

PRINT: ISSN 0971-8923 ONLINE: ISSN 2456-6756

JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Interdisciplinary Reflection of Contemporary Society

© Kamla-Raj 2012

PRINT: ISSN 0971-8923 ONLINE: ISSN 2456-6756

J Soc Sci, 33(1): 81-89 (2012)

DOI: 10.31901/24566756.2012/33.01.07

Students' Experiences of a Continuous Assessment Approach at a Higher Education Institution

M. Combrinck and M. Hatch

*School of Continuing Education, North West University, Potchefstroom Campus,
Potchefstroom, North West Province, South Africa, 2520
University of KwaZulu-Natal, University Road, Westville, Private Bag X54001, Durban, South
Africa, 4000
Telephone: 0182994556; E-mail: Hatchm@ukzn.ac.za*

KEYWORDS Qualitative Research. Formative Assessment. Assessment for Learning. Self-regulated Learning. Large Class Context. Multiple Choice Questions

ABSTRACT Assessment is an important component of any teaching-learning process. Due to economic and historical factors many higher education institutions have been using large-scale summative assessment. However, there is move away from summative assessment to formative and continuous assessment (CA). Academics are therefore re-thinking assessment practices and considering using the latter approach. One of the challenges when using CA is developing the logistical procedures for large classes. This study is based on the introduction of a CA approach for 1000 second-year macro-economics students in the Faculty of Management Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. It was underpinned by an interpretive research orientation and was explorative in that it aimed at achieving an in-depth understanding of these students' experiences of CA. Qualitative data were gathered. The article starts with a literature review of assessment and CA, followed by a description of the research methodology and design of the CA strategy, and finally a discussion of the qualitative data and findings of the study. The qualitative data indicate that CA assisted students to manage their workload better and improved their understanding of the subject content. This approach to assessment in higher education institutions requires additional research, but the positive results demonstrate that CA could be considered as an approach to improve teaching and learning in large-class contexts.