NAU Journal of Technology & Vocational Education, Vol. 8, No. 1, August 2023

UTILIZATION OF AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES IN BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME FOR ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study ascertained the extent authentic assessment strategies are utilized for academic improvement in business education programme in colleges of education in South-East Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised 158 business educators in the seven public colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria. The entire population was studied without sampling because the size was not too large. The instrument for data collection was a 22-item structured questionnaire. The instrument was validated by three experts. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the items, which yielded apha values of 0.91 and 0.90. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha levels. The findings of the study revealed that colleges of education business educators lowly utilized portfolios and moderately utilized projects assessment strategies for academic improvement in South-East Nigeria. Colleges of education. It was found that business educators' years of teaching experience significantly influence the extent of utilization of portfolios and projects assessment strategies for academic improvement. It was recommended among others that business education lecturers in colleges of education should endeavor to provide regular feedback to their students as regards their achievements in various authentic assessment procedures.

Keywords. Colleges of Education, Business Education Programme, Authentic Assessment Strategies, Academic Improvement.

Introduction

College of Education system is one of the tripods of tertiary education in Nigeria. Colleges of education appear to be the bedrock of teacher training institution in Nigeria. It has the primary role of training teachers who will be awarded the minimum teaching qualification of Nigerian Certificate of Education (NCE) (FRN, 2014). Onyesom and Okolocha (2013) noted that colleges of education provide exposure and learning for prospective teachers at the level of the Nigeria Certificate of Education (NCE) in instructional methodology/pedagogy, theories of instruction and curriculum. One of the teacher's educational programme offered in the colleges of education is business education.

Business education is a programme that exposes students to the fundamentals of business practices. It is a skill-based programme that trains students for office careers or occupations and for entrepreneurship, as distributors of goods and services, or as users of information (Okolocha and Nwadiani, 2015). It equips students with the requisite knowledge and skills to find jobs after graduation across territorial boundaries or to become self-employed (Ogben and Amahi, 2018). The

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National Commission for Colleges of Education in Okolocha and Nwadiani (2015) highlighted the following as the objectives of business education programme in colleges of education include: to produce well-qualified and competent NCE graduates in business subjects who will be able to teach business subjects in our secondary schools and other related educational institutions, to produce NCE business teachers who will be able to inculcate the vocational aspects of business education into the society; to produce NCE business teachers who will be involved in the much desired revolution of vocational development right from the primary and secondary schools, to equip students with necessary competencies so as to qualify them for a post-NCE degree programme in business education, and to equip graduates with the right skills that will enable them to engage in a life of work in the office as well as for self-employment. Meanwhile, the acquisition of these skills are often measured via assessment in the programme.

Assessment is the systematic collection, review and use of data about educational programmes to improve students' learning. Assessment thus, focuses on what students know, what they are able to do, and what values they have when they graduate from school. It is concerned with the collective impact of a programme on students' learning. Assessment can be defined as an ongoing process including a lot of techniques such as making an oral judgment of a student's response or writing down a phrase to comment on a student's essay (Al-Zoubi, 2019). Thus, the assessment of student learning is one of the most important stages of the learning process and it is related to educational development which many educational systems seek. It also brings to mind marks, marking and certification (Macpherson and Diseph, 2020). This form of assessment is the traditional modes of assessment. Traditional assessments focusing on the written or oral examination of knowledge can be effective in assessing the student's ability to memorize and redefine the knowledge-based components of the task. However, they are insufficient to measure learning and skills unless traditional assessments are integrated with performance-based assessments, such as authentic assessment, to reflect the achievement of expected standards. In the constructivist learning approach, assessment is part of the teaching process and is carried out not only in the beginning and in the end of learning but also throughout the learning process. Because the constructivist approach focuses on the process, it requires more and various measurement tools or methods than the traditional approach.

Traditional examinations cannot capture the actual changes in students' knowledge. On the contrary, assessment methods that emphasize the learning process and encourage students to participate in meta-cognitive and reflective activities are compatible with the constructivist perspective. Ohaka and Nnokam (2018) lamented that traditional assessment has led to educational institutions churning out graduates who are highly unemployable. The inadequacies of traditional assessment calls for a shift in paradigm to make assessment of teacher trainees in business education not only more inclusive but also democratic and learner-centered. Thus, the question of authentic assessment is central to the understanding of the competencies of students undertaking business education programmes.

Authentic assessment or performance assessment represents such an alternative assessment methodology. Authentic assessment refers to the idea of using creative learning experiences to test students' skills and knowledge in realistic situations. Authentic assessment is a form of assessment in which students are asked to perform real-world tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills (Mueller, 2018). Assessment is authentic when we directly examine student performance on worthy intellectual tasks. (Ozan and Kıncal, 2018) opined that authentic tasks not only assess students' authentic performances or studies, but also evaluate their ability such as

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persistence in solving complex problems, positive habits of mind, growth mindset, resilience and grit, and self-directed learning. The use of analytical or holistic rubrics, which is an important component of authentic assessment, provides criteria and standards for descriptive feedback, self- and peer assessment. It is important that students receive timely and formative feedback from teachers and/or peers to improve their performance and work (Koh, 2016). The assessment is based on authentic learning tasks instead of examinations only, and focuses on the learning process as much as (or more) the final outputs (Ozan, 2019). In this manner, Al-Zoubi (2019) pointed out that the quality of the assessment should be measured according to the students' real abilities. Al-Zoubi also stated that the real assessment objective was about achieving learning and not limited to assessing learning. Students must be included in the assessment process in order to obtain the true meaning of authentic assessment.

Consequently, authentic assessment is the actual assessment of students' performance to decide whether the students can apply what they have learned in real-life situations or not as well as having the ability to be creative and enabling the students to deal with rapid changes in the learning process. The educational assessment in its new trend includes strategies of alternative assessment based on the scientific, methodological basis, and on the authenticity of what the students have learned, in a way that ensures the quality of the educational process and its outputs in terms of the learner's reach for learning purposes and outcomes (Ukashatu, Muhammad and Mahmoud, 2021). The goal of authentic assessments is to evaluate a student's ability to demonstrate understanding of core leaning objectives in a real-world context (Ozan and Kıncal, 2018). Unlike traditional assessments, authentic assessment does not seek to measure rote learning and then require students to recall and restate the information.

Undoubtedly, the use of authentic assessment strategies can help in producing well-grounded and competent business education graduates capable of propagating the goals of business education especially at the colleges of education level. Authentic assessment strategies refer to measures students' success in a way that's relevant to the skills required of them once they have finished their course or degree programme. Authentic assessment strategies can be done in both formative and summative ways to assess business education trainees in a more holistic manner. This paradigm shift from the "One-off" assessment to multiple assessment strategies could make the more teaching and learning authentic, fairer, humane, democratic and inclusive. Kankam, Bordoh, Eshun, Bassaw and Korang (2014) noted authentic assessment strategies to include portfolios, open questions, exhibits, demonstrations, hands-on execution of experiments, self-assessment and computer simulations. Others includes performance, projects, anecdotal records, peer review, group evaluation, concept map, self-assessment, peer assessment and observation (Tay-Koay and June, 2017). The most two common authentic assessment strategies are used in this study which is portfolios and projects assessment. These are discussed below.

Portfolio assessment is a collection of a student's work, which provides a representation of their achievements. Portfolio assessment includes evidence of the student's work, which the student has compiled, for evaluation or assessment. The portfolio collection tells a story about the student's progress over time, or about the students' achievements in one or more learning areas (Stanley and Sri, 2014). Portfolio assessment is a practical approach that assembles students work, interpreting evidence of the students' performance and assessing students' performance relative to instructional objectives. Portfolio assessment is designed in order to present students' performance and development in any time period in detail. Bello (2017) reported that both lecturers and students did not understand the concept of portfolio assessment which comprises rubric, guidelines; self-reflection

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and portfolio model sheets. Ugodulunwa and Wakjissa (2015) who revealed that a significant mean difference existed between the extent of utilization of portfolios assessment strategies which resulted to the great impact based on years of teaching experience.

Projects assessment in a teacher training programme is a student teacher's own initiative and activity designed to give the student a practical training in specific skills in any project that relates to teaching and learning. The teacher trainee can be guided to undertake a learning project without regards to the course contents on how to deal with a disruptive learner in class (Macpherson and Diseph, 2020). The teacher trainee could also undertake a project on how to utilize a particular instructional strategy or facilities in instructional delivery. Project assessment involve the assessment which monitors individual students' progress toward achieving their goals, give feedback and involve students in the learning process in order to achieve the objectives of a programme in the educational institutions. Project assessment is useful to the teachers and students as it encourage skill development lessons in order to determine the way forward. Ohaka and Nnokam (2018) stated that there are changes in administrative policies, change of educational policy, organism in teaching strategy, student-teacher-class-ratio, teacher effective communication skills and availability of teaching aids are the trends in the educational process that have influenced the academic performance of students in business education programme. The above mentioned authentic assessment strategies are not only seen to be appropriate, but in line with the thrust of the study.

The influencing factors in the context of extent of utilisation of authentic assessment strategies in business education programme in colleges of education could be years of teaching experience. Years of teaching experience in the context of this study refers to the number of years of professional practice of business teacher educators. Ezenwafor, Aduhuekwe and Akamobi (2021) reported that respondents did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent of utilisation of authentic assessment strategies in business education in colleges of education, irrespective of their years of teaching experience. Business education, being skill-oriented, needs to be taught using authentic assessment strategies that will require teachers and learners involvement in the assessment process in order to obtain the true meaning of authentic assessment. The variable may influence their views on the extent of utilisation of authentic assessment strategies in business education programme in colleges of education in teaching business education courses. For instance, Ezenwafor and Akpobome (2017) reported that teachers' years of experiences are significantly related to their teaching effectiveness. This implies that teachers' competence is affected by the number of years spent in the profession. It is obvious that the success of colleges of education in South-East Nigeria in producing business education graduates with requisite knowledge, skills and competencies to effectively propagate the objectives of business education programme depends on the effective utilization of authentic assessment strategies by the lecturers. It is against this background; the study seeks to determine the extent authentic assessment strategies are utilize for academic improvement in business education programme in colleges of education in South-East Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Business education programme at the colleges of education is aimed at producing well-qualified and competent NCE graduates in business subjects who will be able to teach business subjects in our secondary schools and other related educational institutions. To effectively ascertain the extent to which the objective of the programme is being achieved in the colleges of education requires holistic assessment of students' learning. One of the challenges facing business teacher education programme seem to be the insufficient use of authentic assessment strategies by business

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educators. Therefore, if this ugly situation is not corrected, business teacher education programme could be churning out graduates who will be highly unemployable.

Thus, the implication of this is that authentic assessment strategies now place different demands on education in general and business education in particular. Therefore, the concern on how business education curriculum is delivered in Nigerian colleges of education in contemporary times becomes important if our educational system is to be relevant to serve the societal needs in the present learned-centred instructions. This can be done by adequately applying authentic assessment strategies in teaching and learning situation to improve and enhance business education students learning, academic proficiency, effectiveness and efficiency in the modern day world of work. The challenges for the educators in the colleges of education is no longer centred on covering the course content or adopting appropriate teaching or pedagogical aids but on extent they applied authentic assessment strategies in their teaching and learning. There is therefore the need for the business educators to be up-to-date in their knowledge and skills especially in the use of authentic assessment strategies in teaching and learning situations. The problem of this study is that, the extent authentic assessment strategies are utilized for academic improvement in business education programme in colleges of education in South-East Nigeria is not clearly known**.** If the status is not determined through an empirical study such as this, relevant stakeholders may not take objective measures to ensure that the graduates are empowered to effectively propagate the objectives of business education programme in the society upon graduation**.**

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to ascertain the extent authentic assessment strategies are utilize for academic improvement in business education programme in colleges of education in South-East Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to determine the extent:

1. portfolios assessment strategies are utilized for academic improvement in business education programme in colleges of education in South-East Nigeria.
2. projects assessment strategies for academic improvement in business education programme in colleges of education in South-East Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guides the study:

1. To what extent is portfolios assessment strategies utilized for academic improvement in business education programme in colleges of education in South-East Nigeria?
2. To what extent is projects assessment strategies utilized for academic improvement in business education programme in colleges of education in South-East Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of colleges of education business educators on the extent of utilization of portfolios assessment strategies for academic improvement in South-East Nigeria based on years of teaching experience.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of colleges of education business educators on the extent of utilization of projects assessment strategies for academic improvement in South-East Nigeria based on years of teaching experience.

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Method

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised 158 business educators in the seven public colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria that offered business education programme. No sample size and technique was taken. Data were collected using a 22-items structured questionnaire. The structured questionnaire was validated by three experts-two in business education and one in measurement and evaluation all from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. To establish the internal consistency of the instrument, a trial-tested was conducted. Data collected in the trial-tested were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha to determine the internal consistency. Reliability coefficients values of 0.91 and 0.90 for clusters B1 and B2 respectively with an overall coefficient value of 0.91. Out of the 158 copies of the questionnaire distributed to the respondents in their organizations through direct approach which facilitated a response rate, 153 copies (representing 97 percent) with an attrition rate of five copies (representing 3 percent) and used for data analysis.

Data collected regarding the research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation while, Analysis of Variance was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. In order to determine the extent authentic assessment strategies are utilize for academic improvement in business education programme in colleges of education in South-East Nigeria, a decision rule based on real limit of numbers was used such that ratings between 4.50-5.00 were regarded as Very Highly Utilised, items with mean ratings of 3.50-4.49 were considered as Highly Utilised; items with mean ratings of 2.50-3.49 were considered as moderately Utilised. Furthermore, items with mean ratings of 1.50-2.49 and 1.00-1.49 were considered as lowly Utilised and not Utilised respectively. In testing the null hypotheses, a null hypothesis was rejected where the calculated p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Conversely, where the calculated p-value was greater than or equal to the level of significance (0.05), it meant that there was no significant difference and the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Results

Research Question 1. To what extent is portfolios assessment strategies utilized for academic improvement in business education programme in colleges of education in South-East Nigeria?

Table 1

Mean ratings on the extent of utilization of portfolios assessment strategies for academic improvement in business education programme in colleges of education in South-East Nigeria

SN	Portfolio Assessment Strategies	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Encouraging business education students to develop abilities needed to become independent/ self-directed learners	2.30	0.65	Lowly Utilized
2	Encouraging business education students to think of creative ways to share what they are learning	1.52	0.74	Lowly Utilized
3	Providing visual and dynamic proofs about business education students' interests	1.70	0.69	Lowly Utilized
4	Providing business education teachers with new perspectives in education	2.69	0.49	Lowly Utilized
5	Providing a summary of business education students' filatures on certain tasks	2.44	0.55	Lowly Utilized
6	Providing opportunity for business education	2.34	0.68	Lowly Utilized

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	students to demonstrate their strengths weaknesses			
7	Reinforcing idea that the curriculum is the center of the educational process	3.20	0.45	Moderately Utilized
8	Providing multiple ways of assessing business education students' learning over time	2.50	0.52	Moderately Utilized
9	Providing more realistic evaluation of business education academic content than pencil-and paper tests	2.38	0.62	Lowly Utilized
10	Allowing business education students, parent, teacher and staff to evaluate the students' strength and weakness	2.46	0.54	Lowly Utilized
	Cluster Mean	2.35		Lowly Utilized

Data in Table 1 shows the cluster mean score of 2.35 which indicate that portfolios assessment strategies are lowly utilized for academic improvement in business education programme in colleges of education in South-East Nigeria. The analysis of the items further indicates that three items out of the ten listed items were moderately utilized. The mean rating for the three items ranging from 2.50 to 3.20 while the remaining seven items were lowly utilized with mean ratings ranging from 1.52 to 2.46. The standard deviation of 0.45 to 0.74 showed that respondents are not wide apart in their mean ratings which indicate homogeneity.

Research Question 2. To what extent is projects assessment strategies utilized for academic improvement in business education programme in colleges of education in South-East Nigeria?

Table 2.
Mean ratings on the extent of utilization of projects assessment strategies

SN	Portfolio Assessment Strategies	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Monitoring business education students' progress	2.60	0.51	Moderately Utilized
2	Giving feedback to business education students	2.50	0.54	Moderately Utilized
3	Involving business education students in learning processes	2.70	0.42	Moderately Utilized
4	Improving the performance of business education programme	2.69	0.43	Moderately Utilized
5	Identifying business education students' learning needs	2.44	0.56	Lowly Utilized
6	Providing for external validity of business education programme	2.64	0.49	Moderately Utilized
7	Assessing multiple perspectives in business education programme	2.20	0.63	
8	Using student-centered design to promote business education students' motivation	2.50	0.54	Moderately Utilized
9	Engaging business education students in active learning	2.66	0.45	Moderately Utilized
10	Responding to business education students' learning	2.56	0.53	Moderately Utilized

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	needs			
11	Promoting business education students' creativity	2.50	0.54	Moderately Utilized
12	Providing reference group measures to business education programme	2.41	0.58	Lowly Utilized
	Cluster Mean	2.53		Moderately Utilized

Data in Table 2 shows the cluster mean score of 2.53 which indicate that projects assessment strategies are moderately utilized for academic improvement in business education programme in colleges of education in South-East Nigeria. The analysis of the items further indicates that nine items out of the 12 listed items were moderately utilized. The mean rating for the nine items ranging from 2.50 to 2.70, while the remaining three items were lowly utilized with mean ratings ranging from 2.20 to 2.44. The standard deviation of 0.42 to 0.63 showed that respondents are not wide apart in their mean ratings which indicate homogeneity.

Hypothesis 1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of colleges of education business educators on the extent of utilization of portfolios assessment strategies for academic improvement in South-East Nigeria based on years of teaching experience.

Table 3.
The t-test analysis on the extent of utilization of portfolios assessment strategies for academic improvement in South-East Nigeria based on years of teaching experience

Years of Teching Experience	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Below 10 Years	51	3.19	0.12	151	2.425	.002	Significant
10 Years and above	102	3.12	0.13				

Table 3 shows that colleges of education business educators differ in their mean ratings on the extent of utilization of portfolios assessment strategies for academic improvement in South-East Nigeria with mean scores of 3.19 and 3.12, while the corresponding standard deviation is .12 and .13. Table 2 indicated t-value of 2.425, at degree of freedom of 151 and the p-value of .002. Testing at alpha level of 0.05, the p-value is significant, since the p-value is less than the alpha value (0.05). This implies that colleges of education business educators significantly differ in their mean ratings on the extent of utilization of portfolios assessment strategies for academic improvement in South-East Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of colleges of education business educators on the extent of utilization of projects assessment strategies for academic improvement in South-East Nigeria based on years of teaching experience.

Table 4.
The t-test analysis on the extent of utilization of project assessment strategies for academic improvement in South-East Nigeria based on years of teaching experience

Years of Teching Experience	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Below 10 Years	51	3.13	0.24	151	3.111	.000	Significant
10 Years and above	102	3.08	0.20				

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Table 4 shows that colleges of education business educators differ in their mean ratings on the extent of utilization of project assessment strategies for academic improvement in South-East Nigeria with mean scores of 3.13 and 3.08, while the corresponding standard deviation is .24 and .20. Table 6 indicated t-value of -3.111, at degree of freedom of 151 and the p-value of .000. Testing at alpha level of 0.05, the p-value is significant, since the p-value is less than the alpha value (0.05). This implies that colleges of education business educators significantly differ in their mean ratings on the extent of utilization of project assessment strategies for academic improvement in South-East Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study revealed that colleges of education business educators lowly utilized portfolios assessment strategies for academic improvement in business education programme in South-East Nigeria. This signifies a low utilization on application of portfolios assessment strategies for academic improvement in business education programme which is unremarkable. This indicate that colleges of education business educators in South-East Nigeria do not give adequate attention on student's progress over time, or about the students' achievements in one or more learning areas. This finding is in line with Bello (2017) who revealed that both lecturers and students did not understand the concept of portfolio assessment which comprises rubric, guidelines; self-reflection and portfolio model sheets.

The findings of the study further revealed that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of colleges of education business educators on the extent of utilization of portfolios assessment strategies for academic improvement in South-East Nigeria based on years of teaching experience. These finding agrees with Ugodulunwa and Wakjissa (2015) who revealed that a significant mean difference existed between the extent of utilization of portfolios assessment strategies which resulted to the great impact based on years of teaching experience. The reason for the similarities in test of hypotheses is because most of the colleges of education business educators who supposed to utilize the portfolios assessment strategies for academic improvement were not doing the needful as required to present students' performance and development in any time period in detail.

Findings of the study revealed that colleges of education business educators moderately utilized projects assessment strategies for academic improvement in business education programme in South-East Nigeria. This signifies a moderate utilization on application of projects assessment strategies for academic improvement in business education programme which is unremarkable. This indicate that colleges of education business educators in South-East Nigeria do not give encouragement on skill development lessons in order to determine the way forward of student's progress. This finding is in line with Ohaka and Nnokam (2018) who stated that there are changes in administrative policies, change of educational policy, organism in teaching strategy, student-teacher-class-ratio, teacher effective communication skills and availability of teaching aids are the trends in the educational process that have influenced the academic performance of students in business education programme.

The findings of the study further revealed that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of colleges of education business educators on the extent of utilization of projects assessment strategies for academic improvement in South-East Nigeria based on years of teaching experience and their different academic qualification. These finding agrees with Ezenwafor, Aduhuekwe and Akamobi (2021) who reported that respondents did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the

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extent of utilization of authentic assessment strategies in business education in colleges of education, irrespective of their years of teaching experience. The reason for the similarities in test of hypotheses is because most colleges of education business educators do not monitors individual students' progress toward achieving their goals, by giving feedback and involvement of students in the learning process in order to achieve the objectives of a programme in the educational institutions.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that the level of utilization of authentic assessment strategies for academic improvement in business education programme in colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria is not adequate for enabling the lecturers understand students' strengths and weaknesses, effectively plan and evaluate their instructions. This study has also made it clear that only self-assessment assessment is highly utilized in business education programmes in colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria. The study concludes that for assessment to be more inclusive and holistic, colleges of education offering business education programmes need to utilize authentic assessment strategies to its fullest.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Business education lecturers in colleges of education should endeavor to provide regular feedback to their students as regards their achievements in various authentic assessment procedures.
2. Utilizing portfolios, projects, anecdotal records and performance assessment strategies for academic improvement will help in producing well-grounded and competent business education graduates capable of propagating the goals of business education especially at the colleges of education level.

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