

Difficulties of Implementing Continuous Assessment in Physical Education Classes in Certain Secondary Schools in Eastern Algeria.

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Abstract

This study investigates the main challenges faced by physical education teachers in implementing continuous assessment during secondary school classes in eastern Algeria. The research employed a descriptive survey method, targeting a simple random sample of 364 physical education teachers distributed across 20 education directorates in the eastern region.

Data were collected using a questionnaire consisting of five axes, each containing 12 items, designed to capture a comprehensive understanding of the difficulties encountered. Statistical analysis involved calculating correlation coefficients, Cronbach's alpha, means, and standard deviations to ensure the reliability and validity of findings.

The results reveal that the lack of adequate facilities and equipment stands as the foremost challenge hindering effective continuous assessment. This is followed by issues related to scheduling and limited class time, then by student characteristics. The scientific content of the curriculum and teacher-related factors were found to pose lesser difficulties, respectively.

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1. Introduction

Algeria's education system has seen multiple reform waves over the years, all geared toward updating curricula, teaching practices, and assessment methods. Reforms have deeply shaped how we evaluate learning, especially with the big shift to competency-based education back in 2003 (Mansouri & Lttal, 2022). This change moved away from just hitting targets toward building real skills, putting students front and center in the classroom. Instead of memorizing facts alone, it stresses using knowledge in everyday situation.

The Algerian Ministry's Decree 03-08 (post-2003) describes the competency-based approach as an educational strategy that pulls together knowledge, skills, and attitudes so learners can handle real-life situations effectively. It goes beyond just meeting lesson goals it's about turning those into practical skills students actually own and apply in everyday life, with them right at the heart of the learning process.

In this framework, assessment is no longer seen as a separate step, but rather as an ongoing, embedded part of instruction. It serves diagnostic, formative, and summative purposes enabling teachers to monitor learning progress, adjust pedagogical strategies, and measure competency acquisition (Ministry of National Education, 2022). Continuous assessment, in particular, has been highlighted in recent official guidelines, such as Ministerial Circular No. 1711 (2022), which outlines procedures for regular evaluation through diverse tasks (e.g., tests, projects, presentations), and stresses the use of transparent criteria to ensure fairness.

This integrated approach has strong support from several research studies. As Jessup (2023) notes, competency-based learning requires a rethinking of assessment itself as both a part of learning and a tool for guiding it (Krimat & Merrouche, 2022). Similarly, In the same vein, Walde (2016) quotes Cone and Foster (1991), stating that real and meaningful learning is based on good assessment. Meanwhile, Alosa (2004) highlighted shortcomings of traditional assessment methods and their inability to provide a true picture of learners' levels.

If the above-mentioned studies show us the importance of continuous assessment in the educational process, then through this study we try to identify the various challenges that physical education and sports teachers face in conducting this type of assessment in physical education and sports classes at the secondary education level. Identifying and understanding

those challenges is essential for bridging the gap between educational policy and classroom reality.

1-1 Study Problem

From the above, the utmost importance of continuous assessment in achieving the objectives of the educational system becomes evident. It also highlights the special attention given by the supervisory authorities to this type of student evaluation across various subjects, as well as the challenges encountered in its implementation. Considering that physical education classes are an integral part of the comprehensive educational process for students, we therefore ask:

What are the difficulties or challenges that may arise when conducting continuous assessment in physical education classes in secondary education institutions?

2.Literature Review

2-1- Definition of continuous Assessment:

Continuous assessment (CA) plays a pivotal role in the educational process, particularly in language learning, where it aids educators in monitoring students' academic progress and evaluating the impact of instructional strategies. It offers valuable feedback that influences teaching methods and contributes to improved learning outcomes (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

Pedagogically, continuous assessment is known by various descriptors. It is termed “continuous” because it spans the entire instructional period; “formative” or “developmental” due to its role in tracking learning stages and providing immediate feedback; and “authentic”, as it assesses competencies through real-life tasks embedded in meaningful learning contexts. Broadly defined, continuous assessment is an ongoing, systematic process of collecting and interpreting data on learners' performance throughout a course or academic year. It occurs periodically, both during and outside classroom time, enabling continuous monitoring of progress (Bitew, 2022). In this context, CA is not limited to one-off evaluations, but is deeply integrated into daily instructional activities.

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competencies through real-life tasks embedded in meaningful learning contexts. According to Cooper (1996), CA is the process of gathering and interpreting evidence of what learners know and are able to do as a result of classroom instruction. It goes beyond traditional tests by offering a more holistic view of a learner's development.

Faleyalo (1986) defines continuous assessment as a structured and regular procedure involving the evaluation of different learning domains cognitive, affective, and psychomotor across a specified period. This definition highlights CA as a multidimensional approach that utilizes various tools (e.g., tests, observations, projects) to measure intellectual skills, personal traits, and practical capabilities (Walde, 2016).

In the Algerian context, the Ministry of National Education (2005) emphasized that formative and continuous assessment should be embedded throughout classroom activities. Its goal is not only to track student progress but also to identify challenges they face and tailor pedagogical interventions accordingly.

Further, official guidelines (Ministry of National Education, 2022) assert that CA should be based on diverse, structured methods including written/oral quizzes, homework, projects, and presentations. Evaluations must follow clear and objective criteria designed to ensure both the validity and reliability of the grades computed.

2-2-Purpose of Continuous Assessment:

Continuous assessment plays a pivotal role in modern educational practices by fostering the effectiveness of instruction, supporting student learning, and enhancing communication among teachers, students, and stakeholders (Hendrickson et al., 1996). Unlike traditional summative assessments, continuous assessment is intentionally designed to provide ongoing feedback for both students and educators, aiming to improve learning outcomes rather than merely measure them (Popan, 1981).

As a diagnostic tool, continuous assessment serves dual purposes: it helps students recognize their areas of strength and weakness and adjust their efforts accordingly; simultaneously, it allows teachers to evaluate the extent to which students understand the material and adapt teaching strategies in real time (Desalegne, 2004). Empirical studies, such as those by Gallardo &

Montolio (2010), Cebrián & García (2015), and González-Campos et al. (2018), highlight the positive impact of well-implemented continuous assessment strategies. These include improved academic performance, higher final grades, and reduced student absenteeism, indicating CA's motivational and pedagogical effectiveness.

In addition to enhancing the individual learning process, continuous assessment aids in curriculum evaluation. It allows educators to monitor how well curricular goals are being met and to make informed adjustments based on students' evolving needs and classroom realities (Desalegne, 2004). As summarized by Nitiro (1996), the broader aims of assessment span both instructional quality and learner development (Oftana, 2022).

Capper (1996) outlines the key purposes of continuous assessment as follows:

- **Evaluating Student Learning:** To determine if educational objectives are being achieved.
- **Informing Instruction:** To guide improvements in teaching based on student performance.
- **Identifying Learning Barriers:** To detect and address learning difficulties.
- **Assessing Teaching Effectiveness:** To measure the impact of instructional strategies.
- **Ensuring Targeted Support:** To identify and aid students in need of intervention.
- **Enhancing Communication:** To facilitate discussions among teachers, parents, and school staff.
- **Deepening Understanding of Learners:** To recognize students' learning styles, strengths, and weaknesses
- **Monitoring Curriculum Progression:** To assess readiness for advancement in content.
- **Supporting Grade Promotion:** To provide evidence for progression to the next academic level.
- **Embedding Assessment into Teaching:** To make assessment an integral part of the instructional process and continuous educational improvement

2-3-Advantages of Continuous Assessment

The main purpose behind adopting continuous assessment was to address the shortcomings of the traditional evaluation system, which relied solely on a single final examination. Continuous assessment adopts a more comprehensive approach by utilizing various assessment tools to evaluate multiple aspects of student learning. This includes not only cognitive skills,

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but also behavioral attributes, personality traits, and practical abilities, providing a more complete understanding of each learner.

One significant benefit, as noted by Alausa (2005), is that continuous assessment is oriented towards guidance. By collecting data over an extended period, it delivers more reliable and timely information, enabling teachers to adjust their teaching strategies promptly to better support students. This ongoing process is crucial for identifying and addressing students' areas of difficulty as they arise.

Additionally, continuous assessment places teachers at the heart of the evaluation process, increasing their involvement in the overall grading and assessment of their students. Paris (1991) emphasizes the importance of allowing teachers to participate in the selection and review of assessments, which enhances their expertise and engagement. This method encourages teachers to incorporate assessment results directly into their instructional practices.

Lewis (1997) further highlights that continuous assessment requires teachers to integrate evaluation into their daily teaching, assess student work, and engage in discussions about standards of achievement with colleagues, parents, and students. For learners, this approach is beneficial because it identifies their strengths and weaknesses early, giving them the opportunity to make adjustments for better performance. For teachers, it provides timely feedback, allowing them to refine their instructional methods to better meet the needs of their students.

In summary, continuous assessment offers a dynamic and holistic framework that supports both teaching and learning by promoting early intervention, active teacher involvement, and ongoing improvement in educational practices. (R. A. Ahukanna, M. I. Onu, P. N. Ukah.2006)

2-4-Problems and Weaknesses of CA in Secondary Schools

Continuous assessment (CA) is widely adopted to support student learning, but its implementation in secondary schools faces several significant challenges and weaknesses:

▪ **Teacher Workload and Time Constraints:**

- **Increased Workload:** Teachers are often overwhelmed by the need to design, administer, and grade frequent assessments for large numbers of students.

- **Time Management:** The time required for continuous record-keeping, feedback, and individualized assessment can detract from lesson planning and classroom instruction. (Abiy Yigzaw.2013)

▪ **Inadequate Teacher Training and Competence**

- **Lack of Assessment Skills:** Many teachers lack adequate training in assessment techniques, statistical tools, and the construction of reliable assessment instruments.

- **Inconsistent Standards:** Differences in teachers' skills and approaches can lead to variability in assessment standards and grading, making comparisons across classes or schools difficult. (Yashim, A.U. and Jibrin, S.K. 2020)

• **Record Keeping and Data Management**

- **Cumulative Records:** Maintaining accurate, up-to-date, and cumulative records over time is challenging, especially in the absence of standardized systems or digital tools.

- **Loss or Inaccuracy of Records:** Manual record-keeping increases the risk of errors, loss, or damage to student assessment data

• **Large Class Sizes**

- **Difficulty in Individualized Assessment:** Overcrowded classrooms make it difficult for teachers to provide meaningful, individualized feedback and monitor each student's progress effectively.

- **Reduced Effectiveness:** The quality of assessment and feedback is often compromised when teachers are responsible for too many students.

• **Lack of Resources and Infrastructure**

- **Insufficient Materials:** Many schools lack adequate assessment tools, teaching aids, and technological resources to support effective CA implementation.

- **Neglect of ICT:** The absence of digital platforms for assessment and record-keeping limits efficiency and standardization.

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- **. Financial and Administrative Challenges**
 - Cost: Continuous assessment can be costly in terms of materials, time, and administrative effort. (AZEB KIDANE.2013)
 - Policy and Guidelines: Lack of clear, consistent guidelines and inadequate monitoring can hinder effective implementation.
- **. Student and Teacher Attitudes**
 - Low Motivation: Both teachers and students may view CA as burdensome, leading to lack of commitment and superficial participation. (AZEB KIDANE.2013)
 - Bias and Subjectivity: Teachers' personal biases may affect grading, especially in assessments that require subjective judgment.
- **. Transfer and Standardization Issues**
 - Student Transfers: Coordinating assessment records when students transfer between schools is often problematic, leading to gaps or inconsistencies in student profiles. (AZEB KIDANE.2013)
 - Non-Standardized Instruments: The absence of standardized assessment tools can result in inconsistent evaluation and reporting.
- **Overemphasis on Cognitive Domain**
 - Limited Assessment Scope: CA often focuses primarily on academic achievement, neglecting non-cognitive skills such as creativity, critical thinking, and social development. (AZEB KIDANE.2013)

3-Method and Materials

Since this study aims to identify the main difficulties faced by physical education teachers when implementing continuous assessment for students by exploring their perspectives on this topic the methodology adopted is the descriptive approach using the survey method.

3-1 Participants

The sample of this study consisted of 364 physical education teachers working at the secondary education level. These teachers were selected using the simple random sampling method from a population belonging to 20 education directorates located in the eastern region of Algeria. They have varied teaching experiences that range from 01 years to more than 10 years. They also have different educational levels including master holders, doctoral students, magister, and PhD holders. Table 2 is a summary of participant's biographical information.

Materials

The main data collection instrument was an online questionnaire directed at secondary education physical education teachers. This questionnaire was divided into five sections, with each section addressing a specific type of difficulty that teachers may encounter when implementing continuous assessment. Each section contains 12 positively items. In a total of 60 items. These items are evaluated using a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree), which are assigned the scores (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) respectively.

The sections and the number of items is summarized in table

Table 01: Teachers' questionnaire sections

Section	Subject	Number of items
Section 01	Difficulties related to the educational content	12
Section 02	• Challenges resulting from limited resources and the infrastructures	12
Section 03	•Difficulties concerning scheduling and time management.	12
Section 04	• Difficulties related to student characteristics.	12
Section 05	• Difficulties related to teachers.	12
Total		60

The psychometric properties of the data collection instrument:

1- validity:

First, face validity (expert validity):

To verify the psychometric properties of the questionnaire, validity was first examined through expert judgment. The questionnaire was distributed to 10 experts, resulting in a validity coefficient of 0.88, which is considered high. After making some modifications based on the experts' recommendations and as part of a pilot study, the questionnaire was then administered to 34 teachers to confirm internal consistency validity and the reliability of the instrument.

Second the internal consistency reliability It refers to the extent to which each item of the questionnaire is related to the subscale to which it belongs, and then to the questionnaire as a whole. This is verified by calculating the correlation coefficient. For this questionnaire was calculated after applying it in the pilot study (34 teachers). The score of correlation coefficients of the entire scale as follows:

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Table (02): the internal consistency reliability of the questionnaire

Item	Section 01	Entire scale	Item	Section 02	Entire scale	Item	Section 03	Entire scale	Item	Section 04	Entire scale	Item	Section 05	Entire scale
01	0.73	0.72	13	0.75	0.71	25	0.90	0.85	37	0.71	0.75	49	0.71	0.75
02	0.86	0.85	14	0.62	0.85	26	0.75	0.75	38	0.89	0.62	50	0.85	0.62
03	0.80	0.75	15	0.93	0.75	27	0.62	0.87	39	0.76	0.71	51	0.71	0.93
04	0.65	0.62	16	0.77	0.71	28	0.71	0.71	40	0.93	0.86	52	0.85	0.71
05	0.79	0.71	17	0.85	0.78	29	0.93	0.85	41	0.77	0.80	53	0.75	0.85
06	0.93	0.89	18	0.85	0.76	30	0.77	0.77	42	0.75	0.93	54	0.71	0.75
07	0.68	0.68	19	0.75	0.71	31	0.85	0.85	43	0.62	0.77	55	0.85	0.71
08	0.71	0.82	20	0.62	0.89	32	0.76	0.75	44	0.71	0.85	56	0.81	0.85
09	0.89	0.74	21	0.71	0.85	33	0.75	0.61	45	0.85	0.81	57	0.75	0.75
10	0.71	0.78	22	0.85	0.75	34	0.62	0.66	46	0.71	0.92	58	0.71	0.77
11	0.81	0.76	23	0.75	0.62	35	0.71	0.85	47	0.89	0.78	59	0.85	0.85
12	0.86	0.92	24	0.71	0.71	36	0.73	0.75	48	0.71	0.65	60	0.71	0.62

2- Reliability

To ensure that the questionnaire yields consistent results when administered to the same sample under identical conditions, its reliability was assessed using two methods:

First, using Cronbach's Alpha: Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated for each subscale as well as for the overall scale. The following table presents these results.

Table (03): Reliability Coefficients of the Scale and Its Subscales Using Cronbach's Alpha

Sections	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
Section 01	0.71
Section 02	0.86
Section 03	0.80
Section 04	0.93
Section 05	0.77
The total reliability	0.87

The table displays the internal consistency reliability, measured by Cronbach's alpha coefficient, for each section of the questionnaire as well as for the total scale. All sections exhibit Cronbach's alpha values above 0.70, indicating acceptable to excellent internal consistency. Total reliability: 0.87 Overall, the reliability of the entire questionnaire is very high

Second: Split-Half Method: The split-half method was employed by dividing the questionnaire into two parts: odd-numbered items and even-

numbered items. Each respondent obtained two scores one for the odd-numbered half and another for the even-numbered half. The Pearson correlation coefficient between these two halves was then calculated, resulting in $r_p=0.78$. After adjusting for test length using the Spearman-Brown formula, the reliability coefficient reached 0.85, which is considered very high. This indicates that the scale demonstrates strong reliability.

Statistical Treatment of the Study Instrument

The questionnaire was constructed based on a five-point Likert scale with five agreement levels: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree. which are assigned the scores (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) respectively. The length of each category (interval) was calculated as follows:

$$\text{Category length} = \frac{\text{Upper limit} - \text{Lower limit}}{\text{Number of grades}} = \frac{5 - 1}{5} = 0.8$$

Based on this, the response categories correspond to the following ranges for the average score:

- [1.00 – 1.80]: Strongly Disagree (indicating a very low level of agreement)
- [1.81 – 2.60]: Disagree (indicating a low level of agreement)
- [2.61 – 3.40]: Neutral (indicating a moderate level of agreement)
- [3.41 – 4.20]: Agree (indicating a high level of agreement)
- [4.21 – 5.00]: Strongly Agree (indicating a very high level of agreement)

This classification helps in interpreting the average scores obtained from the Likert scale responses for analysis purposes.

4-1 Statistical Analysis

After collecting the questionnaires, we calculated the arithmetic mean and standard deviation for each item, then for each axis (dimension), and finally for the questionnaire as a whole. In light of the questionnaire key mentioned earlier, the results were interpreted as presented in the following table:

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Table (04): Arithmetic Means and Random Standard Deviations for the Sections and the Questionnaire

Sections	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation	Order
Section 01	3.72	2.86	high level	02
Section 02	1.78	1.82	very low level	05
Section 03	3.26	1.64	moderate level	04
Section 04	2.87	1.16	moderate level	03
Section 05	4.43	2.73	very high level	01
Total Score of the questionnaire	3.51	0.99	high level	

- Section 05 ("very high level") recorded the highest mean (4.43), indicating a strong consensus among respondents about the statements in this section. Its high ranking (1st) shows it is the most positively rated aspect.
- Section 01 ("high level") also scored above the midpoint, indicating general agreement, but slightly less so than Section 05.
- Sections 03 and 04 ("moderate level") reflect mixed or neutral attitudes, with means close to the scale's center. This suggests varying opinions or some uncertainty among respondents toward the content of these sections.
- Section 02 ("very low level") is notably below the midpoint (mean of 1.78), signifying substantial disagreement or rejection of the statements within this section. Its lowest rank (5th) confirms its relative weakness compared to other sections.
- Standard deviations are relatively high for Sections 01, 02, and 05, pointing to considerable variability in responses and possibly diverse viewpoints within the sample. In contrast, Sections 03 and 04 have lower variability, indicating more consistent responses among participants.
- The total score of the questionnaire (mean = 3.51, SD = 0.99) falls in the "high level" range, suggesting an overall tendency toward agreement or positive perceptions among the surveyed group.

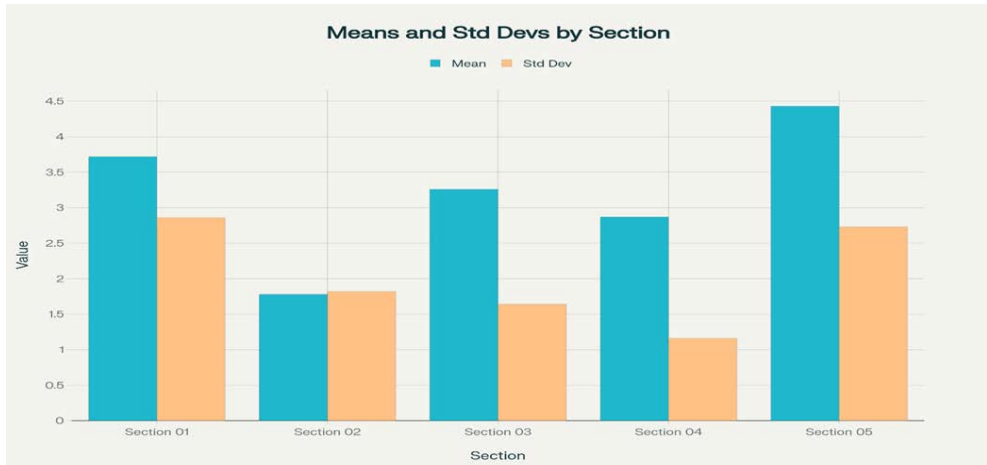


Figure 01: Histogram of the Mean and Standard Deviation of the Questionnaire Sections.

Results

- The data indicates a gradient of perceptions: while the fifth section is strongly endorsed (possibly concerning a highly valued or well-supported aspect), the second section faces significant criticism or lack of agreement.
- The moderate scores for the third and fourth sections may highlight issues that are somewhat divisive or less clearly understood among the respondents.
- High standard deviations in some sections could reflect the need for additional clarification in the questionnaire or point to heterogeneous experiences among the sample.
- The generally positive overall score demonstrates that, on the whole, respondents maintain favorable attitudes toward the subject matter, with distinct variations by thematic area.

5- Discussion

Continuous assessment (CA) is recognized as pivotal to achieving educational goals, including within physical education (PE), where student development depends on ongoing, constructive feedback and multifaceted evaluation. Despite its recognized value, implementation in secondary PE classes encounters a range of challenges. This discussion analyzes the main findings from the provided results table in light of the study problem and hypothesis.

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1. The Primacy of Teacher-Related Difficulties: The findings indicate that difficulties associated with teachers are the most prominent barrier to effective CA in PE classes. This may include challenges such as lack of training in assessment methods, resistance to using varied assessment tools, or being overloaded with responsibilities. The high mean score suggests that professional development and support for PE teachers should be prioritized for successful CA implementation.

Veloo and Md-Ali (2016) emphasized that brief and infrequent training for PE teachers hinders continuous assessment practices, reinforcing the necessity for ongoing professional development (Veloo and Md-Ali .2016)

2. Significance of Educational Content: The educational content itself presents the second-highest obstacle. Issues might arise from curriculum overload, lack of alignment between learning objectives and assessment tasks, or insufficient clarity in performance standards. These findings underline the need for curriculum designers to ensure that content is both assessable and adaptable for ongoing assessment during practical PE sessions. (AZEB KIDANE.2013)

Large instructional content and unclear performance standards have also been cited as factors making CA complex or difficult to implement

3. Moderate Impact of Student-Related and Scheduling Challenges: Contrary to the proposed hypothesis which expected student characteristics to be the top challenge results place them at a moderate level of difficulty. This suggests that, while student motivation, diversity in abilities, and behavioral factors are influential, they may be less obstructive than teacher- and content-related factors in this context. Scheduling and time management are also of moderate concern, reflecting known constraints in the school environment (e.g., limited class time, conflicting timetables), but not as dominant as anticipated.

Student engagement, negative attitudes, irregular attendance, and lack of self-regulation are notable but are often secondary to teacher. and curriculum-related issues. (Indira N. Z. Day.2018)

4. Minimal Effect of Resources and Infrastructure: Interestingly, lack of material resources and infrastructure was rated as the least significant

difficulty by respondents, despite common assumptions to the contrary. This finding suggests that, at least within the surveyed context, schools may have addressed basic equipment and facility needs, or other obstacles are perceived as more immediate. In some contexts, improvements in material conditions have shifted the focus of concern from resources to more systemic or human factors (Nibret ageralem; Tesfaye damena; 2020)

5. Overall Assessment: The high overall mean underscores that, collectively, barriers to CA in secondary PE are substantial and warrant attention. However, the relative ranking of these challenges diverges somewhat from the initial hypothesis, particularly regarding the predominance of teacher- and content-related factors over student characteristics and logistics.

Conclusion

The results highlight a nuanced landscape of challenges to continuous assessment in secondary-level physical education. While teacher-related and curricular difficulties are most prominent, student and logistical factors also play substantive roles. Addressing these findings with targeted interventions can enhance both the effectiveness of assessment practices and the educational experience for students.

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