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The Effects of Continuous Assessment Practices in History on Students' Critical Thinking in Secondary Schools within Fako Division in the SouthWest Region of Cameroon

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Abstract

The study examined the effects of continuous assessment practices in History on students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division, SouthWest Region of Cameroon. The study was guided by four research objectives: to find out the effects of quizzes on history students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division, to find out the effects of assignments on history students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division, to find out the effects of presentations on history students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division, and to find out the effects of group work on history students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division. The objectives were converted to research questions and then to hypotheses. The research design used for the study was a descriptive survey design which combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches. All history students and teachers from selected secondary schools in Fako Division made up the target population. The accessible population consisted of Form Five and Lower Sixth history students and teachers from the selected secondary schools in Fako Division. The sample size consisted of 250 history students and 5 history teachers from public, lay private and confessional schools. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used for the study. The researcher used questionnaire for students and interview guide for teachers as instruments for data collection. The instruments were subjected to face and content validity. A pilot test was carried out in a lay private school in Fako Division which was not part of the sample. Coefficient was established using Cronbach's Alpha (α), $\alpha = k / (k - 1) \times (1 - \sum(s^2) / s^2)$. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics with the use of percentages and frequencies and inferential analysis with the use of Pearson correlation to test hypotheses at the level of significance. The findings revealed that quizzes, assignments, presentations, and group work had significant effects on history students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division. It was recommended that, teachers should consistently implement quizzes, assignments, presentations, and group work in history lessons, as these continuous assessment practices effectively enhance students' critical thinking. It was also recommended that, students should actively engage in quizzes, assignments, presentations and group work, as these practices foster their critical thinking skills in history.

Keywords: Continuous Assessment Practices, Critical Thinking, Fako Division

Introduction

The soft skills are becoming the most required skills in the 21st century and even for centuries beyond. Employers across Africa and the world are becoming more focused on obtaining talented graduates who possess many skills among which is critical thinking. Critical thinking is an essential skill in the study of history, as it enables students to analyse, evaluate, and synthesize information from various sources. This skill helps students to develop a deeper understanding of the past and its complexities. It encourages students to go beyond mere memorization of dates and events. Critical thinking fosters the ability to understand cause-and-effect relationships in historical events. Seixas (2006) [13] holds that critical thinking enables students to connect specific events to broader historical themes and processes, which helps them appreciate the complexity of historical causation. This understanding is crucial for grasping the interconnectedness of historical developments and their impact on contemporary society. VanSledright (2014) [14] highlights that critical thinking in History promotes an inquiry-based approach where students question dominant historical narratives and explore marginalized voices. This approach not only broaden their

perspective but also cultivates a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of history. Paul and Elder (2019) [11] highlight that critical thinking enhances problem-solving and decision-making skills, which are crucial in both academic and everyday contexts.

Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skilfully conceptualizing, applying, analysing, synthesizing, and evaluating information gathered from or generated by observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication. This process serves as a guide to belief and action (Scriven & Paul, 2003). It involves questioning assumptions, recognizing ambiguity, examining evidence, interpreting data, and making informed judgements. According to Ennis (2011) [4] critical thinking is reflective and reasonable thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do. Facione (2015) [5] describes it as purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference.

According to Moliki and Neba (2023) [10], in today's society, schools are held accountable for every aspect of students' achievement. One of the factors that influence critical thinking in history classes is continuous assessment practices. Continuous assessment practices are a systematic approach to evaluating student learning through various tools and methods over time, enabling educators to monitor progress and provide timely feedback (Adeyemo, 2022) [1]. Critical thinking involves asking probing questions about historical events, sources, and interpretations. Students demonstrate a basic understanding of historical events but fail to delve deeper into the causes, contexts, and implications. They recite facts without analysing or questioning them. Students also accept historical sources at face value without scrutinizing the credibility, bias, or perspective of the authors.

Despite the progress made in researching critical thinking in history education, several gaps remain. Much of the existing literature is centred on western educational contexts, leaving a gap regarding how critical thinking is taught and assessed in non-western cultures or diverse educational environments. There is insufficient exploration into how teacher training programs equip educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to foster critical thinking in their history classrooms effectively. This study provides valuable insights on the effects of continuous assessment practices on students' critical thinking. It informs educators on how to optimize assessment practices to effectively promote higher-order thinking abilities in history classrooms. The problem posed as a research question was therefore: What are the effects of continuous assessment practices on history students' critical thinking in secondary schools?

Research Objectives

The study was conducted to investigate the effects of continuous assessment practices in History on students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division.

Specifically, the study was geared to find out:

1. The effects of quizzes on history students' critical thinking in secondary schools.
2. The effects of assignments on history students' critical thinking in secondary schools.
3. The effects of presentations on history students' critical thinking in secondary schools.
4. The effects of group work on history students' critical thinking in secondary schools.

Research Hypotheses

The research hypothesis was:

Ho: Continuous assessment practices in history have no significant effects on students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division.

Specifically, the following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

Ho_1: Quizzes in history have no significant effects on students' critical thinking in secondary schools.

Ho_2: Assignments in history have no significant effects on students' critical thinking in secondary schools.

Ho_3: Presentations in history have no significant effects on students' critical thinking in secondary schools.

Ho_4: Group work in history has no significant effects on students' critical thinking in secondary schools.

Research Methodology

The primary research design that was used for this study was a descriptive survey research design. A descriptive survey research design is a non-experimental research method used to systematically collect and analyse data to describe a population's characteristics, behaviors, opinions, or trends as they exist at a specific point in time. It involved gathering quantitative or qualitative data using questionnaires, structured interviews, or online surveys to obtain insights into a group's attitudes or experiences. The purpose of the descriptive survey design was to provide detailed and accurate description of a population or phenomenon and to explore the characteristics or behaviours of a group without manipulating variables. It employed the quantitative research method. This required that a sample be drawn from the population and studied with the aim that, results obtained from the sample were used to make predictions about the population. To add, the survey design is the most suitable design used in social sciences research studies. This is for proper elaboration of characteristics and variation of population. This helps to describe samples as per demands of the study for further description of educational phenomena (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009 [6]; Leob, *et al*., 2017). The purpose of this design is to provide a valid and accurate representation of the factors or variables that are relevant to the research question and to gather data from samples of a defined population at a particular time (Endeley & Zama, 2021) [3].

This study was carried out in Fako Division. Fako is a division located in the South west Region of Cameroon, covering an area of approximately 2,093 square kilometers with an estimated population of 52,691. The capital city of this division is Limbe. Fako Division comprises seven subdivision which are; Limbe I, Limbe II, Limbe III, Buea, Tiko, Muyuka, and Idenau (Kabo, 2020) [8]. The climate of the division is tropical, characterized by two main seasons that is the rainy season and a dry season which support agriculture with crops such as Bananas, cassava, palm oil and other economic activities. The division is predominantly inhibited by the Bakweri people who have a unique cultural identity and are known for their traditional customs, dances and festivals (Koenig, 2015) [9].

Fako Division has various educational institutions. Looking at notable institutions in the Fako Division, The University of Buea, Cameroon's first Anglo-Saxon state-owned university is found in the Fako Division and the division is

the site of a good number of privately owned universities. Several other higher institutes of learning including the St Francis Schools of Nursing and Midwifery presently known as Biaka University Institute of Buea (BUIB) and one of Cameroon's three Catholic Universities are found in the division. In terms of basic and secondary education, the Fako division has schools of all strata in the region. It is made up of many public schools, confessional schools and lay private schools, which are owned by the government, private and missionary bodies. The schools range from kindergarten to Higher Institutions of Learning. These schools are more dominant in the area, making it a fertile ground for such studies to be carried out. Amongst the schools found in the Fako Division are Arabic schools, schools for the deaf and dumb, a rehabilitation centre for the blind and a reformatory school for young delinquents. Fako Division hosts a Linguistic center found in Buea which was created in 1963 for the promotion of the two official languages in Cameroon; French and English as well as the Buea Linguistic center annex in Limbe. Given the importance of technical education, technical schools ranging from secondary to university levels are dotted all over the division. Today, the Fako division harbours a huge metropolitan population made up of people from other villages, cities, divisions, regions, and nations mainly due to the presence of institutions of learning like the University of Buea, the Cameroon Christian Universities and the Higher Institute of Management Studies (HIMS).

Population of the Study

The target population of this study were history students and history teachers who were drawn from selected secondary schools in Fako Division. The target population of the study were; history students and history teachers of Government Bilingual High School Muea, Summerset Bilingual College Buea, Government High School Bonadikombo-Limbe, National Comprehensive High School Limbe and Regina Pacis College Mutengene.

Table 1: Population of the Study

School Type	Schools	Students	Teachers	Total Population
Public	31	25,889	2,633	28,522
Confessional	21	11,062	933	11,995
Lay Private	78	20,958	1,989	22,947
Grand Total	**130**	**57,909**	**5,555**	**63,464**

Source: Regional Delegation of Secondary Education for the South West Region, (2025) (See Appendix D for the detail population)

Table 2: Accessible Population

S. No	Schools	Students	Teachers	Total
1	G.B.H.S Muea Buea	195	3	198
2	Summerset College Buea	120	2	122
3	G.H.S Bonadikombo-Limbe	160	3	163
4	N.C.H.S Limbe	115	2	117
5	Regina Pacis Mutengene	85	1	86
	Total	**675**	**11**	**686**

The sample was a group that was selected from the accessible population and actually participated in the study. This subset was used to make inferences about the entire population. The sample was guided by Krejcie and Morgan (1970, cited in Amin, 2005) table for determining the sample size from a given population.

Table 3: Sample Size

S. No	Name of Schools	Students	Teachers	Total
1.	G.B.H.S Muea Buea	70	1	71
2.	Summerset Bilingual College	50	1	51
3.	G.H.S Bonadikombo-Limbe	60	1	61
4.	N.C.H.S Limbe	40	1	41
5.	Regina Pacis Mutengene	30	1	31
Total		**250**	**5**	**255**

The stratified sampling was employed to obtain the schools. The purposive sampling was used to select only the history students of form five and lower sixth, and history teachers.
The researcher used descriptive and inferential statistics for questionnaires and interview guide. The responses given by the respondents (N) was multiplied by 100 to get the final percentage as shown below.

$$\text{Percentage of response} = \frac{number\ of\ reponses}{total\ number\ of\ questionnaires\ given\ out}\ x\ \frac{100}{1}$$

For the interview guide, data was analysed using thematic analysis, which involved transcribed responses, coded key ideas, and grouping them into themes.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher amply ensured a plethora of research ethics before, during and after conducting the study. The researcher ensured appropriate data analysis by fully disclosing all methods that were used to obtain the data and all issues of bias were clearly dealt with in the design and interpretation of the study (Jenn, 2006) [7]. This ensures that the readers will not misinterpret the results of the study.
Again, the researcher declares no conflicts of interest (Creswell, 2014) [2]. The researcher had no personal, commercial, political, or financial interest. The researcher contends that no such conflicts of interest exist which means methodology and outcome of the research were not in any way driven by such forces. Furthermore, the researcher has given credit for the works of others used in this study by disclosing all sources of information and ideas used during the course of the study. Even when material was paraphrased, credit was given to the original source. This was done by properly citing and referencing the authors of whose works the researcher consulted during the course of this exercise.
Furthermore, to conduct data collection for the study, the researcher obtained permission (Creswell, 2014) [2] through an authorisation from the administration of the University of Buea, Faculty of Education. Apart from that, the researcher sought the consent of respondent as the researcher made sure that there was an informed consent of the participants through approval from the administrative authorities of selected secondary schools whose students and teacher made up the sample for the study. The researcher made every effort to explain to the respondents the researcher's agenda. The purpose of this study was explained to the participants so that they gave just what was required of them. The interests of the respondents were taken into consideration.
Moreover, only personal details that were relevant to the study were sought. However, respondents were not obliged to give their names or anything that could reveal their identity. They were not even allowed to identify themselves either by name or by any other means as their responses to the questionnaire were done anonymously. Those who were

not willing to participate were not forced to do so (Creswell, 2014) [2]. Only participants who consented and agreed to take part in the study did so. It was therefore a voluntary exercise. The researcher rewarded and appreciated those who provided valuable inputs (data, proofreading and sponsorship) in the study in order to avoid exploitation of participants and instead ensure reciprocity and respect (Creswell, 2014) [2].

Presentation of Findings

Findings showing the Effects of Continuous Assessment Practices in History, and students' Critical thinking were presented in tables. In addition, the statistical tool for data analyses for the study (Pearson product moment correlation coefficient) was computed and following that, research questions were answered and various research hypotheses tested.

Research Question One: What Are the Effects of Quizzes on History Students' Critical Thinking in Secondary Schools in Fako Division?

Table 4: Frequency and Percentages of students' Responses on Quizzes

Quizzes	SA	A	D	SD	Collapsed	
					SA/A	D/SD
Quizzes serve as a valuable checkpoint for learning.	116 (46.4%)	17 (6.8%)	6 (2.4%)	6 (2.4%)	227 (90.8%)	23 (9.25%)
Quizzes provide immediate feedback that allows students to identify gaps in their understanding.	123 (49.2%)	101 (40.4%)	18 (7.2%)	8 (3.2%)	224 (89.6%)	26 (10.4%)
Quizzes promote student's engagement.	83 (33.2%)	132 (52.8%)	29 (11.6%)	6 (2.4%)	215 (86.0%)	35 (14.0%)
Quizzes encourage motivation in students.	108 (43.2%)	117 (46.8%)	19 (7.6%)	6 (2.4%)	225 (90.0%)	25 (10.0%)
Quizzes reduces test anxiety by familiarizing students with the assessment condition.	92 (36.8%)	92 (36.8%)	43 (17.2%)	23 (9.2%)	184 (73.6%)	66 (26.4%)
Regular quizzes help students to build confidence.	112 (44.8%)	107 (42.8%)	22 (8.8%)	9 (3.6%)	219 (87.6%)	31 (12.4%)
Quizzes help to identify knowledge gap in students.	99 (39.6%)	129 (51.6%)	15 (6.0%)	7 (2.8%)	228 (86.4%)	22 (8.8%)
Quizzes help students to be aware of their own learning.	105 (42.0%)	111 (44.4%)	21 (8.4%)	13 (5.2%)	216 (91.2%)	34 (13.6%)
MRS	**833 (41.7%)**	**905 (45.3%)**	**184 (9.2%)**	**78 (3.9%)**	**1,738 (86.9%)**	**262 (13.1%)**

Findings from the study revealed that, students had different opinions on the use of quizzes in learning, as more than nine-tenth of the respondents agreed that quizzes serve as a valuable checkpoint for learning. Also, a similar proportion of respondents equally agreed that quizzes provide immediate feedback that allows students to identify gaps in their understanding. In addition, over four-fifth of the respondents agreed that quizzes promote student's engagement. Also, nine-tenth of the respondents agreed that quizzes encourage motivation in students. Moreover, an overwhelming majority of teachers also agreed that quizzes reduce test anxiety by familiarizing students with the assessment condition. Also, more than four-fifth of the respondents agreed that regular quizzes help students to build confidence. Furthermore, a similar proportion of respondents equally agreed that quizzes help to identify knowledge gap in students. Also, more than nine-tenth of the respondents agreed that quizzes help students to be aware of their own learning. Finally, as is evident in the multiple response set statistics, the majority of respondents favourably perceived the use of quizzes in learning.

Table 5: Correlation between Quizzes and Critical Thinking

		Critical Thinking
Quizzes	Correlation Coefficient	.253**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	·000
	N	250

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The findings from the correlation Table 5, revealed that the correlation coefficient for the relationship between quizzes on history students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division was 0.253** implying a weakly positive relationship between quizzes in history and students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division.

Verification of Hypothesis One

Ho_1: Quizzes in history have no significant effects on students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division.

Ha_1: Quizzes in history have a effects on students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division.

The findings of the study revealed that the p-value for the relationship between quizzes and critical students' thinking abilities in secondary schools in Fako Division was less than the cut-off p-value of 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05), implying that the relationship was statistically significant. The researcher therefore rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that quizzes in history have a significant effect on students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division.

Qualitative Analyses on Quizzes

Three research questions were; Do you use quizzes to assess students in history? How do quizzes help students analyse historical events? How can quizzes be designed to assess students' ability to explain historical concepts effectively?

Table 6: Teachers' Opinions on Whether They Use Quizzes to Assess Students in History

S. No	Themes	Sample Quotations
1	Regularly	"Quizzes help maintain focus and recall" "Yes, I usually use quizzes regularly to track students' progress"
2	End of unit	"Yes, particularly at the end of the unit"
3	Weekly usage	"Yes, I use quizzes weekly to reinforce key concepts"
4	End of lesson	"Yes, I use quizzes at the end of every lesson to assess retention"

As seen in Table 6, findings revealed that all teachers affirmed that they used quizzes, but had different views on the frequency of the use of quizzes to assess students in History. Four main themes emerged from the transcribed data. Firstly, two teachers were of the opinion that they use quizzes regularly to assess students in History. Specifically, respondents R1 and R4 were quoted as *"quizzes help maintain focus and recall"*, and *"yes, I usually use quizzes regularly to track students' progress"* respectively. Specifically, respondent R2 said; "yes, particularly at the end of the unit". In particular, R3 stated that; *"yes I use quizzes weekly to reinforce key concepts"*. Finally, respondent R4 stated that; *"yes, I use quizzes towards the end of every lesson to assess retention"*.

Table 7: Teachers' Opinions on How Quizzes Help Students Analyse Historical Facts

S. No	Themes	Sample Quotations
1	Interpretation of historical facts	"They prompt students to link historical facts and interpretations" "They help students to connect past and present"
2	Simplifying complex facts	"Quizzes help break down complex events into digestible parts"
3	Foster reflection	"Quizzes make students to reflect on cause-effect relationships".
4	Fostering creative thinking	"I often use quizzes to encourage students to think critically by comparing different events".

As seen in Table 7, findings revealed that teachers had different views on how quizzes help students analyse historical facts. Four main themes emerged from the transcribed data. Firstly, two teachers were of the opinion that the use of quizzes lead to the interpretation of historical facts. Specifically, respondents R1 and R4 were quoted as *"they prompt students to link historical facts and interpretations"*, and *"they help students to connect past and present"* respectively. In addition, one teacher was of the opinion that the use of quizzes helped students in simplifying complex facts. Specifically, respondent R2 stated that; *"quizzes help break down complex events into digestible parts"*. Moreover, one teacher believed that the use of quizzes fostered reflection in history learning. In particular, R3 stated that; *"Quizzes make students to reflect on cause-effect relationships*". Finally, one teacher was of the opinion that the use of quizzes in assessing history fostered creative thinking amongst students. Specifically, respondent R5 stated that; *"I often use quizzes to encourage students to think critically by comparing different events"*.

Table 8: Teachers' Opinions on How Quizzes Can Be Designed to Assess Students' Ability in Effectively Explaining Historical Concepts

S. No	Themes	Sample Quotations
1	Using essay formats	"My quizzes usually include short essay questions on key concepts" "The teacher design questions that ask for reasons behind historical actions"
2	Focusing on causes and effects	"I mostly focus on cause and effect, and the significance in the quiz items"
3	Using open ended questions	"The teacher includes open-ended questions which require explanation and not just facts.
4	Focusing on application	"I often use scenarios that would require students' conceptual understanding"

As seen in Table 8, findings revealed that teachers had different views on how quizzes can be designed to assess students' ability in effectively explaining historical concepts. Four main themes emerged from the transcribed data. Firstly, two teachers were of the opinion that quizzes can be designed by using essay formats. In particular, respondents R1 and R4 stated that*; "my quizzes usually include short essay questions on key concepts"*, and *"the teacher design questions that ask for reasons behind historical actions"* respectively. In addition, one teacher was of the opinion that quizzes can be designed to assess students' ability in effectively explaining historical concepts by focusing on causes and effects. Specifically, respondents R2 was quoted as; *"I mostly focus on cause and effect, and the significance in the quiz items"*. Moreover, one teacher believed that quizzes can be designed to assess students' ability in effectively explaining historical concepts through the use of open-ended questions. In particular, respondent R3 stated that; "*the teacher includes open-ended questions which require explanation and not just facts"*. Finally, one teacher was of the opinion that quizzes can be designed to assess students' ability in effectively explaining historical concepts by focusing on applications. In particular, respondent R5 stated that; *"I often use scenarios that would require students' conceptual understanding"*.

Research Question Two: What Are the Effects of Assignments on History Students' Critical Thinking in Secondary Schools in Fako Division?

Concerning the effects of assignments on history students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division, the frequencies of students' responses were displayed in Table 8 Students' response frequencies and corresponding percentages on the use of assignments were displayed in the table below for each questionnaire item.

Table 8: Frequency and Percentages of Students' Responses on Assignments

Assignments	SA	A	D	SD	SA/A	Collapsed D/SD
Assignments are methods for assessing students' performance.	110 (44.0%)	115 (46.0%)	21 (8.4%)	4 (1.6%)	225 (90.0%)	25 (10.0%)
Assignments are powerful tools that guide learning.	108 (43.2%)	114 (45.6%)	22 (8.8%)	6 (2.4%)	222 (88.8%)	28 (11.2%)
Completing assignments encourage deep learning.	102 (40.8%)	118 (47.2%)	20 (8.0%)	10 (4.0%)	220 (88.0%)	30 (12.0%)
Assignments offer opportunities for students to engage in collaborative projects.	90 (36.0%)	120 (48.0%)	33 (13.2%)	7 (2.8%)	210 (84.0%)	40 (16.0%)
Assignments help give feedback in the learning process.	75 (30.0%)	143 (57.2%)	26 (10.4%)	6 (2.4%)	218 (87.2%)	32 (12.8%)
Assignments are learning tools that promote continuous improvement.	104 (41.6%)	111 (44.4%)	25 (10.0%)	10 (4.0%)	215 (86.0%)	35 (14.0%)
Assignments encourage students to reflect on their learning journey.	82 (8.0%)	124 (9.6%)	24 (49.6%)	20 (32.8%)	206 (82.4%)	44 (17.6%)
Assignments help students to recognize areas for growth.	59 (23.6%)	122 (48.8%)	46 (18.4%)	23 (9.2%)	181 (72.4%)	69 (27.6%)
MRS	**730 (36.5%)**	**967 (48.4%)**	**217 (10.9%)**	**86 (4.3%)**	**1,697 (84.9%)**	**303 (15.2%)**

Findings from the study revealed that, students had different opinions on the use of assignments in learning, as nine-tenth of the respondents agreed that assignments are methods for assessing students' performance. Also, over four-fifth of the respondents agreed that assignments are powerful tools that guide learning. In addition, a similar proportion of respondents equally agreed that completing assignments encourage deep learning. Also, slightly more than four-fifth of the respondents agreed that assignments offer opportunities for students to engage in collaborative projects. Moreover, closed to nine-tenth of the respondents agreed that assignments help give feedback in the learning process. Also, closed to nine-tenth of the respondents agreed that assignments are learning tools that promote continuous improvement. Furthermore, over four-fifth of the respondents agreed that assignments encourage students to reflect on their learning journey. Also, seven out of ten respondents agreed that assignments help students to recognize areas for growth. Finally, as is evident in the multiple response set statistics, the overwhelming majority of respondents favourably perceived the use of assignments in learning.

Verification of Hypothesis Two

H_{O2}: Assignments in history have no significant effects on students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division.

H_{a2}: Assignments in history have a significant effect on students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division.

The findings of the study revealed that the p-value for the relationship between assignments in history and students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division was less than the cut-off p-value of 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05), implying that the relationship was statistically significant. The researcher therefore rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that assignments in history has a significant effect on students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division.

Table 9: Correlation Between Assignments and Critical Thinking

		Critical Thinking
Assignments	Correlation Coefficient	.431**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	·000
	N	250

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The findings from the correlation table above revealed that the correlation coefficient for the relationship between assignments in History and secondary school students' critical thinking in Fako Division was 0.431** implying a moderately positive relationship between assignments in history and students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division.

Qualitative Analyses on Assignments

Three research questions were; Do you use assignments to assess students in history? How do you design assignments to enhance students' analytical skill in history? How do you assess students' ability to interpret historical perspectives?

Table 10: Teachers' Opinions on Whether They Use Assignments to Assess Students in History

S. No	Themes	Sample Quotations
1	To promote research	"I use assignments, mostly to promote research and analysis by students"
2	To improve thinking skills	"Yes, they are key to developing deeper thinking" "Yes, assignments must allow students to explore topics further"
3	Frequently	"I frequently use assignments to see my students' performances in History" "Yes, the teacher use assignments as a routine in his class".

As seen in Table 10, findings revealed that all teachers affirmed that they used assignments to assess students in History, but had different views on the frequency of the use of assignments to assess students in History. Three main

themes emerged from the transcribed data. Firstly, respondent R1 stated that; *"I use assignments, mostly to promote research and analysis by students"*. In addition, two teachers were of the opinion that they used assignments to assess students in History to improve thinking skills. In particular, respondents R2 and R4 stated that *"yes, they are key to developing deeper thinking",* and *"yes, assignments must allow students to explore topics further"* respectively. Finally, two teachers were of the opinion that they use assignments frequently to assess students in History. In particular, respondent R3 and R4 stated that; *"I frequently use assignments to see my students' performances in History",* and *"yes the teacher uses assignments as a routine in his class"* respectively.

Table 11: Teachers' Opinions on How They Design Assignments to Enhance Students' Analytical Skill in History

S. No	Themes	Sample Quotations
1	Using multiple references	"I usually use integrate multiple sources and viewpoints"
2	Questioning	"I usually pose questions that require argumentation and justification"
3	Requiring inquiry	"I use inquiry-based formats to foster deep analysis" "I usually frame assignments around the interpretation of complex events".
4	Requiring comparisons	"I always include case studies that demand comparisons".

As seen in Table 11, findings revealed that teachers had different views on how they design assignments to enhance students' analytical skill in History. Four main themes emerged from the transcribed data. Firstly, a teacher was of the opinion that, in order to enhance students' analytical skills in History, multiple references should be used. In particular, respondent R1 stated that*; "I usually use integrate multiple sources and viewpoints"*. In addition, one teacher was of the opinion that, to enhance students' analytical skills in History, questioning should be used. Specifically, respondent R2 stated that; *"I usually pose questions that require argumentation and justification"*. Moreover, two teachers were of the opinion that to enhance students' analytical skill in History, they require students to do inquiry. In particular, respondent R3 and R4 stated that; *"I use inquiry-based formats to foster deep analysis"*, and *"I usually frame assignments around the interpretation of complex events"* respectively. Finally, one teacher was of the opinion that to enhance students' analytical skill in History they require students to do comparisons. Specifically, respondent R5 stated that;*" I always include case studies that demand comparisons"*.

Table 12: Teachers' Opinions on How They Assess Students' Ability to Interpret Historical Perspectives

S. No	Themes	Sample Quotations
1	Conceptual understanding	"One of the ways to assess students' ability in history is to look for students' ideas that reflect nuanced understanding"
2	Insightful student writing	"I look at how well the student consider multiple sides" "I usually evaluate how well students support claims with evidence"
3	Assessing students' critical thinking skills	"I often check for the use of primary and secondary viewpoints".
4	Students' contextualisation arguments	"Students' arguments must show empathy and historical context".

As seen in Table 12, findings revealed that teachers had different views on how they assess students' ability to interpret historical perspectives. Four main themes emerged from the transcribed data. Firstly, one teacher was of the opinion that to assess students' ability to interpret historical perspectives they placed emphasis on conceptual understanding. In particular, respondent R1 stated that; *"one of the ways to assess students' ability in history is to look for students' ideas that reflect nuanced understanding"*. In addition, two teachers were of the opinion that to assess students' ability to interpret historical perspectives they sought insightful student writing. Specifically, respondents R2 and R5 stated that; *"I look at how well the student consider multiple sides"*, and *"I usually evaluate how well students support claims with evidence"* respectively. Moreover, one teacher was of the opinion that to assess students' ability to interpret historical perspectives they assessed students' critical thinking skills. In particular, respondent R3 stated that; *"I often check for the use of primary and secondary viewpoints"*. Finally, one teacher was of the opinion that they required students' contextualization of arguments in order to assess students' ability to interpret historical perspectives. Specifically, respondents R4 stated that*; "students' arguments must show empathy and historical context"*.

Research Question Three: What Are the Effects of Presentations on History Students' Critical Thinking in Secondary Schools in Fako Division?

Concerning the effects of presentations on history students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division, the frequencies of students' responses were displayed in Table 6.

Table 13: Frequency and Percentages of Students' Responses on Presentations

Presentation	SA	A	D	SD	Collapsed	
					SA/A	D/SD
Presentations help students to focus on the most important elements of the content.	92 (36.8%)	106 (42.4%)	40 (16.0%)	12 (4.8%)	198 (79.2%)	52 (20.8%)
Presentations foster an interactive learning environment among students.	84 (33.6%)	110 (44.0%)	41 (16.4%)	15 (6.0%)	194 (77.6%)	56 (22.4%)
Presentation is an opportunity for active learning.	95 (38.0%)	115 (46.0%)	32 (12.8%)	8 (3.2%)	210 (84.0%)	40 (16.0%)
Presentation enhances communication skills.	89 (35.6%)	123 (49.2%)	26 (10.2%)	12 (4.8%)	212 (84.8%)	38 (15.2%)
Presentations improve retention among students.	80 (32.0%)	120 (48.0%)	41 (16.4%)	9 (3.6%)	200 (80.0%)	50 (20.0%)
Presentations actively engage students in the learning process.	93 (37.2%)	121 (48.4%)	28 (11.2%)	8 (3.2%)	214 (85.6%)	36 (14.4%)
Presentations are interactive components that effectively enhance student's participation.	114 (45.6%)	105 (42.0%)	24 (9.6%)	7 (2.8%)	219 87.6%)	31 (12.4%)
Presentations foster a deeper understanding of content.	85 (34.0%)	127 (50.8%)	23 (9.2%)	15 (6.0%)	212 (84.8%)	38 (15.2%)
MRS	**732 (36.6%)**	**927 (46.4%)**	**255 (12.8%)**	**86 (4.3%)**	**1,659 (83.0%)**	**341 (17.0%)**

Findings from the study revealed that, students had different opinions on the use of presentations in learning as closed to four-fifth of the respondents agreed that presentations help students to focus on the most important elements of the content. Also, a similar proportion of respondents equally agreed that presentations foster an interactive learning environment among students. In addition, more than four-fifth of the respondents agreed that presentation is an opportunity for active learning. Also, more than four-fifth of the respondents agreed that presentation enhances communication skills. Similarly, exactly four-fifth of the respondents agreed that presentations improve retention among students. Moreover, more than four-fifth of the respondents agreed that presentations actively engage students in the learning process. Also, nine out of ten respondents agreed that presentations are interactive components that effectively enhance student's participation. Furthermore, more than four-fifth of the respondents also agreed that presentations foster a deeper understanding of content. Finally, as is evident in the multiple response set statistics, the majority of respondents favourably perceived the use of presentations in learning.

Verification of Hypothesis Three

Ho_3: Presentations in history have no significant effects on students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division.

Ha_3: Presentations in history have a significant effect on students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division.

The findings of the study revealed that the p-value for the relationship between presentations in history and critical thinking of students in secondary schools in Fako Division was less than the cut-off p-value of 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$), implying that the relationship was statistically significant. The researcher therefore rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that presentation in history has significant effects on students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division.

Table 14: Correlation between Presentations and Critical Thinking

		Critical Thinking
Presentations	Correlation Coefficient	.401**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	·000
	N	250

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The findings from the correlation Table 14 revealed that the correlation coefficient for the relationship between presentations in History and secondary school students' critical thinking in Fako Division was 0.401** implying a moderately positive relationship between presentations in history and students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division.

Qualitative Analyses on Presentations

Three research questions were; Do you use presentations to assess students in history? How do presentations help students to explain historical narratives more effectively? How do you ensure that student presentation promote accurate interpretation of historical sources?

Table 15: Teachers' Opinions on How They Use Presentations to Assess Students in History

S. No	Themes	Sample Quotations
1	Not often	"Usually once or twice depending on the need I usually include presentations as formative assessment"
2	Often	"Very often to test understanding" "Yes, I often assign topics for in-class presentations" "Yes, especially for group task"
3	As a supplementary tool	"Yes, presentations are part of my assessment strategy'

As seen in Table 15, findings revealed that all teachers affirmed that they used presentations to assess students in History, but had different views on the frequency of the use of presentations to assess students in History. Three main themes emerged from the transcribed data. Firstly, one teacher was of the opinion that they seldom used presentations to assess students in History. Specifically, respondent R1 stated that; *"usually once or twice depending on the need I usually include presentations as formative assessment"*. In addition, three teachers were of the opinion that they often used presentations to assess students in History. In particular, respondent R2, R4 and R5 stated that; *"very often to test understanding"*, *"yes, I often assign topics for in-class presentations"*, and *"yes, especially for group task"* respectively. "Finally, one teacher affirmed that presentations was used to assess students in History as a supplementary assessment tool. In particular, respondent R3 stated that; *"yes, presentations are part of my assessment strategy"*.

Table 16: Teachers' Opinions on How Presentations Help Students Explain Historical Narratives

S. No	Themes	Sample Quotations
1	Orderly presentation of facts	"Students are encouraged to create coherent timelines" "Students have to build and explain storylines logically"
2	Coherent reasoning	"It enhances students' chronological reasoning" "They retell events using evidence and clarity"
3	Build narration skills	"Presentations build students story telling skills"

As seen in Table 16, findings revealed that teachers had different views on how presentations help students in explaining historical narratives. Three main themes emerged from the transcribed data. Firstly, two teachers were of the opinion that they insisted on an orderly presentation of facts by students, specifically, respondents R1 and R4 stated that; *"students are encouraged to create coherent timelines"*, and *"students have to build and explain storylines logically"*. In addition, two teachers were of the opinion that they insisted on students to demonstrate coherent reasoning in writing. In particular, respondents R2 and R5 stated that; *"it enhances students' chronological reasoning"*, *and "they retell events using evidence and clarity"* respectively. Finally, one teacher was of the opinion that students build narration skills as a way of using presentations to explain historical narratives. In particular, respondent R3 stated that; *"presentations build students story telling skills"*.

Table 17: Teachers' Opinions on How They Ensure That Student Presentation Promote Accurate Interpretation of Historical Sources

S. No	Themes	Sample Quotations
1	Peer feedback	"One way in which students' student presentation promote accurate interpretation of historical sources is through peer feedback and rubrics which help maintain accuracy"
2	Analysing info sources	"I often analyse and assess sources of information as a key component of accurate interpretation" "I usually request students to cite and explain relevant sources of information" "I often guide them to evaluate and critique sources"
3	Provision of model presentations	"I provide model presentations and clear instruction on what to do"

As seen in Table 17, findings revealed that teachers had different views on how they ensure that students' presentations promote accurate interpretation of historical sources. Three main themes emerged from the transcribed data. Firstly, one teacher was of the opinion that, peer feedback ensure that student presentation promote accurate interpretation of historical sources. Specifically, respondent R1 stated that; *"one way in which students' student presentation promote accurate interpretation of historical sources is through peer feedback and rubrics which help maintain accuracy"*. In addition, three teachers were of the opinion that they often required an analyses of information sources to ensure that student presentation promote accurate interpretation of historical sources. In particular, respondents R2, R3 and R4 stated that; *"I often analyse and assess sources of information as a key component of accurate interpretation"*, *"I usually request students to cite and explain relevant sources of information"*, *and "I often guide them to evaluate and critique sources"* respectively. Finally, one teacher was of the opinion that they provided model presentations to ensure that student presentation promote accurate interpretation of historical sources. Specifically, respondents R5 stated that; *"I provide model presentations and clear instruction on what to do"*.

Research Question Four: What Are the Effects of Group Work on History Students' Critical Thinking in Secondary Schools in Fako Division?

Concerning the effects of group work on history students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division, the frequencies of students' responses were displayed in Table 11.

Table 18: Frequency and Percentages of Students' Responses on Group Work

Group work	SA	A	D	SD	Collapsed	
					SA/A	D/SD
Group work enhances academic achievement.	126 (50.4%)	97 (38.8%)	17 (6.8%)	10 (4.0%)	223 (89.2%)	27 (10.8%)
Group work fosters critical thinking among students.	106 (42.4%)	109 (43.6%)	27 (10.8%)	8 (3.2%)	215 (86.0%)	35 (14.0%)
Group work builds social skills by engaging students.	99 (39.6%)	101 (40.4%)	41 (16.4%)	9 (3.6%)	200 (80.0%)	50 (20.0%)
Group work engages students in meaningful discussions.	95 (38.0%)	116 (46.4%)	28 (11.2%)	11 (4.4%)	211 (84.4%)	39 (15.6%)
Group work enhances problem-solving activities.	102 (40.8%)	105 (42.0%)	31 (12.4%)	12 (4.8%)	207 (82.8%)	43 (17.2%)
Group work creates a supportive learning environment.	94 (37.6%)	117 (46.8%)	31 (12.4%)	8 (3.2%)	211 (84.4%)	39 (15.6%)
Effective group work fosters deeper understanding among students.	115 (46.0%)	100 (40.0%)	24 (9.6%)	11 (4.4%)	215 86.0%)	35 (14.0%)
Group work enhances communication skills among students.	88 (35.2%)	129 (51.6%)	25 (10.0%)	8 (3.2%)	217 (86.8%)	33 (13.2%)
MRS	**825 (41.3%)**	**874 (43.7%)**	**224 (11.2%)**	**77 (3.9%)**	**1,699 (85.0%)**	**301 (15.0%)**

Findings from the study revealed that, students had different opinions on the use of group work in learning, as closed to nine-tenth of the respondents agreed that group work enhances academic achievement. Also, closed to a similar percentage of respondents equally agreed that group work fosters critical thinking among students. In addition, exactly four-fifth of the respondents agreed that group work builds social skills by engaging students. Also, more than four-fifth of the respondents agreed that group work engages students in meaningful discussions. Moreover, eight out of ten students agreed that group work enhances problem-solving activities. Also, slightly above four-fifth of the respondents agreed that group work creates a supportive learning environment. Furthermore, a similar proportion of respondents equally agreed that effective group work fosters deeper understanding among students. Also, closed to nine-tenth of the respondents agreed that group work enhances communication skills among students. Finally, as is evident in the multiple response set statistics, an overwhelming majority of respondents favourably perceived the use of presentations in learning.

Verification of Hypothesis Four

Ho_4: Group work in history has no significant effects on students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division.

Ha_4: Group work in history has a significant effect on students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division.

The findings of the study revealed that the p-value for the relationship between group work in history and critical thinking of students in secondary schools in Fako Division was less than the cut-off p-value of 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05), implying that the relationship was statistically significant. The researcher therefore rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that group work in history has significant effects on students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division.

Table 19: Correlation between Group Work and Critical Thinking

		Critical Thinking
Group Work	Correlation Coefficient	.575**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	·000
	N	250

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The findings from the correlation table above revealed that the correlation coefficient for the relationship between group work in History and secondary school students' critical thinking in Fako Division was 0.575** implying a moderately positive relationship between group work in history and students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division.

Qualitative Analyses on Group Work

Three research questions were; Do you use group work to assess students in history? What role does group work play to help students explain complex situations in history? How do you structure group activities to develop students' interpretation of historical events?

Table 20: Teachers' Opinions on Whether They Use Group Work to Assess Students in History

S. No	Themes	Sample Quotations
1	Depending on lesson objectives	"Definitely, especially for debates and case studies" "Yes, the teacher assigns group tasks to foster teamwork" "Yes, because group work encourages collaboration and critical thinking"
2	Often	"Yes, I often use group projects" "Yes, group tasks are part of my lesson plan".

As seen in the table above, findings revealed that all teachers affirmed that they used group works to assess students in History, but had different views on the frequency

of the use of group works to assess students in History. Two themes emerged from the transcribed data. Firstly, three teachers were of the opinion that they applied group work in the assessment in history depending on the lesson's objectives. Specifically, respondents R1, R2, and R5 stated that; *"definitely, especially for debates and case studies"*, *"yes, the teacher assigns group tasks to foster teamwork"*, and *"yes, because group work encourages collaboration and critical thinking"* respectively. Finally, two teachers were of the opinion that they often used group work to assess students in history. In particular, respondents R3 and R4 stated that; *"yes, I often use group projects"*, and *"yes, group tasks are part of my lesson plan"* respectively.

Table 21: Teachers' Opinions on the Role Group Work Plays in Helping Students Explain Complex Situations in History

S. No	Themes	Sample Quotations
1	Problem-solving	"Group work simulate problem-solving with historical facts"
2	Understanding	"Each member of the team brings a unique understanding" "Group work builds broader interpretation and understanding through discussions"
3	Simplify complex facts	"It helps students to breakdown complex issues together" "Peer explanations simplify hard topics for the students"

As seen in the table above, findings revealed that teachers had different views on the role group work plays in helping students explain complex situations in history. Three themes emerged from the transcribed data. Firstly, one teacher was of the opinion that group work helps in problem-solving. Specifically, respondent R1 stated that; "*group work simulates problem-solving with historical facts"*. In addition, two teachers were of the opinion that group work helps in the understanding of facts. Specifically, respondents R2 and R5 stated that; *"each member of the team brings a unique understanding"*, and *"group work builds broader interpretation and understanding through discussions"* respectively. Finally, two teachers were of the opinion that group work helps to simplify complex facts. In particular, respondent R3 and R4 stated that; *"it helps students to breakdown complex issues together"*, and *"peer explanations simplify hard topics for the students"* respectively.

Table 22: Teachers' Opinions on How They Structure Group Activities to Develop Students' Interpretation of Historical Events

S. No	Themes	Sample Quotations
1	Giving instructions	"Group rubrics focus on interpretation and reasoning" "The teacher gives guiding questions for event analysis"
2	Report writing	"The teacher requires the students to submit a collective report"
3	Task distribution	"The teacher assigns roles like researcher, writer, and presenter, for each student to partake effectively" "Each group presents on a unique perspective"

As seen in the table above, findings revealed that teachers had different views on how they structure group activities to develop students' interpretation of historical events. Three themes emerged from the transcribed data. Firstly, two teachers were of the opinion that they give instructions to structure group activities such that they develop students' interpretation of historical events. Specifically, respondents R1 and R4 stated that; *"group rubrics focus on interpretation and reasoning"*, and *"the teacher gives guiding questions for event analysis"* respectively. In addition, one teacher was of the opinion that to structure group activities such that they develop students' interpretation of historical events, they often required students to submit reports in writing. Specifically, respondent R2 stated that; *"the teacher requires the students to submit a collective report"*. Finally, two teachers were of the opinion that they often distributed task to structure group activities such that they develop students' interpretation of historical events. In particular, respondent R3 and R5 stated that; *"the teacher assigns roles like researcher, writer, and presenter, for each student to partake effectively"*, and *"each group presents on a unique perspective"* respectively.

Summary of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that; the use of quizzes in assessing learning in history had a weakly positive effect on students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division ($r = 0.253^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). In addition, the use of assignments in assessing learning in history had a weakly positive effect on students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division ($r = 0.431^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). The use of presentations in assessing learning in history had a moderately positive effect on students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division ($r = 0.401^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). The use of group work in assessing learning in history had a moderately positive effect on students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division ($r = 0.575^{**}$, $p < 0.01$).

Conclusions

From the discussion of the findings of the study, it was revealed that continuous assessment practices in history significantly enhance students' critical thinking skills. Through quizzes, assignments, presentations and group work, students are consistently engaged in analytical thinking, interpretation of historical events, and problem-solving tasks. Practices offer ongoing feedback and opportunities for reflection, which are crucial in developing higher-order thinking skills.

It was also concluded that when continuous assessment practices are effectively integrated into history instruction, students demonstrate a deeper understanding of historical content and improved abilities to analyse sources, evaluate different perspectives and construct evidence-based arguments.

Recommendations

The study investigated the effects of quizzes on history students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division. The finding revealed that quizzes in history have a significant effect on students' critical thinking. It is recommended that history teachers should integrate regular quizzes into their instructional strategies. These quizzes should be designed to challenge students' analytical and evaluative skills. Additionally, school administrators should support professional development focused on effective quiz design and implementation.

The study also investigated the effects of assignments on history students' critical thinking in secondary schools in

Fako Division. The finding revealed that assignments in history have a significant effect on students' critical thinking. It is recommended that history teachers should consistently use well-designed assignments to promote critical thinking. These assignments should encourage students to analyse sources, interpret historical events and form reasoned arguments. Teachers should also provide clear guidelines and feedback to support critical engagement with historical content. It was recommended that students should take assignments seriously as a key part of their learning process. Assignments are not just tasks to be completed for grades, they are opportunities to develop important skills such as analysis, evaluation, and logical reasoning. By taking time to research, understand, and reflect on the topics given, students can learn to think more critically about historical events and issues. When students approach assignments with seriousness and dedication, they not only improve their performance in history but also build strong thinking skills that are essential for success in school and beyond.

The study further investigated the effects of presentations on history students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division. The finding indicates that presentations in history have a significant effect on students' critical thinking. It is recommended that teachers should regularly engage students in individual and group presentations. These should focus on analysing historical issues, encouraging independent thought and effective communication. It is also recommended that students should actively embrace presentations as opportunities to deepen their understanding and sharpen their thinking skills. Engaging in presentations allows students to research historical topics, structure their ideas logically, and communicate their viewpoints clearly to an audience. This process encourages them to think beyond surface-level facts, and defend their perspectives with evidence.

The study was also to find out the effects of group work on history students' critical thinking in secondary schools in Fako Division. The finding revealed that group work in history has a significant effect on students' critical thinking. It is recommended that history teachers should regularly use group work as part of continuous assessment to enhance students' critical thinking. Group tasks should encourage discussion, analysis, and problem-solving around historical topics. This collaborative approach helps students develop diverse perspectives and deeper understanding of historical events. It is also recommended that students should embrace group work as an opportunity to learn from peers and build critical discussion skills. By engaging actively in group tasks, students can exchange ideas, and collaboratively solve historical problems. This interaction fosters deeper thinking, encourages multiple perspectives, and strengthens their ability to analyse and interpret historical information. Students should view group work not as a routine task but as a platform to develop teamwork, communication, and higher-order thinking skills essential for success.

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