developing assessment criteria is a very difficult task. This is because expression, personal development, creativity, imagination, and originality, are difficult to measure. The same work might be evaluated differently by different teachers. Thus, students' assessment in visual arts education is multi-dimensional. Although there are no single correct answers to arts questions, pre-set targets based upon rubrics would lead both the student and the teacher to make sound assessments. And another major challenge among visual art teachers is

lack of knowledge on educational assessment during their training. Therefore, only those who studied art education have information on assessment and evaluation. Performance assessment is still not fully recognized by most art teachers in teaching and learning. This is because of lack of knowledge of assessment amongst art teachers in secondary schools (Bello and Tijani 2003; Dilmac 2006). Piscitello (2002) studied on evaluation and the use of rubrics in the arts. The findings of his study suggest that rubrics are successful in helping students assess themselves and develop self assessment abilities. In the process of evaluation, it was observed that over time, students' decisions on their own painting projects grew more independent of their teachers.

Two types of assessment criteria are described in the literature: process criteria and product criteria (Gruber 2008). Teachers utilizing process criteria are considering the development of learning and growth within a program. They report the results of quizzes, homework, class participation, or even attendance. They are also cognizant of effort and work habits. On the other hand, teachers who utilize product criteria base their results on final exam scores, overall assessments based on product appearance, and other critical presentations that demonstrate learning. For these teachers, the significance of where their students are is more meaningful than how far they have come. Process criteria appear to be reliable measures of student growth and establish a baseline from which growth is gauged. Yet product criteria also can provide a valid estimate of student learning as an indication of current ability and knowledge.

Put simply, criteria are statements describing elements of a lesson that are significant in determining whether or not the lesson objectives are being met. It goes without saying that if the lesson is to teach color harmonies, the assessment criteria should be specific to aspects of color harmony. A list of criteria would include proper identification of a particular harmony on a color wheel-the student properly identifies a triadic color harmony. Or when viewing art prints in the classroom, the student properly identifies the color harmony of a given artwork. Assessment criteria can extend to any and all aspects of each lesson. Another example could be a lesson objective that states, "The student will demonstrate proper use of the vanishing point in a one-point perspective drawing." In this case, the product assessment criteria would specifically designate the proper use of the vanishing point as described in the objective. The design and development of assessment criteria are as vital as that of the design and development of each lesson plan and its objectives (Gruber 2008). Assessment criteria should be included in each lesson plan.

### **Balanced Assessment**

No single aspect of assessment can provide a representative and accurate measure of student learning in art. Recognizing this, many art education writers call for a variety of assessment strategies that include testing, observation, products, and portfolios. Additionally, there is support for the use of a "balanced approach" that spreads the assessment findings over a wide range of activities ( Gruber & Hobbs 2002).

Testing, observation, finished product, and portfolios, when used individually, do not provide a completely accurate representation of learning in art. However, like the four legs of a table, the four assessment strategies form a balanced support for a comprehensive assessment plan. Because of the diversity of assessment strategies available for each lesson, a more equitable and accurate measure of student learning is possible with a balanced assessment approach that utilizes all four strategies.

### **Written Tests**

The most widely used source of assessment information apart from the final product for art teachers is written tests (Gruber 1998). Art educator and researcher Karen Hamblen warns us to use caution with tests (1988). "Although testing may appear to be justifiable as a means to give art instruction credibility, it is also necessary to assess whether testing itself may change the character of art instruction" (Gruber 2008). One shortcoming of written tests is their inability to measure aesthetic responses (Gruber 2008).

Still, tests can be used as an important aspect of a total assessment approach as long as they remain applicable to the goals and objectives of the lesson (Gruber, 2008). Tests should be used primarily within concrete applications that measure cognitive learning derived from the subject. These learning can range from simple recall of names of artists to correctly identifying stylistic characteristics of artworks.

There are basically two types of tests available for use by educators in all subject areas: forced-choice and performance based tests. Forced-choice tests are simple and generally reliable, although their ability to measure objectivity can be limited. They offer students a set of answers from which to choose when responding to test questions or statements. Examples of forced-choice tests are matching, true-false, fill-in-the-blank, and completion. Although reliable in their ability to produce consistent results, they cannot measure student performance. Forced-choice tests are generally too simple to measure higher order thinking skills, and they offer the opportunity for guessing. What's more, test scores derived from forced-choice tests are not valid indicators of much more than students' ability to memorize and restate data. They should not be relied upon as the sole source of assessment for student learning. On the other hand, forced-choice tests are a valuable component of the art educator's assessment tool kit. They are cost effective, can be developed and administered in a short period of time, and can be used as a broad measure of student knowledge. As such they represent one leg of a balanced assessment approach.

### **Observations**

Observation strategies involve consistent surveillance of what students actually do during all phases of an art lesson: performance, attitude, work habits and behavior in general. Criteria developed in the form of checklists or rubrics are used to record observation data. Such data can be aimed at behaviors during the ongoing process of studio activities such as organizing the work area, use of tools and materials, and clean up. Observational strategies can also take into account behavioral activities of students as they engage in discussion or general classroom decorum. Finally, an appropriate approach "would be to note a student's participation, the level of serious engagement, the sharing of discoveries ... and attention to the task" (Day 1985:236).

### **Checklists and Rubrics**

Observational assessment strategies utilize checklists or rubrics. Checklists are simple lists of contents or attributes against which student behaviors, or projects, products, or portfolios are compared. There is essentially no limit to the length or number of attributes one includes on a checklist. They can be quantified for simple conversion to numerical equivalents or letter grades. For example, a student product that includes 7 of 10 listed attributes converts to 70%. The data can be applied to the total assessment program. Checklists are considerably less detailed than rubrics. Rubrics, on the other hand, are detailed guides for scoring student behaviors, products,

projects, or portfolios. They are specific descriptors listing criteria for levels of expectations or accomplishments from highest to lowest. Upper level accomplishments score higher. Typically, a rubric will consist of four or five descriptors ranging from 1 to 5 points and generally correspond to 4- or 5-point grading scales. In contrast to checklists, rubrics are more difficult to develop, but are applicable to more objective analyses of learning.

### **Finished Product**

The finished product is the result of a lesson and represents one piece of evidence for the measurement of learning. Some art educators claim that focusing on the product will divert students' attention away from the creative process. But even if this were true, it would not prevent the teacher from using the product as evidence to draw inferences about students' creativity and learning in art. Using finished products as a measurement strategy should not lead to using them exclusively in the assessment of learning. They can be directly related to a craftsmanship component by observing, for example, the smoothness of cut edges when students are using scissors, the sureness of brush strokes when painting, or the general appearance of the finished work. Referring to the quality of student products, education curriculum theorist Grant Wiggins recommends a system of reporting where "degree of difficulty" and "quality" are separated in a method similar to those used in music and gymnastics (Wiggins 1998:35). It can be argued that for "any reporting system (to) be complete, it must place the student's performance (product) on a continuum" thus providing some evidence of progress. Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE) pioneer Michael Day writes that the use of products is a valuable assessment tool because they reflect learning and the results can be pointed out and discussed (Day 2007).

### **Portfolios**

The usefulness of portfolio assessment is evidenced by its growing popularity across the educational spectrum. Other subject areas are beginning to use portfolios as an alternative to traditional paper and pencil tests. In many respects, portfolios involve the three assessment strategies previously discussed: written tests, finished products, and observation (inasmuch as journals-that is, students' self-observations-may be included). A portfolio is a collection of student work and documents that, as a totality, constitutes a valuable assessment tool in an art program. Portfolios generally fall into two categories: formative and summative. Formative portfolios contain all aspects of a particular lesson from initial conceptualizations through research and revisions to final products. This information can be in the form of notes, sketches and other artwork, written reports, tests, and any material relevant to the objectives of a lesson. Formative portfolios document the level of involvement, learning, and thought processes that have taken place over a period of time. They represent a more comprehensive measure of learning than any individual final product. Summative portfolios contain collections of finished products that give indications of abilities at a given point in the instruction, usually at the end of a course of study, portfolios that contain several examples of finished products only give evidence of ability. They fall short of demonstrating a continuous process of learning and growth. They are, however, useful as verification of a student's aptitude with media and processes. Using portfolios as an assessment tool is appropriate within a balanced approach. Portfolio assessment is significant when used to show what students have accomplished within an art education program.

Assessment strategies must not be so labour intensive or intrusive that they leave little time for teaching, or that de-emphasize the creative process. Assessment is an ongoing and post-production activity. Ongoing assessment involves observation, and to some extent testing, student self-assessments, and even journals. Post-production assessments involve product (performance assessment), portfolios (formative and summative), and testing. Dilmac,(2006) conducted a study on art teachers' ability to use portfolio assessment in Turkey Secondary Schools .The findings of his study indicated that visual arts teachers frequently engage in performance evaluation.

Visual arts teachers stated that they experience difficulties in finding time to prepare and evaluate development portfolios as well as storing data of portfolios because classes are too crowded, that they do not have sufficient information on rubrics, and that they need assessment and evaluation experts to educate them concerning the use of the assessment tool.

Amsami (2005) conducted an empirical study on the use of educational media in teaching art in Maiduguri Educational Zone. The study showed that art teachers teaching in secondary schools lacked teaching methodology, skills and experience, let alone the issue of educational measurement and evaluation. The study realized that most of them had not obtained teaching profession training but rather studio design training. They found themselves in the classroom by chance. The study showed that only those with NCE, BA Art Education or BSc/BA Ed can handle educational media effectively. Bello and Tijani (2003) conducted a study that focused on the training needs of teachers in Continuous Assessment (CA) by examining their level of knowledge and the difficulties encountered in the development and administration of different assessment tools. The research sample comprised 2,422 teachers selected from junior secondary and senior secondary schools and 448 heads of schools and educational administrators/officers in Ghana, Nigeria and The Gambia. The study revealed that assessment tools like Essay test, Objective test and Assignments were frequently used and found easy to score by teachers. Teachers were however, found deficient in the use of other assessment tools particularly, in the assessment of project work (portfolio), formative testing, assessment by interviews and behavioural assessment. The teachers signified their ambition to be trained in these areas as well as in the development of marking schemes/scoring keys. Their other training needs were identified and recommendations made to make implementation of CA more effective in schools. Nenty, et al (2007) conducted study on assessment as a means of enhancing improved quality of life through education. The study identified that education is the most efficient means of enhancing improved quality of life for everyone. Its mission which is to "lead forth" and "cause to develop" the potential of every child could be most effectively achieved if teachers are trained to exploit its rich and close etymological relationship with assessment. But unfortunately, though the results of several studies have shown that teachers spend at least a third of their professional time involved in assessment-related activities, and contrary to recommendations by professional organizations in education, many persons are certified to teach with little or no training at all no basic classroom assessment skills. Some teachers training institutions do not offer courses that impart such skills at all, while some make such courses optional as if assessment is an optional duty of the classroom teacher. Teachers incapacitated by such programmes lack the essential skills to "sit beside" a growing child to collect valid data or information with which to ensure valid exploration and identification of potential and the maximization of its growth and development. This seems to be important contributing factor in

the observed trend of poor academic performance by learners in school systems in which such teachers abound.

If assessment is important and can assist teachers, school administrators as well as parents should, therefore, find a way to improve the crop of teachers in our schools. Can the type of teachers present in our schools assess student properly? Do they have the knowledge and capability of assessment?

To justify the discussion in this study, there is the need to narrow down and take example of visual art teachers in secondary schools in Nigeria. The Visual Art programme is classified into two; theory and practical courses. All the practical courses are studio oriented. It is only Art Education that teach about teaching methodology, skills, curriculum and assessment. The students that graduate at first degree level are mostly studio oriented, and virtually the schools could not have adequate professional art educators. For this reason, not all Visual art teachers are professional teachers.

### **Research Design**

The study is a qualitative design, an aspect of survey research aimed at examining the competence of Visual Art Teachers in using new assessment strategies which is a development over the conventional or traditional assessment methods. Qualitative Research design as postulated by Sambo (2008) and Waters-Adams, (2006) is a research design which is characterize by data which are largely based upon an interpretation of events and situation. It is for this fact that all findings require interpretation, and data analyses are concomitant.

### **Scope, Population and Sample**

The study is limited to senior secondary schools that offer visual arts in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states. Therefore all visual arts teachers in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe constitute the population of the study. The study used purposive sampling technique, because the population was finite.

### **Findings of the Studies analyzed and interpreted**

The paper has critically examined the findings of the previous related empirical studies to interpret the data in line with the research questions raised.

### **Research Question One**

How are the competencies of visual arts teachers vary in using development portfolios, performance evaluation, and rubrics? The competence of art teachers and teachers of other subjects as revealed by the recent empirical literature vary because of variation in the quality of teachers' professional training. It has been discovered that the institutions that train teachers do not offer measurement and evaluation as a core course but rather an optional. The visual art teachers knowledge vary because of their areas of specialization. For this reason only those who attained art education knowledge are professional visual art teachers. Others are studio artists and designers basically trained to work in solo or manufacturing Industries. This problem still persists at all level of art education as a resultant of the gap created by Theory and Practice.

### **Research Question Two**

How frequently do visual arts teachers use development portfolios or performance assessment, and rubrics? The findings of the study conducted by Bello and Tijani (2003) showed that 81.5% teachers in Ghana and 73.7% in Nigeria as well as Gambia frequently used Objective and Essay tests weekly and monthly. But they could not use Portfolio because of the lack of knowledge on Portfolio assessment. The findings of the study of Amsami,(2005) showed that the teachers with NCE and BA Ed were the teachers using educational media frequently. Dilmac, (2006) study showed how frequently visual arts teachers use the tools and methods of evaluation, the result showed that 41.1% of the teachers stated that they never use performance evaluation, and 23.0% stated that they use performance evaluation often. When the use of product portfolios was examined, it was observed that 21.7% of the teachers stated that they use it often, whereas 37.2% state they never use it. Whereas 51.3% stated that they never use them. The findings of the study showed that only few of them, 23.3% frequently used performance assessment tools.

### **Research Question Three**

What are the problems encountered by visual arts teachers in assessment, and what solutions can be offered? The study by Bello and Tijani (2003) shows that teachers find it difficult to develop various assessment tools for assessing their students. Nenty (2007) also showed the constraints on assessment. Thus, included:

- grossly inadequate number of teachers in schools;
- lack of test-related resources and facilities;
- very low level of, or in most cases, complete lack of teachers' competence in assessment;
- non-involvement of parents and guardian in the assessment of learns; and
- students perception of assessment as a foe instead of a partner in or facilitator of learning

In most, if not all African schools the teacher-pupil ratio is far in excess of that recommended based on results of research and experience. The expected ratio represent that beyond which a teacher cannot be effective. The high students' population jeopardizes teachers' effort to do a good job, especially when it comes to assessment. It is not uncommon to find a class who is involved in no other meaningful assessment activity except the end of quarter test. Sometimes a teacher teaches two classes each with an enrollment of about 70 pupils. In such a case the size of the number of pupils is prohibitive of any assessment exercise.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The issue regarding teaching and learning plays much importance in the life of learner. The teacher is responsible for the delivery of the standard and success of the programme. For this reason they are bound to face challenges in their teaching profession. The policy controls the implementation of programmes but yet, to our dismay problem exist due the some human fallibility. The competence is the factor that enable teacher to perform maximally in teaching. It is not the ability of teacher to do something anyhow. Rather it is use of knowledge of subject of instruction; ability to select and refine materials from the discipline for the instruction of children. The study realized that institutions that are supposed to impart an absolute teacher training do not seem to give the optimum training. The study has realized what constitutes competence of a teacher in teaching. Teacher's competence is not a nominal acquisition of

theoretical teacher education but an acquisition of ability to synchronize theory and practice of teaching profession. The study of Dilmac (2006), Amsami (2005) and Bello and Tijani (2003) revealed that teachers in Nigeria, Gambia and Ghana have quietly disclosed that they need re-training on assessment. Amsami (2005) has categorically shown that art teachers in Maiduguri Secondary schools lacked the knowledge to use educational media in their teaching.

From the findings of these studies we can deduce that most teachers in secondary schools do not attained adequate knowledge of using Performance assessment tools in their classrooms. Based on the findings of the studies reviewed, it is noted in this study that competency is not an ordinary passing through training and obtaining of certificate. Rather it is attending training with comprehension of theory and practicing the teaching profession. That possesses the knowledge and put it into use. The study concludes that theory and practice through traditional disciplinary line (philosophy, psychology, sociology have contribution to make in art education).The locus of their work in the teacher education is the role of knowledge rather than an academic specialty. The study also, concludes that training institutions of teacher education should know that philosophers look at contributions of knowledge, not just in formal theories but also in the relationship of quantification and qualification to contemporary ideals (e.g schooling for self-actualization).it has been noted that the art teacher with specialty in art studio need to be train in measurement and evaluation. To make them competent in assessment, as it is through assessment that education, teaching and learning are defined. The commitment of WAEC to improving the validity and reliability of school-based assessment is without any doubt. The Needs Assessment Study conducted by WAEC provides a justification for an intervention which is aimed at strengthening the capacity of teachers in school-based assessment at the pre university level of education. WAEC and the World Bank are therefore collaborating with the World Bank under the Global Partnership for Assessment of Educational Achievement Programme to achieve this end.

### **Recommendation**

The study recommends that government should reduce the over crowdedness by promulgating new ratio of teacher-students in secondary schools. Since most of the teachers in secondary schools lack adequate knowledge or information on assessment. There is need for government or non-governmental agencies to look into the issues of retraining the teachers. This can be done by regular and consistent workshops and symposium to sensitize and educate them regarding assessment. Teachers at the pre-tertiary level of education should be given refresher courses in the development of various assessment tools and their corresponding marking schemes/scoring keys. This refresher course should focus on:

- (1) Behavioural Assessment, Diagnostic/Formative test, Practical Skills Assessment, Interview and Assessment using Projects.
- (2) The refresher course should be organize in phases beginning with the schedule officers in-charge of assessment at the local government level.
- (3) Periodic refresher courses should be organized for school managers and teachers to minimize the incidence of non-uniformity in the use of the assessment tools and management of CA scores.
- (4) The Ministries of Education of the various countries should seek the assistance of corporate bodies to sponsor training programmes for their teachers

and administrators/managers.

## **References**

- Ali, H. (1992) *Professionalism in Teacher Education in Nigerian Universities: Issues and Expectations*. Lagos: Evdor Graphic Press and Publishing Enterprises.
- Amsami, B.U. (2005) *Utilization of Teaching Aids in teaching of Creative Art in Secondary Schools in Maiduguri Educational Zone*, Unpublished M.Ed dissertation, University of Maiduguri.
- Bello, M.A and Tijani,A.A.(2003) Training Needs of Teachers in School-based Assessment in Anglophone West African Countries. Email: waechqrs@yahoo.co.uk
- Lorna, E. (2003) *Assessment as Learning: using Classroom assessment to maximize student Learning*, Thousand Oaks: CA Corwin Press.
- Dilmac, O. (2006) *Visual Art Teachers and Performance Evaluation methods: A Case Study of Turkey*, Ataturk University, Turkey.
- Dorn, C. (2002) The Teacher as Stakeholder in Student Art Assessment and Art Programme Evaluation. *Art Education*, 55 (4).
- Federal Republic of Nigeria , (2004 National Policy on Education, (4<sup>th</sup> Edition ) NERDC Press.
- Idowu, A.I. and Esere, M.O. (2009) *Assessment in Nigerian Schools: A Counsellor’s View Point* Email: maryogechim@yahoo.com
- McCollister,S. (2002) “Developing Criteria Rubrics in the Art Classroom,” 55(4), 46-52 retrieved July,2013.
- Nenty, H.J. (2007) *Assessment as a means of Improved Quality of Life through Education*, *Institute of Education*, Lesotho: National University of Lesotho.
- Ohlsen, M.T. (2007) Classroom assessment practices of secondary school members of NCTM, *American Secondary Education*,36(4-14).

Piscitello, M. (2002) Using rubrics for Assessment and Evaluation in Art .Saint Xavier University. Skylight.

Sambo,A.A. (2008) *Research Methods in Education*, Ibadan: Stirling-Holden Publishers.

Shepard, A.L.(2000) The Role of Classroom Assessment in Teaching and Learning ,CSE Technical Report.

Stiggins, R.J. (2001) *Student-Involved Classroom Assessment, (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition)* upper saddle River: Prentice Hill

Wiggins,G.P.(1998) *Educative Assessment : Designing Assessment to Inform and Improve Student Performance*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers

UNESCO-Education For All (EFA) (2005) Global Monitoring Report, Paris:  
<http://portal.unesco.org> ( Accessed 09.05.08).

United Nations Development Programme (2002) World Bank Project.

Waters-Adams, S. (2006) Action Research in Education , Faculty of Education , University of Plymouth. United Kingdom.

Westera, W.(2001) “Competences in Education : a confusion of tongues”. *Journal of Curriculum Studies* , 33 (1).

Wiggins, G.P. (1998) “The Case for Authentic Assessment. Practical Assessment, Research and Evaluation” 2(2) Retrieved 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2006.

**Visual Art Teachers and Performance Assessment Methods in Nigerian Senior Secondary Schools – *Bello Usman Amsami, Yunusa Mohammed and Esther Adamu Mazila.***