



Holistic Assessment Strategies and Redefining Student Success in the Lower Secondary Education in Selected Schools in Wakiso District, Uganda

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PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- Introduction
- Theoretical perspective
- Research problem and objectives
- Conceptual perspective
- Scope of the study
- Methodology
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Introduction

- For decades, student success in Uganda's secondary education had been predominantly defined by an exam-oriented measure at the end of the four-year study(Uganda Certificate of Education).
- Unfortunately, this approach could not address the broader dimensions of learners' development, or even prepare them for the challenges in the world of work (Ssenkusu, & Kibedi, 2022).
- Adopting the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in 2020 marked a significant shift towards a more balanced, holistic student success.
- The CBC framework, focusing on holistic assessment, emphasises a learner's mastery of core competencies, development of values and attitudes, and practical skills that prepare learners for both academic progression and life beyond school (NCDC, 2020).
- As a result, several assessment strategies were introduced.
- Given this shift, the study examined how holistic assessment strategies redefine student success in Uganda's lower secondary education in Wakiso District.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The study is grounded in two theories, namely:

1. **Multiple intelligences theory** by howard gardner (1983 and 2005)

- Learners possess diverse intellectual capacities,
- A general single ability measure may not reflect the child's true achievement.

• 2. **Constructivist learning theory:** piaget and vygotsky(1978).

- Promotes authentic, real-world assessment, allowing learners to form their own learning.
- Both theories support comprehensive, learner-centred assessment.
- Assessment that reflects diversity, allowing students to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and values from multiple perspectives

Problem Statement

- Student success in Uganda's secondary education has been predominantly defined by summative exam-oriented assessments (NCDC, 2020; UNEB, 2014).
- However, the introduction of a CBC in 2020 ushered in a shift from exam-driven instruction to a more holistic approach to learner development.
- To achieve this, UNEB has developed assessment tools and trained teachers on how to use these tools, and an assessment Management System to capture and submit learners' achievements, and changed to criterion-referenced reporting of results.
- Unfortunately, many teachers continue to prioritise preparation of learners for the Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) examinations, which still largely emphasise theoretical recall (UNEB, 2023; Muwonge et al., 2022). There are reports of fictitious and inflated scores.
- The implementation of holistic assessment remains inconsistent across schools.
- There is limited empirical research on how holistic assessment is being applied and whether it is effectively redefining student success in line with curriculum goals.

The study investigated the implementation of holistic assessment strategies and how they redefine success Lower Secondary Education in Uganda

Research Objectives

1. To determine the extent to which project-based assessment is implemented and its influence on student success.
2. To examine how rubric-based assessment is implemented and its influence on student success.
3. To explore how self and peer assessment are implemented and their influence on student success.

CONCEPTUAL PERSPECTIVE

Iv-holistic assessment strategies

- project-based assessment
- self and peer assessment
- Rubric-guided evaluation

Dv- redefined students' success;

- academic mastery(cognitive)
- Emotion, values and attitudes (affective)
- Development of practical and technical competences (psychomotor)
- Development of soft or 21st-centuryy skills

Scope of the Study

The study focused on the implementation of holistic assessment strategies as outlined in the CBC for lower secondary education.

Project-based assessment, rubric-guided assessment, and self/peer assessment strategies, how they are applied in the classrooms, and they redefine student success,

It was carried out in selected secondary schools in Wakiso District, Uganda.

Wakiso is one of the most populated districts and hosts a diverse mix of urban, peri-urban, and rural schools, private and government owned schools.

Thus, it would offer a representative picture of varied school contexts under the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC).

The study period - 2024- 2025, a period after UNEB had rolled out assessment tools and trained the teachers enabling the researcher to capture data on both on the actual use of the tools for assessment.

Significance of the Study

- Policymakers (MoES, NCDC, UNEB) will review and strengthen monitoring systems.
- Allocate targeted resources for schools with limited capacity to implement holistic assessment.
- School Leaders shall supervise and support teachers in designing authentic project-based and rubric-guided performance tasks.
- Teachers will integrate holistic assessment strategies into daily practice and balance exam preparation with competency development.
- Engage in continuous professional development (CPD) to strengthen assessment design and delivery skills.
- Learners shall take active responsibility in self- and peer-assessment to develop reflection, accountability, and teamwork, embrace projects and performance tasks.
- Develop a growth mindset by valuing feedback, not just marks, in building competencies for future success.
- Parents will support schools with resources, expertise, and mentorship for real-world projects.
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Literature Review

The literature reviewed indicated a significant relationship between holistic assessment and student success, but several gaps emerged.

- **Contextual gaps:** Lack of Ugandan-specific studies.
- **Methodological gap:** Some studies applied only quantitative methods, but this study used both quantitative and qualitative.
- **Theoretical gap:** Some reviewed studies were guided by one theory but current study applied two theories.
- **Knowledge gap:** limited research on combined assessment strategies

M e t h o d o l o g y

This study employed a mixed research design.

- Both **quantitative and qualitative** data were collected and analysed simultaneously (Andrew & Halcomb, 2009).
- **Study Area:** Selected secondary schools in Wakiso District (both government-aided and private)
- **Study Population:** Secondary school teachers. Head teachers, students (S1 –S4), UNEB officials.
- **Sample size:** Schools-10, headteachers-10, Teachers-120, Students-400, 4 UNEB officers

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

- **Self-administered questionnaire (SAQ)** -for teachers to obtain their independent views.
- **Interview guide** - to get respondents' opinions about the issues under study.
- ***Lesson observation guide*** –was used to verify the application of holistic assessment in a real classroom.
- **Focus group discussion (fgd) guide** - was used to gather the students' experiences, and establish their attitudes, beliefs, and opinions.

DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative data processing, analysis, and reporting:

- Was processed through SPSS,
- Mean and standard deviation were computed using AMOS, structural equation modelling (SEM)
- Interpretation of results using narrative texts.

Qualitative data processing, analysis, and reporting:

- Audio clips were saved on a computer, then transcribed.
- Transcripts were printed and matched with audio clips again.
- Narratives and verbatim quotations are used to present and interpret findings

FINDINGS- OBJECTIVE 1: PROJECT-BASED ASSESSMENT

- The majority of teachers (68%) reported frequent use of project-based assessments.
- However, 32% cited constraints such as large class sizes and limited human and material resources.
- Limited knowledge of the application
- Projects enhance students' creativity, problem-solving, and collaboration.
- Students are instrumental in crating solution to problems both at school and home.

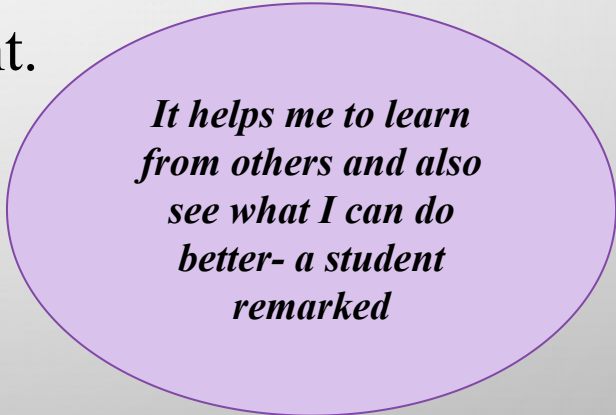
Projects make students think beyond textbooks. They learn how to work in teams, plan their time, and apply what we teach- teacher

We do not do projects in Senior One mainly due to the large number of students and the few teachers. The few available teachers cannot supervise students' projects in senior three and four, and then senior one and two- head teacher

Since we started doing projects, I have planted 25 Eucalyptus trees at home. I hope to get money when they mature- student

FINDINGS – OBJECTIVE 2: SELF AND PEER ASSESSMENT

- Only 49% of teachers consented to using it regularly, but mainly for classroom discourse or group work/discussions.
- Interviews revealed that many teachers are sceptical of students' ability to assess themselves objectively.
- Lack the competence to implement it in their classrooms.
- However, focus group discussions with students indicated that learners value peer assessment.
- Fosters self directed learning.



*It helps me to learn
from others and also
see what I can do
better- a student
remarked*

FINDINGS- OBJECTIVE 3:RUBRIC- GUIDED EVALUATION /ASSESSMENT

- 68.9% of teachers reported consistent use of rubric-guide assessment (subject observation checklists, end-of-topic assessment items, summative assessment items)
- These teachers engage learners in tasks such as experiments and physical education exercises. Oral presentations or artistic performances to evaluate psychomotor skills.
- Observations confirmed that these tasks actively engage learners and several generic skills are exhibited in the process.
- Interviews indicated that while many teachers recognised their value, they find it cumbersome and time-consuming to use some of the assessment tools faithfully .

You just cant observe every learner , unless that is all you will do a term,. There are so many students in a class yet the school administration is also demanding for coverage, end of topic scores , there is co curricular activities. Genrally, too much work for the teacher - teacher

Teachers bring back our papers or give us information on what they have observed, which helps to know my strength and weak areas, which helps me to improve- student.

Students in focus groups appreciated rubrics when available, as they provided clarity on expectations.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, holistic assessment strategies significantly contribute to redefining student success.

They promote cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development creating a responsible and life-long learner.

They helps learners become more reflective, skillful, and adaptable.

However, their effective implementation is hampered by the negative attitude from the teachers, limited training, and resource availability, hindering full realization of these benefits.

CONCLUSION- 2

- The desire for scores 20% that contributed to the final score has led to their abuse. ‘ *I cannot give my learners low scores, yet there are those who do not even administer the assessment but submit high scores.*
- There is need to verify the validity and credibility of the submitted scores
- Much as student success is now criterion referenced using letter grades (A, B, C, D, E,) with descriptors, scores other than students’ competence dominate the results.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Ministry of Education should strengthen teacher training on holistic assessment, especially rubric design and feedback practices.
2. Schools should be equipped with resources and facilities to support performance and project-based assessments.
3. Curriculum developers and uneb should provide clear guidelines and tools to facilitate effective self and peer assessment.
4. School leaders should promote a culture of assessment for/ as learning by embedding formative strategies across subjects.
5. Uneb and other education agencies should intensify monitoring and support supervision to consolidate successes and fill the gaps.
6. The assessment strategies should not focus on score but student development.



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