



## **Exploring Continuous Assessment in Private Schools of Kathmandu Valley: A Teachers' Perspectives**

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### **Abstract**

This study titled “Exploring Continuous Assessment in Private Schools of Kathmandu Valley: A Teachers’ Perspectives” explores the implementation of continuous assessment systems aiming to shed light on the context, problems, and rationale for investigating continuous assessment practices in private schools of Kathmandu Valley through narrative inquiry. It highlights the significance of the study in addressing the limitations of traditional assessment methods. My personal experience as a student serves as a backdrop to the research, emphasizing the impact of memorization-based assessments on individual learning experiences. The literature review section of the study encompasses a thematic review of continuous assessment, different approaches to assessments, assessment practices in Nepal, and a theoretical review of constructivism. I have drawn on constructivist perspectives to explore the relationship between continuous assessment and learning goals, emphasizing the importance of aligning assessment with the active construction of knowledge. The study's findings reveal insights into the challenges posed by traditional assessment methods, the readiness for change, and the potential benefits of continuous assessment systems. The research also discusses the implications of continuous assessment practices for educators and policymakers, highlighting the need for intervention and reform in the education sector.

**Keywords:** Continuous assessment, Constructivism, Educational reform, Teaching-learning practice, Learning experiences



## **Introduction**

Evaluation is a must to assess the understanding or analyze how well an objective is met or a goal is achieved. It can help identify problems and plan a solution for them. Especially in education, evaluation is one of the major tools to assess the progress of any student. Assessment or a test is a measuring process or tool, similar to a weighing scale or a ruler which helps to weigh or measure the learners (Douglas, 2010). The most important evaluation tool we use in the education system to assess the learners is assessments. It is systematic and provides evidence of a student's progress throughout the evaluation period. According to Moon (2005), assessment is something that most teachers spend their time on. Assessment is crucial to teachers because, without it, they cannot provide feedback to the students or keep a proper progress report of them (Wiesnerová, 2012). This statement exhibits the significance of assessment in teaching and learning, associating it with the proper student evaluation.

Atlan (2002) states that evaluation is a continuous procedure where students and teachers are energetically engaged, monitored, and guided to make decisions about their performance. He claims that assessment is a course in which essential indications around the skills and aptitudes of learners are accumulated. Evaluation is another method of getting feedback on the teaching and learning process (Zerihun et al., 2012). It is a way to assess the student's understanding of the lessons taught. Thus, assessment is an indispensable fragment of the teaching and learning process that engages teachers and students to monitor and maintain an account of the student's performance and progress. There are different purposes for the assessments. The main purposes are to encourage the significant immersion of the learners in the teaching-learning process, provide feedback and suggestions, check the aptitude level of the students, identify the core problem, and work on finding the solution to help the students achieve their learning goals.

Testing or assessing students is also used to scrutinize how much the students can comprehend what the teachers have taught. Teaching and assessing are the two parts of a coin; one cannot function or meet the objective without the other. Assessment can be termed as all actions and events teachers and students go through to gather data that can be utilized to customize teaching and learning (Amua-Sekyi, 2016). Assessment can also act as a tool to reinforce and motivate students. It can provide the purposes for evaluation, whether as a summative assessment to determine students' accomplishment or as a formative assessment to aid students' learning (Phelan & Phelan, 2010). We can say that assessment and teaching are interrelated and influenced by each other. Thus, the assessment design should be such that it scaffolds the teaching and learning activities. The teachers must also have a strong understanding of what they assess students on. Assessment can benefit the facilitators and learners if it is well-prepared and validates the taught objective. Assessment is a crucial component of the teaching and learning process that, if well-designed, may be advantageous to both teachers and students in several ways. A well-designed examination helps students maintain their focus and retain their knowledge while honing the skills they need for their day-to-day life.



The current educational landscape in Nepal reflects a persistent reliance on traditional summative assessments, such as year-end examinations, that prioritize memorization and recall skills over comprehensive learning achievements (OECD, 2005). Despite the government's efforts to introduce alternative evaluation techniques, the prevailing public perception continues to emphasize scores obtained in year-end assessments. The changeover from the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination to the Secondary Education Examination (SEE) with a grading system and the introduction of the Continuous Assessment System (CAS) and interdisciplinary curriculum are attempts to foster holistic development and evaluate students based on day-to-day performance and participation (Seki, 2019; Ministry of Education, Science and Technology [MoEST], 2019). However, the effective implementation of continuous assessment remains lacking, even in private schools focused on enhancing educational quality. This raises concerns about the prioritization and adoption of continuous assessment practices, which have proven effective in other educational contexts.

To address these issues, this study aims to explore teachers' perceptions of assessment and their alignment with recent developments in assessment practices in private schools in the Kathmandu Valley. It seeks to investigate teachers' awareness of the requirements and tools provided by the curriculum development center and their actual implementation of the continuous assessment system. By understanding teachers' perspectives and practices, the research intends to identify barriers and propose solutions for the successful implementation of continuous assessment in the Nepali education system. The rationale for this study lies in the assertion by Stefani (2005) that assessment is crucial for actual learning. The research aligns with the broader purpose of scrutinizing the pros and cons of the current evaluation system, providing reasons, references, and examples for the necessity of change in the assessment system, and proposing effective ways to evaluate student learning. Ultimately, the study aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on the need for educational reforms in Nepal and to shed light on how continuous assessment practices can be integrated into teaching processes to enhance student learning outcomes.

## **Literature Review**

### **Continuous Assessment**

Continuous assessment, as its name advocates, is a consistent assessment that is done repeatedly. Continuous assessment should be combined with teaching for progress and to direct the teaching-learning process. It can be used to improve students' learning and performance in the classroom (Holmes, 2015). In CAS, the teachers and students work as a team to resolve the difficulties faced by the students. The teacher maintains a record of the recurring assessment data to provide feedback and motivation to students (Arega et al., 2014). Hence, continuous assessment is an evaluation system that repeatedly integrates with teaching-learning activities.

In continuous assessment, students are assessed using learning outcome parameters or indicators. It is the assessment type that occurs frequently (Rezaei, 2015). The important factor of CAS is that the teacher should know each pupil's potential and limitations and be able to analyze how well they have understood the idea, or the concept being taught. According to



Gipps (2011), to keep track of their student's progress, teachers have to rely on continuous assessment. The teachers can then use this information to evaluate students in their daily teaching activities.

### **Different Approaches to Assessments**

Effective and well-planned assessments are as important as a well-planned lesson or any other activities in the teaching-learning process. The assessment and evaluation are essential to the constructive alignment process and allow students to understand their level of mastery (Baranovskaya & Shaforostova, 2017). Only a single approach to assessment may not be enough to assess the overall learning outcomes; therefore, to evaluate students, different approaches to assessment are essential.

Assessment is commonly separated into three approaches: assessment for learning, assessment of learning, and assessment as learning. Assessment for learning is an ongoing assessment that lets teachers observe students based on their everyday performance and alter their teaching according to the needs of the learners. Students receive pertinent feedback from this assessment frequently, enabling them to modify their learning as needed (Black & William, 2009). The purpose of a learning evaluation is to show the teacher, students, and parents how well each student has completed the assigned readings and other learning activities during a given time frame. It offers proof of the pupil's achievement. It provides useful, well-defined information, but its impact on learning is minimal. Summative assessments of learning are often completed after a task or work unit (MECY, 2006). Assessment as learning engages students in learning activities, which teaches them critical thinking and problem-solving. It also inspires students to set attainable objectives and empirically assess their growth. This approach of assessment is essential in assisting students to become lifelong learners. Using feedback and suggestions to modify their learning promotes a sense of responsibility in the learners.

### **Contribution of Continuous Assessment**

Many developing countries, such as Nepal, consider continuous assessment systems the most important part of everyday classroom instruction. It is a significant factor in any teaching-learning activity. Students should be assessed regularly thus, continuous assessment incorporates its assessment as a part of teaching-learning activities, which helps the learners boost their confidence and be an active part of the process. It implies substituting multiple assessments for a single exam at the end of the semester or academic year as activities in the classroom during the academic year (Rezaei, 2015). As per Holmes (2015), continuous assessment can aid students' learning and involvement in the classroom.

The activities used in the continuous assessment help the teachers recognize the interest and pattern of learning of their students and allow them to customize the learning activities through the curriculums and lessons (Arega et al., 2014). To assess students independently and implement student-centred techniques, many teachers practice CAS. The key purpose of CAS is to assess students, assist weak students with extra support classes and encourage them to be interested in learning (CDC, 2008). Therefore, CAS is a tool that assists teachers in modifying and planning their teaching-learning activities and caters to their student's needs through the data collected.



### **Assessment Practices in Nepal**

The assessment system in Nepal gives written tests and theory-based instruction precedence over learning assessments, resulting in students' lacking creativity and critical thinking. Because of this, there is a lack of collaboration amongst students, rote learning is prevalent, dropouts are high, and challenges in learning achievement stand as the major pitfalls. The evaluation system prioritizes theoretical knowledge and predetermined writing in exams, characterizing an intelligent student as one who can replicate what is taught in class (Gyawali, 2021). As per the evaluation system suggested by the CDC (2009, 2012, 2014, 2019), the examination content should mostly focus on the theoretical aspect, with vivid descriptions and a small portion of practical knowledge. The current system motivates learners to rote learning instead of encouraging them to develop comprehensive skills and integrate the learning into the real world.

CAS has been executed from class one to class seven in Nepal. The relationship between classroom activities and evaluation has been thoroughly discussed for the efficient implementation of CAS. It could help teaching-learning activities and improve student evaluation (Faubert, 2009). Most schools still focus on the textbook-based teaching and learning system, and the students are compelled to write the answers based on the textbooks rather than on critical thinking. The evaluation system still relies on summative assessment and the scores based on those assessments where students are to write answers to the given set of questions in a certain time frame. Khaniya et al. (2018) argued that for the students to be upgraded to the next level, they have to write the answers to certain questions in a limited time with predefined answers because the idea of the school-level assessment and the written examination seems to have overlapped in the current system of evaluation.

Although Nepal has made progress in recent years in continuous assessment techniques, it is far behind compared with countries like the United States of America, Canada, Singapore, Finland, the United Kingdom, etc. Continuous assessment in Nepal mostly uses conventional techniques like written tests and assignments. However, there is a growing focus on incorporating various assessment techniques, such as group projects, presentations, and projects. In contrast, other nations have a wider variety of assessment methods for continuous assessment, including exams, portfolios, oral exams, self-assessments, and peer assessments. While Nepal recognizes the necessity of integrating continuous assessment into the teaching and learning processes, there is still room for improvement in how thoroughly these practices are incorporated into teachers' teaching strategies. In contrast, numerous other nations have successfully implemented continuous assessment procedures into the teaching and learning process.

In reframing the policies, although Nepal has made efforts to integrate continuous assessment practices, more policy development, training initiatives, and support are required for successful implementation. These policies must include guidelines, chances for professional growth, and assistance programs to help teachers properly implement and use continuous assessment procedures. Though Nepal is making gradual progress in implementing





continuous assessment practices, it still has some ground to cover compared to countries with longer-established practices.

Understanding and gaining knowledge is the right of any student; while doing so, if they are directly involved, the learning is obtained better. The key purposes of a continuous assessment system are to determine the student's learning accomplishments, support low-achieving students, channel helpful teaching, and motivate them to learn (Hattie, 2015). The continuous assessment system can also be called a formative type of student assessment system; therefore, this study can be directly related to the constructivist theory. The theory of constructivism believes that knowledge is created in the learner's mind. They actively receive the knowledge and relate to prior knowledge to understand the new learning (Piaget, 2013). Therefore, today's students need to learn about constructing knowledge independently.

Integration of constructivist principles in continuous assessment Practices

Constructivism, a foundational theory of learning, asserts that individuals actively construct knowledge by interpreting and assimilating new information with existing ideas and experiences (McLeod, 2019). The theory, associated with pioneers like Piaget and Vygotsky, emphasizes the dynamic, social, and personal nature of learning. Learning is seen as a collaborative process influenced by cultural and social contexts, and constructivism posits that knowledge is not innate but actively constructed within the human mind. The theory recognizes the uniqueness of each learner, highlighting the importance of prior knowledge, experiences, and motivation in the learning process. It also underscores the contextual nature of knowledge, suggesting that learning is a gradual, non-instantaneous process that takes place within the learner's mind (Elliott et al., 2000; Vygotsky, 1978; Oakley, 2004; Driscoll, 2000).

Aligned with the constructivist approach to learning is the concept of continuous assessment, which resonates with the ideologies of constructivism. Continuous assessment is an ongoing process integrated into the learning experience, emphasizing formative assessment and the active involvement of learners and teachers. The constructivist principles, such as the dynamic and contextual nature of learning, align with continuous assessment practices, emphasizing the importance of ongoing evaluation, timely feedback, and collaboration between teachers and students. Continuous assessment, seen as a formative approach, aims to enhance the quality of students' learning by considering individual needs and promoting a collaborative learning environment (Yilmaz, 2008; Abulnour, 2016).

The research focuses on the practices of continuous assessment through a constructivist lens, exploring how these principles are implemented in the educational context. The study delves into the role of constructivism in shaping assessment practices, emphasizing the collaborative and dynamic nature of learning. By examining the alignment between constructivist theory and continuous assessment practices, the research sheds light on how these approaches contribute to educational quality and student learning outcomes. The overarching theme revolves around the integration of constructivist principles in continuous assessment practices for a more effective and learner-centric educational experience.



### **Constructivist Pedagogy and Continuous Assessment System**

Learners' teaching and learning program goal is to acquire knowledge and skills. Initially, these goals were restricted to academic settings only. However, with successive revolutions and reformation in education, the necessity of new challenges has been highlighted, including both the personal and social context in the curricula (Ramos-Alvarez et al., 2010). Instead of explaining how to learn to accomplish a task, the goal of instruction should be to demonstrate how to perform it.

Evaluation and assessment practices within constructivism are different from traditional approaches. Dynamic assessment was the term Palincsar (1998) used to define the approach used for the evaluation within the constructive framework, where another person guides an individual to assess and determine their potential. It supports the idea of facilitators and facilitation, where teachers guide the students to reach their potential. According to constructivist theory, rather than simply giving the learner predefined instructions, effective teaching requires involving the student with real-world applications of how to utilize a tool. The abilities of individuals go beyond academic contents-contexts, imposing a thoughtful restructuring of attained knowledge and consigning to situations and circumstances (Monereo & Pozo, 2007). An effective constructivist teaching method entails delivering knowledge by updating the material at various points and applying it to various goals and circumstances.

Certain predetermined tools are needed to measure learners' performance successfully. These tools are such that they cannot only evaluate knowledge but also assess how that knowledge is applied in different situations. This kind of assessment is more comprehensive than traditional assessment and can potentially evaluate the students' actual learning.

The above passages highlight the key principles of constructivism and its relationship to continuous assessment practices. According to constructivism, learners construct knowledge based on their existing knowledge and experiences. It accentuates that learning is a dynamic and active process in which students actively engage with physical participation and direct their learning. Knowledge is constructed in large part through social interactions and cultural context. Learning is a subjective process that differs for everyone based on their experiences, convictions, and prior knowledge. As students gain new experiences and understanding, their accumulation of knowledge is constantly restructured.

Constructivism strongly highlights the importance of motivation as a factor in driving learning, cultivating a positive mindset, and encouraging acceptance of new information. Constructivism and the continuous assessment system are related because they both aim to encourage individuality, teamwork, and meaningful evaluation of students' learning. Constructivist pedagogy is aligned with continuous assessment, incorporated into the learning process, and offers continuing feedback. It highlights the use of information in multiple contexts and recognizes the contextual aspect of learning. Comprehensive evaluation methods are crucial for evaluating learners' performance and assessing their ability to apply knowledge successfully across settings.

The importance of engaging students through the cultivation of interest and the implementation of formative assessments for academic growth has been underscored in



educational research (Strauss, 2011; Huisman, 2018). While summative assessments are prevalent, a study by MIT, Harvard, and Brown University researchers reveals their limited effectiveness in measuring critical thinking abilities and cognitive intelligence (Matura, 2014). The implications of high-stakes testing extend beyond academic outcomes, as highlighted in Bhattarai's (2019) research, which identifies sociocultural, socioeconomic, and value-based educational factors that heighten the stakes and consequences of assessments globally.

Past research on teachers' perspectives on continuous assessment systems, as Rai's (2019) exploration at the basic level, highlights the challenge that educators encounter when putting continuous assessment into practice because of a lack of resources and training. Similarly, studies by Chapagain (2005) and Ghimire (2010) highlight the effectiveness of continuous assessment in enhancing students' achievement in English. The global search for balanced and cohesive assessment methods aligning with learning objectives (Darling-Hammond, 2014; Herman, 2010) emphasizes the significance of continuous assessment as an ongoing process integrated with teaching and learning activities (Earl, 2013). The literature review also reveals challenges in the implementation of educational reforms in Nepal, emphasizing the need for better planning and awareness among teachers, students, and parents to ensure a successful transition to new teaching pedagogies and techniques.

The current emphasis on scores in education policy is seen as a distraction from the fundamental objective of education, which is to foster genuine knowledge acquisition (Morgan, 2016). A shift toward a more authentic evaluation approach is advocated, moving beyond reliance on summative assessments and incorporating strategies that prioritize ideas, support, and collaboration over pressuring teachers to achieve predetermined results (Williams & Engel, 2012). Examples from global educational reforms, such as Sweden's transition from a norm-referenced to a criterion-referenced grading system in the 1960s and New Zealand's shift away from norm-referenced assessment, demonstrate the evolving perspectives on assessment methods (Wikström, 2006; Crooks, 2002). Similarly, Spain's move from summative to formative evaluation reflects the recognition of the need for comprehensive assessment reforms (Remesal, 2007).

Within the context of Nepal, various policies and plans have been formulated to enhance the evaluation system, starting from the National Education Commission's recommendations in 2011 B.S. that emphasized the importance of regular and comprehensive evaluations (National Education Commission, 2015). Despite several recommendations and plans, the gap between policy and practice remains evident, with inconsistencies observed in the implementation of continuous assessment systems. The policies, as outlined in the Continuous Student Assessment Implementation Plan (CDC, 2011), demonstrate a commitment to formative evaluations and a shift away from traditional assessments. However, the observed discrepancies, such as limited implementation in grades 1-5, the coexistence of exams with continuous assessment, and the lack of clarity in procedures, underscore the need for more effective implementation strategies aligned with policy objectives.

The research done so far showed the significant importance of a continuous assessment system, the various difficulties teachers face during the evaluation, and how CAS plays a





substantial role in helping students overcome the stress of examination and motivate them to work towards improving their learning achievements. In the context of Nepal, many schools still follow the traditional assessment system to evaluate the students. Even if the schools follow CAS, it is not effectively practiced, and it seems the school management themselves lack proper knowledge about the system.

According to the CDC (2020), the evaluation system considers how well pupils perform academically as well as their behaviour and contextual sensitivity. However, some real-world constraints exist on how the current evaluation system may evaluate learning accomplishments. According to the CDC (2020), the current evaluation method cannot build a connection with learning facilitation, which has led to practical issues when implementing the Continuous Assessment System in the school curriculum. Hence, the observation and teachers' perceptions can shed some light on whether or not CAS is being practiced achieving its actual objective.

Many similar studies were conducted by other researchers with similar purposes. Still, most of them were either focused on the students of grades 1-3 level or the use of CAS in specific subjects such as language, mathematics, etc. However, the research by Rai (2019) has a similar topic and purpose as my study but focuses on basic-level teachers, whereas I am focused on the primary and secondary levels. I found a huge gap in theory and practice with CAS. Many teachers are unaware of the reason behind the implementation of CAS and why it is necessary to use it properly for the evaluation's legitimacy. They feel that CAS is an added burden for their already overloaded workload and are not aware that it helps them manage their teaching as much as it supports the students' learning.

The existing research has underscored the considerable significance of a continuous assessment system (CAS) in education, emphasizing its role in alleviating students' stress, motivating their learning efforts, and contributing to overall learning achievements. Despite this, many schools in Nepal continue to adhere to traditional assessment methods, and even when CAS is implemented, there is a notable lack of effective practice, potentially stemming from a lack of awareness and understanding among school management. According to the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC, 2020), the evaluation system, which encompasses academic performance, behaviour, and contextual sensitivity, faces practical constraints in building a connection with learning facilitation, posing challenges to the implementation of CAS.

## **Methodology**

This qualitative study aims to explore continuous assessment systems from the perspectives of primary-level teachers at private schools in the Kathmandu Valley. It centers on interpretivism and uses narrative inquiry. The study of interpretivism is particularly suitable for this study because it provides an in-depth understanding of how educators interpret their experiences, highlighting the nuanced nature and complexity of their professional environments (Jean & Michael, 2000). According to Amua-Sekyi (2016), narrative inquiry in particular provides a framework for capturing the rich, contextualized stories of teachers and how their interactions with students and the broader educational system affect their



perspectives on continuous assessment. The narrative inquiry is mainly dependent on the aspects of temporality, sociality, and spatiality. Temporality was explored through an examination of how teachers' perceptions of continuous evaluation changed over time, especially after Nepal implemented educational reforms. Sociality highlighted the social and collaborative aspects of assessment processes by focusing on the relationships and interactions among educators, students, and administrators. According to Jean and Michael (2000), spatiality took into account the institutional and physical contexts—such as classroom arrangements and school rules—in which evaluation procedures took place. The structure of interview questions and observation procedures was used to operationalize these components during the information-gathering process to capture social dynamics, changes over time, and the influence of the school environment on continuous assessment approaches (Holmes, 2015; Rezaei, 2015).

Three main techniques were used to collect information: informal conversations, in-depth interviews with six primary-level instructors, and classroom observations. In addition to providing a layer of unstructured, spontaneous insights, the semi-structured interviews delved into teachers' perspectives on the benefits and challenges of continuous assessment. Throughout the data-collecting process, memo writing was used to document reflections and to establish patterns. Classroom observations, which were facilitated by a controlled timetable, recorded the application of formative assessments and feedback mechanisms in real-time. Six private schools were purposefully chosen for this study based on their dedication to implementing continuous assessments in the classroom. The participants were selected based on their familiarity with continuous assessment, their willingness to participate, how their practices have evolved, their interactions with administrators and students, and the effect of the educational setting. Informed consent was obtained, guaranteeing participants' knowledge of the study's goals, their right to withdraw, and the intended use of the data collected. Participant confidentiality was preserved by obscuring participants' identities, and cultural sensitivity was upheld throughout by adhering to local customs and norms. Ethical considerations were critical to the entire process. Memo writing was essential to consider positionality and mitigate bias during the collection and interpretation of data (Palincsar, 1998). The research methodology is carefully designed to uphold the principles of interpretivism and narrative inquiry, providing a robust framework for exploring the complex dynamics of continuous assessment practices in Nepali private schools.

### **Key Insights**

From the participants' narratives and the information, they shared, I found that traditional assessment is a barrier to learning because it focuses only on certain skills, such as rote learning, memorizing, speed writing, and many more, which all the students may not possess. Similarly, it also cannot evaluate their creativity. The needs of a slow writer are not met and it cannot evaluate the holistic development of a student. Not only that, traditional assessment fails to evaluate the actual learning of a student. There is a lot of bias in the assessment done. The students are not informed of their weaknesses and cannot improve.



According to their opinion, there are tremendous flaws in traditional assessment so to make the students perform to their full aptitude revolution in the education sector, especially the assessment system is extremely necessary.

Likewise, in the readiness to change section above, my participants pointed out the necessity for readiness for change. Their narratives show that they believe the traditional assessment has not been able to appraise the students' actual learning. From the information they shared, I found that as an educator, they are ready to do anything or implement any pedagogy or practices they can, if it helps the students to learn better. If it benefits the students, the teachers are ready to do anything. But the schools and educational institutions are not serious about it. They shared that many of them were not trained on how the new system was to be implemented. They believed that the schools work to satisfy the parents more than working towards the betterment of the students. In their opinion, it is not only the teachers and students who should be mentally, emotionally, and physically ready to accept the change, but the educational institution, the management team, and the parents should also focus on accepting the changes then only the desired change or result can be achieved.

Rubrics make things much clearer and easier if it is based on the objectives of the planned lesson or activity. The teacher and students know what skills they are focusing on with that particular lesson or task. In my third theme, my participants clarified that generating rubrics by collaborating with their learners helped them achieve their objectives better because they accepted what was expected of them with each lesson or task. They shared that the biases also radically decreased as they had clear student evaluation parameters. The level and criteria were described so that it was easy for them to grade their students based on that particular performance and not be influenced by how the individual is at other times or other performances. It also emphasizes that CAS helps analyze even the smallest skill separately using rubrics, which can assist students in identifying their potential in that area. There were different rubrics to evaluate their academic, behavior, skills, etc. therefore, their overall performance was evaluated based on holistic performance rather than just the academic ones.

Continuous assessment has acted as a factor that has motivated the students and built a positive mindset among them because the evaluation happens during the teaching-learning process. Except for a few activities, the students do not have to spend extra time preparing, and they enjoy the stress-free evaluation process. In my last theme, my participants narrated that CAS has helped learners have a positive mindset because they are guided and provided constructive feedback, making them see the areas where they can work to improve and enhance their learning achievement. Rubrics are shared with them in CAS so they can self-evaluate themselves and determine how to improve. It has helped develop an individual who can accept their weakness and work towards improving them. It has motivated them to compete with themselves and work towards becoming a better human being. According to my participants' perception, CAS has proven to be a blessing for teachers and students to enhance their learning outcomes.



## **Discussion**

The research findings reveal four key insights into the practices of continuous assessment in Nepali private schools. Firstly, traditional assessment is identified as a barrier to effective learning, restricting the evaluation of diverse skills and hindering the development of students' creativity (Mazumdar, 2010; Dion & Maldonado, 2013). The study aligns with the constructivist perspective, emphasizing that learning occurs through active involvement and social construction of knowledge, which is impeded by traditional assessment methods (Sjøberg, 2010). Participants emphasized the need for a shift from memorization-focused approaches to ones grounded in real experiences, aligning with the call for transformative practices in education (Ultanir, 2012; Griffin et al., 2012).

Secondly, the theme of readiness for change emerges, highlighting the importance of teachers and school administration being prepared, both physically and mentally, to embrace new assessment methodologies (Al-Maamari et al., 2018; Nordin, 2011). Teachers' optimism about the positive outcomes of change is crucial, and the study underscores the responsibility of administrators to provide proper training and resources for successful implementation (Kanjee & Moloi, 2014). The findings resonate with the constructivist idea that change in the assessment system is inevitable and should align with learners' active participation and dynamic knowledge construction (Piaget, 2013).

The third theme explores the use of rubrics for evaluation, with participants noting their effectiveness in minimizing biases, involving students in the assessment process, and aiding lesson planning (Gezie et al., 2012; Abulnour, 2016). Rubrics are seen as valuable tools for aligning learning goals with instruction and creating a reliable and authentic assessment process. The study aligns with constructivist principles, as rubrics support students' self-assessment and guide them in constructing their knowledge through reflection and understanding of expectations (McLeod, 2019; McMillan et al., 2011).

Lastly, the continuous assessment system (CAS) is identified as fostering a positive mindset among learners, encouraging active participation, self-assessment, and improvement (Westbrook et al., 2013; OECD, 2013). CAS provides regular feedback, suggestions, and a variety of activities that motivate students and enhance their learning outcomes (Abulnour, 2016). The study's perspective aligns with the constructivist view that effective teaching involves engaging students in daily activities, and CAS serves as a major tool in addressing learners' needs and supporting their self-assessment (Thomas & Brown, 2011; Elliot et al., 2000). Overall, these insights shed light on the potential benefits of continuous assessment practices in promoting effective learning experiences in Nepali private schools.

## **Pedagogical Implication**

The main purpose of this research was to study the practice of continuous assessment systems in private schools of Kathmandu Valley. Previous studies were either focused on its practices on a particular subject, government schools, or the students of primary level. The participant teachers shared their experiences of their practices. They reflected on the areas that needed immediate attention to determine the actual purpose of implementing CAS in schools



and educational institutions. The findings of this study might be useful for educators and policymakers as it shows what is happening, where their interventions are happening, and where their intervention is needed.

### **Educators**

Educators are the most prominent figures when dealing with the future of students because they are the ones who are directly involved with them on an everyday basis. If they take anything related to education and holistic development lightly, they will not be able to achieve their mission as they claim to. If they claim to work for the students' benefit, they need to consider the findings of this study.

Educators need to understand that the practice of CAS they are implementing in their schools has many flaws. It is not being practiced as it should be because the teachers and staff are unaware of the actual objective of CAS and the new practices prevailing in the national and international markets. They are not trained on how to implement them. Many are unaware of rubrics; based on the findings, most private schools do not use them. Most private schools have tried implementing the CAS but have also been unable to leave behind the traditional system, making it a mixture of confusion among teachers, students, and parents. Most schools still work to satisfy their parents rather than work for the benefit of students, thus ignoring the fact that implementation of CAS is not being as should be used.

If educators want their students to do good, they could work on making parents understand the need for change in the evaluation system and its positive impact on students' achievement. They could have well-trained and competent teachers and staff so that they can guide their students to compete in the global market. They could make a system to provide enough resources for the teachers and staff to work in a good and supportive environment to support their learners best.

### **Policy Makers**

Policymakers are another important unit that works to improve education sectors. The study's findings might work as a guide for them to see somehow what sectors they could focus on while altering the existing policy to make it more advantageous for the students. The policymakers could consider all the aspects before implementing any new system. Once implemented, they could regularly assign someone to monitor whether or not it is practiced as it could be and see if or not the objective of introducing the new system is being achieved. The other important aspect they could consider is if the new policy has been introduced, then there could be uniformity in its practice throughout the country. Only with uniformity in practice can students of the entire country benefit and get access to equal opportunities.

### **Conclusion**

The participants in the study shared their insights on the use of continuous evaluation in educational institutions. They identified several problems with traditional evaluation, such as its emphasis on limited skills like rote learning and memorization, its inability to assess creativity, and its incapacity to evaluate the overall growth of students. Traditional evaluation has also been disparaged for its biases and for not giving students enough constructive





criticism. To enable students to perform to their full potential, participants underlined the need for a revolution in the educational sector, predominantly in the assessment system.

Readiness for change was identified as a necessity in the assessment. Participants emphasized the need for educators and educational institutions to be physically and intellectually capable of embracing and implementing change. They acknowledged that schools and educational institutions frequently place a higher priority on appeasing parents than on enhancing student learning outcomes. Still, they also stated their willingness to adopt new pedagogies and practices if they benefited students. Participants identified that for change to be successful, all stakeholders like teachers, students, administrators, and parents should be willing and receptive to it.

Participants extremely appreciated the use of rubrics for evaluation. They found that rubrics helped decrease unfair evaluation and provided clear expectations for students. Collaborating with students to design rubrics was perceived as beneficial, as it increased student involvement and progress. Rubrics also facilitated lesson planning by aligning learning goals with instruction, activities, assignments, and assessments. Different rubrics were used for academic and behavioral evaluations, agreeing on a holistic assessment of student performance.

Continuous assessment was seen as a motivating factor for students and develop a positive mindset. Participants acknowledged that the evaluation during the teaching-learning process reduced stress and allowed students to focus on their learning without needing additional preparation. Continuous assessment provided constructive feedback and guided students on areas for improvement, fostering a growth mindset. Participants believed continuous assessment benefited teachers and students in enhancing learning outcomes.

The insights from the study highlighted the limitations of traditional assessment, the importance of readiness for change, the value of rubrics in evaluation, and the positive impact of continuous assessment on student mindset. It also highlights that CAS helps evaluate even the smallest skills individually through the help of the rubrics which can help the students identify their potential in that particular skill. These findings align with constructivist perspectives on learning, which emphasize active participation, personal construction of knowledge, and the alignment of assessment with learning goals.

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