Perception and Practice of Assessment for Learning: A Case from Tribhuvan University Faculty of Management

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Abstract

Assessment for learning plays a crucial role in enhancing student learning by integrating student assessment into the teaching-learning process. Taking a case from Tribhuvan University, we conducted a study on the practice of assessment for learning in higher education in Nepal. In this study, we analyzed the perceptions and practices of teaching faculty regarding assessment for learning. The primary research question focused on faculty members' perceptions and practices related to assessment for learning and how these practices contribute to student learning. We employed both quantitative (an online survey) and qualitative (in-depth interviews) methods for data collection. This study utilized descriptive analysis for the quantitative data, supplemented by qualitative analysis of the interviews. Our findings revealed that faculty members have a limited understanding of assessment for learning, and their practices are inadequate in this regard. To enhance the overall quality of higher education, there is a need to improve student assessment practices by adopting assessment for learning. This requires changes in assessment policies, enhancement of faculty capacities, and improvement in institutional environment.

Keywords: formative assessment, assessment of learning, assessment for learning, assessment as learning, assessment in higher education

Perception and Practice of Assessment for Learning: A Case from Tribhuvan University Faculty of Management

It has been over one hundred years since the concept of higher education was introduced in Nepal with the establishment of Trichandra College in 1918 (1975 BS). In its early years, Trichandra College adopted the syllabus and assessment practices of Calcutta University in India. In 1923, the college shifted its affiliation to Patna University in India (Poudel, 2050 BS). Students were required to take final examinations conducted by affiliated institutions until the establishment of Tribhuvan University (TU) in 1959 (Parajuli et al., 2008). The assessment practices implemented by Tribhuvan University were not significantly different from those of the affiliated universities in India, which included an annual examination system for grading purposes. TU initiated an internal assessment alongside a semester system in the National Education System Plan, which began in 1971. However, the semester system was replaced by an annual examination system in 1980. Initially, TU allocated a 20% weight for internal assessment, which was discontinued in 1986 at the intermediate and bachelor's levels and in 1991 at the master's level (Mishra, n.d.). Since 2013, the reintroduced semester system, along with formative assessments—commonly referred to as internal assessments, carries a weight of 40%, while the end-semester examination, usually called the final examination, carries a weight of 60% for final grading (TU, 2070). Annual written examinations continue to dominate assessment practices in higher education in Nepal, except in a few universities and higher education programs. However, available information suggests that the internal assessment provisions at TU have not effectively contributed to achieving objective of improving students' learning through continuous feedback and support (Acharya, 2022; Luitel, 2022; Neupane, 2023; Sharma, 2021).

This study examines the extent to which current assessment practices contribute to assessment for learning. This case study-based article reviews assessment practices in higher education in Nepal by identifying the perceptions and practices of teaching faculty in undergraduate management courses at Tribhuvan University. The next section outlines the objectives and research questions of the article. After reviewing the literature on concepts and theories related to assessment for learning, it discusses studies on assessment practices in higher education in Nepal and briefly describes global trends and practices in this field. Additionally, it outlines the methodology employed to conduct this study. The article then analyzes the data, summarizes the key findings, and presents the conclusions of the study.

Objectives and Research Questions

The objectives of this study were to review the assessment practices in higher education in Nepal and to examine the extent to which these practices have contributed to assessment for learning. The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do teaching faculty perceive assessment for learning?
2. What methods and tools do teaching faculties use for assessment?
3. To what extent do the assessment practices adopted in higher education contribute to student learning?

Review of Literature

This section begins by discussing the concepts of assessment for learning and assessment as learning and concludes by identifying the key qualities of effective assessment. Additionally, it provides a brief overview of global assessment trends in higher education. Finally, this section reviews assessment practices in higher education in Nepal.

The current practices of the examination system in higher education can be understood within the context of a long historical tradition of written

examinations globally. The systematic written examination originated in imperial China, where it was used to select civil servants through the examination beginning in 606 A.D. (Sven and Yu, 2006, as cited in Kellaghan and Greaney, 2019). However, other sources indicate that written examinations had been practiced in China as early as 165 B.C. (Elman, 2000, as cited in Kellaghan and Greaney, 2019). The primary purpose of these examinations was to select individuals for employment rather than to support learning. This system, with some modifications, persisted in China until 1905 A.D. (Wilbrink, 1997). In the ancient period, the Gurukul education system adopted an oral education with an oral form of assessment in the Indian subcontinent.

Similarly, during the ancient education system of Greece and during the medieval period, in the Islamic education system as well as European universities, oral examination was practised (Kellaghan & Greaney, 2019). However, during the late fifteenth century, European universities adopted both written and oral examination systems. In response to schools' and higher education institutions' demand for a formal way to assign ranks and evaluate student progress, the education system continued the practice of testing globally (McArthur, 1986). In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, attempts have been made to develop a standardized examination system, generating some ideas and discussion of intelligence measurement initiated by Francis Galton (1822–1911) and Alfred Binet (1857–1911). During the first decade of the twentieth century, there was a growing realization of the need for the use of statistics in different fields of study, including educational measures. In the twentieth century, the objective intelligence test was the focus of such standardization and statistical modulations by introducing a new type of test 'multiple choice questions' (Kellaghan & Greaney, 2019; McArthur, 1986). In addition, psychometric models, including Classical Test Theory (CTT) and Item-response Theory (IRT) of measurement, and statistical methods of calculating reliability and validity as

well as item qualities have been introduced. Since the nineteenth century, high-stakes public examinations at the national level have begun in various countries across the globe. Besides, in several education systems, there are practices for participating in provincial as well as international board examinations. In relation to higher education, most universities have a separate examination system for the purpose of certifying students. However, since the mid-twentieth century, education researchers have demonstrated that standardized testing does not significantly enhance student learning (Nichols & Harris, 2016).

Currently, diverse examination systems exist worldwide, primarily serving functions such as certification, selection, student motivation, oversight of school activities, provision of information for educational management, accountability for student achievement levels among schools and teachers, and students, and legitimization of membership in a global society (Kellaghan & Greaney, 2019). Unfortunately, these examinations often fail to provide direct feedback to students that could facilitate their learning. In many instances, public examinations are not integrated with classroom practices. Due to the limitations of examinations in contributing to student learning and the lack of adequate integration of assessment and teaching-learning, educationists and assessment experts proposed a wider meaning of student assessment with the use of both formative and summative purposes through using various assessment methods, including both testing and non-testing. As the focus of the examination was 'assessment of learning' rather than assessment for learning and assessment as learning, educators and assessment experts searched for an alternative idea about assessment that could be used to promote students' learning. Since the middle of the twentieth century, the discourse about making assessment an integral part of teaching and learning to contribute to students' learning has been initiated with the emergence of constructivist learning theories in the late nineteenth century, together with Bloom's taxonomy for learning in the middle of the twentieth century. Scriven's

(1967) identified the need for formative assessment by differentiating formative and summative assessment, as "Scriven's formative evaluation led to using assessment processes early in the educational course of events to inform learners as to what they needed to learn and instructors as to what they needed to teach" (Brown, 2022, p. 3).

Three distinct functions of student assessment have been identified: guiding and encouraging effective approaches to learning; providing valid and reliable measures of expected learning outcomes, particularly in higher-order thinking; and assessing students to assign grades that define and uphold academic standards. To achieve these three functions, current assessment literature emphasizes three objectives: assessment of learning, assessment for learning, and assessment as learning (Earl, 2003). One of the key objectives of student assessment is to support students in their learning journeys. Literature widely agrees that assessment is an integral component of teaching and learning. Meaningful integration of teaching, learning, and assessment enhances students' learning achievements. However, the practice of examination-focused student assessment in higher education does not contribute to these goals; rather, it may simply reinforce pre-existing social status and hierarchy (Bourdieu, 1977, 1974) and serve as a tool of elitism (Brown, 2022; Gipps, 1994).

Assessment For and As Learning

Assessment of learning has been used to make 'judgments about students' summative achievement' with the purpose of 'selection and certification,' which also works for 'quality assurance' (Boyd & Bloxham, 2007). It has hardly any direct use in providing feedback for improving current teaching and learning practices. Assessment for learning is a kind of alternative practice to such an assessment of learning practices as it is 'formative' and 'diagnostic' in nature. The main purpose of such an assessment for learning is to provide feedback for the teaching-learning process, aiming at improving students' learning. Although the

purpose of the third type of assessment, assessment as learning, is also to support students for their learning, therefore, this can also be considered assessment for learning. However, in the former one, the roles of teachers in managing feedback and improving learning are the key, whereas in the latter, the focus is on the student's self-realization and improvement, which provides self-feedback for the students. As defined by Black and Wiliam (1998), assessment as learning is 'tackling assignments and revision is when higher education students do much of their learning' and 'is a subset of assessment for learning and sees student involvement in assessment, using feedback, participating in peer assessment, and self-monitoring of progress as moments of learning in themselves' (Bloxham & Boyd, 2007). Further, assessment as learning helps students know what the standard or goal is that they are trying to achieve, how their current achievement compares to those goals, and act to reduce the gap between the first two (Sadler, 1989). Students' involvement in assessment activities as a form of learning-oriented assessment and feedback activity contributes to developing learning and evaluative skills essential for employment and lifelong learning rather than just contributing to the learning at university (Boud & Falchikov, 2006, as cited in Bloxham & Boyd, 2007).

Darling-Hammond et al. (2013) identified five criteria for high-quality student assessment. First, it should provide students with the opportunity of transferring learning to new situations and problems through assessing higher-order cognitive skills. Next, there should be high fidelity in the assessment of critical abilities, meaning that instead of assessing through artificial or proxy context, conduct assessment in real situations, focusing on students' performances. Then, the high-quality assessment should be internationally benchmarked. Similarly, assessment tools should be instructionally sensitive and educationally valuable. That is, assessment should support learning. Finally, the high-quality assessment should be valid, reliable, and fair. Reviewing various

literature (e.g., Black & Wiliam, 1998; Bloxham & Boyd, 2007; Carless, 2007; Darling-Hammond et al., 2013; Earl, 2003; Poudel, 2016; Wiliam, 2011), in addition to technical qualities such as validity, reliability, fairness, and practicality.

Key Qualities of Assessment for Learning

Align with Learning Objectives and Pedagogical Activities. Teaching learning activity should be directed towards achieving the learning objectives. Effective pedagogical activities support achieving the learning objectives and quality assessment that informs the degree of attaining the learning goals (Torrance, 2007). Thus, the assessment and pedagogy should be linked and aligned with the objectives. When assessments align with the learning objectives, the assessment practice can contribute to enhancing the student's learning effectively.

Embedded with Classroom Practice. The classroom is the place where the faculty and students interact with each other for learning purposes. For the enhancement of learning, assessment practice should be linked with the classroom setting and classroom activities. To regulate student learning and ensure the achievement of learning objectives, embedding the assessment activity with the classroom setting is crucial (Black & William, 1998).

Promotes Deeper and Productive Learning-oriented. Higher education itself should promote a deeper understanding of the subject. The formative assessment practice supports deeper understanding and learning. Effectively designed formative assessment helps create a learning-oriented aptitude for the students. Among the various merits of the formative assessment, one important merit is to create a deeper learning-oriented environment. Hernandez (2012) stated that learning-oriented assessments encourage and support students learning in a more productive way.

Provide Effective and Constructive Feedback (Timely and Forward-Looking). Providing feedback is the most important function of the formative assessment. Timely and forward-looking feedback not only supports student learning but also helps teachers modify learning strategies. Without feedback, the assessment alone cannot enhance student learning (Hernandez, 2012).

Facilitate Self-assessment and Peer Assessment and Reflection. The learning focus approaches of assessment should include peer and self-assessment. Students can get the opportunity to assess their own tasks by self-assessment, which supports their own learning and self-regulation of the learning. Peer assessment also supports learning by assessing a distinct perspective, which will contribute to learning better and provide critical input for the students.

Work Assessment Tasks as Learning Tasks. Engagement of the students in learning process is essential. The traditional teaching-learning approach and assessment practice do not allow student engagement in learning. Effective formative assessment provides several opportunities for engaging the learner in their own learning. Assessment cannot be effective in separating student engagement and learning. For such engagement, assessment tasks should be designed in such a way that it works as a learning task. Bloxham & Boyd (2006) mentioned assessment methods that foster student engagement with learning tasks contribute to making assessments valid.

Emphasize Authenticity. Authentic assessment provides the opportunity to gain experience effectively in the real-world situation. Effective formative assessment emphasizes using the situational or contextual tasks for the assessment and helps connect the learning.

Motivate Students for Learning. Regular feedback and engagement in the learning process can leverage students' learning. Formative assessment with feedback support motivates students to learn. The multiple approaches of the formative assessment support the motivation of the students to learn better.

Provide Teachers with Sufficient Information for Improving Instruction. Assessment not only provides information to students but also, teachers modify their pedagogical approaches. During the formative assessment process, teachers can get the opportunity to modify their instruction and adjust the learning objectives with the student's learning needs and context (Popham, 2009).

Global Trends and Practice of Assessment in Higher Education

There is a growing concern about how to use assessments to foster employability and innovation skills for higher education graduates. There are some attempts to link student assessment to achieving twenty-first-century skills. The search for effective strategies and techniques for the assessment of non-cognitive skills like improved networking, social skills, and citizen awareness about civic responsibility has continued since these skills have not been assessed effectively in higher education (National Research Council, 2012). The recent expansion of online and blended learning challenges traditional assessment practices. E-assessments, e-portfolios, e-assignments, and computer-aided assessments are becoming popular concepts in the field. Generative artificial intelligence is creating uncertainty and unexpected changes not only in the assessment but also in the higher education system itself. Inclusion, social justice, and technological adoption are also the priorities of higher education practices, including the teaching-learning and assessment process. Technological advancement creates more opportunities for personalized learning, and it is also linked with a personalized assessment. Assessing higher-order thinking skills effectively has always been an issue in higher education (Brookhart, 2010). There is a growing concern about the practice of assessment for learning, which may adopt a wider perspective on assessing higher-order thinking skills.

The previous paragraph has indicated some general trends of assessment in higher education. Further, Hundley, Kahn, and Barbee (2019) have summarized student assessment trends in higher education with ten points. Although the focus

on external accountability of assessment in higher education has been continued, there is a growing trend of using assessment for improving students' learning—towards assessment for learning from assessment of learning. However, there are still tensions between accountability and improvement in higher education. Leadership and stakeholder's support and engagement have been considered basic conditions for an effective assessment system, which needs to improve continuously. Assessment strategies and approaches are becoming more diverse, inclusive, equity-oriented, and reflective with the use of diverse methods, tools, and technology (particularly, using ICT). Assessment is not limited to the content knowledge and skills; it is broadening its perspective by incorporating students' personal, academic, and professional development. For this, the focus has been shifted towards more authentic measures of student learning, which demands more performance-based and context-specific tools for assessment. Assessment is expanding its focus to include the learning processes and practices rather than just final outcomes, in which efforts must be shifted towards embedding assessment in teaching-learning (classroom practices) from the usual practice that separates assessment and teaching-learning activities. However, to improve and sustain quality assessment practices, there is a need for continuous high-quality professional development as well as support and encouragement for innovation and a continuous improvement in practice. Although there are several examples with convincing evidence of progress in assessment in higher education, innovation and improvement in assessment are continuous processes.

Assessment Practices in Higher Education in Nepal

According to 2023 UGC data, there are thirteen universities, five medical academies, and 1455 higher education campuses offering higher education in Nepal (UGC, 2023). Different universities have their own practices for student assessment. However, paper-and-pencil tests have been widely used. Variations in assessment practices are noticed not only from university to university but also

from program to program. In the re-introduced semester system of Tribhuvan University (TU), both the in-semester (internal) assessment and end-semester examination systems have been provisioned with a total weight of 40 percent for internal and 60 percent for end-semester examination in each course (TU, 2070) at the bachelor's and master's programs. The assessment system varies from program to program. This study focuses on the BBA program, and it has internal (ongoing) evaluation and external (end of the semester) examinations that carry 40 percent and 60 percent weightage respectively for final grading (Faculty of Management, 2021).

Acharya (2022) found that the practice of paper-pencil tests has remained dominant in higher education in Nepal. Indeed, there are practical examinations in technical subjects, including medical sciences, engineering, agriculture, and science and technology. However, they have also been using traditional paper-and-pencil tests as the main assessment approach. In the case of TU, although the university guidelines allow the teacher autonomy for the internal assessment, hardly any alternative assessment approaches have been practiced in assessing students' learning (Acharya, 2022). Similarly, Sharma (2021), in his case study on assessment practice in the English language at the master's level in the education faculty under the current semester system, found that assessment practice was not aligned with the principle of 'assessment for learning.' Instead, the focus was on 'assessment of learning," which is for grading purposes. He hardly found any assessment activities other than the ones formally provisioned for grading. The focus of the assessment was to obtain good marks (grades) rather than improvement in learning.

Similarly, Luitel (2022), in her analysis of assessment practice in higher education based on the case study at the Department of Mathematics within the Central Department of Education at Tribhuvan University, found that the assessment is mostly focused on the cognitive aspect of the student's learning

rather than practical. She further explains that there was a student's reluctance to involve other assessment strategies than the written test. When the teachers do not use a transparent assessment approach, certainly the students will not be ready for other assessment approaches. Similar findings presented by Neupane (2023) mentioned that most of the teachers used traditional paper-and-pencil tests rather than different strategies to assess and support student learning. He mentioned that the teachers were not properly updated and trained for the formative assessment. Acharya (2022) further claimed the poor quality of the student evaluation system influenced the quality of higher education. Certainly, the formal assessment of learning is not sufficient to assess the different learning dimensions, like collaboration, problem-solving, critical thinking, and so on.

Paudyal (2016) connected assessment practice and academic standards with the professional certification examination, like those from the Medical and Engineering Council, as students pass the university examination with good scores but fail the professional council's assessment after several attempts. A similar example can be drawn from the Teacher Service Commission License Examination. About 75 percent of the university graduates from the faculty of education have not got a pass score in the teacher's license examination in 2022. Out of seventeen thousand, four thousand permanent teaching posts were not fulfilled in 2022 (March 3, 2023, ekantipur.com). There might be several reasons for this, though the ineffective assessment system could be one reason. Concerning the reform of higher education assessment, Gaulee (2014) opined that the examination system in higher education needs to be revamped and modernized. Based on the discussion, there is a need to reform the higher education assessment system, focusing on assessment for learning.

Method of Study

To prepare this article, we used both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The participants were selected from the management faculty at

Tribhuvan University using the snowball sampling approach, which is a non-probability sampling technique (Johnson, 2005). All the respondents were current faculty members working at different campuses under the Faculty of Management of Tribhuvan University. All twenty-one respondents were from the faculty of management at Tribhuvan University, teaching different courses under the faculty of management at the bachelor level. The respondents represent all types of colleges (constituent, private, and public) and different job statuses, like full-time, part-time, and contract. Out of twenty-one participants, fifteen have master's degree qualifications, and the rest have further degrees, like MPhil. and PhD. Among them, twelve were aged between 30 and 40 years, and the rest were more than 40 years old. Similarly, sixteen participants have more than 7 years of teaching experience; others have less than that. The respondents taught the core subjects of bachelor-level management courses like economics, business statistics, accounting, finance, marketing, and management principles. In addition, we conducted in-depth interviews with three faculty members (economics, accountancy and finance), selecting them purposefully.

There were six sections in the questionnaires. Except for section two, others were adopted from already used tools developed by Rawlusyk (2018), which were used by Hernández, R. (2009), and Tang, Harrison, and Fisher (2008). The first section of data collection tools concerns personal information about research participants. Similarly, the second section of tools provides the faculty's perception of assessment for learning. Likewise, the third section of tools was designed to collect information from research participants on assessment tasks. The fourth tool section was related to self- and peer-assessment information. The fifth and sixth sections of the tools provide participants' views on feedback. The respondents ticked an appropriate box for the first section and selected the best alternative for the second section. The third and fourth sections of data collection tools were designed with a five-point Likert scale, and the remaining two sections

were designed with a six-point Likert scale. To conduct the in-depth interview, the major guiding questions were developed, like, how do you understand the assessment for learning? How do you do it? What are the challenges faced by you while using assessment for learning approaches? The university and faculty/institutions were selected purposefully to get three participants for the study.

To collect the quantitative information, we requested participants through email, phone, and social media by providing a link to the online questionnaire. The participants returned their responses to the structured online questionnaire. In addition, we conducted in-depth interviews using guiding questions from three faculty members coded FM1, FM2, and FM3 through Google Meet.

The information collected from the participants was analyzed on different themes, such as perceptions, practice, and challenges. The authors' experiences have also been utilized in the discussion section, as we are also partially involved in higher education teaching and assessment at different universities and courses. The information collected from the respondents was analyzed, connecting the different literature and research studies.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

The quantitative data has been presented as a number and percent, and the qualitative information has been added and transcribed based on theme. The analysis is presented in three themes: the perception of assessment for learning, assessment tasks and tools, including self-assessment and peer assessment practice, and feedback practice. The faculty's response has been categorized as never used, sometimes, and often based on the responses.

Perception of Assessment for Learning

The effectiveness of the formative assessment depends on the teachers' understanding and perception of the assessment. The assessment literacy of the teacher contributes to the effective use of assessment information in the

classroom. There is not any formal capacity development opportunity for formative assessment for the faculties. Out of the twenty-one respondents, 11 (52%) have not received any formal training or capacity-building opportunities. Likewise, 8 (38%) respondents mentioned that they have learned through teaching, learning, and personal effort. During the in-depth interview, one faculty member (FM1) who has more than 15 years' experience stated:

> I completed my master's degree with a good score and got the opportunity to remain a teacher at a private college. A few years later, I started teaching at a public campus as a full-time faculty member. I have never had a chance to get training on the formative assessment approaches. The faculty conducted only a one-day formal orientation regarding the changed course. I am undertaking my job as I observed what my teachers did. I have not been offered any orientation about formative assessment or assessment for learning.

In the quantitatively structured questionnaire, there was a question about how they assess their knowledge and understanding about the assessment for learning. Out of twenty-one respondents, 10 (47%) responded that they were just familiar; four respondents obtained an extremely low understanding, and seven (33%) respondents obtained a good understanding of the assessment for learning. So, the understanding of the assessment for learning was found to be unclear, and they have hardly employed it in the classroom. FM2 expressed his dissatisfaction of the training quality. He stated, 'the training was just formality and theoretical explain the structure of the assessment; I couldn't learn new things what I practised in college.

The data shows there is no systematic plan to apply assessment for learning. About 61% of teachers have conducted the internal assessment and practical examination as part of the final examination. Only one respondent has designed a performance task for the students. The remaining teachers conducted

the unit test but did not use the proper feedback mechanism as a part of the assessment for learning. FM3 expressed his experience with the new initiative which he was started and dropped.

> I have started some initiatives to assess the student learning from various practical tasks, but I couldn't get any support from the campus administration. A senior professor on my campus told me that you are a new teacher you can do. It is not necessary for us to do more tasks. Just teach them better, and they will study.

Assessment Tasks and Tools

The structured questionnaires asked the respondents how often they have been using different tools to assess the students' learning. Assessment techniques include individual projects and presentations, group work, and a workbook or worksheet. Similarly, writing a term paper, an observation form or checklist, a portfolio, lab activities, written tasks, quizzes, journals, blogs, etc. were the possible list of assessment tools. Table 1 shows the number of participants using different tools to assess students' learning.

Table 1

Assessment Tasks and Tools

Assessment Tasks/tools	Number of Participants		
	Never used	Sometimes	Often
Fieldwork	6	11	4
Individual projects	13	4	4
Group work	12	7	2
Topic-based discussion	5	9	7
Term paper	11	8	2
Observation/checklist	17	2	2
Portfolio	12	6	3

Table 1 shows that most of the tasks and tools that are designed for the purpose of assessment for learning are never practiced by the teacher. Fieldwork and topic-based discussions have been practiced by many teachers as prescribed

by the curriculum. Other assessment tasks and tools demand more engagement of the teacher during the assessment design. There might be several reasons for not using the assessment for learning. One of the reasons may be the lack of sufficient knowledge and skills in designing and using the techniques and tools for this.

Self-assessment and peer assessment are also assessment approaches that are useful for assessment for learning. However, the collected quantitative data and discussion in the in-depth interview show that there is almost no practice of these approaches in assessment. Students sometimes assess their own learning by reflecting on themselves, but the teachers do not design the self-assessment activity for application in the classroom.

The Practice of Feedback

Feedback is the most important aspect of assessment for learning. To use assessment for supporting students with their learning, the information collected from the assessment activities needs to be aligned with the feedback. Without providing constructive and specific feedback to the students, the assessment alone does not contribute to the student's learning. To assess the feedback-giving practice, some structured questionnaires were asked of the respondents, and a discussion on feedback practices was included in the in-depth interview. Table 2 presents information about the feedback practices of teachers.

Table 2

Feedback Practice

Statements	Response Number		
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
Providing feedback for the student is an important task for the teacher.	1	14	6
I used different strategies to provide the feedback.	5	11	5
I have a good understanding of how to provide effective feedback.	4	9	8

It is a waste of time to provide feedback because students only care about their grades.	6	7	7

Table 2 shows that the understanding and practice of the feedback differs among the respondents. Very few (only 5) teachers used different strategies for the feedback. Most teachers (7) believe that providing feedback is a waste of time and that students only care about their grades and about 34 percent respond as neutral mean that they are unaware of the importance of feedback. Based on the discussion during an in-depth interview, there is no formal training, workshop, or capacity-building opportunity for the teacher to provide feedback. One of the faculty members (FM2), "I never observed the individual feedback-providing system when I was in college. Lately, I listened to it but did not practice it individually and I never seen in my college from the senior professors".

Challenges of Implementing Assessments for Learning

The participants of the in-depth interview mentioned that the lack of proper knowledge and skill of teachers is one of the challenges in the implementation of assessment for learning effectively. Similarly, in the assessment design prescribed by the syllabus, there is no place to design the assessment independently. However, teachers can use the assessment for learning approaches while teaching in the classroom. The student's regularity, motivation to learn, and high number of students in the classroom are other challenges to implementing assessment for learning effectively. The major focus of the teaching-learning process is to complete the course on time rather than conduct the assessment activity. One participant (FM3) stated that:

> A successful teacher was the one who completed the course before the session ended. Then, most of the teachers' priority is to complete the course. Some teachers tried to use different types of assessments, but they did not get support from colleagues and did not have a conducive environment or motivation from the seniors.

Therefore, changing institutional culture is important for improving the practice of assessment for learning. Thus, the challenges for effective implementation assessment for learning can be grouped into four categories: teacher-related factors, student-related factors, course-related factors, and institutional factors.

Discussion on Key Findings

Based on the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, we found that faculty members in higher education possess insufficient knowledge and understanding of how to implement assessment for learning. Assessment literacy is a crucial factor in effectively applying assessment for learning to enhance student learning outcomes. To gather evidence of student learning, it is essential to design and utilize a variety of assessment tools and tasks. The limited responses from teachers regarding the use of diverse assessment methods indicate ineffective and inadequate assessment practices. This study aligns with the findings of Luitel (2022), Neupane (2023), and Sharma (2021), which highlight a predominance of assessment of learning practices in higher education in Nepal, rather than a focus on assessment for and as learning.

To effectively implement assessment-for-learning approach, a teacher's knowledge and understanding are crucial components that significantly influence their academic autonomy (Popham, 2009). Centrally designed curricula provide structured guidance for assessment practices; however, teachers often lack the flexibility to choose alternative assessment methods. The systematic implementation of self-assessment and peer-assessment practices is notably absent, with only a few respondents indicating occasional use. Furthermore, feedback mechanisms are neither well-designed nor effectively implemented. Consequently, there is a limited application of assessment-for-learning approach. Current assessment strategies are insufficient to support student learning and to develop human resources that meet evolving needs.

Assessment should facilitate and enhance student learning. A variety of strategies, tools, and tasks must be employed to ensure effective practices in assessment for learning. To meet the diverse needs of students from various backgrounds, assessments should promote the development of each student's potential. To motivate students to learn, it is essential to monitor their progress and provide support throughout the learning process. Traditional assessment methods may not adequately address the diverse needs and potential of students. Therefore, there is a need to monitor their learning and provide feedback for the learning progress.

Numerous factors influence assessment practices. The rapidly changing global context is a significant driving force shaping these practices of assessment. Additionally, a learning-focused assessment approach enhances student learning (Carless, 2007). To make assessments more effective for improving student learning outcomes, student engagement and constructive feedback are crucial. The awareness and skill development of higher education faculty and relevant stakeholders regarding assessment for learning will significantly enhance the effectiveness of student learning.

Conclusion

The global trend has shifted from assessment of learning to assessment for and as learning in the early twentieth century. At Tribhuvan University, which serves approximately 80 percent of higher education students, this shift has not been effectively implemented. The emphasis on paper-and-pencil tests has led to a predominance of textbook-based lectures in teaching and learning activities. Faculty understanding of assessment for learning approaches is inadequate, and practical application is lacking. The weak internal assessment practices and the dominance of assessment of learning in Nepali higher education restricts teachers' flexibility to select and utilize various tools and tasks for assessment.

Faculty capacity and motivation concerning assessments, student engagement in the assessment process, and the institutional environment are critical factors for enhancing assessment practices aimed at learning. Improving faculty motivation and capacity, allowing flexibility in selecting assessment approaches, and fostering a supportive college environment are essential areas for advancement in assessment for learning within higher education. A fundamental aspect of this transformation is to shift the culture of assessment practices in higher education from a focus on grades to a more learning-oriented approach, moving away from a grade-centric perspective.

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