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## **Thesis Abstracts**

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**A Critical Study on the Continuous Assessment System done by Written Assignments in the Post Graduate Diploma in Education Programme of the OUSL.**

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*Questions about continuous assessment (CA) systems have aroused a great deal of controversy in most distant education institutions. Maintaining academic standards in the CA system is seen as an essential factor in ensuring the quality of programmes. This study seeks to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the CA system, to investigate the problems and difficulties faced by the student and the tutors and to apply the findings to improving the quality of the programme.*

*283 responses to the student teachers' questionnaire and 30 responses to the tutors' questionnaire were analysed along with the interview data. In addition to that Siegels (KOSMAT) statistical analysis was used to check the consistency of awarding grades to students, and a checklist to examine the quality of marking assignments.*

*This study led to certain conclusions. These are*

- the need to formulate a clear set of objectives in using CA as a method of evaluating student achievement*
- the necessity to find a method of teaching and the need to establish a mode of*

*supervision to facilitate the receipt of the marked assignments.*

*It was also revealed that the format of the assignments should be restructured and the questions should aim to induce creative thinking in the students rather than to review their memory. Another important revelation was the necessity to establish a direct supervision system to quicken the turn around time of assignments and an orientation programme for the entire system.*

*It can also be concluded that the method of determining the eligibility for the course is not a fair device in the interests of the students and that there are discrepancies in awarding grades by different tutors. Moreover it was evident that the students were not satisfied with the feedback given. It was also found that the regional centres should be developed as resource centres.*

*It was revealed that by making the CA system more practical and being guided to the standards of the institution, the qualitative development and the reliability of the assessment system could be achieved. The responsibility of the institution is to take necessary steps to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the CA system to contribute to effective learning outcomes of the student. For this to be achieved it is imperative that a clearer and more specific set of objectives for the CA system be formulated and that the entire system should be re-orientated. The practical operation of the process of assessment should also be reviewed through a formal system of supervision. This task could be accomplished effectively by enlisting the active participation of the regional centres.*