



**PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING
CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT IN THE FIRST CYCLE PRIMARY
SCHOOLS: DANGUR WOREDA IN BENISHANGUL
GUMUZ REGIONAL STATE**

BY

MENGISTU REGASSA BOGALE

JUNE, 2018

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND BEHAVIORAL STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

**PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING
CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT IN THE FIRST CYCLE PRIMARY
SCHOOLS: DANGUR WOREDA IN BENISHANGUL GUMUZ
REGIONAL STATE**

BY

MENGISTU REGASSA BOGALE

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND
INSTRUCTION, ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ART IN CURRICULUM AND
INSTRUCTION**

JUNE, 2018

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

Addis Ababa University

School of Graduate Studies

Thesis approval page

This is to certify that, the thesis prepared by Mengistu Regassa Bogale entitled practices and challenges of implementing continuous assessment in first cycle primary schools: Dangur Woreda in Benishangul Gumuz Regional State and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of masters of arts in curriculum and instruction complies with the regulation of university and meets the accepted standard with respect to originality and quality.

Approved By Board of Examiners

1. _____	_____	_____
Name of Advisor	Date	Signature
2. _____	_____	_____
Name of Internal Examiners	Date	Signature
3. _____	_____	_____
Name of External Examiners	Date	Signature

Chairman of Department

June, 2018

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my thanks to God for enabling me to bring my thesis work to completion.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks and pleasure to my Advisor Desalegn Fufa (pHD), for his continuous support and constructive comments throughout this thesis. In deed without his guidance it is hardly possible to see this research output in its present shape.

I would also like to thank the Department of curriculum and instruction for their assistance and encouragement.

I am also grateful to all respondents from Dangur Woreda education office, principals, cluster supervisors, teachers and students from first cycle primary schools for their cooperation during data collection time.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife Aberach Nigatu and my daughter Feven Mengistu for their patience, moral supports and encouragements.

Table of Content

Acknowledgements.....	i
Table of Content	ii
List of Tables	v
List of Figures.....	vi
Acronyms and Abbrivations	vii
Abstract.....	viii

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the study.....	1
1.2. Statement of the problem	5
1.3 Research question.....	8
1.4 Objectives of the study	9
1.4.1 General objective.....	9
1.4.2 Specific objectives	9
1.5. Significances of the study	9
1.6. Delimitation of the study.....	10
1.7. Limitations of the study tedious	10
1.8. Operational definition of key terms	10
1.9. Organization of the study	11

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....	12
2.1. ASSESSMENT	12
2.1.1The Purpose of Assessment.....	15
2.1.2. Assessment Paradigms	19
2.1.3. Good Assessment Practices	21

2.1.4. Elements of good assessment practice.....	21
2.2. Continuous Assessment.....	22
2.2.1. Characteristics of Continuous Assessment.....	25
2.2.2. Advantages of Continuous Assessment.....	27
2.2.3. Drawbacks of Continuous Assessment.....	29
2.3. Assessment methods and strategies.....	30
2.3.1. Assessment tools.....	30
2.3.2. Strategies of classroom assessment	32
2.4. Implementation of Continuous Assessment in Schools	33
2.5. Attitude of Teachers and Students toward CA.....	35
2.6. Challenges in Implementing Continuous Assessment	36
2.7. International Findings on Continuous Assessment	41
2.8. Continuous Assessment in Ethiopian Context	44
2.9. Conceptual Framework of the Study.....	46

CHAPTER THREE

3. Research Design and Methodology	50
3.1 Research Design.....	50
3.2. Sources of Data	50
3.2.1 Primary Sources.....	50
3.2.2 Secondary Sources.....	51
3.3 The Study Area and Study Population	51
3. 4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique	51
3.5 Data Collection Instruments.....	52
3.5.1 Questionnaire.....	52

3.5.2 Interview	53
3.5.3 Classroom Observation.....	53
3.5.4 Document Analysis.....	53
3.5.5 Focus Group Discussion.....	54
3.6. Pilot Study	54
3.7. Procedures of Data Collection.....	54
3.8 .Techniques of Data Analysis.....	55
3.9. Ethical Issues	55
CHAPTER FOUR	
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	57
4.1 Background and General Characteristics of Participants.....	57
4.2. Training on Continuous Assessment.....	60
4.3. Inclusion of Continuous Assessment in Lesson Plan.....	62
4.5. Challenges to the Implementation of Continuous Assessment	73
CHAPTER FIVE	
5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	80
5.1. Summary	80
5.2. Conclusions.....	84
5.3. Recommendation.....	85
References.....	i
Appendix _A.....	xii
Appendix _B.....	xvi
Appendix _C.....	xviii
Appendix _D.....	xx
Appendix _E.....	xxii

List of Tables

Table 1. Demographic characteristics and experience of the respondent teachers.....	58
Table 2. In-service and pre-service training of teachers on Continuous Assessment	60
Table 3. Integration of continuous assessment method in lesson plan as perceived by respondents	62
Table 4. Reasons to use continuous assessment and Students' involvement in continuous assessment tasks as perceived by respondents	63
Table 5. Continuous Assessment Techniques used by Teachers.....	65
Table 6. Responses of teachers on the provision of feedback and its frequency on continuous assessment activities.....	68
Table 7 . Presence/absence of continuous assessment guidelines and teachers awareness level on continuous assessment guidelines and formats	69
Table 8. Continuous assessment support from education stakeholders and interaction of parents with teachers	
Table 9. Different challenges influencing level on continuous assessment implementation	73

List of Figures

Figure 1. Transforming Assessment (Adapted from Sieborger, 1998).....	15
Figure 2: Conceptual Model of the Study.....	48

ACRONYMS AND ABBRIVATIONS

ARG-	Assessment Reform Group
BGRS-	Benishangul Gumuze Regional State
CA-	Continuous assessment
CPD-	Continuous Professional Development
DOE-	Department of Education
FGD-	Focus Group Discussion
FMEST-	Federal Ministry of Education, Science & Technology
GTCNI-	General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland
HESC-	Higher Education Strategy Center
ICDR-	Institute of Curriculum Development Research
MOE-	Ministry of education
NCCA-	National Curriculum Committee Advisory
NEAEA-	National Education Assessment & Examination Agency
NIED-	National Institute for Educational Development
OECD-	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RSA-	Republic of South Africa
SPSS-	Statistical Package for Social Science
TGE-	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
TLRP-	Teaching and Learning Research Program
TTI-	Teachers Training Institute
USA-	United States of America
USAID-	United States Agency for International Development

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess the practices and challenges hindering effective implementation of continuous assessment in some selected First cycle primary schools in Dangur Woreda ,Metekel zone of Benshangul Gumuz regional State. The study was descriptive survey research. The subjects in this study were 96 students, 4 cluster supervisors, 12 directors, 4 District education office experts and 68 teachers. Data were collected through questionnaire, Interview, focus group discussion, observation check lists and document analysis. Percentages were used as the main method of analysis even though qualitative data were analyzed qualitatively. The results indicated that most of school teachers implement continuous assessment with the given formats but the way of assessing students learning, use of different assessment methods in classrooms and the time of continuous assessment result recording vary from teachers to teachers. Moreover, most of the teachers didn't include a variety of continuous assessment tools in their plan and did not use in the classroom activities regularly and also they record students' results at one session i.e., at end of each month and semester. Furthermore, some of school teachers have used continuous assessment to identify students' learning difficulties and learning interests while others have used it to assign mark to students' learning achievement. Thus, there is discrepancy between the perceived purpose of continuous assessment and what the teachers have used for. It is also difficult to get well-handled documents and properly kept assessment records or portfolios of the students, and the system of reporting learners' achievement for their parents' regularly with appropriate detail is completely weak. Therefore, it is very difficult to say that teachers in the selected first cycle primary schools have adequate and complete understandings about continuous assessments. To sum up, the practice of continuous assessment in the first cycle primary schools are; poor, lacks harmony and consistency. Continuous assessment has not fully practiced because of the following major challenges: low utilization of guidelines, large class size, lack of follow up and evaluation, lack of time, lack of awareness, lack of teaching and learning materials, job burden, teachers commitment and students readiness. To overcome these challenges, generally it is better to recruit additional teachers to reduce workload, making stakeholders aware and committed, fulfilling teaching and learning materials, identifying students based on their academic achievements and providing successive remediation and enrichment activities, providing students' continuous assessment reports to parents in monthly basis and evaluating together, training teachers and raising their awareness, improving teachers managing of students , mobilizing students and making conducive classrooms.

Keywords: primary education; Challenges; Implementing; Continuous Assessment

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Education is a means of transferring knowledge to the generation. It provides the generation the tools that enable them to be effective and productive member of their society socially, politically, technically and economically. Of the three forms of education; informal, non-formal and formal, formal education needs a well-organized and developed curriculum. Once the curriculum is developed, it should be implemented. According to Saylor et al, (1981), if there is no implementation, there will be no reason for developing curriculum. After the implementation of the curriculum, it is necessary to assess the achievement of students to check whether or not the implemented curriculum has produced the intended result. Therefore from this point of view, teachers need to use different assessment methods to crosscheck the attainment of intended objectives.

In today's policy environment, testing has become a critical component of education reform. Policy makers and education administrators often view test scores as a measure of educational quality and use test scores to hold schools accountable for teacher performance(USAID, 2003).On the other hand, Mulu (2005) remarks that, one time final examination or test doesn't bring a complete or true picture of students performance including the higher order thinking skills, that is to say examination cannot measure all that the student learns, their effectiveness is limited to assess the entire complete learning outcomes. To overcome this, it will be much more helpful if the assessment is employed on a continuous basis using different strategies. Because continuous assessment is, believed to be more valid, reliable and motivating than the traditional assessment mechanism (Mulu, 2005).

Moreover, Ministry of Education (MoE, 2011) pointed out that an essential element of the move to personalized learning is the use of assessment for learning (Formative assessment) as well as assessment of learning (summative assessment). Teachers are encouraged to use a range of assessment techniques that are appropriate to the learning activities of the students in order to fulfill the primary aim of assessment which is to support learning.

Furthermore continuous assessment, an alternative or supplement to high stakes testing of pupil achievement, offers a methodology for measuring pupil performance and using those findings to improve the success of pupils (USAID, 2003).

Nowadays, in the world of education, continuous assessment has been recognized as an integral part of everyday classroom instruction and a key tool to ensure quality learning. That is why advanced nation such as England, Spain, Australia and others are applying continuous assessment partially or wholly in their education system (Heaton, 1990). Similarly, in Africa context countries such as Nigeria, Malawi, Zambia and others are applying continuous assessment in their classes. In relation to this, Ethiopian Ministry of Education (MoE, 1994) included in new Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia that continuous assessment in academic and practical subjects will be conducted to ascertain the formation of all round profile of students at all levels. Moreover in Ethiopia, the practical task of implementing the curriculum at all schools level requires continuous assessment as part of the curriculum in particular and instructional process in general. Regarding to the teaching and learning ,the Ethiopian Education and Training Policy introduced student centered approaches of teaching and the uses of continuous assessment to evaluate learners' progress (MOE,1994).Furthermore, the Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia (1994),envisages that students would be assessed using different types of continuous assessment strategies and tools that can measure learners progress.

Moreover Ethiopia has a vision of building education and training system which aims at ensuring quality and equity education by the year 2020 that could produce competent citizens. Keeping this objective in mind, the status of quality of education has to be measured and determined through continuous formal and /or informal ways of assessment. In the broadest sense, continuous assessment (CA) is something that we do every time in the instructional process. Continuous assessment (CA) is scholarly recommended to view it in the light of assessment of learning, assessment as learning and assessment for learning. This entails that student learning should be continuously assessed and timely feedback should be given so that it is possible to capitalize on the learning outcome of the assessment and take possible action(re-teaching and re- assessment) for better learning (HESC,2012).

Hence, continuous assessment entails a variety of classroom activities and tasks used to determine students' progress in learning and to regulate teaching and learning (Kapambwe,

2010). Teachers use a variety of assessment instruments such as written tests, performance assessment, observation and portfolios to gather information about teaching and learning. Similarly, the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (1999) of Namibia, states that continuous assessment consists of all the processes and tools teachers use to make decisions about their students' progress. These include observations of students' seat work, their voluntarily responses, and answers to questions and their results on teacher made tests. It also involves decisions such as assigning grades, re teaching a topic, and providing supplementary instruction.

The assessment methods used and the quality of feedback provided have influence on the learning outcomes attained by students (Gonzalez & Fuggan, 2012). Therefore, teachers have a great potential of enhancing students' learning through the use of relevant assessment methods. By implementing different assessment methods, teachers should get necessary information about their students' progress. In relation to this, Airasion(1991) cited in ICDR(1999) states that classroom assessment is a process of collecting, interpreting and synthesizing information to help teachers' understanding of their pupils, plan and monitor instruction, and establish a conducive classroom atmosphere accordingly. Therefore, from classroom assessment information, teachers can modify their pedagogical strategies to include the construction of remedial activities for pupil who are not working at the expected grade level and the creation of enrichment activities for pupils who are working at or above the expected grade level. Hence, continuous assessment process supports a cycle of self-evaluation and pupil's specific activities by both pupils and teachers.

According to Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Technology(FMEST,1985), continuous assessment is a classroom strategy implemented by teachers to ascertain knowledge, understanding, skills, and mechanism whereby the final grading of learners on cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of learning systematically takes account of all their performances during given period of schooling.

Continuous Assessment System – is an assessment process that 1) includes both formal and informal assessments that are conducted on a regular basis, 2) is integrated with instruction at various times, 3) improves learning and helps guide and direct the teaching-learning process, 4) informs every aspect of instruction and curriculum (Kentucky Department of Education, March, 2004).

Furthermore, continuous assessment occurs frequently during the school year and is part of regular teacher-pupil interactions. Pupils receive feedback from teachers based on their performance that allows them to focus on topics they have not yet mastered. Teachers learn which students need review and remediation and which pupils are ready to move on to more complex work. Thus, the results of the assessments help to ensure that all pupils make learning progress throughout the school cycle thereby increasing their academic achievement (USAID, 2003).

According to Obioma (2010) cited in Awofala and Babajide(2013), investigated that many teachers misapplied the continuous assessment (CA) instruments leading to more continuous testing instead of continuous assessment. Besides to this, some other scholars also suggested that current assessment practices in higher education did not equip students well for lifetime of learning and the assessment challenges they would face in the future. It was argued that assessment practices should be judged from the point of view of whether they effectively equip students for a lifetime of assessing their own learning (HESC, 2012).

Furthermore, some other studies also pinpointed that teachers practice continuous assessment as continuous tests(Abiy,2013) and assessment process is not a learning experience for most students (Abera,2012).Implementation of continuous assessment overall was found to be negative and non –frequently implemented(Gemechu,2013);practice of continuous assessment activities to assess students’ written work is not sufficient enough to improve the learning and teaching of writing course (Yiheyis and Getachew,2014).

According to Aytaged (2013), judgmental role of continuous assessment (Summative assessment) is more practiced to evaluate student’s learning at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against some standard or benchmark than developmental role of the assessment (Formative assessment) which is used to monitor student’s learning to provide ongoing feedback that can be used by teachers to improve their teaching and by students to improve their learning. These results have manifested the implementation problem of continuous assessment (CA).

Moreover, as documented by different national and international researchers, also some of the problems found were that the entire practice of continuous assessment is surrounded by laxity(Birhanu,2013),the assessment methods that the teachers use are not effective in promoting

good learning (Black and William ,2004 cited in Fisseha ,2010),teachers experienced difficulties in implementation of formative assessment(Isral,2005 cited in Mpapalika,2013),and are complaining that continuous assessment increases the workload for teachers(Mpapalika,2013),etc. Additionally, Horner and Ryf (2007) as cited in Eba (2014) show that teachers do not just share the learning objective with learners but may involve them in formulating it.

The above research findings clearly showed that the problem of assessment in general and the poor implementation of continuous assessment in particular in Ethiopia.

Besides from the observation and experience of the researcher, most teachers seem to lack clear understanding of the concept of continuous assessment and considered continuous assessment as method which make them busy and increase workload for the preparation of the content they taught. This wrong conceptualization of the term will even affect the need to employ variety of techniques to assess learners' progress. It is worthwhile, therefore, on the part of the investigator to look in to the practices and challenges of implementing continuous assessment in the First cycle primary schools of Dangur Woreda.

1.2. Statement of the problem

In Ethiopia, the practical task of implementing the curriculum at all educational levels requires continuous assessment as part of the curriculum in particular and instructional process in general(MOE 1994).Moreover policy makers are now considering integrating continuous assessment to all levels of schools. These movements reflect the changes in the nature of assessment and its purpose.

Continuous assessment policy is aimed to bring about a paradigm shift in educational assessment in several ways. Furthermore the central characteristic of this shift is the moving assessment from a judgmental role to a developmental role (Republic of South Africa National Educational Ministry (1996).

As suggested by MOE (1994), in the Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia, primary school teachers are expected to apply continuous assessment so as to decide their learners' holistic change in the classroom by using various activities and assessment strategies. According to

MOE (2008), the syllabus for grade (1-4) say that “continuous assessment can take place as learners are doing the activities and through regular checking of students’ notebook. Similarly teachers are expected to assess learners in ongoing basis; where lots of activities can be used for assessment and practice. Teachers also keep records of learners’ progress in class and frequently take note of work and record achievement. ”It is not only the teacher who can assess, students are also expected to do self and peer –assessment activities. On the other hand, teachers assess their learners dominantly, but disregarding students self and peer assessment activities.

The Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia and its implementation (ETPEI, 2002), suggests that children in the first cycle (1-4) should be assessed on ongoing basis of continuous assessment and pass from one class to the next through automatic promotion. Researches indicate that continuous assessment could be employed as teachers honestly and frequently use various assessment methods and strategies or activities continually for assessing their learners’ progress and making decision. But, teachers conceive continuous assessment as continuous testing (using only testing as way of assessing learners on a continuous basis or testing learners regularly by using teacher made tests instead). Continuous assessment is an assessment which involves the use of a great variety of models of assessment for the purpose of finding and improving the learning and performance of the students. But, in the view of continuous testing, various assessment methods, strategies and tools were disregarded in the classes. In line with these, they frequently focus on giving formal assessment which only links with competency level and disregarded informal assessment which is used in evaluating learner’s behavior. Due to this, what practically going on is that learners of the first cycle (1-4) pass from grade to the next without mastering even basic skills and knowledge. Webb and Briars (1990) argue that assessment has to be interaction between the teacher and student; with the teacher continually wanting to understand what a student can do and how a student is able to do it. As Yoloye (1991), indicated continuous assessment is a method of evaluating the progress and achievement of students in educational institutions. Thus, one can infer from this point of view that continuous assessment can be used to predict student’s progress persistently by using various strategies and techniques of continuous assessment.

Continuous assessment is said to be effectively implemented and applied when there are variety of assessment mechanisms used by teachers, and when there is a regular and timely

assessment in order to evaluate students' progress and performance in learning. Hence, depending on the nature of subject, the assessment techniques to be used vary from one subject to the other even in the same subject between different unit contents. Gray C: et al. (2004) on their part argued that there are a number of types of assessment which can be appropriate for different assessment purposes. These assessment techniques are classroom assignment, interviews, peer reviews, portfolios, speaking test, survey of student's services, focus groups, case study, mid-term test, final test in a course, and examination.

Moreover, various researches both in Ethiopia and abroad conducted on different issues about continuous assessment and teachers' conception of it.

For instance, Birhanu (2013) conducted a research about continuous assessment practices in secondary schools of Oromia Regional State. He revealed that the proper handling of student assessment in sampled schools are inadequate because of teachers' lack of skills of assessing students' performance continuously; manuals and directives of continuous assessment are inadequate and continuous assessment strategies were merely used. Moreover, Abiy (2013) also conducted a study on high school teachers' perception, attitude and practice of continuous assessment. He indicated that continuous assessment was exclusively used for developing students' intellectual skills. Teachers gave learners assignments to evaluate their achievement of learning objectives.

Furthermore, Kapambwe (2010) studied teacher's implementation of continuous assessment in Zambian schools at large. His finding showed that teachers emphasized continuous testing instead of continuous assessment. He thought this happened due to past influence of traditional objective based assessment. This is because of lack of understanding about continuous assessment and lack of implementation of it. For instance, Birhanu (2004) indicated that proper handling of students assessment in general and continuous assessment in particular at secondary school level in selected high schools are poor and are not up to the standard compared to the contemporary assessment system.

In Ethiopia, Eba (2014) found that primary school teachers did not have enough in-service training courses on teaching young learners. They did not have proper conception and pedagogical knowledge and skills to deal with them. Moreover, most of the teachers at these

schools believed that continuous assessment as continuous testing and uses mostly a single assessment method like test, group work frequently.

These all findings clearly indicated that, the existing deficiency in continuous assessment implementation. Unless the source of challenge is clearly identified, it would become difficult to set out possible solutions to maintain effective implementation of continuous assessment at institutional level.

However, to the knowledge of the researcher, there are a number of researches done on continuous assessment at first cycle primary school level in Ethiopia. But almost none of the study was conducted on Benishangul Gumuz Regional State, Metekel Zone, Dangur Woreda primary schools regarding the problem under study. Hence, this study would contribute to closing the existing research gap. These inspired the researcher to look into the implementation of continuous assessment in Benishagul Gumuz Regional State, Metekel Zone, Dangur Woreda first cycle primary schools. Therefore, on the basis of the facts stated above, this study intends to investigate the practices and challenges of implementing continuous assessment in Dangur Woreda first cycle primary schools.

1.3 Research question

To these end, the following basic research questions were set:

1. What does the practice of implementing continuous assessment look like in the first cycle primary schools of Dangur Woreda?
2. To what extent different assessment tools are used by teachers to assess their students' overall performance?
3. What are the major challenges faced in the implementation of continuous assessment in the first cycle primary schools of Dangur Woreda?

1.4 Objectives of the study

1.4.1 General objective

The overall objective of the study is to assess the practices and challenges of continuous assessment in the first cycle primary schools of Dangur Woreda.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

In order to attain its purpose the study focused on the following specific objectives:

1. To assess how continuous assessment is implemented in Dangur Woreda the first cycle primary schools.
2. To identify the extent of different assessment tools used by teachers to assess their students' overall performance.
3. To identify the challenges that hinder the implementation of continuous assessment in Dangur Woreda first cycle primary schools.

1.5. Significances of the study

The findings of this study are important for different concerned educational partners that are found at various levels. These are policy makers, education office experts, school administrators, students, teachers, the school community and parents.

Therefore, the study provides information to higher officials and policy makers about the practices and challenges of continuous assessment implementation and the areas to be considered in the process of making policy decisions. It also gives information to school principals on how continuous assessment is being carried out in the first cycle primary schools and the mechanisms to make improvement in the area. Moreover, the study creates awareness among Woreda educational office about the existing problem to take shared responsibility for the implementation of continuous assessment. The research findings would also help to create awareness among teachers about tools and procedures used in continuous the assessment and shed light on the current assessment approaches in the school by clarifying the extent to which continuous assessment has been practiced in first cycle primary schools.

Furthermore, it suggests alternative solution to be used by education office experts, teachers, students, cluster supervisors and school principals to minimize the problem in the implementation of continuous assessment. Finally, the study could be used as an additional source of information for further studies.

1.6. Delimitation of the study

It was more comprehensive if the research is done in all regional and zonal primary schools of Benishangul Gumuz Regional State (BGRS). However, to make the study manageable and to investigate the problem deeper, the scope of this study is confined to governmental first cycle primary schools of Dangur Woreda. Furthermore; it was delimited to the practices and challenges of continuous assessment implementation.

1.7. Limitations of the study tedious

The researcher encountered some problems. The potential problem faced in the research process was unwillingness of few respondents to fill in the questionnaire and return back on time. However, the researcher appointed the respondent frequently and showed the commitment to complete this study successfully.

1.8. Operational definition of key terms

Assessment: is the process of collecting, analyzing, synthesizing and interpreting information to aid classroom decision making.

Continuous assessment: Continuous assessment can be regarded as a method of ascertaining what a student gains from schooling in terms of knowledge, character development, taking into account all his/her performance in tests, assignments, projects and other educational activities during the entire period of an educational level(Onuka, A and Oludipe, B, 2006).

Informal assessments: are procedures for gathering information about learning that you frequently use on the spur of the moment or casually during classroom activities.

Formal assessment: are procedures for gathering information about the learners that are created with special thoughtfulness and care and should be closely matched to the basic competencies in the syllabus.

Diagnostic assessment- is a special form of formative assessment in which assessment is used to obtain detailed information about individual students' prior knowledge, ways of reasoning, use of strategies, and misconceptions (Crisp, 2012; Keeley& Tobey, 2011).

Continuous assessment practice:-The overall efforts made in the implementation of continuous assessment.

Perception- is the process of attaining awareness or understanding of sensory information.

First cycle primary school:-It is elementary school consisting of grades (1-4)

1.9. Organization of the study

This research has been organized into five chapters. The first chapter deals with the background, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, limitation of the study, definition of key terms and organization of the study; the second chapter deals with the review of related literature which includes conceptual definition of assessment, Purposes of assessment ,assessment paradigms, Elements of good assessment practices , assessment methods and strategies, Conceptual definition of continuous assessment ,characteristic of continuous assessment, advantages and drawbacks of continuous assessment, teachers and students attitude towards continuous assessment, implementation of continuous assessment and its challenges in education have been discussed ; the third chapter discussed the research design and methodology which includes research design, sources of data, the study area and study population, sample size and sampling techniques, data collection instruments, procedures of data collection, techniques of data analysis and ethical issues were discussed ; fourth chapter were about the analysis and interpretation of the data. The fifth chapter includes presented findings, conclusion and recommendations. At the end, the list of reference, questionnaire and interview guides were indicated.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this review of related literature, important reference materials were analytically organized and used to advance the study. The materials utilized in this literature include journals, books, unpublished materials and internet sources. In this review of related literature conceptual definition of assessment, purposes of assessment ,assessment paradigms, elements of good assessment practices, assessment methods and strategies, conceptual definition of continuous assessment ,characteristic of continuous assessment, advantages and drawbacks of continuous assessment, teachers and students attitude towards continuous assessment, implementation of continuous assessment and its challenges were included and discussed briefly.

2.1. ASSESSMENT

According to the National Curriculum Committee Advisory (NCCA) guidelines, Assessment is the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting information about a child's progress and achievement in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes" and it is about "building a picture over time of a child's progress and /or achievement in learning across the Primary School Curriculum" (NCCA, 2007, p.7). Furthermore, assessment, as defined by Agrawal (1994), is beyond a mere collection of information. It is collection with purpose to come up with an integrated development of the personality of the child.

Assessment serves as the barometer by which instructional achievement outcome can be gauged, thus enabling the school to achieve an overall objective of having as complete a record of the growth and progress of each pupil as possible so as to make unbiased judgments in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor assessment on pupils in the classroom (Adebowale & Alao, 2008).

The term 'assessment' refers to all those activities undertaken by teachers and by their students in assessing themselves, and which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged. Such assessment becomes 'formative assessment' when the evidence is actually used to adapt the teaching work to meet the learning needs of pupils (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

Webb (2002) defines assessment literacy as: ‘knowledge about how to assess what students knows and can do, interpret the results of these assessments, and apply these results to improve student learning and program effectiveness’.

As Arends (1997) pointed out, Assessment refers to the full range of information gathered and synthesized by teacher for the purpose of making decisions about their students. Information about students can be gathered in informal ways, such as through observation and verbal exchange. It can also be gathered through formal means such as homework, tests and written reports.

Assessment is part of a process that identifies what we want students to learn, provides them with good opportunities to learn those things, and then assesses whether they have learned those things (Suskie, 2009)

Assessment is much broader; it refers to a planned process for gathering and synthesizing information relevant to the purposes of discovering and documenting students’ strengths and weaknesses, planning and enhancing instruction that is appropriate given the student’s learning needs, or making recommendations related to educational goals for a student (Cizek, 1997).

Educational assessment is the systematic process of documenting and using empirical data on the knowledge, skill, attitudes, and beliefs to refine programs and improve student learning(Allen, 2004).Assessment data can be obtained from directly examining student work to assess the achievement of learning outcomes or can be based on data from which one can make inferences about learning (Kuh, Jankowski, and Ikenberry, 2014).

The term “assessment” is used to refer to judgments on individual student performance and achievement of learning goals. It covers classroom-based assessment as well as large-scale, external tests and examinations (Nusche et al., 2012: 24).

According to Robert, Gerace, Mestra and Leonard (2000),assessment informs the teacher about what students think and how they think. Assessment benefits teachers to establish what learners already know and what they need to learn. This implies that employing various types of continuous assessment activities and methods can help the teacher to make decision about the current teaching methods and modify the instructional materials

needed for teaching and learning process, identifying the need, interest, background, levels the strength and weakness of their students.

Assessment comprises an integral part of teachers' classroom practices, and its effective use has the potential to significantly improve learning and learner performance (Black & Wiliam, 1998). However, if they are to successfully address the diverse learning needs of all children, teachers must be sufficiently knowledgeable and competent to use assessment for both summative and formative purposes. The effective use of assessment for identifying and addressing specific learner needs is especially relevant during the foundation phase of schooling as children begin to further develop and enhance their cognitive and affective capacities for learning new knowledge and skills, thereby establishing a foundation for future development (Kanjee and Mthembu, 2015).

According to Veldhuis Michiel (2015) the teacher can use multitude of approaches for collecting information almost anything that teachers usually have in their repertoire of classroom activities, such as asking a questions, giving a standardized test or teacher designed assignments, observing students working, inspecting student work, or letting students design their own exercises, and so on. All these activities through which a teacher can gather information on students' knowledge and skills are called *assessment* activities.

As a continuous process, assessment establishes measurable and clear student learning outcomes for learning, provisioning a sufficient amount of learning opportunities to achieve these outcomes, implementing a systematic way of gathering, analyzing and interpreting evidence to determine how well student learning matches expectations, and using the collected information to inform improvement in student learning (Allen, 2004). Therefore, it is possible to show how assessment fits into teaching and planning by means of a diagram (Sieborger, 1998). In this diagram the cyclic nature of assessment starts with planning teaching and learning activities, and followed by organizing learning, gathering information (or evidence), recording the results, analyzing the results of learning and feedback to the learner.

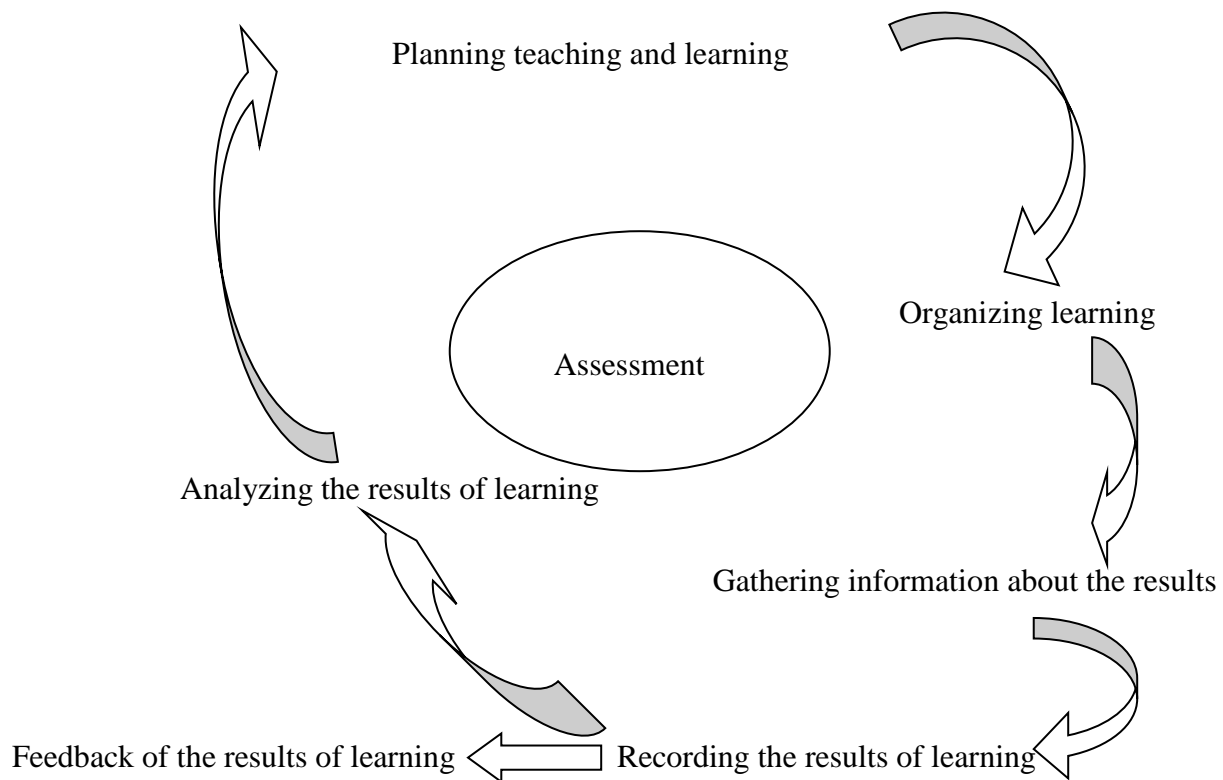


Figure 1. Transforming Assessment (Adapted from Sieborger, 1998)

The figure above shows that the cyclic nature of assessment and assessment is not the end point of teaching and learning, but something that is used to guide future teaching and learning, through analysis of the results of learning.

2.1.1 The Purpose of Assessment

Gipps and Cummings (2003) underscored that the key issue in any assessment process revolves around fitness for purpose. They argued that no assessment is considered good or bad, but rather, it should be judged on how well it satisfies its intended purpose.

The primary purpose of assessment is to assist teachers in enhancing their pupils' learning by providing information about their knowledge, their understanding of concepts and their mastery of skills, with a view to planning learning programmes for each pupil (INTO, 1997)

The fundamental role of assessment is to provide authentic and meaningful feedback for improving student learning, instructional practice and educational options (Safarath and Kingtin, 2014).

Quanash (2005) argues that the major purposes of continuous assessment are to improve the results of pupils' performance on tests and exercises, and to help pupils to develop effective learning and work habit.

Assessment can serve different purposes according to how we use the information it provides (Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP), 2010). Assessment has four main purposes:

1) Diagnostic Assessment

Diagnostic assessment identifies strengths and areas for improvement and informs the next steps. It normally takes place at the beginning of a learning programme. As struyven, Dochy and Janssens (2002) viewed, the aim of diagnostic assessment is to determine the causes of persistent learning problems and to formulate plan for remedial actions. Diagnostic assessment is a special form of formative assessment in which assessment is used to obtain detailed information about individual students' prior knowledge, ways of reasoning, use of strategies, and misconceptions (Crisp, 2012; Keeley& Tobey, 2011)

2. Formative Assessment (Assessment for Learning)

Formative assessment, often referred to as Assessment for Learning is part of the everyday teaching and learning process. Teachers gather evidence about a pupil's learning, for example by observing, listening, questioning, discussing and reviewing pupil work. They can then use this evidence to: identify progress and gaps in learning (including individual support needs); set learning goals and success criteria; and provide feedback to pupils (ARG, 2002)

3. Summative Assessment (assessment of learning)

Summative assessment in the primary school can occur at different intervals such as weekly, on completion of a topic of work, at the end of each term, or at the end of the year. The information it gives indicates pupil progress and achievement in the knowledge and skills in a particular area of learning, sometimes in grade-related or numerical terms.

Teachers can use the information generated from summative assessments as feedback to support and help pupils to improve their learning. Teachers should ‘report not only the pupils’ final performance, but also what processes pupils need to improve in order to raise their performance’ (Harlen, 2005). In addition teachers can use this information to inform the next steps in their planning or to highlight gaps in pupil knowledge and identify areas that they may need to re-emphasise. The information gathered from summative assessment can also be analysed at whole-school level for benchmarking and target setting.

4. Evaluative Assessment

The main purpose of evaluative assessment is to ensure that there is appropriate accountability at all levels for the performance of our school system (CCEA, 2011).

Evaluative assessment informs curriculum planning and provides information for monitoring and accountability. Schools can use this data for school development and action planning. Teachers can also use this data to set class targets to improve specific pupil outcomes.

Furthermore Brown, Race and Smith (1996), Pointed out the following points for the purpose of assessment.

1. To classify or grade students: There are often good reasons for us to classify the level of achievements of students individually and comparatively with in cohort. Assessment methods to achieve this will normally be summative and involve working out numerical marks or letter grads for students’ work of one kind or another.
2. To enable student progression: Students often cannot undertake course of study unless they have a sound foundation of knowledge or skills. Assessment methods to enable student progression therefore need to give a clear idea of students’ current level of achievements so that they can know if they are ready to progress.
3. To guide improvement: the feedback students receive helps them to improve their performance. Assessment is primarily formative need not necessarily count towards any final award and can therefore be upgraded in some instances. The more detailed the feedback we provide, the greater is the likelihood that students will have the opportunities for further development.

4. To give us feedback on how our teaching is going: if there are generally significant gaps in student knowledge, this often indicates faults on the teaching in the areas concerned. Excellent achievement by high proportion of students is often due to high quality facilitation of students learning.
5. To motivate students: as students find themselves under increasing pressure, they tend to become more and strategic in their approaches to learning, only putting their energies into work that counts. Assessment methods can be designed to maximize student motivation, and prompt their efforts towards important achievements.
6. To provide statistics for the course, or for the institution: Institutions need to provide funding agencies with data about student performance, and assessment systems need to take account of the need for appropriate statistical information.
7. To add variety to students learning experience, and add direction to our teaching: utilizing a range of different assessment methods spurs students to develop different skills and processes. This can provide more effective and enjoyable teaching and learning.

In particular, Salvia et al. (2013) noted at least four purposes for assessment in education for which assessment practices needed to be designed to:

1. Provide opportunities for teachers to gather evidence about student achievement in relation to programming goals and targeted syllabus outcomes;
2. Enable students to demonstrate what they know and can do;
3. Clarify student understanding of concepts and promote deeper understanding; and
4. Provide evidence that current student level of understandings and competencies are at a suitable level for future learning.

According to Danjuma (2004), purposes of continuous Assessment in the educational system are stated as follows: To provide more valid and reliable assessment of the student overall ability, to enable teachers' to be more flexible and innovative in their teaching, to provide basic guidance for students, and to reduce examination malpractice

2.1.2. Assessment Paradigms

The curricular paradigms described by Short and Burke are supposed to represent different philosophical views of reality, knowledge and learning (Short and Burke, 1994a).

According to Frank Serafini(2001) there are three paradigms of assessment entitled (A) assessment as measurement, (B) assessment as procedure, and (C) assessment as inquiry.

(A). Assessment as measurement:

The first paradigm is assessment as measurement. The primary instrument of this paradigm is the large-scale, norm-referenced standardized test. These standardized tests are designed to objectively measure the amount of knowledge that a student has acquired over a given time (Wineberg, 1997). A major concern for classroom teachers is whether these assessments provide the necessary information required to make day-to-day instructional and curricular decisions (Johnston, 1992).In the assessment as measurement paradigm, knowledge is believed to exist separately from the learner, and students work to acquire it, not construct it. The student is seen as an empty vessel, a "blank slate," ready to be filled up with knowledge. Learning is viewed as the transmission of knowledge from teacher to student while meaning is believed to reside within the text, and only one interpretation or judgment is accepted in the standardized tests (Short &Burke, 1994b).These tests were not designed to support classroom instruction; rather, they were designed for large-scale educational and program evaluation (Taylor & Walton, 1997).In the assessment as measurement paradigm, decisions about the information to be collected, and the means of evaluating this information, are usually determined by authorities outside the classroom.

(B)Assessment as inquiry

In the assessment as inquiry paradigm, assessment is based on constructivist theories of knowledge (Fosnot, 1996), student-centered learning (Altwerger, Edelsky, & Flores, 1987), and the inquiry process (Short, Harste, & Burke, 1995). Here, the teacher uses various qualitative and quantitative assessment techniques to inquire about particular learners and their learning processes. It is a process of inquiry, and a process of interpretation, used to promote reflection concerning students' understandings, attitudes, and literate abilities. Within this paradigm the

purpose of the assessments is a deeper understanding of individual learners in their specific learning contexts. The audience has also changed from external authorities to the teachers, parents, and students involved in the classroom. Assessment, in this paradigm, is viewed as a social, contextually specific, interpretive activity (Crafton & Burke, 1994). Knowledge is believed to be constructed by the individual within the social contexts of the learning event, rather than being acquired solely through transmission or direct instructional techniques. In this paradigm multiple interpretations are encouraged, and each learner transacts with different texts and the world to create meanings (Rosenblatt, 1979). Using assessment as inquiry, teachers are no longer simply test administrators. Rather, teachers and students are viewed as active creators of knowledge rather than as passive recipients (Wells, 1984). Instead of using tests to measure student abilities and compare children, teachers use these classroom-based assessment procedures to facilitate learning, direct curricular decisions, and communicate more effectively with students and parents (Serafini, 1995).

(C) Assessment as procedure

The assessment as procedure paradigm has elements of the assessment as measurement paradigm as well as the assessment as inquiry paradigm. In this paradigm, the primary focus is on the assessment procedures, not on the underlying purposes of the assessment program or the epistemological stance. Epistemologically, this paradigm is closely related to the assessment as measurement paradigm. Knowledge is still believed to exist independently from the learner; this knowledge can be transmitted to the student and eventually objectively measured. The main difference between this paradigm and the assessment as measurement paradigm is that the procedures have changed to resemble qualitative data collection methods. However, even though the methods have changed, the underlying beliefs that student achievement can be objectively measured and that knowledge exists independently from the learner had not changed. In this way, this paradigm has elements of the measurement and the inquiry paradigm in collecting this information. In this paradigm, like the assessment as measurement paradigm, teachers and students are not directly involved in making decisions concerning the assessment procedures or the purposes for these assessments. The primary concern is with reporting information, albeit information gathered by new methods, to external stakeholders and not with directing classroom instruction (Cizek, 1998).

2.1.3. Good Assessment Practices

According to Suskie (2004) good assessment practices must fulfill the following criteria:

1. Give us useful information.
2. Give us reasonably accurate, truthful information
3. Are fair to all students.
4. Are ethical and protect the privacy and dignity of those involved.
5. Are systematized.
6. Are cost-effective, yielding value that justifies the time and expense we put into them.

2.1.4. Elements of good assessment practice

Good assessment leads to collective reflection and action (Allen, 2004, p. 11)

According to Greater Expectations Project on Accreditation & Assessment (2004), good assessment practice ought to include the following elements:

1. The use of both formative assessment, for the purpose of giving feedback and making improvement, and summative assessment, for the purpose of identifying levels of attainment
2. Multiple methods that include both qualitative and quantitative evidence
3. Authentic methods that arise from students' actual assignments and learning experiences, which might be both curricular and co-curricular
4. Assessments those are developmental, so that students and others can observe progress toward valued outcomes, perhaps through the use of portfolios
5. A focus on higher, more sophisticated knowledge and capacities rather than on more easily measured basic skills
6. Assessment as continuous, systematic, and multi-dimensional
7. An ongoing, systematic process for using assessment results to improve teaching, learning, and the curriculum.

Ideas and theories of assessment have changed a great deal in recent years. This change has partly come about as a result of educators trying to improve their use of assessment. Many educators changed because they want a different approach to assessment from traditional approach.

Flanagan (1998) referred in Nomhlangano T.Z. (2006) states the following reasons that educators give for wanting to change assessment:

- Many learners fail at the end of grade one. These learners might begin to think that they will always fail at learning. So, educators need to reconsider the way in which they assess grade one learners.
- Some learners do not work during the year but they still pass to the next grade. Some only learn at the end of the year. New ways of assessing learners' work throughout the year have to be found.
- Some learners do not write things well. If you ask them they know the answer, but they always do badly in written work or in a test. There must be other ways in which to assess them, for example, using oral and or practical methods.
- The knowledge which learners need to obtain is changing. Learners used to learn "facts" but now they have to learn 'skills'. New forms of assessment are needed to assess skills.

2.2. Continuous Assessment

Continuous assessment is a classroom strategy implemented by teachers to ascertain the knowledge, understanding, and skills attained by pupils. Teachers administer assessments in a variety of ways over time to allow them to observe multiple tasks and to collect information about what pupils know, understand, and can do. These assessments are curriculum-based tasks previously taught in class. Continuous assessment occurs frequently during the school year and is part of regular teacher-pupil interactions. Pupils receive feedback from teachers based on their performance that allows them to focus on topics they have not yet mastered. Teachers learn which students need review and remediation and which pupils are ready to move on to more complex work. Thus, the results of the assessments help to ensure that all pupils make learning progress throughout the school cycle thereby increasing their academic achievement. (USAID, 2003)

Continuous assessment is not continuous testing of the cognitive ability of students whereby the affective and psychomotor domains are neglected. The purpose of continuous assessment is to assess the totality of the learner in the teaching –learning setting. In other words, it should focus on the intellectual, affective and psychomotor. It is, therefore, necessary that the teacher

should ensure proper assessment of pupils in school from time to time. The old system whereby the final assessment of the learner at the end of a particular level of education was done through a single examination (one shot) appears to be grossly inadequate and lends itself to various forms of examination malpractices. It is evident that an assessment process which takes into account the learners performance throughout the entire period of schooling is likely to be more valid and more indicative of the learner's overall ability than a single examination (Olubukola and Bankole, 2015).

Continuous assessment was proposed as the preferred method for implementing the policy and is described as the best model to assess outcomes of learning throughout the system and enable improvements to be made in the learning and teaching process. It must be used to support the learners developmentally and to give feedback to teaching and learning, and should not be interpreted merely as the accumulation of a series of traditional test results (RSA DoE, 1998).

The national steering committee on continuous assessment defined continuous assessment as a systematic method of ascertaining what a pupil has gained from schooling in terms of knowledge, industry and character development, taking into consideration all his/her performance in tests, assignments, projects and other educational activities during a given period of educational level (Bandeke and Ayodele, 2015)

According to Ezewu and Okoye (1986), continuous assessment refers to a systematic and objective process of determining the extent of a student's performance in all the expected changes in his behaviour, from the day he enters upon a course of study and a judicious accumulation of all pieces of information derived from this purpose with a view to using them to guide and shape the student and to serve as basis for making important decisions about the child. Similarly, Falayalo (1986) and Juliet (2007), viewing continuous assessment as an integral part of instruction, considers continuous assessment as a mechanism whereby the final grading of learners on the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of learning is made. The cognitive domain refers to the development of students' content knowledge and intellectual skills, while the affective domain includes students' confidence, feelings, values, motivations and attitudes. The psychomotor domain refers to the physical movement, coordination and use of motor skills; and in this study, it is particularly related to students' speaking and writing skills. According to Nitko (2004) cited in Sintayehu (2016) continuous assessment is an information gathering tool

that helps teachers select content and method of instruction and an ongoing process of gathering and interpreting information about student learning that is used in making decisions about what to teach and how well students have learned.

Continuous assessment occurs recurrently during the school year, and serves as a part of teacher-student interaction. It serves as a means of increasing students' achievement, and is used as an alternative or supplemental to high stake testing (USAID, 2003). As divergent from summative tests, continuous assessment is formative in that it enables both teachers and students to be aware of the knowledge base and level of students, and indicates both teachers and students the gaps to be filled and the higher level to deal with.

Continuous assessment is a more formative means of assessing learners that gives an opportunity for them to improve their performance. It is used as a process of gathering and integrating information about learners shifting from judge mental role to a developmental role (Byrans, 1992; Puhl, 1997).

According to Abera (2012) Continuous assessment can be seen as a means of carrying an assessment formally and informally within the classroom, yet at the same time make valid judgments about a given students' progress within a particular subject area. In addition to this, continuous assessment is a demanding task that requires the use of various assessment tools in order to assure the achievement of curricular objectives by each and every student.

Continuous assessment occurs on a regular and continuous basis, it is an ongoing formative and summative process, involves the monitoring of pupils, is integrated with teaching, involves a systematic collection of marks or grades into a final score, may be used to determine the candidates' final grades, reflects students' abilities over a period of time, allows for improvement, takes care of students' learning in the three domain of educational objectives, and it is a cumulative process (Awofala and Babajide, 2013).

The process of continuous assessment is not only examination of pupil achievement but also it is a powerful diagnostic tool that enables pupils to understand the areas in which they are having difficulty and to concentrate their efforts in those areas and it allows teachers to monitor the

impact of their lessons on pupil understanding and modify their pedagogical strategies (USAID, 2003).

Generally from the above definition one could conclude that continuous assessment is an ongoing assessment approaches that involves the use of variety of assessment tools in assessing learning and teaching to improve instructional process.

2.2.1. Characteristics of Continuous Assessment

The characteristics of continuous assessment as noted in the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (1985) is systematic, cumulative, and comprehensive and guidance oriented. Furthermore according to Falayajo (1988); Ughamadu (1994) and Egbule (2002), Continuous assessment is seen to be systematic, comprehensive, cumulative, and diagnostic and guidance oriented. These are explained below.

(A) Systematic Nature of Continuous Assessment

Continuous assessment is said to be systematic because it requires an operational plan which indicates what assessments are to be made of the student's performance, at what intervals or period during the school year. These assessments will determine the nature of instruments to be used.

(B) Comprehensive Nature of Continuous Assessment

Continuous assessment is said to be comprehensive in that it makes use of a great variety of instruments e.g. tests, assignment, project, observation, rating scales, checklist, interviews, socio-metric method, questionnaires etc to evaluate the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of behaviours.

(C) Cumulative Nature of Continuous Assessment

Continuous assessment is said to be cumulative in that it not only specifies that there should be repeated measurements, but that all such measurements must be taken into account in presenting a picture of a student at any point in time.

(D) Guidance–Oriented Nature of Continuous Assessment

Continuous assessment is said to be guidance –oriented because information gathered from it is always used to guide the student’s further development. Such information is always useful to the teachers and the school’s counselor.

(E.) Diagnostic Nature of Continuous Assessment.

Continuous assessment is said to be diagnostic since it involves continuous monitoring of students’ progress to identify each student’s strength and weaknesses. With the knowledge of the weaknesses of students, remedial programmes could be planned for them.

According to Manitoba education and training (1997) there are seven characteristics of effective continuous assessment. Effective continuous assessment is;

- ✚ Congruent with instruction and integral to it;
- ✚ Based on authentic task and meaningful learning process and context;
- ✚ Multi-dimensional and uses a wide range of tools and methods;
- ✚ Based on criteria that students know and understand, appealing to their strength;
- ✚ A collaborative process involving students;
- ✚ Focuses on what students have learned and can do;
- ✚ Ongoing and continuous.

Furthermore, according to Department of Education (2002) Characteristics of Continuous assessment covers all the outcomes-based education assessment principles and ensures that assessment:

- takes place over a period of time and is ongoing: Learning is assessed regularly and the records of learners’ progress are updated throughout the year.
- supports the growth and development of learners: Learners become active participants in learning and assessment, understand the criteria that are used for assessment activities, are involved in self-evaluation, set individual targets for themselves, reflect on their learning, and thereby experience raised self-esteem.
- provides feedback from learning and teaching: Feedback is a crucial element in formative assessment. Methods of feedback include appropriate questioning; focusing the teacher’s oral and written comments on what was intended to be achieved by an assessment activity, and encouragement to a learner.

- allows for the integrated assessment: This may include assessing a number of related learning outcomes within a single activity, and combining a number of different assessment methods. Competence in particular learning outcomes can be demonstrated in many different ways, and thus a variety of assessment methods and opportunities must be provided through which learners can demonstrate their ability.
- uses strategies that accommodate for a variety of learner needs (language, physical, psychological, emotional and cultural): Continuous assessment allows teachers to be sensitive to learners with special education needs and to overcome barriers to learning through flexible approaches. In any group of learners, there are different rates and styles of learning. All learners do not need to be assessed at the same time and in the same way.
- allows for summative assessment: The accumulation of the results of continuous assessment activities provides an overall picture of a learner's progress at a given time. Summative assessment needs to be planned carefully from the beginning of the year, to include a variety of assessment strategies – for example, exercises, tasks, projects, school and class tests - which will provide learners with a range of opportunities to show what they have learned.

2.2.2. Advantages of Continuous Assessment

Continuous assessment has benefits and limitations. First, it is advantageous because it regularly illuminates about the quality of teaching and learning and informs about the level of students' achievement of learning objectives and expected competencies. Continuous assessment allows teachers to better employ the teaching-assessment-feedback-correction (re-teaching) learning cycle that summative, time-limited assessment lack (NIED), 1999). Similarly, Alausa (2006) regards continuous assessment as guidance-oriented because it gathers data about the teaching/learning over a period of time and helps to modify instruction. According to Alausa (2006), "this could play a vital role in diagnosing and mediating areas of learners' weakness if properly anchored in what occurs in classrooms."

In addition, it is a way to genuinely gauge learners' capabilities by utilizing varied methods of assessment. Harnessed to promote learner-centered education, continuous assessment helps students to demonstrate their actual and potential capacities in the mastery of learning objectives. On the other hand, teachers will also have high engagement in performance activities, which at

last leads them to integrate assessment results into instructional practice (Alausa, 2006). According to Jacobs and Gawe (1996) continuous assessment has many advantages for both the learner and the educator. These advantages are the following: The promotion of learners is not confined to a couple of tests and one or two examinations a year since continuous assessment is an ongoing process. Learners are always aware of how they are progressing in their learning as everything is exposed to them. Continuous assessment is not threatening to learners. Continuous assessment enables learners to realize their strengths and weaknesses as they learn. It provides opportunity for weak learners to improve their weaknesses and continuous assessment is both formative and summative.

However, according to Birhanu (2013) the expected advantages of continuous assessment lies in its being guidance oriented. The importance of continuous assessment is not only pedagogic functions, i.e. ‘to provide students with feedback’, ‘to meet the learning outcomes’ and ‘to motivate students to study’ but also it provide academics with more control over the assessment within the classroom rather than leaving it in the hands of the central system (Hernandez, 2012). Continuous assessment has the potential to support student learning through feedback and to increase students’ motivation for learning (Hernandez, 2012). Continuous assessment could play a vital role in diagnosing and remediating areas of learners’ weakness if properly anchored in what occurs in classroom (Birhanu, 2013). In order to produce feedback that is relevant and informative and meets students’ needs, teachers themselves need good data about how students are progressing (David and Debra, 2006)

According to Newton (2010), the uses of assessments are reviewed as monitoring students’ progress over time, placing students in teaching groups, diagnosing students’ difficulties, reporting to parents, guiding future educational and employment decisions, etc.

Greaney and Kellaghan (2003), point out that the advantages of continuous assessments as follows (1) it does not deconceptualise knowledge and skills, (2) it provides evidence of learners learning in authentic settings, (3) it allows an assessment of learners’ ability to think critically, to co-operate, to solve problems, to communicate, and it can contribute substantially to advancing learners’ learning and understanding. Greaney and Kellaghan (2003) add that continuous assessment plays a role in determining the learner’s current level of knowledge, skills and

understanding, to diagnose problems they may be encountering, to make decision about the next instructional steps to take (to revise or move on), and to evaluate the learning that has taken place in a lesson.

Continuous assessment makes it possible to assess qualities that are not assessed in traditional examinations and provides the teacher with additional information about learners (Le Grange & Reddy, 1998). Continuous assessment allows the teacher to concentrate not only on the basic skills and rote learning, but also on the higher cognitive levels of thinking (Gipps, 1994). Continuous assessment increases the accountability of continuous assessment results from one teacher to another (Nitko, 1995)

In contrary to the above advantages of continuous assessment, it also has drawbacks as well.

2.2.3. Drawbacks of Continuous Assessment

The disadvantage of continuous assessment is teacher overdependence on measuring students' progress in the cognitive domain in a school-based assessment with total neglect of the affective and psychomotor domains of learning (Awofala and Babajide, 2013).

Continuous assessment also exhibits certain draw-backs which are linked with teachers' skill and management. Alausa (2006), for example, contended that the problems of continuous assessment chiefly concentrate on teachers' skills in test construction and administration, their attitudes and record keeping. Teachers need to construct valid and reliable assessments which can be comparable across classes, schools, regions and nations; and this can be a reality only when they are equipped with the skills of test construction and administration.

Continuous assessment leads to an increase in both the learner and teacher workload in the area of extensive record keeping and monitoring of individual learner's work throughout the school year (Njabili, 1999). Continuous assessment places much power in the hands of teachers and this power is often abused by the teachers who award scores even when tests are not administered (Ughamadu, 1994).

According to Black (1998) the main weaknesses in class room assessment are as follows:

- Classroom assessment practices generally encourage superficial and rote learning, concentrating on recall of isolated details, usually items of knowledge which pupils soon forget.

- Teachers do not generally evaluate the assessment questions that they use and do not discuss them critically with peers, so there is little reflection on what is being assessed.
- The grading function is over-emphasized and the learning function underemphasized.
- There is a tendency to use a normative rather than a criterion approach, which emphasizes competition between pupils rather than personal improvement of each.
- The evidence is that with classroom assessment practices the effect of feedback is to teach the weaker pupils that they lack ability, so that they are de-motivated and lose confidence in their own capacity to learn. (Black, 1998)

2.3. Assessment methods and strategies

2.3.1. Assessment tools

The classroom teacher can match the assessments tools (instrument) with the learning targets (Knowledge, skills, and attitude). The type of assessment instrument depends on the kind of learning to be measured (NEAEA, 2014).

According to NEAEA (2014) the classroom teacher can select the right assessment tool that is appropriate for the pertinent topic.

- A) Homework: refers to tasks assigned to students by their teachers to be completed outside of class. Common homework assignments may include a quantity or period of reading to be performed, writing, problems to be solved, a school project to be built (display), or other skills to be practiced.
- B) Class works: are tasks that are given during learning teaching process.
- C) Assignments: are tasks or activities that are undertaken at home or outside the classroom.
- D) Group work: a form of cooperative learning. It aims to cater for individual differences, develop students' knowledge, generic skills (e.g. communication skills, collaborative skills, critical thinking skills) and attitudes.
- E) Quiz: short and informal questions usually administered in class hours.
- F) Oral presentation: a performance which requires a learner to use his or her oral skills to verbalize their knowledge.
- G) Oral questioning: a process focused which requires a learner to respond to questions.
- H) Observation: It is a process focused which is usually informal where the teacher gathers information by watching learners interacting, conversing, working, playing, etc. A

teacher can use observations to collect data on behaviors that are difficult to assess by other methods (attitude toward problem solving, ability to work effectively in a group, persistence, concentration and completion of tasks).

Performance- oriented behaviors can be assessed using observational techniques which are relied on highly practical way to gather information without interrupting classroom activities (Gronlund, 1998).

- D) Interview: a process where a learner is expected to respond to questions concerning his or her learning.
- J) Portfolio: Student portfolios are a collection of evidence, prepared by the student and evaluated by the staff member, to demonstrate mastery, comprehension, application, and synthesis of a given set of concepts.
- K) Cloze test (cloze deletion test) is an exercise, test, or assessment consisting of a portion of text with certain words removed (cloze text), where the participant is asked to replace the missing words. Cloze tests require the ability to understand context and vocabulary in order to identify the correct words or type of words that belong in the deleted passages of a text. This exercise is commonly administered for the assessment of native and second language instruction.
- L) Jigsaw group projects: In jigsaw projects, each member of a group is asked to complete some part of an assignment; when every member has completed his assignment task, the pieces can be joined together to form a finished project.
- M) Self-Assessment: Self-assessment has been defined as the involvement of students in identifying standards and/or criteria to apply to their work and making judgments about the extent to which they have met these criteria and standards. Assessment decisions can be made by students on their own essays, reports, presentations, projects, and so on, but it is believed to be more valuable when students assess the work that is personal in nature, like a learner log, portfolio etc.

With self-assessment, students check their work, revisit assignment drafts and texts, and research and reflect upon their past practices. Care is needed to teach the student to make judgments on what was actually achieved rather than what was 'meant'. But once mastered, in addition to judging one's own work, the concept of self-assessment develops skills in self awareness and critical reflection.

- N) Peer Assessment: In the context of learning as assessment, peer assessment is used to estimate worth of other students' work, and to give and receive feedback. This approach to assessment requires careful planning, agreement of criteria and use of common tools for analyzing marks. Furthermore, the teacher may need to encourage the students to take this practice seriously, and developing the necessary skills.
- O) Group Assessment: Group assessment can be used for a task where a group of learners work together to achieve an outcome. Learners should be encouraged to work effectively with others in a team, group, organization and community. Some activities are better done in pairs or groups of learners. Some of the activities that can work well when done in pairs or groups are role-play, drama, debates, and discussions, brainstorming and sharing ideas (Lorraine, 1996).

All the aforementioned varieties of assessment techniques and tools can be used as a menu for the classroom teacher to choose from and implement to gather information about his/her students learning progress. There is no single recipe or blueprint that all teachers can successfully adopt and follow. What matters most is improving students' diverse learning needs using various techniques and tools of assessment (Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis and Chappuis, 2004).

2.3.2. Strategies of classroom assessment

According to NEAEA (2014), there are seven classroom assessment strategies. These are

1. Provide students with a clear and understandable vision of the learning target
- 2 .Use examples and models of strong and weak work
3. Offer regular descriptive feedback.
4. Teach students to self-assess and set goals.
5. Design lessons to focus on one learning target or aspect of quality at a time.

Motivation and achievement both increase when instruction is guided by clearly defined targets. Effective feedback shows students where they are on their path to attaining the intended learning. It teaches students to identify their strengths and weaknesses and to set learning goals for further learning. When assessment information identifies a need, the teacher can adjust instruction to target that need. In this strategy, the teacher scaffolds learning by narrowing the focus of a lesson to help students master a specific learning outcomes or to address specific misconceptions or problems.

6 .Teach students focused revision.

7. Engage students in self-reflection, and let them keep track of and share their learning.

When a concept, skill, or competence proves difficult for students, the teacher can let them practice it in smaller segments, and give them feedback on just the aspects they are practicing. This strategy allows students to revise their initial work with a focus on a manageable number of learning targets or aspects of quality. Long-term retention and motivation increase when students track, reflect on, and communicate about their learning. In this strategy, students look back on their journey, reflecting on their learning and sharing their achievement with others (Chappuis, 2007).

2.4. Implementation of Continuous Assessment in Schools

The teacher's role is central to ensuring quality assessment within schools (Wyatt-Smith et al., 2010). The assessment process provides the teacher with the information needed “in order to make important decisions about the teaching and learning process – selecting curriculum objectives, identifying appropriate teaching methodologies, designing learning activities, choosing suitable resources, differentiating learning, and giving feedback to children on how well they are doing” (NCCA, 2007).

The Introduction to the Primary School Curriculum states Parents are the child's primary educators and the life of the home is the most potent factor in his or her development during the primary school years. There is a continuing process through which the child's formal learning experience in school interacts with the less formal developmental experience of home and the family. It is widely recognised that significant educational, social and behavioural benefits accrue to the child as a result of effective partnership between parents and teachers. Close co-operation between the home and the school is essential, therefore, if children are to receive the maximum benefit from the curriculum. Regular consultation with parents helps teachers to come to a deeper appreciation of children's needs and so to plan for more effective learning experiences. It also provides the means by which teachers keep parents fully informed about children's progress (NCCA, 1999).

In relation to assessment, the introduction states assessment assists communication about children's progress and development between teacher and parent. It also helps to ensure quality in education (NCCA, 1999).

Teachers and schools must have sound knowledge of assessment and the professional skills to develop and apply continuous assessment in practice (GTCNI, 2011).

The OECD (2013) proposes that teachers should 'draw on a variety of assessment types to obtain a rounded picture of student learning.' They should also strive to 'ensure that student assessment is inclusive and responsive to different learner needs.' Additionally, the results should be comparable across schools. In sum, teachers should be able to create assessments which (i) meet a wide range of purposes, (ii) accommodate the many diverse abilities and styles of their students, (iii) comprise many different approaches and tasks, and (iv) are well -suited to the particular education setting. In addition, at least for lower primary teachers in many countries, they must do this for multiple subject areas and with a growing emphasis on 21st Century Skills and competency-based, integrated learning. And increasingly, even single subject teachers are expected to design assessments which link their discipline with other topics and skill sets.

The National Policy recognizes that government is aware that the administration of continuous assessment within schools will pose certain significant problems to both the teachers and the educational system itself. The policy further advocated training programmes for teachers who will be central to the achievement of continuous assessment and other objectives of school evaluation programme. There is the need to design an operational plan so that uniformity in both standards and record keeping across and within schools will be maintained. Such model is necessary so as to facilitate the transfer of student's records from school-to-school without much distortion to his/her previous records. It is expected that the students, teachers, guidance counselor, principals and stakeholders in teaching-learning setting should be considered in the administration of continuous assessment (OMEBE, 2014).

The major evidence weighted in support of continuous assessment in schools is that students who are assessed continuously obtain better results than those of equal ability, assessed through a single examination (Nneji,et al., 2012 and Mwebaza, 2010). This is because continuous

assessment allows for more opportunities to test a wide range of abilities over a longer period of time than through a single examination (Eimann, 2002).

duPlessis et al.(2003) highlighted nine reasons for using continuous assessment in school settings which include (i) to gain confidence in what we say our students know and can do; (ii) to provide all children with opportunities to show what they know; (iii) to promote learning for understanding; (iv) to improve teaching; (v) to help determine what kind of remediation and enrichment activities to provide, and to identify which students need assistance; (vi) to let the students know how well they are progressing in their own learning; (vii) to let parents know how their children are progressing; (viii) To lead to overall evaluation; and (ix) to find out what students know and can do.

2.5. Attitude of Teachers and Students toward CA

The attitude of teacher and students affect how assessment is viewed and implemented. This means the positive and the negative attitudes that teachers and students may have due to reason of their own may have the power of influencing the implementation positively and negatively. In relation to this, researchers and educators share the idea that teacher's low interest or negative attitude towards assessment has been one of the variables that contribute to an ineffective assessment implementation. In view of this Nitko (1996), and Gronlund and Linn (2000) as cited in Tamene Olana (2007) suggested that a new assessment program can succeed only if teachers accept it. If teachers do not accept the philosophy of this program it is clear that it is not possible to implement the program effectively. We know that, teachers are more interested to assessments carefully if they accept the new assessment strategy. Teshome (2001) in the work of Getachew Kassa (2008) strengthen this idea and suggested that teachers must understand the assessment process, feel secure about it, and accept it as their own for its effective implementation. But insufficient training, lack of adequate materials, Lack of moral support, and lack of orientation and assistance from concerned body make it difficult for teachers to appreciate and apply continuous assessment.

According to Azeb (2013), even though continuous assessment is taken as integral part of their instructional activities but some teachers and students have negative attitudes to works continuous assessment this has negative impact on implementation of continuous assessment.

The attitudes of students are also important factors on the implementation of the program.

In case of students attitude Shirley (2003) in the work of Getacho Kassa (2008) suggested that pupils who do well in tests like tests and pupils who do not do well on tests do not like tests. That is pupils, who do well on tests, may have a positive attitude towards assessment and pupils who are not doing test may have negative attitude towards continuous assessment.

Teachers' beliefs are crucial in how teachers approach teaching in the classroom (Butler & McMunn, 2006). For example, if a teacher believes that a child is unable to learn as shown by a test score, the teacher is less likely to invest time and effort in the student. In this example, it is the teachers' attitudes and beliefs about assessment that is helping to shape the teachers' classroom behaviours. The claim is that changing teacher attitudes and classroom behaviours about assessment is best achieved through on-going professional development (Butler & McMunn, 2006; Clark, 2012).

A study conducted by Kleinert, Kennedy and Keranst as cited in Moges (2015) revealed that teachers expressed levels of frustration in the use of alternative assessments. Some major issues that teachers have against the use of alternative assessments are that they require more time for students to complete, and for teachers to supervise and assess. In consistent with this, Joyce (2014) evidenced that despite the fact that teachers reported favorable perceptions of assessment, they seem to be facing a conflict in implementing effective assessment in their classrooms. This means that although teachers acknowledge the importance of assessment, they consider it as an additional load to their work. Such perceptions might make things difficult to conduct meaningful assessment and offer regular feedback to the students.

2.6. Challenges in Implementing Continuous Assessment

It is unfortunate; however, that continuous assessment has not made the expected contribution to pupils' school performance due to the way it was conceptualized and due also to some other inherent problems in its operation. At the Lower Primary School where five subjects are presently taught (English, Mathematics, Environmental Studies, Ghanaian Languages and Culture, and Religious and Moral Education) a pupil has to carry out 165 assignments per year calculated as follows: 11 assignments x 5 subjects x 3 terms = 165 (Quansah, 2005)

Furthermore according to continuous assessment handbook of Quansah(2005), some of the problems that arise out of continuous assessment implementation in schools are as follows:

1. High level stress in test taking and test marking:

The first problem is the large number of assessments pupils have to go through, and the larger number of mark recordings teachers have to make. While a pupil takes or completes 165 tests and exercises a year at the Lower Primary level, a teacher in a lower primary class has to mark and record 19 marks per pupil, per subject, per term. In a year, the teacher has to mark and record 285 marks for each pupil in 5 subjects ($19 \times 3 \text{ terms} \times 5 \text{ subjects} = 285$).

2. Reduction in teacher /pupil contact hours

The large number of assessments also tends to reduce the number of contact hours for instruction in many public schools. In a number of schools, the two weeks before the vacation are used for marking outstanding tests and for completing the continuous assessment record books. Very little instruction is carried out.

3. Lack of emphasis on project work

Assessment modes class tests and Tests/quizzes are marked out of 40% each. The third modes, projects and homework, are marked out of 20%. Teachers have not been trained on “project undertaking” and “project marking” and they therefore concentrate mainly on “home work”. In effect, the current continuous assessment system involves: class tests, class exercises and homework. No attention is given to project work which is the most important learning medium that allows pupils to take active part in their own learning. Tests are used to collect data on pupils’ learning in the continuous assessment process. Tests by themselves do not lead to improved learning. Projects, by their nature, lead to greater learning.

4. Use of questions that require easier marking

Because of the large number of tests and exercises that have to be marked, there is the tendency on the part of teachers to use test questions that are easier to mark. These invariably are recall questions. High level ability questions that involve critical thinking and problem solving skills are rarely, if ever, used.

5. Lack of uniformity in continuous assessment procedures across schools

Since there is currently no formal training of teachers in the` continuous assessment process, each teacher and each school tend to use their own separate ways for conducting continuous assessment. This tendency consequently creates lack of uniformity in the continuous assessment process in the country. Schools have been provided “Record Books” which show exactly how continuous assessment marks should be recorded. The problem concerns the type and quality of tests, exercises and homework different schools set and record.

6. Lack of remedial instruction based on continuous assessment results

Very little remedial instruction based on continuous assessment results takes place in schools. This is essentially due to lack of time arising from the rather large number of assessments and other duties that the teacher has to carry out. There designed continuous assessment system has a built-in remediation system in the project component. The teacher is required to guide and advise the pupil as he/she goes through the various phases of the project, while making sure that the outcome of the project largely reflects the effort of the pupil.

7. Lack of moderation

The quality of continuous assessment is presently under the control of the classroom teacher, and one, therefore, cannot be certain of the quality of tests and other assignments used in the continuous assessment system. For continuous assessment to have the effects envisaged there must be an accompanying moderation system aimed at authenticating the quality of tests set by teachers and there liability of marks awarded by teachers. Circuit supervisors are required, as part of their work, to check the continuous assessment process in schools. But there will certainly be variations in the monitoring processes of circuit supervisors unless a more formalized continuous assessment moderation process is instituted in schools

Kellaghan and Greaney (2004) note that the quality of teacher assessments has been found to be deficient in a number of ways including the use of poorly developed tests and exams, the predominance of the use of questions that require recalling factual knowledge and a lack of procedures designed to assess high-order thinking skills. Kellaghan and Greaney (2004) also note that other explanations provided for the poor quality of classroom assessment can be

attributed to large class sizes, limited access to learning and teaching material, poor facilities, poorly qualified teachers, limited support from district or Ministry officials, and limited training and capacity-development opportunities.

According to Ughamadu (1994), one of the problems of continuous assessment is the comparability of standards which is not unconnected to the fact different instrument of assessment are used. Ezeudu (2005) opined that the grade obtained from continuous assessment cannot be compared because there are situations in which schools and students with the system differ considerably in terms of program offered, tradition, inputs, teachers' qualifications, student's abilities, entry behaviours etc.

Again, another problem of continuous assessment is record keeping and continuity of records (Federal Government Handbook on Continuous Assessment, 1985 and Yoloye, 1984). It is sated that continuous assessment cannot be meaningful except there is a careful keeping of accurate records for each student throughout the child's period of schooling.

According to the article of Kapambwe(2010), the following are major challenges faced by teachers in the implementation of continuous assessment:

A) Large class size

One of the major challenges was the large class sizes. Teachers indicated that the workload became higher as they were required to mark and keep records of the progress of all learners. Due to this challenge a good number of teachers in the pilot schools continued to practice continuous testing by administering assessment or tests at the end of the first month and the end of the second month. A good number of teachers failed to appreciate the need to administer assessments on an on-going basis such as weekly, fortnightly or after a topic.

B) Staffing

The high pupil to teacher ratio was another challenge. Due to lack of adequate staffing levels, some teachers were found to handle more than one class.

C) Pupil absenteeism

Absenteeism also posed an obstacle to the smooth management of pupil performance and to continuous assessment records as some pupils 'attendance was irregular. This was worse in the rural areas where some pupils stayed away from schools due to the fear of very challenging work. Some absenteeism eventually leads to pupils dropping out of schools completely.

D) Remediation and Enrichment

Although continuous assessment should be well integrated with teaching and learning processes, a good number of teachers still felt that the continuous assessment practice took a lot of time spent on remediation and enrichment and also many teachers did not believe that they would finish the syllabus with continuous assessment. This means before the implementation of continuous assessment a considerable number of teachers develop resistance to the proper implementation of continuous assessment.

E) Teaching and learning resources: The majority of the teachers complained that they had inadequate teaching and learning materials. The difficulty with learning materials mainly affected the availability of appropriate teaching and learning in new curriculum. There was a complete lack of materials in some learning areas like community studies and creative and technology studies. It was clear that they needed a lot of support in form of materials and equipment such as stationery, computers and photocopiers etc.

F) Teacher networking

It was found difficult to implement on the ground the collaboration of groups of schools in the districts work together to develop common end of term tests. The findings from the monitoring visits and the formative assessment study revealed as schools experienced difficulties in coming together due to lack of materials and coordination.

G) Monitoring and feedback

Monitoring was another area in which the overall implementation experienced challenges. When there is inadequate monitoring and feedback, implementation of continuous assessment is challenged. There was need for the district offices to closely monitor the teachers' implementation so that they could be given the necessary support.

According to Omebe (2014), the challenges of implementing continuous assessment are listed as follows: Continuous assessment is poorly implemented because of the absence of proper monitoring program, teachers lack the expertise required in analyzing assessment information, teachers' attitude towards continuous assessment is negative as they have to do extra work, teachers lack the skill of instrument construction and they would construct poor instruments, un-availability of continuous assessment guidelines in schools, lack of induction training and refresher courses for teachers on continuous assessment, absenteeism and irregular pupils' attendance, low morale on the part of teachers and incompetence in the operation of continuous assessment, lack of uniformity and standardization of continuous assessment practices, teachers unethical behaviour in the award of continuous assessment marks and parents ignorance on the usefulness of continuous assessment.

2.7. International Findings on Continuous Assessment

Over the past twenty years, assessment is a policy issue that has grown worldwide because governments have realized its importance in the education sector (Broadfoot & Black, 2004). Its implementation is considered to be essential in the education transformation process in many countries. For example, in Scotland, assessment development has a long tradition in teaching practices. However, the implementation is considered to be challenging and those who are concerned struggle to implement assessment and produce the expected results in teaching (Hayward & Hedge, 2010). Some of the challenges experienced were, firstly, the relationship between continuous assessment ideas and the practicality experience in the classroom. Secondly, assessment in learning increases the workload of teachers. Thirdly, there was no synergy between what was needed to be assessed for learning and the tasks given to the learners (Hayward & Hedge, 2010). Several studies have also revealed that the shift from summative (traditional assessment) to formative assessment was not easy. Morgan, Preece, Skinner, and Shen (in Broadfoot & Black, 2004) explain how summative tests requirements dominate the assessment practices in teaching. Teachers tend to focus mainly on instruction and demonstration, rather than on assessment activities, and they, therefore, perceive summative assessment as a form of selection, certification and accountability, rather than as giving feedback in the teaching process (Mavrommatis, 1997).

In the United States, Stiggins (2002) argued for new ways of thinking about assessment because over-reliance on summative assessment makes it virtually impossible for teachers to adopt teaching and learning that meet individual learners' assessment needs. Stiggins further advocated that assessment for learning (formative assessment) must be balanced with the traditional assessment of learning (summative assessment) so that teachers can feed information back to learners in ways that enable them to think well. Furthermore in the United States of America (USA), Bachor and Anderson (in Broadfoot & Black, 2004) found that teachers could not properly distinguish between the purposes and practices of formative and summative assessment. Mavrommatis (in Broadfoot & Black, 2004) found that, in Greece, teachers resisted the implementation of formative assessment to the extent that they only used summative assessment in schools.

In the United Kingdom (UK) assessment policy changes have produced various practices that are counter-productive to the stated aims of the reform process (McCallum et al. & Gipps et al. in Black & Wiliam, 2006). However, these changes were slow in pace because it was very difficult for teachers to change practices that were directly rooted within their model of pedagogy as a whole (Torrie & Shepard et al., in Black & Wiliam, 2006). It, therefore, is hard for the teachers to accept the changes, because the old practices were embedded in their everyday teaching practices. Mavrommatis(1997) notes that inadequate assessment training of teachers seems to be held responsible for a lack of proper implementation of assessment policy in most primary classrooms internationally. Broadfoot and Black (2004) therefore argue that if assessment policy is to flourish in schools, teacher training and initiatives that support a constructive connection between formative and summative assessment is needed from the teachers and all the stakeholders in education.

Lewin and Dunne (2000) argue that assessment on the African context emanated from many discourses on assessment and curriculum reform designed by African curriculum developers and assessment specialists. The Science Education Programme for Africa, along with the African Primary Science Programme, which advocates for a shift in emphasis from rote learning to enquiry-based activities and subject integration, spearheaded curriculum reform in the 1970s. This was accompanied by a competency-based discourse and an official shift in curriculum and assessment policy design. The reason behind this was to minimise the significance of

examinations and enhance the importance of continuous assessment activities as a means of stimulating a learner-centered approach (Lewin& Dunne, 2000).

The national policy on education in Nigeria placed more emphasis on assessment policy because it was assumed that it would provide teachers with greater motivation and encouragement to provide quality education to the learners (Eimann, 2002). However, Adebowale and Alao (2008) observed that the implementation of assessment policy was not successful and they identified certain challenges in schools that hampered the successful implementation of assessment. These included inadequate skills among teachers in test construction and test administration; the teachers' lack of skills in assessment implementation, which created the wrong impression about the continuous assessment approach; and the teachers' lack of interest in keeping assessment record-sheets that are retrievable.

Furthermore, implementation of continuous assessment in Nigeria has been fraught with such problems as poor assessment skills of teachers, poor attention of stakeholders to the use of continuous assessment as a quality control and assurance tool and care free attitude of both teachers and students. Sufficient funds are not allocated for its implementation and continuous assessment scores storage equipment such as computers are not made available for teachers to use (Onuka and Oludipe, 2004; 2006; Onuka, 2007a).

In Senegal, a learner-centered approach was adopted, but teachers continued to focus on recall and memorisation rather than learning with understanding (Chisholm &Leyendecker, 2008).Teachers were not prepared to teach using a learner-centered approach, which involves the implementation of formative assessment in the classroom. For this reason, teachers were encouraged to continue giving instruction in a teacher-centered approach and implement summative assessment activities in teaching.

In Malawi, assessment in primary schools is mainly summative and teachers designing tests that are used with norm-referenced interpretations of scores (Chulu, 2013). Chulu further notes that certain teachers lack important skills, such as test constructions, score reporting and score interpretation. The teachers also experience a lack of adequate knowledge and skills of educational assessment practices (Kadzamira et al.,& Seleman imbewe, in Chulu, 2013).

2.8. Continuous Assessment in Ethiopian Context

In many countries, the examination system employed is continuous assessment up to grade eight. After stressing of the need of continuous assessment in schools of the country, Ministry of Education, MOE (2002) has expanded continuous assessment for students, teachers and to education system as a whole. Adoption of such a system would certainly require much preparatory work. In the conditions of our country, it is at least possible to evaluate the performance of students on weekly or monthly basis and to correct weakness by continuous assessment and ensure that they have learnt what they had to, at least, in the first four years of schooling. Since this method was not applied before, our experience shows that many children repeated in the first grade. Thus, continuous assessment provides for students to be tested not only twice a year, but to be continuously assessed and, where necessary, to repeat lessons to them until they understand them. This way, students can be automatically promoted from class to class. This enables them not to be terror-stricken by exams and to have lessons repeated to them when they become problematic. Even after automatic promotion, the self-contained teacher who knows the students characters and problems can use their weak points as the basis of rectification. In this manner, students go through the first four years of schooling without any class repetition, and yet with mastery of the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic. Consequently, the inefficiency of the educational system is reduced significantly (The education and training policy and its implementation, ministry of education, February, 2002)

However, before the introduction of the education and training policy, test and examination are the most dominant mode of assessment of students at all level. The system of evaluation of students has been improved along with the organization of the curriculum. A system of continuous assessment through observation, questionnaire, oral tests and regular written exercises has been put in place for Grades 1 to 4 school children. (MOE, 2002)

The education and training policy envisages that assessment at all levels of education and training be made using continuous assessment. This policy direction is more meaningful specially to school beginners(grade1-4).The policy assumption behind continuous assessment to effect grade-to grade promotion is that such kind of pedagogical approach will contribute to quality learning as assessment is also an integral part of teaching-learning process. As a result,

it's advised to use continuous assessment both to maintain the quality of learning as well as the desired efficiency coefficient, especially at this lower level of learning. The enforcement of the continuous assessment strategy has served as a typical instrument to lower down classroom repetition (Demise, 2016).

Notably, the Ethiopian Education and Training policy (TGE, 1994) affirmed that “continuous assessment in academic and practical subjects including aptitude tests will be conducted to ascertain the formation of all round profile of students at all levels”. From this notion, one can easily deduce that this compressive term which refers particularly to inquiring into the learners competence knowledge, attitude and skill through various students’ profile using different assessment methods to improve learning, has become an integral part of learning process ever since the policy has been implemented.

Although the policy of the country adheres the implementation of Continuous assessment at all educational levels, there seems to be challenges of implementation related to various factors. From research findings to Ethiopia context, Birhanu (2004) indicated that proper handling of student assessment in general and continuous assessment in particular in selected high school level is poor and not up to the standard compared to the contemporary assessment system. This finding further indicated that the major problem in implementing continuous assessment include lack of awareness about the technique and procedures of continuous assessment, lack of guideline and directives in implementing continuous assessment, lack of technical support, unmanageable large class size and lack of adequate learning materials and so on.

There are teachers in the Ethiopian school system who are aware of the advantages of continuous assessment and who are implementing it with success. The majority, however, seems to be hesitant and need assistance and guidance before they will be able to implement continuous assessment with confidence. It seems as if current education policies on continuous assessment are experienced as general, vague and insufficient in assisting teachers at classroom level. A clear conception of the meaning of continuous assessment and practical guidelines to assist teachers with its implementation are lacking. Teachers have some confusion on the practical importance and types of continuous assessment; whether it should be an integral part of a lesson plan or not (Ogar, 2007).

For effective implementation of continuous assessment, manageability of class size, nature of course, professional skills of teachers in line with the new approach is important. Commitment of teachers towards continuous assessment, the presence of appropriate working loads and resources seem necessary in the implementation of continuous assessment. Moreover, educational quality in Ethiopia is low in that students are not achieving the desired standards and that there is a wide dispersion in educational outcomes. A general consensus has emerged regarding the country's need to improve its educational outcomes, that education quality has to increase to boost productivity and foster growth and at the same time that the country needs to reduce the education gap between top-bottom achievers as a way to reduce income inequality among Ethiopians (Teklebrhan and Samuel, 2015)

In the Ethiopian context, continuous assessment was found to be misconceived by most teacher educators and its implementation is impeded by a lot of factors (Mulu, 2005). Among the factors that are identified (Mulu, 2005) to impede the implementation of continuous assessment are large student population, lack of commitment and motivation by instructors and misconception of the beneficial aspects. Shortage of time is also taken as one of the factors.

Similarly, some other studies also pinpointed the following findings viz., teachers practice continuous assessment as continuous tests (Abiy, 2013), assessment process is not a learning experience for most students (Abera, 2012), implementation of continuous assessment overall was found to be negative and non-frequently implemented (Gemechu, 2013), practice of the continuous assessment activities to assess students' written work is not sufficient enough to improve the learning and teaching of a writing course (Yiheyis and Getachew, 2014) and judgmental role of continuous assessment is more practiced than the development role of the assessment (Aytaged, 2013). These results have manifested the existing deficiency in the implementation of continuous assessment.

2.9. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Continuous assessment practices in schools are guided by different materials developed for teachers. Thus continuous assessment has its own principles, guidelines and purposes, characteristics, methods, tools and techniques which facilitate the practical implementation. Continuous assessment takes the view that knowledge is dynamic, can be generated and is

valuable wherever it is located. The activities in Continuous assessment are based on colleagues working together, listening to each other, sharing ideas, creating innovations, and taking action together. Thus, assessment is both a teaching approach and a set of assessment techniques which are performed by teachers and their students to assess the learning activity.

And also assessment is seen to have both formative and summative functions. Summative assessment involves gathering of evidence about pupils' learning at the end of a course. On the other hand, formative assessment includes a variety of activities undertaken to provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning process.

Besides to the above summative and formative assessment functions ,continuous assessment also enables students to demonstrate what they know and can do, Provide opportunities for teachers to gather evidence about student achievement and providing teachers the information needed to afford quality teaching that will advance learning.

As discussed above, the implementation of continuous assessment are influenced by a variety of factors such as absence of proper monitoring, teachers lack the experience in analyzing assessment information, teachers' negative attitude towards continuous assessment as it makes them to do extra workload, un-availability of continuous assessment guidelines in schools, Lack of training on continuous assessment, absenteeism and irregular pupils' attendance. So that in order to have good assessment practice to the schools, teachers must plan and analyze continuous assessment appropriately to achieve the desired students' academic progress and competency.

In this review literature important concepts of the study area are included. Conceptual definition of assessment, purposes of assessment ,assessment paradigms, elements of good assessment practices , assessment methods and strategies, Conceptual definition of continuous assessment ,characteristic of continuous assessment, advantages and drawbacks of continuous assessment, teachers and students attitude towards continuous assessment, implementation of continuous assessment and its challenges in education have been discussed. Based on the theoretical information discussed above, this study has its conceptual framework of the study which is the signpost of the study process. Therefore, these areas are taken as the model which used throughout the study to detect the practices and challenges of implementing continuous assessment in first Cycle Primary schools.

Conceptual Model of the Study

Challenges that hinder the implementation of continuous assessment

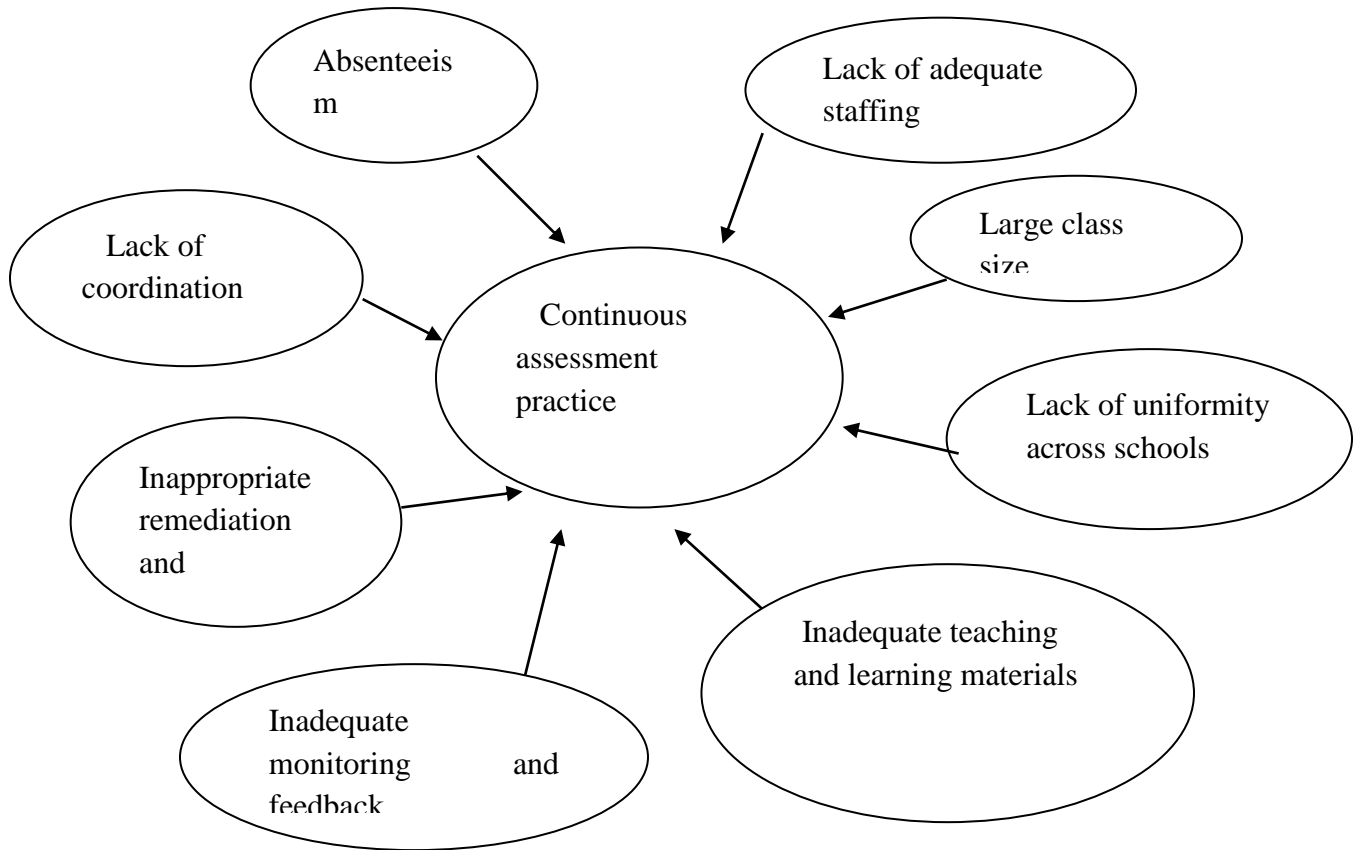


Figure 2: Conceptual Model of the Study

Source: Own presentation

As we have seen from figure 2:conceptual model of study, the practices of continuous assessment in schools and the extent of using different assessment methods to assess students' achievement in classrooms are directly or indirectly affected by different challenges. Absenteeism of students makes teachers scoring and recording of students' assessment irregular, forces teachers to score and implement assessment at one occasion. Similarly in lack of adequate staffing, teachers were enforced to teach more than one subjects and this increases workload to teachers which further influences the use of different assessment methods regularly in the classroom with the required content knowledge. Large class size also affects the method of

teaching and use of different assessment methods in the classroom, scoring and recording of students' assessment and provision of feedback to students at each classroom activity. Moreover due to lack of uniformity across schools, different schools implement continuous assessment differently by the way they understand and this also affects utilization of different assessment methods, scoring and recording of assessment and also transfer of students' assessment from school to school and comparability to standards. Inadequate teaching and learning materials also affects the use of different assessment methods in the class and outside the classroom i.e. if students did not get textbooks one to one ratio, exercise books, pen, pencil etc, they cannot do their assessment activities given by their teachers. Furthermore inadequate monitoring and feedback also affects teachers' use of different assessment methods, scoring and recording of assessments consistently. Therefore, teachers need successive supports from school principals, supervisors and District education office experts with appropriate feedback to implement assessment regularly. Moreover, if students did not get remediation and enrichment activities based on their academic achievement gaps, it is impossible to observe progress of students in knowledge, attitude and skills. Therefore it is impossible to move to further activities and this in turn increases students' class repetition.

Generally an assessment explained above is usually carried out by teachers to improve pupils' learning and teachers' instruction on the basis of impressions gained through a variety of assessment techniques they employ. However, this part of educational assessment is the most difficult aspect of teaching. Because judging pupils 'work with respect to the different educational domains is difficult since it is a continuous process that demands teachers' knowledge, skills, time and energy.

CHAPTER THREE

3. Research Design and Methodology

In this chapter the research design, samples and sampling techniques, instruments of data collection, methods of data analysis and ethical issues are presented.

3.1 Research Design

The overall purpose of the study is to assess the practices and challenges of continuous assessment in the first cycle primary schools of Dangur Woreda. Therefore the researcher used descriptive survey design to conduct the research in terms of its appropriateness. Kothari (2004) stated that the major purpose of descriptive survey is description of the state of affairs as it exists at present. Furthermore, he explained that the main characteristic of descriptive survey is that it enables the researcher to come up with what has happened or what is happening.

The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative methods (mixed method). According to Creswell(2012.p.22) the core argument for a mixed methods design is that the combination of both forms of data provided a better understanding of a research problem than either quantitative or qualitative data by itself. Qualitative methods assist the researcher to analyze those data which is not quantitative in nature while quantitative methods assist the researcher to collect data that are more statistically significant. Mixed method is appropriate to bring a solution which is understandable and implemented by all the consumers of the research findings.

3.2. Sources of Data

Having a real source of data in the process of the study is unquestionable to address the basic questions. To have broad and important data, the researcher used both primary and secondary sources of data.

3.2.1 Primary Sources

Primary data sources of this study were principals, first cycle primary school teachers, first cycle primary students, cluster supervisors and Woreda Education office experts. Primary sources help the researcher to get first-hand information about the issue under study.

3.2.2 Secondary Sources

Secondary data sources of this study are obtained from documents. In this regard, an assessment of documents related to the areas of the study was consulted at the selected first cycle primary schools. These documents include student mark list, teachers' weekly and daily lesson plans, teachers' daily assessment report and other important documents.

3.3 The Study Area and Study Population

The research was held in government first cycle primary school of Dangur Woreda. This Woreda is found in Benishangul Gumuz Regional state and Metekel zone. The target population for this study was all teachers, students, directors and Cluster Supervisors in 12 first cycle primary schools of Dangur Woreda and Woreda education office experts. Therefore the target population for the study was all the First Cycle Primary school teachers (92), students (2421), directors (12) and Cluster Supervisors (4) and Woreda education office experts (18). As a result the total target populations of the study were about 2547.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The area under study, which is Dangur Woreda, has one town and twenty nine administrative kebel. The classification of this Woreda into Woreda and administrative kebele is for the purpose of provision of effective administration and facilitating the guidance and support to teaching and learning processes and other sectors development. In dangur woreda there are 35 first cycle primary schools. Before determining the sample size needed, it is better to consider some aspects as determinants.

According to Gay & Diehl, (1992), generally the number of respondents acceptable for a study depends upon the type of research involved - descriptive, correlational or experimental. For descriptive research the sample should be 10% of population. But if the population is small then 20% may be required. Additionally the researcher considered time, budget and energy consumption while data collection and also considered the representativeness of the selected sample to the research study. Therefore, by using simple random sampling techniques (lottery system) 12(34.3%) of first Cycle primary schools were incorporated in study. These schools were namely Manbuk first cycle primary school, Shibeshi first cycle primary School, Birhan

first cycle primary School, Mizizika first cycle primary School, DabuKokele first cycle primary school, Dilsanbi first cycle primary school, Jimitiya first cycle primary school, Gublak first cycle primary school, Juraysis first cycle primary school, Bengez first cycle primary school, Aysika first cycle primary school and Kota first cycle primary school. From the selected first cycle primary schools there are 12 principals and 4 cluster supervisors. All of the principals and cluster supervisors were included in the study. And also in the selected first cycle primary schools the total numbers of teachers were 92 and out of these total teachers, 68 teachers were selected by using simple random sampling techniques. In the case of woreda educational office experts, from the total of 18 respondents, 4 educational experts and from 2421 total students of selected schools, 96 students were also taken as the sample from grade 3 and 4 considering their ability of expressing their thought during discussion by using purposive sampling techniques. Thus, the size of the sample is 68 teachers, 12 school principals and 4 cluster supervisors, 4 Woreda education office experts and 96 students. Therefore, the total sample size taken for the study from total targeted population is 184.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected using different data collecting instruments. Accordingly, questionnaire, interview, document analysis and classroom observation and focus group discussion were employed for the study to collect primary and secondary data.

3.5.1 Questionnaire

For this study, questionnaire is an important data collecting tool. It was used to collect sufficient primary data. Open-ended and close-ended questions were developed for teachers. The questionnaire is selected not only because it is the most common data gathering tool, but also it helps to collect a great deal of information within the time limit and help to reach large group of research subjects(Kothari,2004).The questionnaire was prepared for teachers only. The researcher designed close-ended (23) questions and Open-ended (1) question were developed for teachers. The item was prepared in English and translated to Amharic for participants. This is because of the fact that Amharic is widely used as a medium of communication in the area and participants express their ideas in detail and freely. Moreover, to test the validity and reliability of the instrument, a draft of the questionnaire was distributed for research advisor,

senior graduate students and to the researcher colleagues. Based on their comment the necessary correction was done to improve the validity and reliability of the instruments. Finally, questionnaires were distributed to 68 teacher participants from the selected 12 first cycle primary schools. And out of these questionnaire, 68 (100%) were filled out and returned for the analysis. The entire questionnaires distributed were returned all in all because the researcher and his assistants were created awareness to participants about the purpose of the study, the benefits of the study that would accrue to the participants prior to participation and also the researcher's effort to distribute them personally, giving time to fill and collected back them.

3.5.2 Interview

In addition to questionnaire the researcher also used interview to collect primary data. It is helpful to supplement the information gathered, through other instruments, as well as for the clarification of some unforeseen information. The researcher designed 13 semi structured open ended interview questions for school directors (12) and cluster supervisors (4). Moreover 14 semi structured open ended interview questions were designed for district education office experts (4). Consequently, a face to face interview was held with selected school principals, woreda education office experts and cluster supervisors.

3.5.3 Classroom Observation

The researcher used class observation in the selected 12 first cycle primary schools by taking one grade level and with subjects taught to observe the extent to which teachers employ continuous assessment techniques in their classroom with the help of designed checklists (12 items) to cross-check the response of the teachers and their practices in classroom.

3.5.4 Document Analysis

In addition to the above instruments of data collection, document analysis was used to gather secondary data. Therefore, reliable information was obtained from the 12 selected first cycle primary schools. Essential documents, like schools plans for the implementation of continuous assessment, daily lesson plan, students mark list, records of assessment on students' note book, teachers' assessment report and other relevant documents were analyzed.

3.5.5 Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussion (FGD) is a method of data collection which is frequently used to collect in depth qualitative data in various descriptive studies. The main goal of focus group discussion is to provide an opportunity for participants to talk to one another about a specific area of study. The facilitator is there to guide the discussion. The researcher prepared semi-structured open questions (14 items) and used for focused group discussion with the selected grade 3 and 4 students (96) since they were unable to fill the questionnaire.

3.6. Pilot Study

A pilot Study was carried out before the main study to test the clarity of the questionnaire items. The information obtained was used to revise the items. Questions that are not clear are rephrased. Three schools were used for the pilot study purposes. The three selected schools are not part of the main study. In addition to the pilot study schools, the researcher used to test the validity and reliability of the instruments by providing developed questionnaire to research study advisor, by distributing a draft of the questionnaire for senior graduate students and to the researcher colleagues. The researcher has taken 30 teachers, which is 10 teachers from each school for pilot test and the questionnaire was distributed to them and analyzed the reliability of the questionnaire by using SPSS and the reliability statistics of Cronbach's alpha (α) is 0.781. Based on their comments the necessary correction was done to improve the validity and reliability of the instruments.

3.7. Procedures of Data Collection

The researcher sought a permit from the Woreda education office in charge of research on first cycle primary schools with the approved research topic. Having the permission, the researcher constructs questionnaire for teachers, interview question for school principals, cluster supervisors and Woreda education officers. And also the researcher constructs focus group discussion questions for the selected grade 3 and 4 students.

After construction of questionnaire, interview, focus group discussion and class room observation items the researcher invites research study advisor, senior graduate students and research colleagues for comments. As the result, the questionnaire, interview, focus group

discussion and class room observation items were reconstructed on the basis of comments. Then permission was requested from the school principals to collect data from the respondents. Orientation was given to assistance data collector upon the process of distribution and collection or how to handle questions raised from the respondents. In addition, clear explanation was provided for the respondents about the questionnaire and other items provided to them. Therefore, the data collection was conducted through questionnaire, interview, observation, document analysis and focus group discussion.

3.8 .Techniques of Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods were used in the study. Quantitative data which were collected through questionnaire from teachers were organized, tabulated and described quantitatively using percentage and frequency. Those data which were collected from school principals, cluster supervisors and woreda education office expert participants through interview and Open ended questions of observation, documentary analysis and focus group discussion of students were narrated in words and analyzed qualitatively in order to supplement the information gathered through other instruments. After the completion of data collection, quantitatively collected data were compiled using statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 24. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentage. Finally the major findings of the study were reported and recommendation was forwarded.

3.9. Ethical Issues

Research ethics is an essential component of the study. The researcher had the responsibility to conduct the investigations and report their findings without harming research participants (Keyton, 2004:251).In this research, informed consent was sought from teachers, school principals, cluster supervisors, students and woreda education office experts. Johnson and Christensen (2004:102) contend that informed consent refers to procedures in which individuals choose whether or not to participate in an investigation after being informed of the purpose of the study, procedures of the study, risks and the rights to ask questions, the benefits of the study that would accrue to the participants, alternative procedures and limits of confidentiality prior to participation and non-participation. This was done verbally and in writing, by providing information about the study, the research aims and questions, instruments, research procedures,

and plans for informed consent by all study participants. Participation at every stage was voluntary, and confidentiality and anonymity were assured wherever possible. The overall purpose of the study, duration, benefits and risks of the study was also stated.

Only voluntary participation by participants was accepted prior to participation in research. All participants could discontinue their participation at any time as they wished. Participants made the choice to be part of the research or to withdraw from the research after some explanation pertaining to the study. Borg and Gall (2002:85) contend that, “researcher should respect the individual freedom to decline to participate or to withdraw from the research study at any time.” By the nature of qualitative research, protecting anonymity would be difficult because of its use of observation, interviews and focus groups. Names will not be attached to any other data.

The research results from all participants were summarized and given as a research report with no names. Borgdan and Biklen (2007:215) assert that, informant’s identities should be protected to avoid embarrassment and any form of harm on participants.” Any material that was collected through documents analysis, interviews, and observations were kept away from the data collection site to further enhance confidentiality. The true natures of the research including procedures have spelt out.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter includes data that were collected from participants through questionnaire, interview, focus group discussion, class observation and document analysis. The data that were gathered by using methods of questionnaire from teacher participants, interview from school directors, cluster supervisors and Woreda education office experts and focus group discussion from grade 3 and 4th student participants and class observation and document analysis were analyzed and interpreted systematically in line with research questions.

4.1 Background and General Characteristics of Participants

To assess demographic characteristics of teacher respondents, issues such as school name, age, sex and specific characters such as educational qualification, teaching experience and teaching work load per weeks were considered. Their responses were concluded and indicated as follows in table No 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics and experience of the respondent teachers

No	Item	Variables	N	%
1	Gender	Male	33	48.5%
		Female	35	51.5%
		Total	68	100%
2	Age	20-25	32	47%
		26-30	27	39.7%
		31-35	4	5.9%
		>36	5	7.4%
		Total	68	100%
3	Subjects taught	Mother tongue	6	8.8%
		Amharic	13	19.1%
		Maths	13	19.1%
		English	16	23.5%
		Environmental science	16	23.5%
		aesthetics	4	6%
		Total	68	100%
4	Educational/ Professional qualification	degree	0	0%
		diploma	60	88.2%
		TTI certificate	8	11.8%
		Total	68	100%
5	Experience/service of years	0-5 years	20	29.4%
		6-10 years	36	53%
		11-15 years	9	13.2%
		>20	3	4.4%
		Total	68	100%
6	Weekly teaching load	<10	1	1.5%
		10-15	5	7.4%
		16-21	20	29.4%
		22-26	19	27.9%
		27-31	12	17.6%
		>31	11	16.2%
		total	68	100%

In the table 1, the first item deals about gender of the participants, and thus, the majority of the respondents, 35(51.5%) were female teachers and 33(48.5%) of them were male teacher. This

shows that as there was high female employment and empowerment in the first cycle primary education system to ensure gender equity.

Concerning the age of participants, majority of respondents, 32(47%) of the teacher respondents were between 20-25 years and 4(5.9%) of teacher respondents were between 31-35 years. This indicates that as majority of teacher respondents are young employers and inexperienced teachers. This may hinder continuous assessment implementation due to lack of experience on the issue.

Regarding subjects taught, majority of subject teacher respondents, 16(23.5%) were English and environmental science teachers respectively and 6(8.8%) were mother tongue teacher respondents and also 4(6%) teachers were aesthetics teachers.

This indicates that there are many English and environmental science teachers and in the case of mother tongue and esthetics teacher recruitment rate is low and these subjects are taught in schools by other non-qualified teachers which may create challenges to the implementation of continuous assessment as they may not properly know even the contents of the lesson.

When we see the educational qualification of teachers, majority 60(88.2%) of teacher respondents were diploma holders and 8(11.8%) are certificate holders. This shows that as there was standardized teacher qualification in first cycle primary schools. According to first cycle education standard (2004), the teacher qualification standard for first cycle primary schools is diplomas but for the further improvement there needs to train certificate teachers to diploma level to achieve the standards.

In the case of service years of respondents, majority, 36(53%) of teacher respondents were between 6-10 years and 3(4.4%) of teacher respondents are above 20 years. From this one can observe that the majority of teachers have less teaching experience in the first cycle primary schools and this may contribute to assessment problems of scoring and recording.

On the other hand, regarding teachers' workload ,20(29.4%) teacher respondents have 16-21 teaching load and 12(17.6%) teacher respondents have 27-31 teaching load per week where as 11(16.2%) teacher respondents have greater than 31 teaching load per weeks .This tells us

many of the teachers have teaching load per week which may hinder them from implementing continuous assessment.

4.2. Training on Continuous Assessment

Teachers need to get successive pre-service training from universities, colleges to implement continuous assessment effectively in their classrooms. Moreover, in-service training, such as periodic refreshment courses, workshops, seminars and conference are essential parts of the ongoing work and development of teacher training education in order to keep up with the current trends in the application of continuous assessment.

Table 2. In-service and pre-service training of teachers on Continuous Assessment

No	Description	Response	Teacher participants	
			N	%
1	Did you take continuous assessment courses in your pre service program?	Yes	68	100
		No	0	0
	Total		68	100
2	Did you take continuous assessment course in your in service training?		N	%
		Yes	20	29.4
		No	48	70.6
	Total		68	100
3	Continuous assessment in-service training given for teachers in a year	Alternatives	N	%
		One day	15	22
		Two days	4	5.9
		A week	1	1.5
		No training	48	70.6
	Total		68	100
4	When did you get continuous assessment training?	Alternatives	N	%
		This year	7	10.3
		Previous year	6	8.8
		2-5 years before	6	8.8
		10 years before	1	1.5
		No training	48	70.6
	Total		68	100

As can be observed in table 2, teacher participants were asked whether they have attended continuous assessment courses during pre-service program or not. About 68(100%) of teachers were responded that as they had taken courses related to continuous assessment in their pre service program.

One of the interviewed education office expert (I₂) concerning the trend of education office teachers employment for first cycle primary schools and orientation provided to new employers on continuous assessment formats, guidelines, recording and reporting,

revealed that “most of the time teachers are recruited without assessing their competency and more over district education office do not create awareness to directors, cluster supervisors and new recruited teachers on the area of continuous assessment implementation, student’s result recording and reporting before sending to their teaching place”(January 29,2018).

Based on the above data one can conclude that teachers did not get continuous assessment implementation orientation by district offices during their recruitment and placement. This hinders them to implement continuous assessment in first cycle primary schools.

Similarly teachers were asked whether they had attended continuous assessment in service training or not. About 48(70.6%) teachers had not attended in service training and 20(29.4%) of them had attended in service training. Concerning the duration of in service training teachers had attended in a year, 48(70.6%) of teacher had not attended continuous assessment in service training per year but 15(22%) of them had attended for one day, 4(5.9%) of them attended in for two days and 1(1.5%) attended for a week. Furthermore teachers were asked about the year that they had attended in service training. About 48(70.6%) of teachers had not attended in-service training given in the year but 7(10.3%) of them had attended in this year, 6(8.8%) of them attended in the previous year, 6(8.8%) of them attended 2-5 years before and 1(1.5%) of them attended 10 years before.

Concerning training opportunity provided by district education office to teachers and school administrators based on the skill gap on continuous assessment implementation, one of the interviewed district education office expert (I₁) said that “there is no trend of providing training based on the skill gap of continuous assessment to directors, teachers and cluster supervisors at Woreda level” (January 28, 2018).

From the above presentation of data it could be inferred that the majority of teachers were employed to implement continuous assessment without in service training on continuous assessment and different institutions did not give due emphasis to continuous assessment implementation training in in-service programs. Even though some teachers who took in-service training on continuous assessment implementation, it lacks continuity and the training days were very short and not practical. This hinders the practice of continuous assessment implementation in schools.

4.3. Inclusion of Continuous Assessment in Lesson Plan

Teaching and learning need annual, weekly and daily lesson plans to achieve the intended objectives. Therefore, teachers need to have skill in the inclusion of continuous assessment methods and using in their classroom to promote student centered teaching method and assess the practical achievements of students.

Table 3.Integration of continuous assessment method in lesson plan as perceived by respondents

No	Description	Response	Teacher participants	
			N	%
5	Did you Include continuous assessment in your planning?	Yes	65	95.6
		No	3	4.4
Total			68	100
6	Type of planning in which continuous assessment is included?	Annual planning	2	2.9
		Weekly planning	50	73.5
		Daily planning	5	7.4
		In education plan such as CPD and others	8	11.8
		Not at all	3	4.4
Total			68	100

In table 3, item 5 teachers were asked whether they had included continuous assessment in their planning or not. About 65(95.6%) of teachers had included in their planning but 3(4.4%) of them

had not included in their planning. Even though teachers responded that as they included continuous assessment in their planning, classroom observation evidences revealed that teachers did not include continuous assessment in their planning effectively.

From this one can understand that as majority of teachers had skill gap in including different continuous assessment methods in their planning.

Moreover in table 3, item 6, teacher was asked about types of planning they had used to include continuous assessment methods. 50(73.5%) of teachers had included in weekly planning and 5(7.4%) of them had included in daily planning. From this one can understand that majority of teachers had used weekly planning for inclusion of continuous assessment but teachers need to include continuous assessment in daily planning to run teaching and learning effectively.

Table 4.Reasons to use continuous assessment and Students’ involvement in continuous assessment tasks as perceived by respondents

No	Items	Alternatives	No	%
7	Purposes for using continuous assessment	For improving and evaluating students learning.	25	36.8
		To know how much the students understand the content	12	17.6
		For increasing students participation	14	20.6
		To know success of education achievement	6	8.8
		To use continuous assessment type and time	11	16.2
	Total		68	100
8	Duration of participating student in continuous assessment	Always	23	38.8
		Sometimes	35	51.5
		occasionally	10	14.7
	Total		68	100

In table 4, item 7 teachers were asked concerning the use of continuous assessment mostly for.

25 (36.8%) of teachers were used continuous assessment for improving and evaluating students learning, 12(17.6%) of them were used to know how much students understand the content,

11(16.2) of them were used continuous assessment type and time and 14(20.6%) of them were used for increasing students participation. Concerning the contributions of continuous assessment for the improvement of teaching and learning activities,

One of the interviewed directors (I₄) said that “the contribution of continuous assessment for teaching and learning activities is that to improve students result and ethics, to evaluate teachers teaching effectiveness, to increase student’s participation, to know how much students understand the content thought, to measure easily student’s immediate learning achievements and to measure different learning skills, knowledge and attitudes” (February 9, 2018).

From this one can understand that as majority teachers mostly use continuous assessment for improving and evaluating students learning.

Form the table 4, item 8 regarding for frequency of participating students in continuous assessments 35(51.5%) of teachers had participated their students in continuous assessment sometimes and 10(14.7%) of them participated their students occasionally. Furthermore classroom observation evidence also revealed that teachers were not frequently engaging all students by using different continuous assessment methods. Concerning whether all students actively participating in classroom assessment practices and if not reason for passive participation,

Information taken from students FGD explained that students are not actively participating in classroom assessment practices because students do not give attention and interest to education, students do not understand the content thought to them, teachers are not supporting and managing students(February 4, 2018).

From this one can understand that as majority teachers had used continuous assessment to participate students sometimes and this hinders continuous assessment continuity in teaching learning activity to brought significant changes to students.

4.4. Continuous Assessment Methods

Teachers should have understanding of a variety of assessment methods which is appropriate with students needs and must provide a range of opportunities for learners to demonstrate knowledge, attitude and skills. Assessment tools that are chosen must be fitted with identified

purposes of assessment and teachers' choice of methods depends on extent on what is to be assessed.

Teacher respondents had asked for using or not using different types of continuous assessment techniques. 68(100%) of teacher had responded that they used different continuous assessment techniques.

Table 5. Continuous Assessment Techniques used by Teachers

No	Type of Continuous assessment tools used	Extent of use of continuous assessment tools by teacher participants							
		Always		Sometimes		When necessary		Don't use	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Class Work	37	54	23	33.8	8	11.8	0	0
2	Home Work	34	50	26	38.2	8	11.8	0	0
3	Observation	18	26.5	21	30.9	28	41.2	1	1.5
4	Oral Question	59	86.8	7	10.3	2	2.9	0	0
5	Group Discussion	35	51.5	26	38.2	7	10.3	0	0
6	Test	7	10.3	36	52.9	25	36.8	0	0
7	Presentation	63	92.6	3	4.4	1	1.5	1	1.5
8	Peer Assessment	5	7.4	13	19.1	16	23.5	34	50.0
9	Self-Assessment	5	7.4	12	17.6	32	47.1	19	27.9
10	Project Work	5	7.4	20	29.4	33	48.5	10	14.7
11	Quizzes	2	2.9	20	29.4	38	55.9	8	11.8
12	Interview	18	26.5	21	30.9	18	26.5	11	16.2
13	Exam	23	33.8	13	19.1	32	47.1	0	0

Note: N=frequency of teacher participants, Total teacher participants = 68.

Teacher respondents asked for the extent of using class work in teaching and learning activities. 37(54.4%) of teacher respondents used always and 8(11.8%) of them used when necessary. Similarly the extent of using homework, 34(50%) of respondents used always and 8(11.8%) of them used when necessary. Regarding to the extent of using observation, 28(41.2%) of teachers used when necessary and 21(30.9%) of them used sometimes. Moreover the extent of using oral questions, 59(86.8%) of respondents used always and 2(2.9%) of respondents used when necessary.

Regarding the assessment technique teacher use to assess students' performance and how often do they use the technique,

Information taken from students FGD explained that their teachers use class attendance, class participation, personal hygiene, communication with others, homework, class works, tests and group discussion and occasionally peer assessment as assessment methods but most of the time teachers use group work, homework and class work(February 4, 2018).

Concerning the assessment methods schools use for practical implementation of continuous assessment in classrooms, (I₁) replied that “the assessment methods teachers used for practical implementation of continuous assessment varies from subject to subject and in most of time teachers used assessment methods for practical implementation of continuous assessments are presentation, oral questioning and answering, class works, home works, class participation, group works” (February 2, 2018).

Regarding the assessment techniques teacher use to assess students' performance and how often do they use the technique,

One of the interviewed directors (I₂) replied that “the assessment technique teachers used frequently to assess students performances are oral questions, class works , home works, class attendance, class participation, personal hygiene, communicating with others, project works, , test and group discussions”(February 4,2018).

From the above table 5 presentation one can conclude that, majority of teachers used class work, homework and oral questions more frequently for assessing students in their classes and teachers used classroom observation when necessary.

In table 5, teacher respondents asked for extent of using group work in the classroom. 35(51.5%) of teachers used always and 7(10.3%) of them used when necessary. Similarly extent of using test, 36(52.9%) of teachers used sometimes and 25(36.8%) of them used when necessary. Concerning to extent of using presentation in teaching and learning activities, 63(92.6%) of teachers used always and 1(1.5%) of respondents were used when necessary. Moreover the extent of using peer assessment, 34(50%) of teachers did not use it and 16(23.5%) of them used when necessary.

From above table 5 presentation one could understand that, majority of teachers more frequently used presentation, tests, and group work as continuous assessment methods to assess students learning in their classes but majority of teachers did not use peer assessment as continuous assessment methods to assess their students in classrooms.

In table 5, concerning to the extent of using self-assessment, 32(47.1%) of respondents replied that they used it when necessary and 19(27.9%) of them not used self-assessment in assessing students learning. Similarly teachers had asked for extent of using project work in teaching and learning activities. 33(48.5%) of teachers had used when necessary and 10(14.7%) of them not used project work. In extent of using quizzes, 38(55.9%) of respondents had used when necessary and 8(11.8%) of them had not used quizzes. Moreover the extent of using interview, 21(30.9%) of respondents used sometimes and 11(16.2%) of respondents not used interviews in their teaching and learning activities. Concerning to the extent of using exam, 32(47.1%) of respondents used when necessary and 13(19.1%) of them used exams sometimes.

From the above table 5 presentation, one could understand that as majority of teachers use self-assessment, quizzes, projects and exam as assessment method in assessing their students when necessary and some teachers used interview sometimes as assessment method in assessing their students. Therefore majority of teachers used exam, quizzes, interviews, project work and less used self-assessment.

Table 6. Responses of teachers on the provision of feedback and its frequency on continuous assessment activities

No	Items	Alternatives	Teachers Participants	
			N	%
9	Do you provide feedback for students	Yes	68	100
		No	0	
Total			68	100
10	Frequency of giving feedback teachers	In each continuous assessment tasks	28	41.2
		When test papers returned to the students	32	47
		At the end of the semester/course	8	11.8
Total			68	100
11	feedback provision system to students	for all students	26	38.2
		partial /for some students	28	41.2
		for group of students	14	20.6
Total			68	100

Table 6 shows that all the respondent teachers were giving feedback for their students. They were giving feedback mainly when they return test papers and for each continuous assessment tasks. Concerning teachers feedback provision system, 28(41.2%) of respondents provided feedback for partially / for some students, 26(38.2%) of them provided for all students and 14(20.6%) of respondents provided feedback for group of students.

Regarding teachers provision of timely feedback for students in relation to their assessment results and its frequency,

Information taken from students FGD explained that even if teachers do not provide feedback to students regularly but most of the time teachers provided feedback to students while in each test papers returning time, by reflecting students rank at the end of semester, by reflecting answers to question and in each assessment activities(February 10, 2018).

Classroom observation evidences showed that teachers’ feedback provision to students was very limited.

From table 6 presentations above one can conclude that all students do not get feedback at right time and provision of feedback lacks continuity and this reduces students’ confidence and academic achievement and in turn it hinders continuous assessment implementation.

Table 7 .Presence/absence of continuous assessment guidelines and teachers awareness level on continuous assessment guidelines and formats

No	Items	Alternatives	Teacher participants	
			No	%
12	Do your schools have continuous assessment guidelines?	Yes	63	92.6
		No	5	7.4
Total			68	100
13	Teacher’s awareness level on continuous assessment guidelines and formats.	Very high	11	16.2
		High	13	19.1
		medium	6	8.8
		low	38	55.9
Total			68	100

From table 7, majority of teacher respondents replied that as they had continuous assessment guidelines in their schools where as only few respondents replied that as there had no continuous assessment guidelines in their schools.

Moreover teacher respondents asked concerning their awareness level on continuous assessment guidelines and formats, 38(55.9%) of respondents replied that their awareness on continuous assessment implementation is low.

Regarding continuous assessment guidelines, formats and necessary materials distribution by Woreda to facilitate continuous assessment practice, (I₈) said that “district education office distributes continuous assessment formats and continuous assessment guidelines to schools but schools do not use assessment guidelines properly for practical implementation of continuous assessment in their schools and moreover teachers do not have the same understanding and due to this they implement differently” (February 13, 2018).

From the table 7 above presentation one could conclude that even though there is continuous assessment guidelines in most of schools, teachers did not use it for building their capacity due to this teachers' awareness level on continuous assessment guidelines are low.

Table 8. Continuous assessment support from education stakeholders and interaction of parents with teachers

No	Items	Alternatives	Teacher participants	
			No	%
14	stakeholders giving support to teachers for continuous assessment implementation	District office	7	10.3
		directors	42	61.8
		cluster supervisors	11	16.2
		department heads	8	11.7
Total			68	100
15	Support of school administration on continuous assessment implementation	Very high	13	19.1
		High	24	35.3
		Medium	26	38.2
		Never	5	7.4
Total			68	100
16	Duration of teachers interaction with parents to evaluate students continuous assessment results	Daily	1	1.5
		Weekly	1	1.5
		Monthly	12	17.6
		Semester	43	63.2
		No interaction	11	16.2
Total			68	100
17	Do teachers occupy other jobs than continuous assessment?	Yes	36	52.9
		No	32	47.1
Total			68	100%

In table 8, item 14 teacher respondents asked about the stakeholders giving support to teachers for continuous assessment implementation. 42(61.8%) of teacher respondents responded that directors were providing support to them and 7(10.3%) of respondents responded that district education office provided support to teachers. Moreover table 9, item 29 teacher respondents asked about frequency of support that school directors provided on continuous assessment implementation. 26(38.2%) of teacher respondents replied that directors support is medium, 13(19.1%) of them very high and 5(7.4%) of teacher respondents responded that directors did not provide any support on continuous assessment implementation.

Concerning the means of checking whether teachers are implementing continuous assessment or not, (I₄) said that “teachers implementation of continuous assessment is approved in school by distributing continuous assessment formats to all teachers and follow up with internal supervision committee and also at the end of each month teachers continuous assessment result recording are observed and approved by school directors” (February 9, 2018).

More over one of the interviewed supervisors (I₆) said that “ I checked randomly teachers continuous assessment implementation by observing lesson plan construction, by classroom observation, by observing test construction, by observing temporary and permanent continuous assessment result recordings”(February 11,2018).

How often district education office support school teachers to implement continuous assessment and provide supervision feedback to schools?

One of the interviewed district education office (I₂) revealed that “even if supervision supports are not carried out only for continuous assessment implementation, but it is included in other supervision check lists and schools had supported and provided feedback two times a semester but there is skill gap in expert’s supervision support and feedback giving” (January 29,2018).

From the table 8,item 14 and 15 presentation above one can conclude that even though different stakeholders possesses different responsibility in the schools, they did not support the implementation of continuous assessment in schools as expected and in most of schools directors provided support to teachers to implement continuous assessment.

Table 8, item 16 concerning duration of teachers interaction with parents to evaluate students continuous assessment results, 43(63.2%) of respondents did interact with student parents at the end of semester and 11(16.2%) of respondents did not interact to parents to evaluate students continuous assessment results.

Regarding teacher’s interaction with parents to evaluate their child’s continuous assessment results, (I₇) replied that “parents are not voluntary to come and participate on school meetings to evaluate and discuss with their child’s continuous assessment implementation on monthly basis, but in our schools parents come to school one time for semester final students’ academic

achievements evaluation and this is due to school directors commitment problem and are not planned to enter in practical activities” (February 12, 2018).

Regarding teachers and parents communication to evaluate continuous assessment implementation results at school level,

Information taken from students FGD explained that there is no trend of evaluating students continuous assessment results with parents on monthly basis but sometimes parents are called for misbehavior of their students, this interaction problem is due to lack of teachers commitment and parents awareness problems(February 9, 2108).

From the table 8,item 16 presentation above one can conclude that in most of schools parents did not follow-up and control their children’s learning and did not interact with teachers to evaluate continuous assessment implementation in continual manner but parents and teachers interacted at semester for student’s academic achievement evaluation and this hinders continuous assessment implementation.

In table 8 item 17, teacher respondents asked whether they had occupied other jobs in addition to teaching. 36(52.9%) of respondents responded that as they had additional jobs in schools such as committee, different clubs, department heads, and teachers continuous professional development coordinators and so on and 32(47.1%) of respondents responded that they had no other jobs than continuous assessment.

From table 8 item 17 presentations above one can conclude that most of teachers engaged in extra activities than teaching and implementing continuous assessment. This shows as there were extra activities on the teacher that consumes the time needed to gather, record and interpret data in continuous assessment and in turn it affects directly or indirectly the practice of continuous assessment implementation in schools.

4.5. Challenges to the Implementation of Continuous Assessment

Teachers' practical implementation of continuous assessment was challenged by different constraints. These were illustrated as follows in table 9.

Table 9. Different challenges influencing level on continuous assessment implementation

No	Items	Level of influence					
		High		Medium		Low	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Large class size	35	51.5	15	22.1	18	26.4
2	Attitude of students	34	50	9	13.2	25	36.8
3	Lack of time	29	42.6	20	29.4	19	27.9
4	Lack of awareness	42	61.8	16	23.5	10	14.7
5	Shortage of teaching & learning materials	32	47.1	24	35.3	12	17.6
6	Lack of teachers commitment	26	38.2	24	35.3	18	26.5
7	Lack of students readiness	26	38.2	23	33.8	19	27.9
8	Lack of guidelines & formats	30	44.1	17	25	21	30.9
9	Lack of incentives	35	51.5	14	20.6	19	27.9
10	Lack of follow up & evaluation	32	47.5	25	36.8	11	16.2
11	Lack of accountability	23	33.8	24	35.3	21	30.9

In table 9, teachers respondents asked about the different challenges influencing level on continuous assessment, 35(51.5%) of respondents replied that large class size had high influence, 34(50%) of respondent replied as attitudes of students had medium influence, 29(42.6%) of respondents replied that lack of time had high influence, 42(61.8%) of respondents replied that lack of awareness had high influence, 32 (47.1%) of respondents replied that shortage of teaching and learning materials had high influence, 26(38.2%) of respondents replied that teachers commitment had high influence, 26(38.2%) of respondents replied that students readiness had high influence.

In table 9, teacher respondents asked about influencing level of different challenges on continuous assessment implementation, 30(44.1%) of respondents replied that lack of guidelines and formats had high, 35(51.5%) of respondents replied that lack of incentives had high influence, 32(47.5%) of respondents replied that lack of follow up and evaluation had

high influence, 24(35.3%) of respondents replied that lack of accountability had medium influence.

For the major challenges faced in the implementation of continuous assessment of the first cycle primary schools, (I₇) replied as “major challenges for implementation of continuous assessment are negative attitudes of teachers, lack of commitment, shortage of time, lack of training, lack of control and accountability and large class size”(February 12,2018).

One of the interviewed district office expert (I₁) said that “major challenges to continuous assessment implementation are, teachers negative attitudes, lack of conducive classrooms, scoring results that do not measure students, problem of continuous assessment result scoring continuity, not using continuous assessment results for improvements and supporting students for further improvement and lack of training”(January 28,2018).

One of the interviewed supervisors (I₁₂) replied that “major challenges to implementation of continuous assessment are, students absenteeism and drop out, parents think controlling and supporting of students are the mandates of teacher, lack of skill in test construction and result recording, lack of awareness in continuous assessment implementation, lack of district education office support and evaluation of continuous assessment” (February 20, 2018).

Regarding the major challenges that affect practice of continuous assessment in first cycle primary schools, information taken from students FGD revealed that students absenteeism, wastage of periods, lack of text books, lack of teaching learning materials, students’ not working class work and home works, students are not actively participating in group works and project works, lack of feedback, lack of readiness by students, large class size, lack of parents follow up and support, not using teaching aids, lack of tutorials and enrichment program to students.

From the above table 9 data analysis, teacher respondents had reflected frequency of different challenges that influence highly, medium and low on the implementation of continuous assessment. According to majority of teacher respondents challenges such as lack of awareness, large class size, lack of incentives, lack of follow up and evaluation, shortage of teaching and learning materials, lack of guidelines and formats, lack of teachers commitment and lack of students readiness had highly influencing whereas attitudes of students and lack of

accountability had affected in medium level the practical implementation of continuous assessments respectively.

Classroom observation

Moreover, the classroom observation evidence revealed that teachers did not use different methods of continuous assessment in their classrooms effectively. Similarly, the evidence revealed that some teachers did not confirm activities given to students in the classrooms. Similarly teachers did not initiate students to evaluate their own assessment activities in the classrooms. This simply indicates that teachers are working for the purpose of satisfying their own need, criteria but not for student needs and mostly they assess students for collecting marks.

Interview with school directors, cluster supervisors and district education office experts

Concerning the status of the use of continuous assessment in schools, (I₂) replied as “most of teachers implement continuous assessment with the given formats but the way of assessing students learning, use of different assessment methods in classrooms and the time of continuous assessment result recording vary from teacher to teacher due to the awareness problem, skill gap in planning, lack of time, commitment and attitudes of teachers” (February 20, 2018).

One of the interviewed school director (I₁₂) also replied as “teachers were randomly implement continuous assessment and record students’ results at one session i.e., at the end of each month and semester” (March 6, 2018).

Moreover one of the interviewed supervisors (I₂) also replied “it is impossible to say continuous assessment is fully implemented in all schools rather it is implemented symbolically and lacks regularity, because of lack of follow up and control and lack of awareness”.

One of the interviewed education experts (I₃) said “continuous assessment is not implemented in all schools as it brought changes to students’ academic performance due to lack of uniformity and awareness gaps”(February 15,2018).

Regarding use continuous assessment results in schools, (I₆) said “teachers do not have clear understanding of the purpose of continuous assessment results and they score continuous

assessment results randomly and using continuous assessment results for decision making i.e. to say students are detained and promoted rather than not using for improvement of teaching and learning processes” (February 11, 2018).

One of the interviewed district education office experts (I₄) also replied as “in most of schools teachers are using continuous assessment results for decision making ,for fulfilling the criteria set in continuous assessment formats, they use for shelf consumption and to free themselves from managers control and reduce accountability”(February 9,2018).

Regarding continuous assessment practical implementation in school and the changes observed on learners,(I₁₀) replied as “I didn’t believe that as continuous assessment implementation brings these all changes to students rather students simply get marks with class participation, personal hygiene and class attendance with total mark greater than 50 %”(February 18, 2018).

One of the interviewed directors (I₇) replied as “since students do not regularly attend classes, there is large gap in student’s knowledge, behavior and attitudes and in most of schools teachers take continuous assessment as additional work and it takes time due to this they do not implement it properly and do not brought required changes to their students” (February 12, 2018).

Regarding continuous assessment properly implementation and its role on improving students’ literacy, numeracy and reading skills at first cycle primary schools,

One of the interviewed directors (I₂) replied that “even if continuous assessment is used to identify students’ academic achievement and to assign level performance, still teachers believe that continuous assessment implementation is boring and all teachers do not implement regularly but assesses on monthly basis which is not satisfactory to brought changes and do not record students achievement on time and based on achieved result they do on not provide remediation and enrichment activities due to this reason it does not contribute to improve students reading, writing and numeration skills at required level”(February 4,2018).

One of the interviewed district office expert (I₂) also replied that “even if continuous assessment implementation brought significant changes to students learning, practically in most of schools teachers do not implement it as expected and there is skill gap on students writing,

reading and numeration and in such condition students promoted from one class to the next class and parents said our students do not read and write letters and asks schools to make detained their child's"(January 29,2018).

Regarding the status of repetition rates of students and the causes for the repetition, (I₂) replied that "in our school there is 8% repetition of students due inappropriate implementation of continuous assessment, lack of support, shortage of textbooks, due to frequent absenteeism, lack of library, not recovering missed classes, lack of tutorial and lack of teachers competency and motivation" (February 4, 2018).

Concerning the level of students absenteeism in schools and the relationships of absenteeism with the implementation of continuous assessment,(I₄) replied that "there is high rate of student's absenteeism and this makes continuous assessment program interruptive and obliged teachers to score and fill mark at one session and also it facilitates class repetition and reduces student's results" (February 9, 2018).

Regarding attitudes teachers towards continuous assessment implementation,(I₅) replied that "teachers are not accepting continuous assessment policy as change agent rather they implement in traditional way and they feel continuous assessment implementation as boring and as additional job load due to this continuous assessment marks are recorded at the end of each month and semesters' (February 8, 2018).

One of the interviewed district education expert (I₁) replied that "most of teachers' have negative attitudes to continuous assessment implementation because they think that as it creates workload, it consumes time to cover the content, it does not make students success" (January 28, 2018).

Regarding the solutions undertaken to improve the implementation of continuous assessment in the first cycle primary schools,(I₄) replied that "improving continuous assessment implementation policy and giving some percent to written and other activities, scoring and recording continuous assessment on weekly basis, providing tutorial and enrichment activities to students, providing training opportunities to teachers, providing monitoring and evaluation, recruiting additional teachers to reduce workload"(February 9,2018).

Students focus group discussion

Regarding teachers inform students about the assessment process,

Information taken from students FGD explained that some teachers are informing the assessment types they used for students while group discussion, class work and home work.

Concerning whether teachers provided opportunity for student to discuss within groups, self-assessment activities and evaluate their peer assessment tasks,

Information taken from students FGD showed that most of their teachers provided group work but occasionally their teachers provided self-assessment and there were no trend of evaluating peer assessment activities.

Concerning teachers provision of homework, assignments, class works, and project work to students and the method teachers used to follow up students' performances,

Information taken from students FGD revealed that as their teachers ask students whether they perform or not their given home works, assignments, class works and projects works, observe students exercise books, by signing and giving guidance counseling service for those students that do not perform their activities(February 6, 2018).

Regarding to teachers' provision of remediation and enrichment activities for students based on continuous assessment results and its frequency,

Information taken from students FGD revealed that some teachers provide remediation to all students occasionally and the tutorial given are not satisfactory, are not based on students' weakness but there is no trend of providing enrichment activities to students, due to these student academic achievements are not improved as required (February 2, 2018).

Regarding attendance of all students in classroom regularly, reason for absence from school and teachers action to compromise absence students' assessment results,

Information taken from students FGD showed that students are not attending their classes regularly because of burden of jobs at home, not getting breakfast and launch on time, lack of interest on education, lack of teaching learning materials, lack of clothing due to this teachers are

in problem to record continuous assessment results to students but some teachers asks students to provide evidence for their absence and fold the previous assessment results to them (February 13, 2018).

Concerning the solutions undertaken to improve the challenges faced in implementing continuous assessment in the first cycle primary schools,

Information taken from students FGD explained that making stakeholders aware and committed, fulfilling teaching and learning materials, identifying students based on their academic achievements and providing successive tutorials and enrichment activities, providing students continuous assessment reports to parents in monthly basis and evaluating together, improving teachers managing of students and mobilizing students, making conducive classrooms, providing one to one text book ratio(February 6,2018).

Generally, teachers from first cycle primary schools did not get pre service orientation and in-service training successively. Moreover, teachers have workload, lack skills in inclusion of continuous assessment methods in their plan and practical utilization in classrooms due to this reasons continuous assessment implementation lacks consistency. Similarly, teachers dominantly prefer to use group work, homework, class work, tests and exams as assessment methods in their classrooms and less used other methods. Furthermore, teachers assessment scoring and recording were at the end of each month and semesters and they did not use assessment results for improvements of learning and teaching. This indicates that as school teachers were heavily influenced by traditional assessment methods and this challenges the continuous assessment implementations in their classrooms.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter the researcher try to summarize, conclude and recommend based on the research findings.

5.1. Summary

The study was intended to evaluate the practices and challenges of implementing continuous assessment in first cycle primary schools. To this end, the research attempted to answer three basic research questions. To answer the research questions, the researcher used descriptive survey methods to gather different information from the research participants by using questionnaire, interview, focus group discussion, and document analysis and classroom observations. The researcher employed descriptive statistics to analyze quantitative data collected by using questionnaire from teacher respondents and interview from school directors, cluster supervisors and Woreda education office experts, focus group discussion from students, and document analysis which were analyzed qualitatively.

After analyzing the data the following findings were arrived at;

1. The practice of continuous assessment implementation in the first cycle primary schools of Dangur Woreda

The research finding showed that most of school teachers implement continuous assessment with the given formats but the way of assessing students learning, use of different assessment methods in classrooms and the time of continuous assessment result recording vary from teacher to teacher and also most of teachers were arbitrarily implement continuous assessment and record students' results at one session i.e., at end of each month and semester due to lack of awareness, lack of skill in planning, lack of time, commitment and attitudes of teachers.

Majority of school teachers communicated with student parents to evaluate student's continuous assessment results at the end of semesters rather than interacting weekly and monthly basis due to lack of commitment from teachers and school directors and lack of awareness of parents. And also the awareness level of most of the teacher's to implement the guidelines and formats of

continuous assessment is low due to lack of in-service training and not using of continuous assessment guidelines as capacity building. Furthermore, majority of teachers did not use students assessment results for decision of improving students learning and did not have clear understanding of the purpose of continuous assessment results and using for fulfilling the criteria set in continuous assessment formats, they use for shelf consumption and to free themselves from managers control and reduce accountability, use for decision making i.e. to say students are detained and promoted, not using for improvement of teaching and learning processes .

Most of the time, the district education office recruited teachers without assessing their competency and do not make directors, cluster supervisors and new recruited teachers aware of continuous assessment implementation, student's result recording and reporting before engaging on teaching and learning process. As a result, most of schools teachers did not accept continuous assessment policy as change agent. Rather they implement in traditional way and they feel continuous assessment implementation as boring and as additional job load due to this continuous assessment marks are recorded at the end of each month and semesters. Similarly, most of school teachers considered continuous assessment as additional work and they did not implement it properly and did not bring the required changes in student's knowledge, behavior and attitudes.

Classrooms observation evidence revealed that, teachers did not confirm the presence of students' self-assessment and peer assessment activities. Similarly, in majority of observed classrooms, teachers were not initiating students to evaluate their own assessment activities. As a result, in most of schools continuous assessment implementation did not contribute to improve students reading, writing and numeration skills at required level because teachers assess students' performance on monthly basis which is not satisfactory to bring changes and based on achieved result they did not provide remediation and enrichment activities.

2. Assessment tools used by teachers to assess their students overall performance

Most of teachers frequently used presentation, oral question, class work, test, group discussion, homework and exam respectively as continuous assessment methods while, they did not use

peer assessment, self-assessment, interview, projects and quizzes respectively as assessment method as required.

3. Challenges faced in the implementation of continuous assessment in the first cycle primary schools of Dangur Woreda

Teachers did not get support and feedback from stakeholders to implement continuous assessment practically and efficiently. But, in most of schools, stakeholders giving support to teachers for continuous assessment implementation are school directors but teachers are not supported by district offices, cluster supervisors and department heads to use various continuous assessments methods in their classes as required. Even though majority of school teachers sometimes include different continuous assessment methods in their lesson plan, but still there is lack of skill in the inclusion of continuous assessment methods in their planning and in utilizing what is planned in their lesson. To build teachers capacity on utilization of continuous assessment methods, most of teachers did not attend in-service training and this hinders continuous assessment implementation in classrooms.

In most of schools aesthetics and mother tongue subjects were taught by non qualified teachers which may create challenges to the implementation of continuous assessment as they may not properly know even the contents of the lesson. Additionally, most of teachers had additional workload and this consumes time for scoring, recording and interpreting students' continuous assessment results. Due to this reason, most of teachers did not provide feedback to all students on time in each assessment activities. Moreover, in most of schools continuous assessment implementation was highly influenced by challenges of not using guidelines, large class size, lack of incentives, lack of follow up and evaluation, lack of time, low level of awareness, lack of teaching and learning materials, job burden, teachers commitment and students readiness. Similarly, in most of schools there is high rate of student's absenteeism and this makes continuous assessment implementation interruptive and obliged teachers to score and fill mark at one session and also it facilitates class repetition and reduces student's results.

In most of schools only some teachers provided remediation to all students occasionally and the remediation given are not satisfactory, are not based on student's skill gap but there is no trend of providing enrichment activities to students, due to this student academic achievement are not

improved as required. Besides to this, in most of schools students were not actively participating in classroom assessment practices because students did not give attention and interest to education; students did not understand the content taught to them, teachers did not support and manage students.

Major challenges faced in the implementation of continuous assessment of the first cycle primary schools; negative attitudes of teachers, lack of incentives, teachers lack of commitment, shortage of time, lack of training, lack of control and accountability, large class size , lack of conducive classrooms, scoring results that do not measure students, problem of continuous assessment result scoring continuity, not using continuous assessment results for improvements and supporting students, students absenteeism and drop out, lack of skill in test construction and result recording, lack of awareness in continuous assessment implementation, wastage of periods, lack of teaching learning materials, students are not working class work and home works, students are not actively participating in group works and project works, lack of feedback, lack of readiness by students, lack of parents follow up and support, not using teaching aids, lack of remediation and enrichment program to students.

5.2. Conclusions

The overall objective of the study is to assess the practices and challenges of continuous assessment in the first cycle primary schools of Dangur Woreda. The successes of intended objectives were related to teachers' selection and utilization of different assessment strategies and methods. Moreover, there were many continuous assessment strategies used. Through continuous assessment, teachers tend to realize their own weaknesses in teaching and those of their students and strive to improve them. Good application of continuous assessment using different strategies would help in moving towards accomplishing learning objectives and restoring greater confidence in the class and school systems. However, the contribution should not only be looked at as improving student performance but also as determining students' current level of knowledge, skills, or understanding of content. Therefore from this point of view, teachers' knowledge on the implementation of continuous assessment methods and analyzing assessment results need to be considered. Though, it is very difficult to say that the school teachers have adequate and complete understanding about continuous assessments. Moreover, it is also difficult to get well-handled documents and properly kept assessment records or portfolios of the students, and the system of reporting learners' achievement for their parents' regularly with appropriate detail is completely weak. Therefore, the implementation of continuous assessment in the targeted first cycle primary school is poor. Furthermore, the task of implementation of continuous assessment is weighing teachers down because of lack of awareness, job burden, and large class size, lack of time, lack of commitment and success of students. Through taking action to the problems raised, CA implementation has the potentials of improving teaching and learning and thus the entire education system. Similarly, it can assist in building self-confidence in the student as well as reducing the rate of examination malpractices. It could also assist student to cultivate good study habit. Finally, if training, supervision and co-operation between all stakeholders involved are operational, the continuous assessment implementation in schools will be more effective and continuous assessment will be a reliable representation of learners' abilities. Furthermore, an effective classroom assessment calls on teachers to become agents of change in their classrooms actively using the results of assessment to modify and improve the learning environments they create.

5.3. Recommendation

From findings of the study and conclusion the following recommendations were forwarded as follows.

Stakeholders such as regional education bureau and district education offices be supposed to provide in service training to teachers, cluster supervisors and directors based on their skill gaps for serving them on the practice of continuous assessment in schools.

District education office needs to provide orientation on assessment planning, test construction, scoring, recording, reporting and documenting for new recruited teachers, cluster supervisors and directors before engaging in teaching and learning process. Also give due emphasis in providing continuous assessment formats and guidelines to all schools for improving the implementation of continuous assessment.

It appears good if school directors, cluster supervisors and district education offices identified teachers skill gap in inclusion of assessment methods in their lesson plan and provide successive support for teachers to include different continuous assessment methods in their weekly and daily lesson plans and control through classroom observation whether teachers use various continuous assessment methods in their classrooms or not.

Teachers need to take feedback as integral part of teaching and learning process, therefore ought to provide continuous assessment feedback to all students at each assessment activities in continual manner to promote students' progress in their learning and to make students self-confident.

Teachers, cluster supervisors and directors be required to use continuous assessment results for diagnosis of students learning, for improving students learning, evaluation of teaching methods, for providing remediation and enrichment activities to students than to focus on terminal decision.

District education office and school directors ought to reduce workload of teachers by arranging their programs and recruiting supportive teachers. Moreover, district education offices, school directors and cluster supervisors are supposed to aware, plan and take the right responsibility to support and follow up continuous assessment implementation and provide

supportive feedbacks on time. Similarly, district education offices, school directors and cluster supervisors provision of evaluation and follow up of continuous assessment results ought to be on continuous schedule and in such a way student's behavior, attitudes, knowledge and skills show progressive changes.

Governmental as well as non-governmental agencies be supposed to provide students school feeding and fulfilling teaching learning materials to reduce students' absenteeism and to practice continuous assessment in continual and regular basis.

Teachers need to identify students based on their academic achievements and be supposed to provide remediation and enrichment activities based on their need on continuous, regular to enhance their basic skills improvements and reduce class repetition.

District education offices and other stakeholders be supposed to work on creating awareness and providing training to teachers, cluster supervisors, should construct additional classes and recruit additional teachers to make 1:50 teacher student ratio, should motivate teachers to accept continuous assessment as integrated to teaching and learning and implement with commitments and accountability, should aware students as continuous assessment increases their academic achievements and it gives opportunity to observe continuous assessment results and take remediation to improve their success.

References

- Abera Assefa(2012).Continuous assessmentvis-à-vis the attainment of major educational domains of physical education in Ethiopia.*International Journal of Social Science&Interdisciplinary Research*, 1(11), 14-27.
- Abiy Yigzaw(2013).High school English teachers' and students' perceptions, attitudes and actual practices of continuous assessment. *Academic Journals*, 8(16), 1489-1498.
- Adebowale, O. F., &Alao, K. (2008).Continuous assessment policy implementation in selected local government areas of Ondo state (Nigeria): Implications for a successful Implementation of the UBE program. *KEDI Journal of Educational Policy*, 5(1), pp.3-18
- Aggrawal,J.C.(1994).Essential of Educational Psychology.New Delhi vikas Pupliching Company
- Alausa, Y.A. (2006) 'Continuous assessment in our schools: advantages and problems.
- Alausa,Y.A.(2003).Continuous assessment in our schools: Advantages andproblems. Retrieved from <http://www.ednet.na/Resources/Reform%20Forum/journal9/journal%209%20Article%202.pdf>
- Allen,M.J.(2004).Assessing academic programs in higher education. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, CA.
- Altwerger, B., Edelsky, C, & Flores, B. (1987).Whole language: What's new? *The Reading Teacher*, 41, 144-154.
- Arends,R.(1997).Classroom Instruction and Management, New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.
- Assessment Reform Group, (2002), *Assessment for Learning: 10 Principles* (University of Cambridge School of Education)
- Awofala, A., &Babajide,V. (2013). Examining attitude towards continuous assessment practices among Nigerian pre service STM teachers. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 4(13), 37-49.
- Aytaged Sisay(2013).A comparative study on the practice of continuous assessment between Addis Ababa and Unity Universities.*Global Journal of Comparative Education*, 1(1), 50-58
- Azeb Kidane(2013).TheChallenges Of Implementing Continuous Assessment in Physical EducationClassesin some selected Addis Ababa High schools.

- Bandele,S.O.,and Ayodele,C.S. (2015).Improving Continuous Assessment Practice in Nigerians Schools. *Advances in Social Science Research Journal*, 2(4)161-170.
- Birehanu Moges(2004).Teachers assessment of students performance in selected high schools of Arsi zone with Emphasis on continuous assessment. M.A thesis Addis Ababa University
- Birhanu Moges(2013).Continuous Assessment Issues and Practices in Secondary Schools of Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia: The “Big Picture” of Assessment Mechanism: *Palgo Journal of Education Research*.Pp,19-41.Available online <http://paljojournals.org/PJER/Index.htm>.
- Black, P., &Wiliam, D. (1998).Inside the black box: Raising standards through classroom Continuous Assessment: A Practical Guide for Teachers, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade Office of Education. Available at PDKintl.org/Retrieved from <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED041829>
- Bogdan, R.C., & Biklen, S.K. (2007).*Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theories and Methods* (5th Ed). Boston: Pearson Education.
- Borg, E.R., & Gall, M. D. (2002).*Educational Research: An Introduction*, New York and London. Longman Group LTD.
- Broadfoot, P., & Black, P. (2004).Redefining assessment: The first ten years of assessment in education: *Assessment in Education. Principles, Policy and Practice*, 11(1):7-26.
- Brown,S.,Race,P., and smith, B. (1996).Tips on Assessment. London: Kogan page Limited, 120 pentonville Road.
- Bryans,T.(1992).Educational Psychologists Working in a Biased Society, The Profession and Practice of educational Psychology. Great Britain: Cassell Educational Limited.
- Butler, S. M., &McMunn, N. D. (2006).A teacher's guide to classroom assessment: Understanding and using assessment to improve student learning. Jossey- Bass,an Imprint of Wiley.
- CCEA (2011).Guide to Assessment: Supporting Schools in Meeting Statutory Requirements for Assessment and Reporting, Foundation Stage

- Chappuis, J. (2007). *Learning Team Facilitator Handbook: A Resource for Collaborative Study of Classroom Assessment for Student Learning*. Portland, OR: Pearson Assessment Training Institute.
- Chisholm, L., & Leyendecker, R. (2008). Curriculum reform in post-1990s Sub-Saharan Africa. *International Journal of Education Development*, 28(2):195-2005.
- Chulu, B.W. (2013). Institutionalization of assessment capacity in developing nations: The case of Malawi. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 20(4):407-423.
- Cizek, G. J. (1997). Learning, achievement, and assessment: Constructs at a crossroads. In G.D. Phee (Ed.), *Handbook of classroom assessment* (pp.1–32). San Diego: Academic.
- Cizek, G. (1998). The assessment revolution's unfinished business. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, 34, 144-149
- Clark, I. (2012). Formative assessment: Assessment is for self-regulated learning. *Educational Psychology Review*, 24(2), 205-249.
- Crafton, L., & Burke, C. (1994). Inquiry-based evaluation: Teachers and students reflecting together. *Primary Voices*
- Creswell, J. (2012). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method approach*, 2nd Ed. London; sage publications, Inc.
- Crisp, G .T. (2012). Integrative assessment: Reframing assessment practice for current and future learning. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 37(1), 33-43.
- Danjuma, E. (2004). Continuous Assessment as a Predictor of end of Semester Performance of Science Students of College of Education Waka Biu. *Waka Journal of Vocational Arts and Science Studies* 2 (1), 66. from Higher Education. London: Kogan Page.
- David, J. N. and Debra, M. D. (2006). Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: a model and seven principles of good feedback practice. *Journal of Studies in Higher Education*, Vol. 31, No. 2, pp. 199–218.
- Davidoff, S., & Lazarus, S. (1997). *The learning school: an organization development approach*. Cape Town: Juta.
- Demissie Kebede (2016). Teachers' conceptions and practices of continuous assessment in Efl classes: The case of four primary schools in Adulala Town. MA Thesis, Haramaya University, (unpublished).

- Department of Education (2002). Revised National *Curriculum statement Grades R-9(schools)*. Pretoria: Department of Education. Vol.443, p.55
- DoE(Department of Education) (1998). Assessment policy in the GET band :grade R to 9 and ABET. Pretoria: Department of Education.
- duPlessis, J., Prouty, D., Schubert, J., Habib, M. ,& George, E. S.(2003). Continuous Assessment. A Practical Guide for teachers. Improving Project Educational Quality (IEQ) American Institutes for Research 1000 Thomas Jefferston Street, NW Washington, DC, USA.
- Eba Mijena (2014). Practices of Impending Factors in the Teaching of English to Young Learners in the first cycle public primary schools at Nekemte Town, Western Ethiopia. Sci. Technol. Retrieved from <http://www.starjournal.org/>
- Egbule, J.F. (2002). Continuous assessment: A comprehensive guide for schools.
- Eimann, A.M. (2002). The implementation of continuous assessment in Social Studies Grade 6-7 in the Windhoek education region: Unpublished master's thesis. Windhoek: University of Namibia.
- Ezeudu, S.A. (2005). Continuous assessment in Nigeria Senior secondary school geography: Problems and implementation strategies. A paper presented at the annual conference of the international association for educational assessment at Abuja
- Ezewu, E.E., & Okoye, N.N. (1986). Principles and practice of continuous assessment. Ibadan: Evans Publishers.
- Falayajo, W. (1988). The Concept of Continuous Assessment. Onitsha: Africana
- Falayalo, W. (1986). Philosophy and theory of continuous assessment. A paper presented at a workshop for Inspectors of Education in Odor State, Nigeria. 4th December.
- Federal Ministry of Education (1988). *Handbook on Continuous Assessment*, Lagos Evaluation Unit, Ministry of Education
- Federal Ministry of Education, science and Technology (1985). The hand book on CA. Lagos: Government press.
- Fisseha Mikre (2010). Review article: the roles of assessment in curriculum practice and enhancement of learning. *Ethiopian Journal of Education Science*, 5(2), 101-114.
- Flanagan, W.(Ed.)(1998). Education Studies: The Prep Education Series. Kenwyn: Juta

- Fosnot, C.T. (1996). Constructivism: A psychological theory of learning. In C.T. Fosnot (Ed.), *Constructivism: Theory, perspectives and practice* (pp. 8-33). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Frank Serafini(2001).Three paradigms of assessment. *The Reading Teacher* .54(4), 384-393.
- Gay, L.R. & Diehl, P.L. (1992).*Research Methods for Business and Management*. New York: Macmillan.
- Gemechu Abera(2013). Assessing factors affecting the implementation of continuous assessment in rift valley university college with special attention to technical and vocational educational training (TVET) programs at Adama main campus(Unpublished master's thesis), Adama Science and Technology University, Adama, Ethiopia
- General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI) (2011) *Teaching: The Reflective Profession* www.gtcni.org
- Getachew Kassa (2008). The status of continues assessment and factor affecting its implementation in technical vocational education and training colleges of Addis Ababa city administration. A Master's thesis Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa (unpublished)
- Gipps, C. (1994). *Beyond Testing: Towards a Theory of Educational Assessment*. London: The Palmer Press.
- Gipps,C.V., &Cumming, J.J.(2003).Assessing Literacy. Paper presented at the International Literacy Conference: Literacy Policies for the Schools We Need, Toronto.
- Gonzales,R.,& Fuggan,F.G. (2012).Exploring the conceptual and psychometric properties of classroom assessment. *The International Journal of Educational and Psychological Assessment*, 9(2), 45-60.
- Greaney,V., &Kellaghan, T. (2003).Monitoring Performance: Assessment and Examinations in Africa. Draft Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA).
- Greater Expectations Project on Accreditation and Assessment (2004).Taking responsibility for the quality of the baccalaureate degree. Washington: Association of American Colleges & Universities
- Gronlund, N. E. (1998).*Assessment of student achievement*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Harlen,W,(2005).Teachers' summative practices and assessment for learning –tensions and synergies. *The Curriculum Journal*, 16(2): 207–201

- Hayward, L., & Hedge, N. (2010). Travelling towards change in assessment. *Research in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 12(1):55-75.
- Heaton, J.B, (1990). Classroom Testing London: Longman.
- Hernandez, R. (2012). Does continuous assessment in higher education support student learning? *Journal of High Education*, 64: pp 489–502.
- HESC(2012). *Guideline for Modularization to Ethiopian Higher Education Institutions*, Organized by Higher Education Strategy Center (HESC), Ministry of Education, Ethiopia
- Horner, C., and Ryf, V. (2007). Creative Teaching: English in the Early Years and Primary Classroom, Routledge: London and New York. Retrieved from <http://www.ednet.na/Resources/Reform%20Forum/journal9/journal%209%Article%202.pdf>
- ICDR (2004). Continuous assessment and its application, ICDR Ethiopia Addis Ababa, Unpublished
- ICDR (1999). Teachers Education Handbook, ICDR Ethiopia Addis Ababa
- INTO (1997). Teaching & Learning – Issues in Assessment, Dublin: INTO
- Jacobs and Gawe (1996). Teaching-learning daynmi: participative approach. Johannes burg: South Africa.
- Johnson, B., & Christensen (2004) *Educational Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Mixed Approaches*. (7th Edition) Boston: Pearson.
- Johnston, P.H. (1992). Non-technical assessment, *The Reading Teacher*, 46, 60-62
- Joyce, L. (2014). Secondary School Teachers' Perceptions of Assessment. *International Journal of Information and Education Technology*, 5(5):326-330. Retrieved from www.ijiet.org/papers
- Juliet, O.A. (2007). A survey of the implementation of continuous assessment in Nigerian Universities, a paper presented at second regional conference of higher education research and policy network held at Ibadan, Nigeria
- Kanjee, A., and Mthembu, J. (2015). Assessment literacy of foundation phase teachers. *South Africa Journal of children education*. 5 (1), p.1
- Kapambwe, W. M. (2010). The implementation of school based continuous assessment (CA) in Zambia. *Educational Research and Reviews*, Vol. 5(3), pp. 099-107.

- Keeley, P., & Tobey, C. R. (2011). *Mathematics formative assessment: 75 practical strategies for linking assessment, instruction, and learning*: Corwin.
- Kellaghan, T., & Greaney, V. (2004). *Monitoring performance: Assessment and examinations in Africa*. Paris: Association for the Development of Education in Africa.
- Kentucky Department of Education (2004). *The Kentucky Early Childhood Continuous Assessment Guide*: Frankfort.
- Kothari (2004). *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*, 2nd ed., University of Rajasthan, NewAge International, LTD, India
- Kubiszyn, T., and Borich, G. (1987). *Educational Testing and Measurement: Classroom Application and Practice* (2nd ed). London: Scott, Foresman and Company.
- Kuh, G.D., Jankowski, N., Ikenberry, S.O. (2014). *Knowing What Students Know and Can Do: The Current State of Learning Outcomes Assessment in U.S. Colleges and Universities* (PDF). Urbana: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment.
- Le Grange, L., & Reddy, C. (1998). *Continuous Assessment: An Introduction and Guidelines to Implementation*. Kenwyn: Juta and Company
- Lewin, K., & Dunne, M. (2000). Policy and practice in assessment in Anglophone Africa: Does globalisation explain convergence: *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 7(3):379-399.
- Manitoba Education and Training, *Reporting on Student Progress and Achievement (1997)*. Characteristics of effective continuous assessment
- Mavrommatis, Y. (1997). Understanding assessment in the classroom: Phases of the assessment process—the assessment episode. *Assessment in Education: Practices, Policy & Practice*, 4(3):382-400
- Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (1999). *Case Study on the establishment of a National Examinations and Assessment System for School Examinations in Namibia*: Windhoek
- MOE (1994). *Education and Training Policy* Addis Ababa st. George printing press
- MOE (2002). *The Education and Training Policy and its Implementation*, Addis Ababa
- MOE (2005). *The Education and Training policy and Its Implementation*, Addis Ababa

- Moges Tadesse (2015). Teachers' classroom assessment and students' perception in government preparatory schools of Addis Ababa
- Mpapalika, K. (2013). Tanzania science teachers' practices and challenges in continuous assessment.
- Mulu Nega (2005) the current status of CA practices. A discussion paper presented to the National workshop on CA organized by AED/BESO, 3-7 June, 2005 Addis Ababa.
- Mwebaza, M. (2010). Continuous assessment and students' performance in A' level secondary schools in Masaka district. An unpublished M. Ed dissertation, Makerere University, Kampala
- National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) (1999). Towards improving continuous assessment in schools: A policy and information guide for implementation, Republic of Namibia
- NCCA (1999). Primary School Curriculum Introduction, Ireland
- NCCA (2007). Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum, Guidelines for Schools, Dublin: NCCA
- NEAEA (2014). Classroom assessment manual for primary and secondary school teachers (draft). Addis Ababa: National Educational Assessment Agents.
- Newton, P.E. (2010) Educational assessment – concepts and issues: the multiple purposes of assessment, in E. Baker, B. McGaw and P. Pearson (eds.) International Encyclopedia of Education. Oxford: Elsevier.
- Nitko, A. J. (1995). Curriculum-Based Continuous assessment: A Framework for Concepts, Politics, and Procedures. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice*, 2, 321.
- Njabili, A.F. (1999). Practical guide for classroom measurement and testing. The basic essentials, Dares Salaam: Mature Publishers.
- Nneji, L.M., Fatade, A.O., & Awofala, A.A. (2012). Examining Attitude of Nigerian science, technology, and mathematics teachers towards assessment Practices, *International Journal of Mathematics Trends and Technology, Practice*. Vol. 4, No. 13, pp. 37-49.
- Nomhlangano, T.Z. (2006). Educators implementation of assessment in outcome base education. University of Zululand

- Nusche, D., Laveault, D., MacBeath, J., and Santiago,P.(2012). OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: New Zealand 20 Phi Delta Kappan, 83(10), 758–765.
- OECD (2013).Synergies for Better Learning: An International Perspective on Evaluation and Assessment. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/synergies-for-better-learning>
- Ogar,G.(2007).Effects of large enrolment on continuous assessment in a language class. *International Journal of Research in Education*, 4 (1&2): 201-206.
- Olubukola, A., and Bankole, O. (2015).Reducing Examination Malpractices in Nigerian Schools through Effective Continuous Assessment Techniques as an Alternative to One-Shot Examination in Osun State. *American Journal of Educational Research Vol.3 (6)*: 783-789.Available online at <http://pubs.sciepub.com/education/3/6/18>
- Omebe(2014).Continuous assessment in Nigeria; Issues and challenges. *International Journal of Humanities, Arts, Medicine and Sciences*.Vol.2, Issues 9, pp 89-96.
- Onuka, A.O., and Oludipe, B.D. (2006).Systematic school based assessment for an improved cognitive achievement. *Academic Journal of Research and Development.1 (1).1-12*
- Onuka,A. O., and Oludipe, B.D. (2004).Feedback as poor-performance remediation. *Education for Today*, 4(1), 43-48
- Pellegrino, J. W.,Chudowsky,N.,& Glaser, R. W. (Eds.). (2001).*Knowing what students know: The science and design of educational assessment*, Washington, DC: National Academies Press.
- Puhl,C.A.(1997).Continuous Assessment in ESL Classroom. *English Teaching Forum: A Journal for the teacher of English outside the United States*.Vol.35, No.2.
- Quansah,K, B.(2005).Continuous assessment Handbook. Accra.
- Rosenblatt,L.M.(1979).The reader, the text, the poem. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press
- RSA DoE (Republic of South Africa Department of Education) (1998).Assessment policy in the general education and training band: Grades R to 9 and ABET. *Government Gazette*, no19640. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Safarath, B., and Kingtin,K.(2014).Implementation of School Based Continuous Assessment (CA) in Tanzania Ordinary Secondary Schools and its Implications on the Quality of Education: *Journal of Developing Country Studies*, Vol. 4, No.6, pp. 55-62.

- Salvia, J., Ysseldyke, J.E., & Bolt, S. (2013). *Assessment in special and inclusive education*, 12th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/ Cengage Learning.
- Schoenfeld, A. H. (2014). What makes for powerful classrooms, and how can we support teachers in creating them? A story of research and practice productively intertwined. *Educational Researcher*, 43(8), 404-412.
- Serafini, F. (1995). Reflective assessment. *Talking Points: Conversations in the Whole Language Community*, 6(4), 10-1
- Short, K., & Burke, C. (1994b). Curriculum as inquiry. Paper presented at the Fifth Whole Language Umbrella Conference, San Diego, CA.
- Short, K., & Burke, C. (1994a). *Creating Curriculum*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Short, K., Harste, J., & Burke, C. (1995). *Creating classrooms for authors and inquirers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Sieborger, R. (1998). *Transforming Assessment. Guide for South African Teachers*. Juta. Cape Town.
- Sintayehu Belay (2016). The Practice of Continuous Assessment in Primary Schools, The case of Chagni, Ethiopia. *Journal of Education and practice*. vol .7(31)
- Stiggins, R. J., Arter, J. A., Chappuis, J., and Chappuis, S. (2004). *Classroom Assessment for Student Learning: Doing It Right—Using It Well* (Portland, OR: ETS Assessment Training Institute).
- Stiggins, R. J. (2002). *Assessment Crisis: The Absence of Assessment for Learning*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Struyven, K., Dochy, F., and Janssens, S. (2002). Students' perceptions about assessment in higher Education: A review. <http://www.leads.ac.uk/educol/documents/00002255.html>.
- Strydom, H., & Delport, C. S.L. (2011). *Information Collection: Document study and secondary analysis*
- Suskie, L. (2004). What are good assessment practices? In *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*. Bolton, MA: Anker
- Suskie, L. (2009). *Assessing Student Learning*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, CA.
- Tamene Ollana (2007). *Factors affecting the Implementation of continuous Assessment in selected West Oromia regional Government Teachers Training College* M.A Thesis Addis Ababa. Addis Ababa University (unpublished).

- Teaching and Learning Research Programme, Assessment in Schools: Fit for Purpose? Available at www.tlrp.org (University of London, 2010)
- Teklebrhan Berhe and Samuel Embiza(2015).Problems and Prospects of Implementing Continuous Assessment at Adigrat University.*Journal of Education and Practice* Vol.6, No.4
- TGE, (1994).Education and Training policy, Ministry of Education: Addis Ababa Ethiopia
- Ughamadu, K.A. (1994).Understanding and implementing continuous assessment
- USAID (2003) ‘Continuous assessment’ EQ Review, Educ. Qual. Dev. World 1(1):1-3.
- Veldhuis Michiel (2015). Improving classroom assessment in primary mathematics education: Freudenthal Institute for Science and Mathematics Education, Faculty of Science, Utrecht University, the Netherlands
- Webb, N, (2002), Assessment literacy in a standards-based education setting, a paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, 1–5 April) www.ADEAnet.org
- Webb,N.,&Briars,D.(1990). Assessment in Mathematics Classroom, K-8 in T.J Cooney(ed), teaching and learning Mathematics in the1990’s, year book of the National council of Teachers of Mathematics, Reston VA.
- Wells,G.(1984).The meaning makers. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Wuest,D.,and Lombardo,B.(1994).Curriculum and Instruction. The Secondary School Physical Education Experience, New York: Mosby.
- Wyatt-Smith, C., Klenowski, V., and Gunn,S.(2010). ‘The centrality of teachers’ judgement practice in assessment: a study of standards in moderation, Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice, 17 (1): 59–75.
- Yiheyis Seyoum and Getachew Seyoum(2014).The Implementation of Continuous Assessment in Writing Classes of the Jimma College of Teachers Education.*Ethiopian Journal of Education &Science, 10(1), 109-135*
- Yoloye, E.A. (1984). Continuous assessment: A simple guide for teachers. London: Cassell L.T.D.2 (2), 2-7.
- Yoloye,E.A.(1991) .Continuous Assessment. A Simple Guide for Teachers, Ibadan: University.

Appendix _A

Addis Ababa University
College of Education and behavioral studies
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Teachers 'questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data for the research entitled the, practices and challenges of continuous assessment implementation in Dangur Woreda First Cycle Primary schools; it is aimed at suggesting the problems encountered in the implementation of continuous assessment. Thus, dear teacher, your genuine response to this questionnaire has significant value for this research. Accordingly, I kindly request your cooperation to fill the questionnaire as accurately and genuinely as possible. I thank you in advance for your cooperation! All the information you provide is kept confidential and is used only for the research purpose.

General Instruction

You are not expected to write your name. This questionnaire contains both close ended and open ended questions. Please circle the letter of your choice for closed ended questions and provide answers by writing your opinion or view for open ended questions on the space provided.

Teacher Respondent's Information

Please give appropriate information about yourself by circling the letter of your choice or by writing where appropriate.

Part I General Information

1. Name of school _____
2. Sex M F
3. Age A.20-25 years B. 26-30 yrs C. 31-35 yrs D. 36 and above
4. Please specify the subject /subjects/ you are teaching _____
5. Your qualifications
A. Degree B. Diploma C. TTI certificate D. 10th complete E. Please indicate if there is additional information _____
6. Teaching experience in the primary school
A.0-5yrs B. 6-10yrs C. 11-15yrs C. 16-20yrs D. above 20

7. Teaching period per week

A. Below 10 B. 10-15 C. 16-21 D. 22-26 E. 27-31 F. above 31

Part II The main data information

Circle the letter which you think of the answer and give explanation where it is required

1. Have you taken a course about assessment particularly in continuous assessment in pre service program? A. yes B. No

2. Did you take any training on the implementation of continuous assessment in your in-service program? A. yes B. No

3. If your answer for question number 2 is "yes" for how many days did you take a course?

A. one day B. two days C. a week D. a month E. if others specify _____

4. If your answer is "yes" for number 2, who conducted the training? (More than one response is possible).

A. Ministry of education C. District education office

B. Regional Education Bureau D. your school E. NGO F. if other, specify _____

5. When did you get the training? (More than one response is possible)

A. This year B. last year C. 2-5 years before D. 6-10 years before E. beyond 10 years F. if other, specify _____

6. Are you engaged in extra responsibility other than teaching at your school?

A. Yes B. No

7. If your answer is "yes" for number 6, please specify the responsibility _____

8. Did you include continuous assessment in your lesson plan? A. yes B. No

9. If your response for question number 8 "yes" in which type of plan did you include?

A) Annual plan B) Weekly plan C) Daily plan D) if others specify _____

10. If your response for questions number 8 is “yes” why? (More than one response is possible)

A. To assess and improve the students learning activity

B. To know how much the students understand the content

C. To engage students participation D. To know effectiveness of teaching methodology

11. How often do you incorporate continuous assessment techniques in to your lesson plan?

A. always B. sometimes C. rarely D. not at all

12. Did you use different type of continuous assessment in the teaching and learning to assess your students learning? A. Yes B. No

13. Indicate by “\” tick the extent of assessment techniques you used to assess your students on the space provided below under (use always, sometimes, when necessary and don’t use) in the table

No	Assessment method	always	Sometimes	Occasionally	Don’t Use
1	Class work				
2	Homework				
3	Observation				
4	Oral questions				
5	Group discussion				
6	Test				
7	Presentation				
8	Peer assessment				
9	Self-assessment				
10	Project work				
11	Quizzes				
12	Interview				
13	Exam (mid and final)				

14. How often do you involve your students in the assessment process?

A. always B. sometimes C. rarely D. not at all

15. Do you provide feedback to your students? A. yes B. No

16. If your response for questions number 15 is “yes”, how your method of providing feedback to students is explained?

A. For all students B. For partially/some students C. for group of students D. If others specify_____

17. If your response for questions number 15 is “yes”, what was its frequency?

A. In each continuous assessment task B. when test paper returned to the students C. At the end of the semester/course D. If others, specify-----

18. In assessing your students’ performance, is there any guiding principles supplied by the school? A. yes B. No

19. How did you explain your awareness level on continuous assessment guidelines and formats? A. Very high B. High C. Medium D. Low E. No awareness

20. Which stakeholders of education provide support for the implementation of continuous assessment in your school?
A. District education office B. Directors C. Cluster supervisors D. Department heads
E. Specify if any others _____

21. To what extent the school administrator help teachers in implementing continuous assessment? A. very high B. high C. average D. low E. never

22. How often did you communicate with students’ parents to evaluate students’ continuous assessment implementation?
A. Daily B. Weekly C. Monthly D. Semester E. never

23. Tick by “√” your choice of priority that affects the implementation of continuous assessment in your school context under highly negative influencing factor and low negative influence on space provided

No	Challenges	Degree of influence to CA implementation		
		Highly influence	Medium influence	Low influence
1	class size			
2	attitude of students towards continuous assessment			
3	Shortage of time			
4	Lack of awareness (knowledge)			
5	Shortage of teaching and learning materials			
6	work burden on the teachers			
7	Attitude of teachers to continuous assessment			
8	Readiness of students			
9	Achievement of students			
10	lack of guidelines and formats			
11	lack of incentives			

24. What should be done to improve the current practice of continuous assessment in your school context? _____

Appendix _B

Addis Ababa University
College of Education and behavioral studies
Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Focus group discussion for Students

The purpose of this focus group discussion is to obtain information about the practices and challenges of implementing continuous assessment in first cycle primary schools of Dangur Woreda. The researcher asks you to cooperate in discussion and explanation on the stated question. Your response contributes much to the success of the research to be under taken, Hence you are kindly requested to discuss on the question stated below.

Thank you very much!

Part I. Main data information

Discuss and give explanation on the questions below.

1. Do teachers inform you about the assessment process?
2. What type of the assessment techniques do your teachers use most regularly?
3. Do your teacher provide opportunity for student to discuss within groups, self assessment activities and evaluate their peer assessment tasks? If “yes” what assessment tasks do you evaluate? If “No” why teachers do not provide opportunities to you? Specify the reason _____
4. What are the assessment techniques your teacher use to assess students’ performance? How often do they use the technique?
5. Do your teachers provide homework, assignments, class works, and project work to students? How do you perform them? How do teachers follow up students’ performances?
6. Do teachers provide timely feedback for students in relation to their assessment results?
7. If your answer for question number 6 is “yes” what was its frequency?
8. If your answer for question number 6 is “No” what was the reason behind? Specify the problem with regard to teachers and students respectively?
9. Do your teachers provide remediation and enrichment activities for students based on continuous assessment results? If “Yes”, for how many times and what benefits do you get from it?

10. Do teachers and parents interact together to evaluate continuous assessment implementation results at school level?

11. Do all students attend the classroom regularly? If “No” why do you absent from the school? How do your teachers compromise your absence from classroom with assessment tasks you should do?

12. Do all students participate actively in classroom assessment practices? If “No”, reason out for passive participation?

13. What are major challenges that hinder the effective practice of continuous assessment in your school?

14. What should be done to improve the challenges faced in implementing continuous assessment in the first cycle primary schools?

Appendix _C

Addis Ababa University
College of Education and behavioral studies
Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Semi structured interview with school principal and supervisors

The purpose of this interview is to obtain information about the practices and challenges of implementing continuous assessment in the first cycle primary schools of Dangur Woreda. The researcher asks you to cooperate in giving your response to the stated question. Your response contributes much to the success of the research.

General information

1. School name_____
2. Sex (interviewee) _____
4. Qualification_____
3. Age_____
- 5.Years of service_____

1. What is the status of the use of continuous assessment in your school?
 - 1.1. How do you check whether teachers are implementing continuous assessment or not?
 - 1.2. What support do you provide for teachers to practice it?
2. Do the school/woreda; provide guidelines,formats and the necessary materials to facilitate continuous assessment practice?
3. What do you say about the contribution of continuous assessment for the improvement of teaching-learning activities?
4. For what purpose your schools use continuous assessment results of the learners?
5. What assessment methods your schools use for practical implementation of continuous assessment in the classrooms?

6. If continuous assessment was practically implemented in your school, what behavioral, cognitive, affective and psychomotor changes did you observe on the learners?
7. If continuous assessment is properly implemented, what is its role on students' literacy, numeracy and reading skills at first cycle primary schools?
8. Do teachers participate and report parents to evaluate their Childs' continuous assessment results?
9. What is the status of repetition rates of your schools? What do you think are the causes for the repetition?

10. What is the level of absenteeism in your school? How do you see absenteeism with the implementation of continuous assessment?
11. What attitudes do your school teachers show towards continuous assessment implementations?
12. What are the major challenges to the implementation of continuous assessment in your school?
13. What should be done for the successful practices of continuous assessment in your schools?

Appendix _D

Addis Ababa University
College of Education and behavioral studies
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Interview guide questions for Dangur Woreda education office experts

The purpose of this interview is to collect data for the research entitled the practices and challenges of implementing continuous assessment in Dangur Woreda First Cycle Primary schools, to find out problems and indicate possible solutions. Thus, as education office experts your genuine response to this interview has significant role for this research. Accordingly, I kindly request your cooperation. I thank you in advance for your cooperation!

Interview guide questions for education office experts.

1. What does the implementation of continuous assessment in the First Cycle Primary schools look like?
 - 1.1) at what level is it practiced?
 - 1.2) how do you check whether teachers were implementing continuous assessment or not
 - 1.3) what support do you provide for teachers to practice it?
 - 1.4) how often woreda education office supports school teachers to implement continuous assessment and provide supervision feedback to schools?
 - 1.5) based on skill gap on continuous assessment implementation; does woreda education office provide training opportunity to teachers and school administrators? How often?
2. What do you say about the contribution of continuous assessment for the improvement of teaching-learning activities?
3. Does the woreda education office provide guidelines, formats and necessary materials to facilitate continuous assessment implementation?

4. Do all first cycle primary schools implement continuous assessment with the same guidelines and formats? And do all schools have the same orientation on the formats?
5. How does education office implement teacher's employment for first cycle primary schools? Does education office provide orientation to new employers on continuous assessment formats, guidelines, recording and reporting?
6. For what purpose your schools use continuous assessment results of the learners?
7. What assessment methods your schools use for practical implementation of continuous assessment in the first cycle primary classrooms?
8. If continuous assessment is practically implemented in your school, what changes are observed on the learners?
9. If continuous assessment is properly implemented in your schools, what is its role on students' literacy, numeracy and reading skills at first cycle primary schools?
10. How do you relate absence from the classroom with implementation of continuous assessment?
11. What is the status of repetition rate in your first cycle primary school? What do you think the causes for the repetition?
12. What does the attitude of teachers towards the implementation of continuous assessment looks like?
13. What are the major challenges faced in the implementation of Continuous assessment in First Cycle Primary schools?
14. What should be done for the successful practices of continuous assessment in First Cycle Primary schools? /Woreda?

Appendix _E

Addis Ababa University

College of Education and behavioral studies

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Classroom Observation Checklists for the implementation of Continuous assessment

Part I. General information

1. Name of the School _____
2. Name of Observer _____ 3. Date _____
4. Subject _____ 5. Grade _____

Part II. Classroom observation checklists put “√” mark on the space provided for your response yes or No

No	Item of observation	Alternative and	
		Yes	No
1	Used appropriate continuous assessment plan		
2	Used variety of continuous assessment tools		
3	Continuous assessment related to lesson objective		
4	Cross check students self and peer assessment activities		
5	Give information about assessment		
6	Encourage students to assess their own work		
7	Provide feedback		
8	Class room environments suitable for continuous assessment		
9	Have student center arrangement of desk		
10	Have standardized student teachers ratio		
11	teachers had motivated to teaching		
12	participating all students by using different assessment methods		