

**Second Cycle Primary Schools Teachers'
Practices of Continuous Assessment in
Three Selected Government Primary
Schools of Hawassa**

By

Tewodros Kore

A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate
Studies of Addis Ababa University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Educational Policy and Planning

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ICDR Institute of Curriculum Development and Research
MOE Ministry of Education
USAID United States Agency for International Development
NPE National Policy on Education
USA United States of America

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CA	Continuous Assessment
CODE	Council of Ontario Directors of Education
ICDR	Institute of Curriculum Development and Research
MOE	Ministry of Education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
NPE	National Policy on Education
USA	United States of America

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study is to assess Second Cycle Primary Schools Teachers' Practices of Continuous Assessment in Three Selected Government Primary Schools (Betekihnet, Hawassa Haik, and Tabor) of Hawassa. The subjects in this study were 42 teachers, 120 students and 3 principals being a total of 165 respondents. The purposive sampling helped the researcher in selecting the sample schools, and in deciding on the number of subjects under study. Using stratified sampling also teachers were chosen to pledge appropriate numbers of them for subsequent dissections and groupings during the analysis of data. Moreover, Simple random sampling technique was used in the selection of student respondents. The research used quantitative method so that questionnaire, interview and classroom observation were the main instruments of data collection. The results of the study revealed that most of teachers had poor understanding on the basic concepts of continuous assessment in one way or another. The practicality of continuous assessment in the schools was also in question in situation where written tests and quizzes were the most commonly used continuous assessment activities used by the teachers. What is more, class size, work load and uninterested students respectively were the three most frequent challenges that the teachers encountered in practicing continuous assessment. Finally, based on the findings and the conclusions, recommendations were forwarded.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0. Introduction

This is the chapter which deals with the problem and its approach that includes background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significances of the study, limitation of the study, delimitation of the study, organization of the study, and operational definitions of terms.

1.1. Background of the Study

An effervescent nation pines for a vibrant mode of education. Since, education is groundwork of political, economic, technical, and social development, primary education is its underpinning factor. Imperatively, primary school children need to be outfitted with knowledge and skills quite poles apart from those which sufficed for their parents. So, in order to get a hold of those knowledge and skills by the children, there is a decisive stipulation for re-appraisal of the work of the primary schools in all-purpose and teachers in meticulous. In this case, there is one word that needs to clutch the attention of many.

Brown (1997:10-12) called the original term of the word as '*ad sedere*' meaning to sit down beside with the etymology of giving guidance and feedback to learners. Today, we call this word *assessment*. As of Brown (1997:10-12) the first and the eldest assessment in the human history was in the days of Homo Australopithecus.

These days, assessment has got much broader meaning than ever before. Its worth in the teaching-learning pulls out to the extent that assessment is part and parcel of teaching-learning. Lambert (2000:2) having

something to say on the relation among assessment, teaching and learning forwarded that instruction, learning, assessment, and evaluation are all interrelated. Marzano (1993:11) also fortified this point saying assessment and learning are closely and intimately tied. Similar idea is in black and white by Brown (1997:13) in his elucidation of the relation between assessment and teaching. According to him assessment is part of the indispensable errand of teaching.

Despite there is nothing qualm about its importance, assessment has got some assortments. Robert (2005:35-36), mentioning Airasian and Madaus (1972), tagged assessment according to the sequence its procedures likely to be used in the classroom. They are Placement assessment, continuous assessment, Diagnostic assessment and summative assessment.

Among those classroom assessments, continuous assessment, which is the focus of this research, is an on-going assessment with incessant feedback to learners on the basis of their progress. Weeden (2002:20) asserts that continuous assessment rally rounds pupils learn; brings about measures that are thriving in closing the cranny between current and anticipated performance.

Continuous assessment utilizes manifold evaluation schemes, and let regular feedback to students in order to uphold their learning. As of USAID (2003:2), continuous assessment is a formative mode of classroom strategy executed by teachers in bringing in to play arrays of assessment techniques and layouts in order to authenticate the knowledge, understanding, and skills attained by students.

Mr

No matter what stunning the values of continuous assessment, there are downsides and destitutions pore over in its practice. A case in point is the opinion of Lambert (2000:107-108):

That good continuous assessment practice is hard to find is also somewhat perplexing, for we imagine that many, if not most, teachers would say that they do it. Perhaps inspectors do not see it; and it is the case that, unlike tests for example, continuous assessment may well be relatively invisible, in the teachers head rather than in some forms of documentation. Or perhaps 'good practice' is so difficult to pull off that it is in fact rarely seen operating in a fully developed manner.

Marzano (1993:11) has also stated the growing recognition of the need for significant changes in classroom continuous assessment practices since the last decade. What is more, Weeden (2002:28-29) vividly explained five major confronts for teachers in escalating continuous assessment for learning, and so need a legroom for a change in practice. Those confronts are: perceptions of teachers about continuous assessment, teachers' expectations, considering continuous assessment as time-taking, ways collecting and interpreting data continuously, and teachers' concept of change.

The practices of continuous assessment in some countries have shown a lot of efforts to be done regardless of the commitment of the governments in those countries. One supplementary solid evidence is the summary document by Harpring (2003:2) which has revealed the challenges of four countries - Djibouti, El Salvador, Macedonia, and Malawi, in the

practices of classroom continuous assessment. According to this document the major confronts in those countries had been constraints of resource allocation and commitment of implementers, and stake-holders for that matter. Therefore, this research studies under the title - *Second Cycle Primary Schools Teachers' Practices of Continuous Assessment in Three Selected Government Primary Schools (Betekihnet, Hawassa Haik, and Tabor) of Hawassa.*

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The concept of continuous assessment was first incorporated in the policy and formally introduced in primary schools of Ethiopia with the launching of the Education and Training Policy in 2002. However, before the introduction of the policy, testing (more of summative assessment) dominates the educational evaluation system of primary schools in the country. After stressing the need for continuous assessment in primary schools of the country, Ministry of Education (MOE) (2002:126-127) has expounded the pluses of CA for students, teachers, and to the education system as a whole.

Bearing in mind all these bare facts, a great number of documents encompassing of details, rules and guidelines about continuous assessment has been prepared since the commencement of the Education and Training Policy. One of these documents was 'A National Curriculum Guideline for Pre-service Teacher Education Programmes'. According to MOE (2003:9) in this document, under the subsection competencies for Ethiopian teachers, there is an evident detail that divulges the responsibilities of teachers in practicing classroom continuous assessment.

On the other verge of those efforts, there are problems observed in the implementation of classroom continuous assessment. Since assessment and teaching-learning are two faces of the same coin, the problems in classroom continuous assessment are either healed or aggravated by the performance of teachers. Although it is not the sole responsibility of the teacher, teachers with the knowledge, skill and above all the perseverance for the best practice of continuous assessment are inexorably responsible for the positive augmentation of students. In the words of Obiamo (2001:1):

The successful implementation of continuous assessment system requires total adherence to the prescribed guidelines as well as teachers' proper understanding of the concept and practice of continuous assessment. Thus continuous assessment to succeed much emphasis must be placed on the professional competence and integrity of school teachers.

Hence; therefore, studies on the aspects of teachers' practices of classroom continuous assessment have come into sight in Ethiopia. A case in pint is a research by Muluken (2006); the general objective of his research is assessing teachers' perceptions and practices of continuous assessment in selected government first cycle primary schools of Addis Ababa. The study indicated the problems in the practices of continuous assessment. It also mentioned that the majority of the primary school teachers perceived continuous assessment as testing. Another research is by Tamene (2007); the general objective of his research is assessing the factors that affect the implementation of continuous assessment in Western Oromia government teachers' training colleges. According to this

research, lack of time, lack of facilities, teachers' knowledge and commitment, class size, and attitude of teachers were the major constraints of assessing students continuously.

In the same manner, the researcher of this study bestowed himself under the title - *Second Cycle Primary Schools Teachers' Practices of Continuous Assessment in Three Selected Government Primary Schools (Betekihnet, Hawassa Haik, and Tabor) of Hawassa*. In very plain words, this study and the preceding two local studies have things to share and things to differ. One big point, they are similar in the foremost attention they gave to continuous assessment. All of them have spaces to address the practices of continuous assessment in their selected institutions although degrees of emphasis confirmed an incongruity among the studies. Another big point, keeping all methodological and further differences under a curtain, this study is different: for one thing geographically, besides by its scope as it plans to entertain only Second Cycle Primary Schools. Consequently, the researcher of this study has set the basic research questions below to guide the study effectively and efficiently:

1. What is the level of understanding of second cycle primary school teachers on the basic concepts of continuous assessment?
2. What are the continuous assessment activities being applicable by second cycle primary school teachers?
3. What are the challenges for teachers in practicing continuous assessment?
4. To what extent is continuous assessment being applicable by second cycle primary school teachers?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1. General Objective

The general objective of the study is to explain second cycle primary schools teachers' practices of continuous assessment in three selected government primary schools (Betekihnet, Hawassa Haik, and Tabor) of Hawassa.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

In order to realize its purpose, the study aims at treating the following specific objectives under the shadow of the general objective so that the research at the end will be able to:

1. Explain Second cycle primary school teachers' level of understanding on basic concepts of continuous assessment.
2. Identify the continuous assessment activities being applicable by Second cycle primary school teachers.
3. Identify challenges for Second cycle primary school teachers in practicing continuous assessment.
4. Explain the extent in applicability of continuous assessment by second cycle primary school teachers.

1.4. Significances of the Study

This study will be supposed to have the following significances:

1. It helps teachers and principals upgrade their concept of continuous assessment.
2. It will let the educational society to know the current practices of classroom continuous assessment.
3. It might pave the way to better practices of classroom continuous assessment for the future.
4. It can be used as a starting point or else a reference document for further research.

1.5. Delimitation of the Study

To make the study manageable and thereby investigate the problems thoroughly, the scope of this study is delimited to Three Selected Second Cycle (Grades 5-8) Government Primary Schools of Hawassa.

1.6. Limitation of the Study

Despite the ample efforts exerted, this research never be said unchallenged with any problems. In fact, it had been confronted with problems at some extents though there was exploitation of successful way outs too. The biggest challenge the researcher faced with was the pressure from some teachers to fill and return the questionnaires. So, in the process of data collection, the researcher was persisted on incessant follow-ups to let the questionnaires back to their original owner, he himself, and of course it had been a booming experience.

1.7. Operational Definitions of Terms

Continuous Assessment: An on-going, diagnostic, classroom-based process that uses a variety of assessment tools to measure learner performance.

Second cycle Primary School: A school from grade 5 to grade 8.

Challenges: They are obstacles that hinder the practices of continuous assessment.

1.8. Organization of the Study

This research is a composite result of five chapters. Chapter one (The Problem and Its Approach) deals with background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significances of the study, limitation of the study, delimitation of the study, organization of the study, and operational definitions of terms. Chapter two (Review of Related Literature) discusses a concise and coherent account of what is known in the field of continuous assessment is presented. This is the chapter where controversies and differences of opinion among scholars in the field of continuous assessment are elucidated. Chapter three explains the design and methodology of the research. Chapter four consolidates, authenticates, presents, and analyzes the findings of the study. Chapter five, the last of all the chapters, comprises of the summary of the main findings, the conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0. Review of Related Literature

This is the section where a concise and coherent account of what is known in the field of continuous assessment is presented. This is the chapter where controversies and differences of opinion among scholars in the field of continuous assessment are elucidated. So, below is the quintessence of the chapter in focus.

2.1. The Basic Concepts of Continuous Assessment

In this section a particular attention is given to the definition, the type, the characteristics, the importance, and the feedback mechanisms of continuous assessment.

2.1.1. Defining Continuous Assessment

A common saying annotated that defining a problem is like solving half of the problem itself. In fact, many a scholar couldn't find this an easy endeavor in the case of continuous assessment. Rather, they prefer to phrase the term continuous assessment in different ways despite the gist of the term is the same in almost all the definitions. The confusion of the term with other terms is also another factor which triggers the challenge of defining.

Before defining continuous assessment, let's have a look on and clarify the different terms related to assessment. Regard to this, USAID (2006:3) has explained the commonly used terminology with reference to assessment as follows:

◆ **Assessment:** is the process of collecting information and using the information to make a decision about an educational policy, about the curriculum, and educational programs.

◆ **Examination:** a method of assessment that is carried out at the end of primary, preparatory or secondary school. Students do not often get feedback on their performance on the exams apart from a grade and a judgment of pass or fail.

◆ **Tests:** usually prepared by teachers and given at the end of a unit or at the end of a term, at the end of a semester or at the end of the school year.

Evaluation: overall judgment of student performance based on assessment. Evaluation generally comes at the end of a semester, a term, or a year.

Continuous assessment, according to Ajuonuma (2007:2), is defined as a mechanism whereby the final grading of a student in cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of behavior takes account, in a systematic way, all his performances during a given period of schooling.

Continuous Assessment is defined as an on-going, diagnostic, classroom-based process that uses a variety of assessment tools to measure learner performance (McAlpine, 2002).

2.1.2. Characteristics of Effective Assessment

Over the years since 1980 assessment practitioners have developed a number of characteristics that define effective continuous assessment (Palomba and Banta, 1999). According to Manitoba Education and Training (1997:53) there are seven characteristics of effective continuous assessment. Effective continuous assessment is:

- ◆ congruent with instruction, and integral to it
- ◆ based on authentic tasks and meaningful learning processes and contexts
- ◆ multi-dimensional, and uses a wide range of tools and methods
- ◆ based on criteria that students know and understand, appealing to their strengths
- ◆ a collaborative process involving students
- ◆ focused on what students have learned and can do
- ◆ ongoing and continuous

Tesfaye (2005:194), in addition, confirmed that effective continuous assessment is characterized in being systematic, guidance oriented, diagnostic, comprehensive, and cumulative. Obiamo (2001) also said that continuous assessment involves testing students before and after teaching any topic.

2.1.3. Advantages of Continuous Assessment

Not everything is a scantron test, and not everything has to go into student's grade book. But frequent and reliable assessments are what

give feedback on what one have done and need to do. Real assessment is build on the philosophy that our job is to get students to learn (not to teach), and assessment is our way of gauging what is working and what is not.

As of Hein and Lee (2000) on a larger scale, administrators and policymakers use continuous assessments to determine how well their schools are educating the next generation. Similarly, USAID (2006:6) further mentioned that continuous assessment reduces student fear of testing, and provides feedback to students. According to McTighe and Ferrara (1994:61) continuous assessment is important in education because it provides information about learning that can be used to:

- ◆ diagnose learner strengths and needs,
- ◆ provide feedback on teaching and learning,
- ◆ provide a basis for instructional placement,
- ◆ inform and guide instruction,
- ◆ communicate learning expectations,
- ◆ motivate and focus learner attention and effort,
- ◆ provide practice applying knowledge and skills,
- ◆ provide a basis for learner evaluation (e.g., grading) and
- ◆ gauge program effectiveness.

2.2. Types of Continuous Assessment

A teacher's career is to ensure that all learners learn. The teacher does this by teaching in a variety of ways. In order to know if the learners are learning, the teacher needs various continuous assessments to be informed about the learners' progress.

All teachers assess what their students know, where they need help, and what they should do next. Teachers do this informally countless times each day, and more formally after completing a topic, or at a fixed time, such as at the end of a marking period or semester, or the end of a unit.

Scholars divide continuous assessment in to different types. For instance, according to The University of Adelaide (2002) continuous assessment can be categorized broadly into three types - diagnostic, formative and summative. Hein and Lee (2000) divide continuous assessment in to four - diagnostic, formative, summative, and comparative. According to USAID (2006:8-17), continuous assessment is two types, informal and formal. The Irish Education Committee (1986:9) also classified it in to convergent assessment, divergent assessment, and idiographic assessment, nomothetic assessment.

2.2.1. Diagnostic Assessment

Diagnostic assessment is used to determine what knowledge and understanding a student brings to a subject. As stated by Airasian (1997:20) Diagnostic assessment also mentions how present performance is at variance from anticipated performance and spots out particular problems that a student may be experiencing. Most important for diagnostic assessment is that teachers be clear about what they expect to do in their teaching and know what qualities they hope to bring out in their students. As Gronlund and Linn (1990) elaborated Diagnostic assessment is concerned with the importunate or recurring learning intricacies that are left unsettled by the standard corrective prescription of formative assessment.

2.2.2. Formative Assessment

Assessment used to support day-to-day instruction, called formative assessment, makes use of all the normal activities of a classroom. What turns any instructional activity into an assessment is the explicit intention of a teacher to use it for that purpose, the systematic recording of student results, and the application of some criteria for judging the quality of a child's performance.

2.2.3. Summative Assessment

Traditionally, summative assessment consists of tests at the end of a period of instruction. The term needs to be expanded to include any judgment based on all available evidence of what a student has learned after working on a particular topic. Brookhart (1999:7-8) stated summative assessment in contrasting to formative assessment. He said that when the cook tastes the soup that is formative assessment; when the customer tastes the soup that is summative assessment.

2.2.4. Comparative Assessment

When assessment is used to compare students with others in a larger arena, problems associated with assessing inquiry become more complex. In order to compare students to each other, standards need to be established about what would serve as an appropriate measure of achievement.

2.2.5. Informal Assessment

Not all the assessment situations require a pencil and paper test or a formal, structured testing situation. And the assessment can be done before, during, and after a lesson or a unit of instruction.

2.2.6. Formal Assessment

Formal and more structured assessment and testing are usually done at the end of a lesson, at the end of a topic or unit, at the end of a school term, and at the end of the school year.

2.2.7. Convergent assessment

It focuses on clearly defined tasks (e.g. involving deductive reasoning). It is favored because it facilitates comparability, measurability and fairness; however, it tends to be rigid (e.g. objective tests).

2.2.8. Divergent assessment

It is more open and idiosyncratic than convergent assessment (e.g. assessment of creativity). It uses the inductive reasoning approach.

2.2.9. Idiographic assessment

Idiographic assessment attempts to document the uniqueness of an individual, what he or she does, knows and is.

2.2.10. Nomothetic assessment

Nomothetic assessment collects data about individuals with a view to comparing one with another; thus it focuses on traits shared by people.

2.3. Types of Continuous Assessment Activities

Developing a variety of assessment activities allows the teacher to match assessment activities to the individual student's ability. Using a variety of activities also allows students with different learning styles to demonstrate knowledge that verifies learning has taken place.

Assessment activities tend to overlap and blend together. Using several activities of assessment provides a broader and more comprehensive picture of the learning and teaching of primary schools. In fact, tests and exams could and sometimes do use some of the continuous assessment activities listed and tests can be part of continuous assessment. Table 1 below shows some of the different types of assessment activities and how they are usually used.

Table 2.1: Types of Assessment Activities

Activities Commonly Used for Exams and Testing		Activities Commonly Used for Continuous Assessment	
Selected Response Questions	Brief Constructed Response Activities	Constructed Response Activities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple choice questions • True and False • Matching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill in the blank • Short answer • Label a drawing 	Performances <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral presentation • Dance/ movement • Science activity • Athletic skill • Dramatic reading • Role play • Debate • Song • Practical test • Interviews of learners 	Products <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illustration or drawing • Invented dialogues • Making models • Essay/composition/ short story • Report • Project

Adapted from McTighe, J. and Ferrara, S. (1998). The table lists the types of tasks that are commonly used for exams and those for Continuous Assessment.

2.3.1. Performance Assessments

In performance assessments learners are going to perform or do something. The learners are asked to demonstrate or show in some way what they know and do. As of McGuirk (2002:3) performance assessment is defined as direct, systematic observation of an actual student performance according to pre-established criteria. In accordance with, McTighe (1998:13) performance assessments encourages self- evaluation and revision, require judgment to score, reveal degrees of proficiency based on established criteria, and make public the scoring criteria.

Table 2.2: Types of performance assessments and their examples

Example of Performance Assessment Activity	Type of Performance Assessment Activity
Oral presentation	After a visit to the village shopping area groups have to make an oral presentation to the class telling what they learned.
Dance/movement	After reading a story, learners are asked to make movements that describe how one of the characters in the story feels.
Science activity	Learners work in pairs to classify a group of objects into two distinct groups and tell why they grouped them the way they did.
Athletic skill	Learners demonstrate the ability to dribble a football 50 meters while weaving around 5 objects placed in their path.
Dramatic reading	Learners dramatize a story or parts of a story they read to show their understanding of the story.
Role play	Learners act out parents explaining and showing children how to keep their bodies clean. Some learners play the role of the parents, and some play the children.
Debate	Teams of learners debate whether there should be a village clean up day.
Song/poem	Groups of learners write and sing a song (or read a poem) telling about their community.
Practical test	Learners work in pairs to measure the length, weight and temperature of a set of objects set up around the classroom and record their answers on paper.
Interviews of learners	The teacher interviews individual or small groups of learners with maths objects to find out what they understand about angles.

2.3.2. Product Assessments

Product assessments can be described as a tangible (can be touched with the hands) objects created by the student and can be viewed by the teacher. According to Plessis (2003:20) Product assessments differ from performance assessments because they are physical pieces of student work that can be touched. Performances need to be observed or heard in order to assess them.

Table 2.3: Types of Product Assessments and Their Examples

Type of Product Assessment	Description and Example
Illustration or drawing	Learners draw a picture showing the way they felt during the recent harvest.
Invented dialogue	Learners write a dialogue or conversation taking place between two people or things. Learners imagine and write a dialogue between the roots and the soil describing how they work together.
Models	Learners make a model of their village when studying their community.
Essay/composition/story	Learners tell or write a story describing what they did during the holiday.
Report	Learners visit a fish farm. At the farm they see fish, how they are fed, grown and harvested. They take notes, draw pictures and collect written information. When the learners return to the classroom they work on writing guided reports.
Projects	Projects are lengthy pieces of work involving multiple tasks and skills. An integrated project on transportation might include writing or reading a story about a train (language), drawing a map of the railway system in the country or region (social studies), making a model of trains (science), calculating the cost of a train ride (maths), and making a chart of the different uses for trains (information skills/social studies).
Journals	Learners write for 15 minutes at the end of the week describing what they learned in science class.

2.4. Challenges in Implementing Continuous Assessment

Many researches revealed that teachers encounter various challenges in implementing continuous assessment. Challenges that teachers encountered were also revealed by the findings of the Formative Evaluation Study of the Implementation of the Continuous Assessment Pilot Program at the Basic School Level in Zambia (Kapambwe, 2006:6-7). According to the findings large class size, time for remediation and enrichment, pupil absenteeism, inadequate teaching and learning resources, poor teacher networking, and poor monitoring and feedback were the major challenges. Genesee and Upshure (1996); Bogale (1994:70-71), and Tamene (2007) explained the lack of time, lack of

facilities, teachers' knowledge and commitment, class size, and attitude of teachers are the major constraints of assessing students continuously. Below are some of the major challenges:

2.4.1. Class size

According to the standard of the MOE (2002), the standard class size is 50 students in a class of 46.08 m². Some researchers claim that classroom size might not have any notified negative effect on continuous assessment. Scholars like Allwright cited in Hayes (1997) and Locastro (2001) stated that large class size might not be a problem for student assessment if teachers use a variety of learning strategies. However, the findings of most researches rather refer the effect of class size as either a challenge or a prospective of classroom continuous assessment. As of these researches, continuous assessment requires assessing learners regularly to see what progress the learners are making. This can be time consuming in a large class. That is why Ellington and Earl (1997); Papworth (2005) asserted that large class size is the major limiting factor that affect the use of continuous assessment. However, class size is not a major barrier of continuous assessment in countries such as USA and Japan. As of Cummings (1980:109) the typical Japanese primary school has between 40 – 45 students per teacher in every class at every grade level. In contrast, USA's primary school class size tends to be much smaller particularly at the first and second grade levels.

2.4.2. Work load

Teachers' workload is one challenge to teachers in conducting continuous assessment effectively. In considering the effect of workload on teachers' continuous assessment practice, Muluken (2006:47)

emphasized the high workload contribution to the poor assessment practice of teachers. On the other hand, scholars like Rego (2007:63) wrote that a man who always complain being busy of workload is a man who can't manage his works. According to him there isn't any thing like a sort of being busy in workload. MOE of Australia (2004) in its research finding affirmed that teachers under study were strongly motivated and committed to helping students achieve their academic and personal potential in conducting continuous assessment as one means despite the increased stress created on them owing to high workload.

2.4.3. Uninterested students

Learning to takes place, the motivation of students is a major factor. Students who are not interested on the learning are problems of the learning process by themselves. Uninterested students are major challenge of continuous assessment. Most educators believe that it is extremely difficult to deal with poorly motivated, uninterested, learners irrespective of their abilities (Harmer, 1983; Gardner, 1985; Spolsky, 1989; Johnston, 1987). On the other hand, Trooboff (2003:16) asserted that teachers are also tantalizing for the lack of interest or demotivation of students. Furthermore, Wikibooks (n.d.) in a different view, affirmed that having uninterested learners in a class never be a reason for teachers choose to continue their traditional teaching techniques and not carrying out continuous assessment.

2.4.4. Student Absenteeism

Absenteeism is also an obstacle to the smooth practice of continuous assessment. Kapambwe (2006) asserted continuous assessment records

of some students' attendance were irregular, and some absenteeism eventually leads to students dropping out of schools completely. Williams (2004:73) a major problem facing public schools is that of chronic absenteeism among school-age children. School attendance is a critical factor for school performance among youth. Studies show that higher attendance is related to higher achievement for students of all backgrounds. For instance, Epstein and Sheldon (2002) emphasized that students who attend school regularly score higher on achievement tests than their peers who are frequently absent.

2.4.5. Teaching and Learning Resources

The inadequacy or the lack of learning materials mainly affects the process of teaching and learning in a classroom in general and classroom assessment in particular. Tekeste (1990:49) has said that text books are always in short supply and in most subjects several students share the text books.

2.5. Practices of Continuous Assessment

2.5.1. Appalling Practices of Continuous Assessment

There are pit falls. You can assess too much in one area and not enough in another, you can spend too much of the class time assessing, you can assess poorly and not get the correct results, and you can assess often and perfectly but do nothing with the results. Assessment, the process of gauging and collecting student progress, is a means to an end. It's good if it gets to the end result - which is improved instruction, but it's a waste if it doesn't effect the instruction at all.

Airasian (1997:42-44) asserted the negative impacts on pupil learning where:

- ◆ The giving of marks and the grading functions are overemphasized, while the giving of useful advice and the learning function are underemphasized.
- ◆ Pupils are compared with one another, because this focuses pupils' attention on competition rather than personal improvement. As a result, assessment feedback teaches pupils with low attainment that they lack 'ability', so they are demotivated, believing they are not able to learn.

As of Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam (1998:5) the most important difficulties with assessment revolve around three issues.

The first issue is *effective learning*.

- The tests used by teachers encourage rote and superficial learning even when teachers say they want to develop understanding; many teachers seem unaware of the inconsistency.
- The questions and other methods teachers use are not shared with other teachers in the same school, and they are not critically reviewed in relation to what they actually assess.
- For primary teachers particularly, there is a tendency to emphasize quantity and presentation of work and to neglect its quality in relation to learning.

The second issue is *negative impact*.

- The giving of marks and the grading function are overemphasized, while the giving of useful advice and the learning function are underemphasized.

- Approaches are used in which pupils are compared with one another, the prime purpose of which seems to them to be competition rather than personal improvement; in consequence, assessment feedback teaches low-achieving pupils that they lack "ability," causing them to come to believe that they are not able to learn.

The third issue is the *managerial role* of assessments.

- Teachers' feedback to pupils seems to serve social and managerial functions, often at the expense of the learning function.

- Teachers are often able to predict pupils' results on external tests because their own tests imitate them, but at the same time teachers know too little about their pupils' learning needs.

- The collection of marks to fill in records is given higher priority than the analysis of pupils' work to discern learning needs; furthermore, some teachers pay no attention to the assessment records of their pupils' previous teachers.

2.5.2. Good Practices of Continuous Assessment

For continuous assessment achieve its goal, it should be practiced appropriately. In doing this, there are values for best practices in continuous assessment. Among these, five of them are discussed below:

1. Assessment should be valid

There should be a match between the objectives of the lesson and assessment methods used; it should assess what it is that one really wants to measure. In accordance with this, the Joint Advisory Committee of Canada (1993:4) affirms that assessment methods should be in harmony with the instructional objectives to which they are referenced in order to enhance validity. Besides, Ministry of Basic Education and Culture of Namibia (1999:10) stated that the nature of the learning task, e.g., the ability to apply knowledge or the mastery of a practical skill like typing, will determine which assessment type will be most suitable to use to attain the objectives of the lesson.

2. Assessment should be transparent

If an assessment is not clearly articulated, students will have different understandings about it. Accordingly, they can't perform the assessment properly, and this results in a failure to achieve the targets of the assessment. The Joint Advisory Committee of Canada (1993:6) emphasized that lack of understanding of the assessment task may prevent maximum performance or display of the behavior called for.

3. Assessment should provide immediate and meaningful feedback to the students

Any meaningful feedback offered immediately to students is like the right medicine given to patients on time. As of Rowntree (1987) feedback is the lifeblood of learning. So, giving a meaningful feedback is a mandatory for teachers.

4. Assessment should be given adequate time

The time allocated for the assessment has to be appropriate. This is because, an assessment that is done within inadequate time is not much use in providing feedback and doing the assessment effectively. Phil (2005:4) said that even where there is only end- point formal assessment, earlier opportunities should be provided for rehearsal and feedback.

5. Assessment should be fair

Since the teachers wanted to assess their students learning, not just their ability to use a method of assessment, it is best for them to use more than one assessment method. So, students of all ability levels will be able to demonstrate what they know and can do. Gardner (1985) has found that students have nine learning styles that demand varied teaching strategies to let them successfully and fairly exhibit their potential and get their best out of them. Phil (2005:3) also stated that students should have equivalence of opportunities to succeed even if their experiences are not identical. To this end, as Tesfaye (2005:199) enlightened assessment can take many forms, and it could be argued that the more diverse the methods of assessment, the more fair the assessment is to students.

2.6. Practices of Continuous Assessment around the World

Effectiveness in education is achieved when teachers are able to translate educational policies and appropriate methodologies into improved pupil learning in the classroom. To this effect, the current educational systems, both in developing and developed countries are searching for appropriate modes of assessment.

Table 2.1. Summary of Some Assessment Practices outside Africa

2.6.1. Practices of Continuous Assessment outside Africa

Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE, 2006:9), in examining practices around the world, stated that the most common form of assessment is done in the classroom by teachers. Yet, according to CODE, some jurisdictions will have provincial or state examinations, while countries with a national curriculum may have some form of nation wide examinations in some subjects. The table below is summary of some common practices outside Africa according to CODE (2006:11).

Country	Assessment Practice	Grade Level	Subject	Frequency	Form
Canada	Standardized assessments	Grades 4, 6 and 8	Mathematics and Language Arts	Annual	Multiple choice
United Kingdom	Standardized assessments	Grades 7, 10 and 13	Mathematics, Science, English, History, Geography	Annual	Multiple choice, essays, projects
United States	Standardized assessments	Grades 3, 4, 5, 8 and 11	Mathematics, Reading, Science, Social Studies	Annual	Multiple choice, essays, projects
France	Standardized assessments	Grades 6, 9, 11 and 13	Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Literature	Annual	Multiple choice, essays, projects
Germany	Standardized assessments	Grades 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12	Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Literature	Annual	Multiple choice, essays, projects
Japan	Standardized assessments	Grades 5, 8, 11 and 12	Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Literature	Annual	Multiple choice, essays, projects
China	Standardized assessments	Grades 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15	Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Literature	Annual	Multiple choice, essays, projects
India	Standardized assessments	Grades 5, 8, 10 and 12	Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Literature	Annual	Multiple choice, essays, projects
Australia	Standardized assessments	Grades 5, 8, 10 and 12	Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Literature	Annual	Multiple choice, essays, projects
South Africa	Standardized assessments	Grades 6, 9, 11 and 12	Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Literature	Annual	Multiple choice, essays, projects

Table 2.4: Summary of Some Assessment Practices outside Africa

The abbreviations in the table correspond to the following:

S	School Base (Continuous Assessment)	N	National
SA	Standardized Assessments	E	Exit Exams
P/S	Provincial or State	U	University Entrance Exams

Country	S	SA	P/S	N	E	U
Australia provides a website for consistency and resources. Each school is responsible for a consistency strategy	X					
California uses a moderation process through the Center for Language Learning. Exit exams were planned but have now been postponed	X					
In China national university entrance exams are administered. There are insufficient spaces for applicants who would appear to be qualified	X					X
England has national level exams at ages 7, 11, 14, and 16. The examination requirements are being adjusted at this time.	X			X		
France uses standardized assessments at Grades 3, 6 and 9. National level assessments are conducted at each grade level and subject for year-end testing. There are exit exams.	X	X		X	X	
In Germany each Land (state) is responsible for education and assessment. Random selection of test papers is used as a moderation strategy.	X					
In Hong Kong yearly evaluations of Chinese, English and math are conducted. There are 2 exit exams and an A Levels System. Testing is geared to right and wrong answers.	X				X	
In Israel exit examinations are conducted.	X				X	
There are no state assessments in Ireland, but rather continuous assessment.	X					
Japan uses high stakes entrance exams to secondary school, teacher assessment during school and individual university examinations.	X					X
New Zealand uses external moderation to assess school consistency.	X					
In Ontario the Education Quality and Accountability Office oversees a variety of standardized assessments at Grades 3, 6, and 9, as well as a literacy test for graduation from secondary school.	X	X				
New York has its Regents exams for graduation from secondary school.	X				X	
Alberta conducts achievement testing in grade 3, 6, and 9. There are provincial diploma examinations at Grade 12.	X		X		X	
British Columbia has some province wide examinations in a variety of subjects in secondary school.	X		X			
Assessment in Sweden is on a school basis. There are no large scale or final assessments	X					

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New York has its Regents exams for graduation from secondary school.	X				X	
Alberta conducts achievement testing in grade 3, 6, and 9. There are provincial diploma examinations at Grade 12.	X		X		X	
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2.6.2. Practices of Continuous Assessment in Africa

Several African countries including Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Zambia, Ghana, and Djibouti are embracing continuous assessment as a means of introducing educational reform. Below are the reports of continuous assessment practices in those countries:

2.6.2.1. Continuous Assessment in Malawi

By: USAID (2003)

The Government of Malawi declared free access to primary schools in 1994, which resulted in severe shortage of classrooms, lack of adequate teaching and learning materials, and shortage of qualified teachers. In an attempt to compensate, the government employed many unqualified teachers, most of whom are still not trained. Consequently, quality of education especially the areas of classroom continuous assessment fell down to the ground and this increased the dropout and repetition rates in many schools.

2.6.2.2. Continuous Assessment in Namibia

By: Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (1998)

The majority of teachers seem to be hesitant and need assistance and guidance before they will be able to implement continuous assessment with confidence. It seems as if current ministerial 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.

2.6.2.3. Continuous Assessment in Nigeria

By: Anikweze (2005)

The Nigeria's National Policy on Education (NPE) recommended the use of continuous assessment for taking summative decisions on students' level of attainment at the end of any level of schooling. The federal government through the Ministry of Education (MOE) equally provided policy guidelines aimed at streamlining the assessment practices in Nigerian schools. The experience of the country is an example of poor continuous assessment practices though there are encouraging results in some of its states.

2.6.2.4. Continuous Assessment in South Africa

By: Puhl (1997)

The new policy of CA is aimed to bring out a paradigm shift in educational assessment in several ways. The central characteristic of this shift is the moving of assessment from a judgmental role to a developmental role. This move reflects evolving ideas on the nature of assessment and its purposes.

2.6.2.5. Continuous Assessment in Zambia

By: The Ministry of Education (2008)

In Zambia, over the years, examinations have been used for selection and certification, without formal considerations on school-based continuous

assessment as a component in the final examinations at Grade seven levels.

The Ministry of Education introduced School Based Continuous Assessment for two reasons: To improve teaching and learning and to collect school based marks to be added to the final examination marks for certification and selection.

Notably the education policy makers in Zambia had acknowledged the inherent benefits of continuous assessment in improving educational quality as reflected in the 1977 Education Reforms. The educational reforms' recommendation that continuous assessment be introduced as an integral part of the examinations results was not implemented at the primary school level due to a number of reasons, one of which was public apprehension. In particular, the competencies of teachers in carrying out objective assessment and the perceptions of teachers towards assessment coupled with managing large class sizes at primary school level. The introduction of an Outcomes Based Curriculum in 2001 and the demand for more comprehensive assessment systems that impact positively on learning achievement, has prompted educational policy to re-affirm the importance of School Based Continuous Assessment in enhancing education quality.

2.6.2.6. Continuous Assessment in Ghana

By: Fletcher (2001:7-11)

The last decade or so has seen major developments in the policy and practice of assessment in this country. The introduction of the criterion-referenced assessment scheme at the primary school level as well as the use of continuous assessment at almost all levels of education in Ghana

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reflects fundamental new conceptions of what assessment is for. The old notion of tests as something, which will sort young people into social roles they will occupy in society, is being replaced by reformed rhetoric, which asserts multiple purposes of assessment. At one level, it seems there has been growing acceptance, at least among educationists, which the primary purpose of assessment must be formative, which is the information it gathers should be used to improve the educational process. At another level, emphasis is being laid on the summative function of assessment whereby a judgment of some kind is passed on an individual at the end of some course of work.

2.6.2.7. Continuous Assessment in Djibouti

By: Harpring (2003:3)

Djibouti is in a nascent stage of continuous assessment. In 1999 presidential discussions of educational reform and the subsequent development of a Strategic Plan called for a competency-based curriculum, now in place in Grades 1 and 2. It was recognized that a competency based curriculum calls for a different method of assessment than one used in a more traditional approach to teaching and learning. Plans are underway for the introduction of continuous assessment in training activities.

2.7. Continuous Assessment in Ethiopia

The concept of continuous assessment was first incorporated in the policy and formally introduced in primary schools of Ethiopia with the launching of the Education and Training Policy in 2002. However, before the introduction of the policy, testing (more of summative assessment) dominates the educational evaluation system of primary schools in the

country. After stressing the need for continuous assessment in primary schools of the country, Ministry of Education (MOE) (2002:126-127) has expounded the pluses of CA for students, teachers, and to the education system as a whole.

Bearing in mind all these bare facts, a great number of documents encompassing of details, rules and guidelines about continuous assessment has been prepared since the commencement of the Education and Training Policy. One of these documents was 'A National Curriculum Guideline for Pre-service Teacher Education Programmes'. According to MOE (2003:9) in this document, under the subsection competencies for Ethiopian teachers, there is an evident detail that divulges the responsibilities of teachers in practicing classroom continuous assessment.

On the other verge of those efforts, there are problems observed in the implementation of classroom continuous assessment. Since assessment and teaching-learning are two faces of the same coin, the problems in classroom continuous assessment are either healed or aggravated by the performance of teachers. Although it is not the sole responsibility of the teacher, teachers with the knowledge, skill and above all the perseverance for the best practice of continuous assessment are inexorably responsible for the positive augmentation of students.

Hence; therefore, studies on the aspects 'of teachers' practices of classroom continuous assessment have come into sight in Ethiopia. A case in point is a research by Muluken (2006); the general objective of his research is assessing teachers' perceptions and practices of continuous assessment in selected government first cycle primary schools of Addis Ababa. The study indicated the problems in the

practices of continuous assessment. It also mentioned that the majority of the primary school teachers perceived continuous assessment as testing. Another research is by Tamene (2007); the general objective of his research is assessing the factors that affect the implementation of continuous assessment in Western Oromia government teachers' training colleges. According to this research, lack of time, lack of facilities, teachers' knowledge and commitment, class size, and attitude of teachers were the major constraints of assessing students continuously. By and large, in Ethiopia, researches are still admitting the domination of the poor practices of continuous assessment to the success.

2.8. Assessment Rights and Responsibilities

2.8.1. Assessment Rights and Responsibilities of Teachers, Students, and Parents

It is evident that teachers have rights and responsibilities, and a predominant source of discontent among them on the practice of continuous assessment is created by their fight to secure their rights. Maxwell (2000:62) stated that stopping fret about rights will turn one's focus to the right direction, and let focus on what one can control- her / his responsibilities. Thus, every teacher always needs to ask themselves 'what is expected of me?', and as long as the teacher makes a move to satisfy this question, he/ she will accomplish their responsibilities. Then, they might solicit their rights keeping the rights and responsibilities of the other bodies- the principals, the parents and the students, in mind. The table below, according to CODE (2006:18), is the rights and responsibilities of teachers, students, and parents.

Table 2.5: Assessment Rights and Responsibilities of Teachers, Students, and Parents

Students	Teachers	Parents
<p>Rights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to know how they are performing • to receive timely marking/grading • to have opportunities to improve their work • to get feedback which is formative • to understand how they are being evaluated prior to the evaluation • to be fully prepared for all assessment and evaluation experiences 	<p>Rights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to have students take charge of their own learning as active partners • to receive student submissions on time • to receive student submissions that reflect a student's best work • to reasonably expect students and parents to accept a teacher's professional judgment regarding assessment and evaluation • to have adequate training and in-service to implement sound assessment and Evaluation practices 	<p>Rights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to know on a regular and frequent basis how their child is performing • to know how their child is being assessed • to be able to contact teachers for advice or information regarding their child's progress • to be informed through their child about subject requirements, assessment and evaluation, and due dates for submission of work
<p>Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to complete all work to the best of their ability • to submit work to teachers on time • to be active partners in the learning process • to take all opportunities to improve work after receiving feedback • to assist other students • to learn by providing focused feedback to them 	<p>Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to prepare all students fully for assessment and evaluation • to grade and return student work in a timely manner • to be familiar with, and implement, assessment and evaluation practices that are consistent with Ministry and Board policies • to implement assessment and evaluation practices that are fair to all students • to keep parents fully informed regarding the progress of their child to report to parents as required 	<p>Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to initiate contact with teachers if and when difficulties arise • to ensure that their child completes all work assigned for homework • to monitor the progress of their child • to act as partner in the learning process • to take advantage of interview opportunities provided at parent interview nights • to ensure that students spend time at home preparing for evaluation • to know about, and monitor, due dates for submission of work

2.8.2. Assessment Rights and Responsibilities of Principals

If assessment is ever to reach its immense potential as a force for good in schools, principals across the country must fulfill critically important assessment leadership responsibilities. In the discussion that follows, Stiggins (2000:24-25) explore those specific roles:

Principals have two crucial responsibilities regarding assessment literacy. First, they must become assessment literate themselves. Without this basis of professional expertise, principals will remain unable to bring the issue of effective assessment to the fore as a school priority or provide the support teachers need to develop and use assessments productively in their classrooms.

Second, principals must remove all barriers to the development of teachers' assessment literacy. These include personal, institutional, and community barriers. Personal barriers may include the anxiety that accompanies trying new assessments before one is certain that they will work. The principal needs to assure teachers that initial failure to assess dependably or to use assessment effectively will not lead to a directive to stop trying. Institutional barriers may include a lack of time to learn and to experiment with new assessment ideas. Teachers need to know that school resources will be allocated for these purposes—and the principal needs to make sure that they are. Community barriers may include parents who question changes in assessment and communication procedures. Principals need to be sufficiently assessment literate to be able to ease community concerns in this regard and to support teachers in their relationships with parents during the process of change.

2.9. Chapter Synopsis

Assessment is a broad based concept but this chapter was focused on the continuous assessment component of it. Assessment, Examination, Tests, and Evaluation were defined in order to understand continuous assessment better. Continuous Assessment is defined as an on-going, diagnostic, classroom-based process that uses a variety of assessment tools to measure learner performance.

Scholars divide continuous assessment in to different types. For instance, according to The University of Adelaide (2002) continuous assessment can be categorized broadly into three types - diagnostic, formative and summative. Hein and Lee (2000) divide continuous assessment in to four - diagnostic, formative, summative, and comparative. According to USAID (2006:8-17), continuous assessment is two types- informal and formal.

Using several activities of assessment provides a broader and more comprehensive picture of the learning and teaching of primary schools. Assessment activities commonly used for continuous assessment are performance assessments and product assessment. In performance assessments, the learners are asked to demonstrate or show in some way what they know and do. Product assessments, on the other, hand can be described as a tangible objects created by the student and can be viewed by the teacher. Effective continuous assessment has many characteristics that shares with and different from other types of assessments. Over the years since 1980 assessment practitioners have developed a number of characteristics that define effective continuous assessment (Palomba and Banta, 1999).

Continuous assessment having all its advantages has got some pitfalls that come from its bad practice. Despite those bad practices and pitfalls for continuous assessment achieve its goal, it should be practiced appropriately. In doing this, there are values for best practices in continuous assessment. Among these, five of them suggested that assessment should be valid, transparent, provide immediate and meaningful feedback to the students, have adequate time, and, fair.

Many researches revealed that teachers encounter various challenges in implementing continuous assessment. According to the findings of many researches large class size, time for remediation and enrichment, teachers' workload, pupil absenteeism, inadequate teaching and learning resources, poor teacher networking, and poor monitoring and feedback are some the major challenges.

The current educational systems, both in developing and developed countries are searching for appropriate modes of assessment. In examining practices around the world, the most common form of assessment is done in the classroom by teachers. Yet, some jurisdictions will have provincial or state examinations, while countries with a national curriculum may have some form of nation wide examinations in some subjects.

On the verge of the other side, several African countries including Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Zambia, Ghana, and Djibouti are embracing continuous assessment as a means of introducing educational reform. The experiences of those countries indicated that there is still much to do for the best practices of continuous assessment.

To end with, it is evident that teachers have rights and responsibilities, and a predominant source of discontent among them on the practice of continuous assessment is created by their fight to secure their rights. Thus, every teacher always needs to ask themselves 'what is expected of me?', and as long as the teacher makes a move to satisfy this question, he/ she will accomplish their responsibilities. Then, they might solicit their rights keeping the rights and responsibilities of the other bodies- the principals, the parents and the students, in mind.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0. Research Design and Methodology

Enhancing our understanding of all about educational phenomenon is the basic purpose of educational research. So, to address this purpose successfully, the design and the methodology of the research have to be pertinent to the objectives. This researcher also went inline with the same analogy. So, this section: describe the materials used in the study, explain how the respondents were prepared for the study, describe the research protocol, explain how measurements were made and what calculations were performed, and state which statistical tests were done to analyze the data.

3.1. Research method

Since the researcher engrossed collecting data to know the contemporary practices of the target population under study (teachers), Quantitative or descriptive survey research method was applicable in this case. According to Gay (2000:11) Quantitative or descriptive surveys are carried out to obtain information about the preference, attitudes, practices, concerns, or interests of some group of people.

3.2. Data Sources

Teachers, students and school principals were the primary sources of data that the researcher relies on much.

3.3. Sampling Techniques

How a sample is drawn from the target population is greatly important in making inferences and giving explanations about the population from which the sample is drawn. First, the researcher adopted the purposive sampling technique. The purposive sampling helped the researcher in selecting the sample schools, and decided on the number of subjects under study. In this case, the researcher took account of Betekihnet, Haik, and Tabor Primary Schools as research population. Similarly, three principals from the three schools were part of the research population. This action essentially offered to two supreme importances. First of all, it let all the three schools and their principals 100 % chance to be selected. In addition, it highly increased the inclusiveness of the research, especially in the state of making generalizations for the three schools. This is, consequently, followed by Stratified sampling. What is more, Simple random sampling technique was used in the selection of student respondents. So, the number of student respondents taken from each school using simple random sampling technique was 40, and among them 20 were girls and 20 were boys. This whole summed up to 120 student respondents for the three schools, and still with equal number of boys and girls.

Using stratified sampling members of the samples were chosen to pledge appropriate numbers of subjects for subsequent dissections and groupings during the analysis of data. Hence, in this research, the teachers' population divided into four based on the categories of the subject they teach. They were social science teachers, natural science teachers, language teachers and aesthetics teachers of Second Cycle Primary School (Grades 5-8). So, first, the researcher lists 73 teachers. Secondly, the desired sample size of 57.53 %, which is 42 teachers,

supposed to be respondents. Though there is no hard and fast rule about selecting the exact sample size for a given population, there are still efforts to achieve this. The researcher of this study made the size of the sample to be more than half of the total population (that is $[50 + 7.53]$ %). Thirdly, the researcher clearly observed subjects that continuously taught through the second cycle (Grades 5-8). So, among those, four subjects from the four stratum were selected to make the stratified sampling most effective. Those subjects were English (language), Civics (social science), Mathematics (natural science), and Physical Education (aesthetics). Consequently, the researcher used a table of random numbers and selected the sample teachers by simple random sampling technique. Except from Physical Education, in all the three subjects from grades 5-8 a total of 12 teachers in a single school and 36 teachers in the three schools were selected. In other words, four teachers from the four grade levels (grades 5-8) were selected in a single subject. In Physical Education, a total of 6 teachers were selected since a single Physical Education taught double classes in those three schools. So, in order to have a proportional representation, the researcher selected 33.33 % of the sample (14 teachers) from each school which resulted in a total of 100 % (42) teachers from the three schools using a table of random numbers.

3.4. Data gathering tools

Unless a research to be a vain practice, the appropriate selection of data gathering tools is a must. Being a descriptive survey, questionnaire, interview and classroom observation were the main data collecting tools of this research.

3.5. Pilot test

A pilot test using small groups should be carried out before planning the actual full - scale extensive investigation. First the draft questionnaire was distributed to 15 teachers at the three schools under the study. After it had been filled by those respondents, each questionnaire was examined item by item to detect ambiguous items. Through this process, the internal consistency reliability of measuring instruments was checked. Thus, the researcher used Cronbach's alpha and measured the internal consistency reliability. The researcher, using Cronbach's alpha, also measured the extent to which the items in data gathering tools are similar to one another in content. According to the Cronbach's alpha result measured a fairly high coefficient ($r=0.74$) was found. Thus, the correlation affirmed a good indicator of the internal consistency reliability of the items, and the content similarity of the items in data gathering tools. Besides, the data gathering tools were given to three experts for evaluation. Any how, the two major measures taken by the researcher at the end of the pilot test were adding and removing a few items, minor modifications of instructions, and enlarging the fonts of the questionnaires.

3.6. Procedures of data collection

It was like this: First came was the preparation of data gathering tools. Then, pilot testing of the instruments proceeded. After careful pilot testing, amendments were done based on the feedbacks getting in the process of pilot testing. The researcher prepared a convenient schedule for data collection. At their meeting, the researcher briefed the respondents as to the nature or purpose of the instrument and attempted to make the respondents feel at ease. The researcher also

respondents as to the nature or purpose of the instrument and attempted to make the respondents feel at ease. The researcher also explained the manner in which he would be recording responses, or observing classrooms, or filling questionnaires. To increase the quality of responses and the rate of return, the students' questionnaires were administered out of their classroom in a silent open space. A very clear explanation was also done to the students in order to make them fill in the questionnaires without any bias and ambiguity. Close follow up was also in action during the filling in of the questionnaires. However, the teachers were made to take the questionnaires and returned it to the researcher after two days, and some of them returned the questionnaires on time and the rest of them returned it within a week. On the other hand, interviews of principals and teachers' classroom observation were administered in their offices and classrooms respectively. Once data had been collected, the next stage for the researcher was processing the data by coding, classifying, editing, and tabulating to make the data amenable to analysis and scoring. Finally, the data were transferred to the analysis stage.

3.7. Data Analysis

The data were presented in tables and figures followed by textual discussions, and analysis. To meet the objectives of this study, the researcher computed and analyzes the processed data using percentage, frequency, standard deviation, and weighted mean for the descriptive aspects of the research. To analyze the inferential aspects of the research, the inferential statistics t - test and ANOVA were applicable. In

CHAPTER FOUR

the process of data analysis, the researcher used SPSS to the best and most accurate results.

Calculating the mean and standard deviation of the data was done using SPSS. The researcher used SPSS to the best and most accurate results.

4.1. Generalized Linear Model (GLM)

GLM is a statistical model that allows for the analysis of data that is not normally distributed. It is a generalization of the linear model, which assumes that the data is normally distributed. GLM allows for the analysis of data that is skewed, kurtotic, or has other non-normal characteristics. The researcher used GLM to analyze the data from the study.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Variable 1	15.2	3.5	10.0	20.0
Variable 2	12.8	2.8	8.0	18.0
Variable 3	18.5	4.2	12.0	25.0
Variable 4	14.1	3.1	9.0	19.0
Variable 5	16.7	3.8	11.0	22.0

The results of the GLM analysis are presented in Table 4.2. The table shows the mean and standard deviation for each variable. The researcher used SPSS to the best and most accurate results.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0. Presentation and Analysis of the Data

Consolidating the study is one purpose of this chapter; authenticating, presenting, and analyzing the findings is its major purpose.

4.1. General Characteristics of Research Respondents'

There were a total of 73 teachers in the three schools under study. Shared among the schools, 24, 25, and 24 teacher respondents were from Haik, Betekihnet and Tabor primary schools respectively. Student and principal respondents were taken just to substantiate the study and nothing else.

Table 4.1: Respondents by school

Schools	Teachers																Students			Principals		
	Grade 5				Grade 6				Grade 7				Grade 8									
	M	F	T	%	M	F	T	%	M	F	T	%	M	F	T	%	M	F	T			
H	2	2	4	9.5	1	3	4	9.5	1	2	3	7.1	2	1	3	7.1	20	20	40	0	1	1
B	1	3	4	9.5	2	2	4	9.5	2	1	3	7.1	2	1	3	7.1	20	20	40	1	0	1
T	1	3	4	9.5	2	2	4	9.5	1	2	3	7.1	3	0	3	7.1	20	20	40	1	0	1
Total	4	8	12	28.5	5	7	12	28.5	4	5	9	21.3	7	2	9	21.3	60	60	120	2	1	3

H=Hawassa Haik, B=Betekihnet, and T=Tabor

Table 1 shows equal distribution of teacher respondents in the three schools; each school contributed 14 (33.33 %) of the teacher respondents. The quantity (22) of female teacher respondents was a bit surpassed that of male teacher respondents (20). Yet, gender was not evenly distributed among the schools. Thirty percent of male teacher respondents were from Hawassa Haik, and the rest 70% of male teacher respondents were equally shared between Betekihnet and Tabor schools. The number of student respondents taken from

each school was 40, and among them 20 were girls and 20 were boys. This whole summed up to 120 student respondents for the three schools, and still with equal number of boys and girls. The number of principal respondents was three in the three schools, and one of them was a female.

Table 4.2: Teacher Respondents by subject

School	Teachers															
	Grade 5				Grade 6				Grade 7				Grade 8			
	E	C	M	P	E	C	M	P	E	C	M	P	E	C	M	P
Hawassa Haik	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Betekihnet	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tabor	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

E= English, C=Civics, M=Mathematics, and P=Physical Education

As the table illustrates, for one subject one teacher respondent was selected at each grade level in all the three schools. As a result, the total number of respondent teachers in four subjects in four grade levels (Grades 5-8) in the three schools is calculated to be $4 \times 4 \times 3 = 48$. However, this is a pseudo-calculation since only 2 Physical Education respondent teachers who teach double grade levels were selected as part of teacher participants of the research from each school. Hence, the real calculation shall be $(3 \times 4 \times 3) + (1 \times 2 \times 3) = 42$.

Table 4.3: Qualifications of Teachers

School	Reported Qualifications of Teachers					
	TTI Certificate		College Diploma		Bachelor Degree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Betekihnet	0	0	14	33.33	0	0
Hawassa Haik	0	0	14	33.33	0	0
Tabor	0	0	14	33.33	0	0
Total	0	0	42	100	0	0

Having qualified teachers in all schools is a necessary step in improving the quality of education. In line with this, MOE (2002) has

made college diploma a minimum requirement for teachers to teach in second cycle primary schools (Grades 5-8). According to the above table, all the teacher respondents are College Diploma holders. This is an indication in the availability of qualified teachers in all the three schools. On the other brink of the issue of qualification, some researchers still argue that qualification of teachers has little or else no positive relation ship with teachers' activities and students' performance in the classroom (Simmons and Alexander, 1980; Chantavanich and Fry, 1990).

Table 4.4: Teachers' Total Years of Work Experience

Years of Experience	Reported Years of Experience of Teachers							
	Betekihnet		Hawassa Haik		Tabor		Total	
	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
Below a year	1	2.38	2	4.76	1	4.76	4	7.14
1-5	4	9.52	2	4.76	4	7.14	10	23.80
6-10	3	7.14	5	11.90	6	14.29	14	33.34
11-15	4	9.52	3	7.14	2	4.76	9	21.43
Above 15 years	2	4.76	2	4.76	1	2.38	5	11.90

f=frequency, and %=percentage

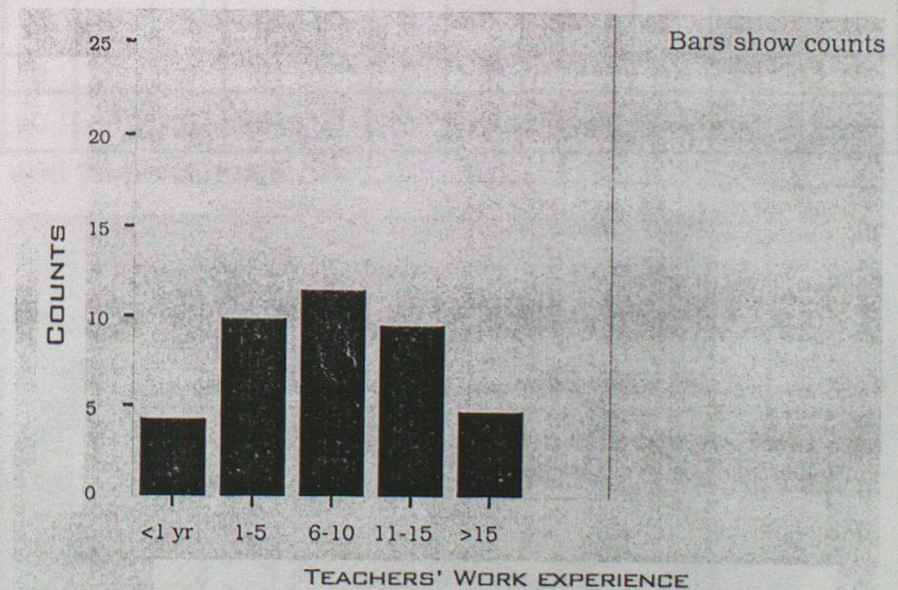


Figure 4.1: Teacher Respondents by Length of Service

When Sir Isaac Newton, who was one of the pioneer scientists, asked to explain work, he said that work is a combination of power and time.

This is also a basic logic for teaching let to be work. In teaching, the work we do and did is the teaching work experience that we gain and enrich. For some, this teaching work experience is a valuable asset in letting teachers do their classroom activities effectively. For others, like Adane (2001:66) it doesn't give pledge to have a notified effect on teachers' classroom activities. Any how and whatever the fact could be, the table above is just an evidence for the duration in work experience of teachers in the targeted three schools of the research. Consequently, most of the teachers (33.34 %) have a teaching experience of 6-10 years. The least number of teachers (7.14 %) have a teaching experience below a year. The rest 23.80 %, 21.43 %, and 11.90 % of the teachers have teaching experiences of 1-5 years, 11-15 years, and above 15 years respectively.

Table 4.5: Teachers' Weekly Teaching Load (Periods)

School	Weekly teaching load (periods)											
	1-5		6-10		11-15		16-20		21-25		Above 25	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Betekihnet	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	14.29	8	19.05	0	0
Hawassa Haik	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	16.67	7	16.67	0	0
Tabor	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	11.90	9	21.43	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	42.86	24	57.15	0	0

f=frequency, and %=percentage

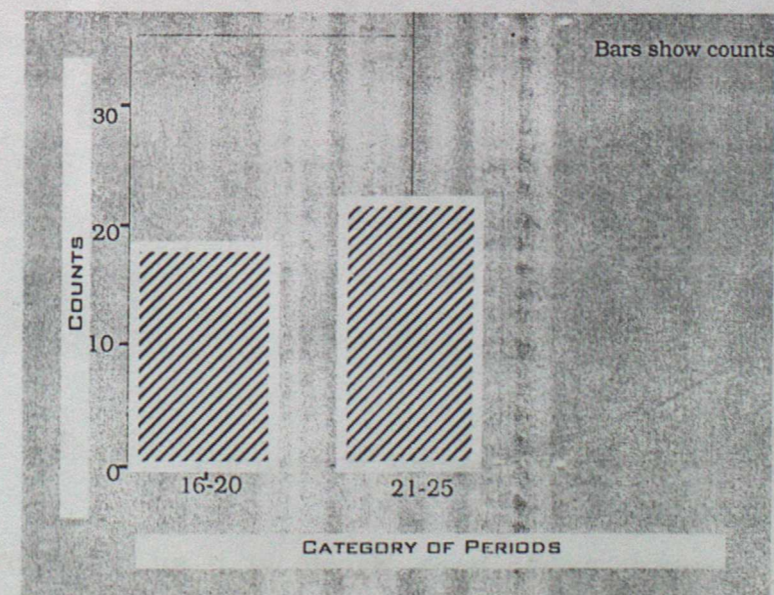


Figure 4.2: Number of Periods Taught Per Week by Teachers

As of table 10, all the respondent teachers have teaching work load of 16-25 periods per week. Among the teachers, a greater number (57.14%) of them teach 21-25 periods in a week, but 42.86 % of the teachers teach 16-20 periods in a single week. However, no respondent teacher teaches less than 16 or greater than 25 periods in a week. This shows that the teachers do have high a high workload, and this can impinge on their practices of continuous assessment.

Table 4.6: Average Number of Students in a Class

School	Average Number of Students in a Class											
	Below 40		40-50		51-70		71-90		91-100		Above 100	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
Betekihnet	0	0	7	16.67	5	11.90	2	4.76	0	0	0	0
Hawassa Haik	0	0	6	14.29	6	14.29	2	4.76	0	0	0	0
Tabor	0	0	5	11.90	8	19.05	1	2.33	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	18	42.85	19	45.24	5	11.90	0	0	0	0

f=frequency, and %=percentage

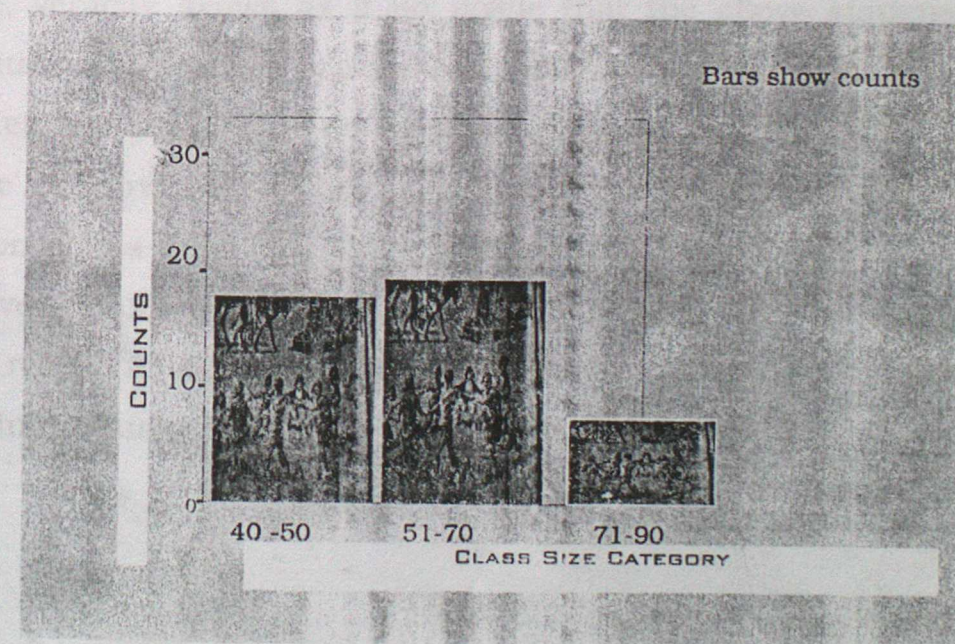


Figure 4.3: Average Class Size

In this research as it is clearly seen above the average number of students in a classroom ranges from 40-90 students. In this case,

45.24 % was the uppermost figure for 51-70 pupils in a classroom. The figures 42.85 % and 11.90 % also illustrate the availability of 40-50, and 71-90 students in a classroom. All the figures explained are evidences for the ease of use in high pupils to classroom ratio in the three schools. According to Terefe (2004), large class size is a barrier to the practice of continuous assessment, and one of the most common reasons for teachers tends to rely solely on lecture methods. However, as of foundation of education and instructional assessment (2001), class size can not be a reason why teachers choose to continue their traditional teaching techniques.

4.2. Second Cycle Primary School Teachers' Understanding on Basic Concepts of Continuous Assessment

Had it been possible, all the teachers would have either 'strongly agreed' or else just 'agreed' with all the statements in the table below. Here, veracity avows as if no niggles that the above statements are inevitable facts about continuous assessment. Hence, the teachers in entirety were supposed to respond to the statements either 'strongly agree' or 'agree'. Nevertheless, the respondent teachers did not arrive at consensus even in a single statement; they had different opinions on every statement for that matter. Those differences in opinions are the result of the gap in understanding the basic concepts of continuous assessment.

Table 4.7: The Basic Concepts of Teachers on Continuous Assessment

Statement	Frequency in Degree of Agreement										Descriptive Stat.		Inferential Stat.	
	SA		A		U		D		SD		Mean	SD	t	Sig.
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%				
the teacher to find the student knowledge of	12	28.6	19	45.2	6	14.3	2	4.8	3	7.1	3.83	1.12	4.80	0.00
a teacher to find progress of students	14	33.3	23	54.8	5	11.9	0	0	0	0	4.21	0.64	12.19	0.00
teachers about their effectiveness	11	26.2	6	14.3	1	2.4	14	33.3	10	23.8	2.85	1.58	-0.58	0.56
uses testing students on any topic	9	21.4	11	26.2	3	7.1	12	28.6	7	16.7	3.07	1.45	0.31	0.75
different types of activities	33	78.6	9	21.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.78	0.41	27.86	0.00
reduce fear of	6	14.3	4	9.5	8	19	11	26.2	13	31	2.61	1.63	-1.50	0.14
gives feedback to	21	50	18	42.9	3	7.1	0	0	0	0	4.42	0.63	14.69	0.00
uses testing students on any topic	2	4.8	5	11.9	0	0	29	69	6	14.3	2.24	1.01	-4.90	0.00

Frequency, t=t test, SD= Standard Deviation, Sig.= Significance level
 SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U=Undecided, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

The weighted mean for each item is a clear evidence for this gap of understanding. It ranged between 2.24 and 4.78. A mean of 4.78 by itself is still a reflection of having a sort of poor understanding in the basic concepts of continuous assessment though it is not embroidered as that of 2.24. To this end, the understanding of the respondent teachers go downhill in tracing from statement 5 to statement 8 in the following array of statements' series: 5,7,2,1,4,3,6,8. In relative terms, lack of this understanding was even more exacerbated in statements 8, 6, and 3 whereby their means are 2.24, 2.61, and 2.85 respectively. What is more, the t test values are better manifestations of the unbolted apertures on the part of the respondent teachers in understanding the basic concepts of continuous assessment. Since t test shows the difference between two means, the researcher at the first insight states the null hypothesis (H_0) and the alternative hypothesis (H_1). The null hypothesis (H_0) in this case is read as follows: *'There is no significant difference among teachers in understanding the basic concepts of continuous assessment'*. The alternative hypothesis is just the reverse of the null hypothesis and that is: *'There is a significant difference among teachers in understanding the basic concepts of continuous assessment'*.

In statement 1, the alternative hypothesis will not be rejected since the t test level of significance (α) 0.00 is less than the critical (rejection) region α 0.05. So, the probability P of getting the observed difference between the means by chance due to random sampling amounts to less than 0.05, which may be considered too low. As a result, the null hypothesis (H_0) will be rejected. Hence, the level of significance 0.000 with a t test value of 4.80 shows that there is a significant difference between the test value (3) and mean 3.83. In other words, there is a significant difference among teachers in understanding the basic concepts of continuous assessment ($P < 0.05$).

The fact is: The higher the propensity of a t test value towards the 'strongly agree' side, the better will be the understanding of teachers on the basic concepts of continuous assessment. In fact, the direction of the difference in statement 1 tends to lie to the ascending wing of the test value (3) which is in an enhanced word to say towards to the 'strongly agree' option. This implies that the teachers, keeping in mind their misunderstanding, have more or less an understanding level which is above the average (the test value) that continuous assessment helps a teacher to find out what the student know and capable of.

The same analogy and verity so forth holds true in statements 2, 5, 7, and 8 as it had been in statement 1. So, in all of these statements there are significant differences among teachers in understanding the basic concepts of continuous assessment. However, unlike to the rest, in statement 8 the t test value is less than the test value so that the teachers have more or less an understanding level which is below the average (the test value).

On the threshold of the other side, the t test values of statements 3, 4, and 6 are found under the critical region. This is because, their levels of significance would like to accept an error of 56 %, 75 % and 14 % respectively. Yet, this is an agonizing condition in situation where the pinnacle for tolerating an error in a two - tailed test shall not be greater than 5 % in both ends together, and the result will be the acceptance of the null hypothesis (H_0) and rejection of the alternative hypothesis (H_1) in statements 3, 4, and 6. Thus, there is no significant difference among teachers in understanding the basic concepts of continuous assessment in statements 3, 4, and 6.

To cap it all, the findings under this section have some sorts of similitude with other researches. According to Black and William (1998) teachers do not have adequate understanding of continuous assessment. Nitiko (2005) argued that teachers have incomplete understanding of continuous assessment. The research results of Obiamo (2001) also confirmed that vast majority of school teachers in Nigerian Primary and Junior Secondary schools demonstrate poor knowledge of the basic concepts of continuous assessment.

4.3. Extent in Applicability of Continuous Assessment by Second Cycle Primary School Teachers

The old maxim and in fact the chestnut put in the picture that 'practice makes one perfect'. Nonetheless, the quality of the practice matters for one to fetch their aptness. Correspondingly, this section looks in to the extent in applicability of continuous assessment by second cycle primary school teachers in the targeted three schools of the research.

There are 9 items in this section of the questionnaire. Among those, items 1, 5, 6, and 7 are positively toned (things that a teacher should do); whereas, items 2,3,4,8, and 9 are negatively toned (things that a teacher should not do).

Table 4.8: Applicability of Continuous Assessment

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23

Statement	Frequency in Degree of applicability										Descriptive Stat.		Inferential Stat.	
	N		R		S		U		A		Mean	SD	t	Sig.
	F	f	%	f	f	%	f	f	%	f				
Students the criteria of the assessment	11	26.2	14	33.3	2	4.8	10	23.8	5	11.9	3.38	1.41	1.75	0.088
In all assessment at the end of the learning program	7	16.7	9	21.4	6	14.3	8	19	12	28.6	4.40	1.13	1.12	1.269
Ensure that I know the performance of the student who has completed each element of work	4	9.5	6	14.3	12	28.6	5	11.9	15	35.7	3.50	1.36	2.37	0.022
It is fair to all students, I give each an equal test	1	2.4	2	4.8	1	2.4	7	16.7	31	73.8	4.54	0.94	10.64	0.000
When I set a coursework essay, I set a word limit	11	26.2	13	31	6	14.3	9	21.4	3	7.1	3.47	1.29	2.39	0.022
I ask my questions too early/forward	9	21.4	1	2.4	1	2.4	10	23.8	21	50	2.21	1.60	-3.18	0.003
Students written feedback	8	19	4	9.5	15	35.7	9	21.4	6	14.3	2.97	1.29	-0.12	0.906
When I sign a question paper and marks well, I use it year on year	5	11.9	0	0	4	9.5	14	33.3	19	44.1	4.00	1.28	5.03	0.000
Students plan at least some questions on material that I have covered with the class	7	16.7	18	42.9	13	31	1	2.4	3	7.1	2.40	1.04	-3.72	0.001

f= frequency, t=t test, SD= Standard Deviation, Sig.= Significance level

Unveiled in the mean, the responses of the teachers for all the 9 items show a discrepancy. For instance, a mean of 4.54 with a standard deviation of 0.94 in item 4 is the utmost figure, but a mean of 2.21 with a standard deviation of 1.60 in item 6 is the bare minimum figure among the 9 items. Subsequently, the order of the items in descending manner of their means is: 4,2,8,3,5,1,7,9,and 6. Despite the former sequence, an imperative point under attention needs to be given for the direction of the means in relation to their magnitude. Thus, for the positively toned items 1, 5, 6, and 7, an increase in magnitude of a mean reflects a better practice of an item by a teacher, but the reverse is true for the negatively toned items 2,3,4,8, and 9.

Another way of working in to this section is through the *t* test, which is an inferential statistics of course. The null hypothesis in this case is: *There is no significant difference among teachers in practicing continuous assessment*. The alternative hypothesis is: *There is a significant difference among teachers in practicing continuous assessment*.

In items 1, 2, and 7 with a significant level of 0.088, 1.269, and 0.906 respectively, the alternative hypothesis will be rejected since the *t* test levels of significance of the three items are greater than the critical (rejection) region alpha 0.05. So, the probability *p* of getting the observed difference between the means by chance due to random sampling amounts to greater than 0.05 (5%) for a two - tailed test, which may be considered too high. As a result, the null hypothesis (*H*₀) will not be rejected. Hence, for items 1, 2, and 7 the researcher inferred that there is no significant difference among teachers in practicing continuous assessment (*p* > 0.05).

On the other hand, the *t* test levels of significance of the rest of the items (3, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 9) are less than the critical region alpha 0.05.

This led to the fact that there is a significant difference among teachers in practicing continuous assessment ($p < 0.05$). However, as the t tests of those former items signify, the means of items 4 and 6 with t tests values of 0.000 in both have more significant changes from the test value (3) than items 3, 5, 8, and 9 do have.

Bearing all those discussions in to consideration, the strength in the practice of continuous assessment attenuated in shifting from the test value in two opposite directions (to its right and left wings). Values of the t test to the right of the test value are: -3.18 (item 6), -0.12 (item 7), and -3.72 (item 9), and they have mean differences of -0.79, -0.03, and -0.60 in the foregoing order. Their mean differences (deviations of the items' mean from the test value) implied that item 6 is the least practiced, and item 9 is the most practiced of the three by the schools' teachers. On the right brink of the test value, there are t test values 1.75 (item 1), 1.12 (item 2), 2.37 (item 3), 10.64 (item 4), 2.39 (item 5), and 5.03 (item 8), and they have mean differences of 0.38, 1.40, 0.50, 1.54, 0.47, and 1.00 respectively. The upshot of their mean differences; then, let palpable the disparity in the practices of the items by the school teachers. In this case, the more the negatively toned items closer to the test value the better they are practiced. So, the sequence of these items in ascending order of their extent of practice is as follows: item 4, 2, 8, and 3. From the two positively toned items, item 5 is better practiced item than item 1.

The results in this section of the analysis coincided with the results of other researchers. A case in point is the conclusion of Muluken (2006:50); as of him the prevailing assessment practice was poor in the 1st Cycle primary schools under his study. Kwawukume (2007:2) also showed that the poor practice of continuous assessment in primary and Secondary schools of Ghana.

4.4. Challenges of Teachers in Practicing Continuous Assessment

"I should like to have been asked what I knew. They always tried to ask what I didn't know. When I would willingly have displayed my knowledge, they sought to expose my ignorance". This was what Winston Churchill, the former British Prime Minister, claimed in one of his speech delivery, and still this was also a challenge that a man like him might face.

Challenges have also been transpired in the life cycle of schools, but unlike the preceding, their scope and impact have not been personal rather they are nationwide. Likewise, challenges in continuous assessment are the center of attention of this particular section.

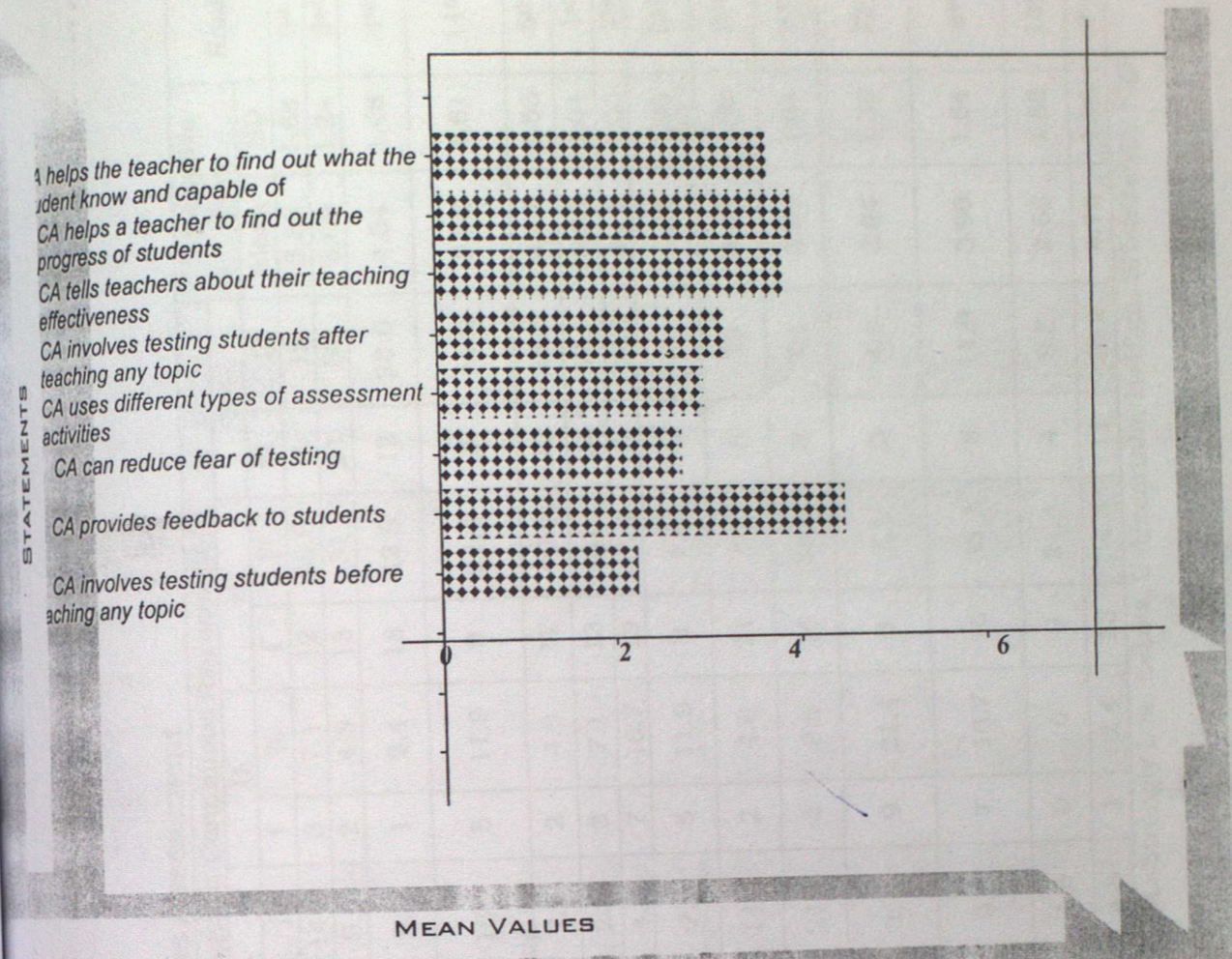


Figure 4.4: Teachers' Basic Concepts of Continuous Assessment

Figure 4.9: Challenges of Teachers in Practicing Continuous Assessment

Statement	Degrees of Challenges in Continuous Assessment												Descriptive Stat.		Rank	
	N		SL			L		U		H		SH		Mean		SD
	f	%	f	f	%	f	f	%	f	F	%	f				
Pupil Absenteeism	3	7.1	10	23.8	6	14.3	3	7.1	12	28.6	8	19	3.83	1.68	9 th	
High work load	1	2.4	1	2.4	4	9.5	2	4.8	13	31	21	50	5.09	1.24	2 nd	
Shortage of materials or equipment	1	2.4	6	14.3	4	9.5	1	2.4	18	42.9	12	28.6	4.54	1.48	4 th	
The excessive time spent on remediation and enrichment	4	9.5	12	28.6	7	16.7	5	11.9	9	21.4	5	11.9	3.42	1.61	11 th	
Disruptive students	2	4.8	6	14.3	3	7.1	2	4.8	17	40.5	12	28.6	4.47	1.56	5 th	
Large class size	1	2.4	0	0	1	2.4	3	7.1	13	31	24	57.1	5.35	1.01	1 st	
Low motivation of teachers	4	9.5	5	11.9	2	4.8	7	16.7	19	45.2	5	11.9	4.11	1.53	7 th	
The presence of students with special needs	24	57.1	8	19	3	7.1	5	11.9	2	4.8	0	0	1.88	1.25	14 th	
The range of student abilities in the class	4	9.5	1	2.4	6	14.3	2	4.8	21	50	8	19	4.40	1.49	6 th	
The range of differences in students' backgrounds	7	16.7	3	7.1	9	21.4	4	9.5	16	38.1	3	7.1	3.66	1.61	10 th	
Limits in my own background knowledge in the subject	6	14.3	7	16.7	15	35.7	9	21.4	3	7.1	2	4.8	3.04	1.30	12 th	
Low support or lack of support of the school administration	3	7.1	8	19	4	9.5	7	16.7	15	35.7	5	11.9	3.90	1.54	8 th	
Lack of training pertinent to continuous assessment	17	40.5	10	23.8	2	4.8	0	0	9	21.4	4	9.5	2.66	1.88	13 th	
Uninterested students	1	2.4	4	9.5	2	4.8	1	2.4	23	54.8	11	26.2	4.76	1.30	3 rd	

Frequency, SD= Standard Deviation, Sig.= Significance level, N= Never, SL=Strongly Low, L=Low, U=Uncertain, H=High, SH=Strongly High

The ranking in the table above is according to the degree of challenge to continuous assessment from the highest to the least challenging condition. Then, rank 1st is the most challenging, and rank 14th is the least challenging condition.

In the same notion, as the ranks in the above table clearly stated, and being mentioned by the highest respondents' mean 5.35, large class size is the most challenging condition that the three school teachers have come across. However, the presence of students with special needs is the least challenging condition of the teachers. On top of this, those conditions which are ranked from 1st to 11 have means greater than the average mean value 3.5, but the rest (12th, 13th, and 14th) have means less than that. Below are the four most challenges (with means above 4.50) that the teachers encounter:

Class size

According to the standard of the MOE (2002), the standard class size is 50 students in a class of 46.08 m². Opposite to this, many of the teachers condemned the cramming of 50 – 70 students in each class to use varieties of assessment techniques, and actively involve each student through continuous assessment.

Contrary to the findings of this research, not a small number of researchers have claimed that classroom size might not have any notified negative effect on continuous assessment. Scholars like Allwright cited in Hayes (1997) and Locastro (2001) stated that large class size might not be a problem for student assessment if teachers use a variety of learning strategies. However, the findings of most researches, including this, rather refer the effect of class size as either a challenge or a prospective of classroom continuous assessment. As of these researches, continuous assessment requires assessing learners regularly to see what progress the learners are making. This

can be time consuming in a large class. That is why Ellington and Earl (1997); Papworth (2005) asserted that large class size is the major limiting factor that affect the use of continuous assessment. Class size is not a major barrier of continuous assessment in countries such as USA and Japan. As of Cummings (1980:109) the typical Japanese primary school has between 40 – 45 students per teacher in every class at every grade level. In contrast, USA's primary school class size tends to be much smaller particularly at the first and second grade levels.

Work load

Teachers' workload is the second major challenge that hinders second cycle teachers of the three schools in conducting continuous assessment effectively. As it was depicted by Table 10, most of the teachers (57.15 %) teach 21-25 periods per week, and this is by no means can be referred as small workload. This is to say that high workload of the teachers negatively affected their continuous assessment practice. In considering the effect of workload on teachers' continuous assessment practice, Muluken (2006:47) emphasized the high workload contribution to the poor assessment practice of teachers. On the other hand, scholars like Rego (2007:63) wrote that a man who always complain being busy of workload is a man who can't manage his works. According to him there isn't any thing like a sort of being busy in workload. Australian Council for Educational Research (2004) in its research finding affirmed that teachers under study were strongly motivated and committed to helping students achieve their academic and personal potential in conducting continuous assessment as one means despite the increased stress created on them owing to high workload.

Uninterested students

Learning to takes place, the motivation of students is a major factor. Students who are not interested on the learning are problems of the learning process by themselves. This research also found that uninterested students are the third major challenge of continuous assessment. Most educators also believe that it is extremely difficult to deal with poorly motivated, uninterested, learners irrespective of their abilities (Harmer, 1983; Gardner, 1985; Spolsky, 1989; Johnston, 1987). On the other hand, Trooboff (2003:16) asserted that teachers are also tantalizing for the lack of interest or demotivation of students. Furthermore, Phil (2005:37) in a different view, affirmed that having uninterested learners in a class never be a reason for teachers choose to continue their traditional teaching techniques and not carrying out continuous assessment.

A final to say, similar to the findings of this research, Genesee and Upshure (1996); Bogale (1994:70 - 71), and Tamene (2007) explain the lack of time, lack of facilities, teachers' knowledge and commitment, class size, and attitude of teachers are the major constraints of assessing students continuously.

Shortage of Materials or Equipment

Teachers with a mean of 4.54 complained that the inadequacy of teaching and learning materials is one of the major barriers to the practice of continuous assessment. The inadequacy or the lack of learning materials mainly affects the process of teaching and learning in a classroom in general and classroom assessment in particular. Tekeste (1990:49) has said that text books are always in short supply and in most subjects several students share the text books. According to Manitoba Education and Training (1997), of teaching and learning materials or equipment can assist teachers in making, facilitating, and recording assessments. With the same notion, Kapambwe (2006)

asserted that the difficulty with learning materials and equipment (such as stationery, computers and photocopiers) mainly affected the availability of good classroom continuous assessments.

4.5. Continuous Assessment Activities Being Applicable By Second Cycle Primary School Teachers

A continuous assessment uses different types of assessment activities. The purpose of this section is discussing to what extent teachers of Betekihnet, Haik and Tabor are practicing those activities.

The activities in table 15 are of two types' – Performance (1-11) and Product (12-18) activities. Plessis (2003:15) and USAID (2006:18) entitled these activities as the most commonly used activities of continuous assessment.

4.9: Challenges of Teachers in Practicing Continuous Assessment

Statement	Degrees of Challenges in Continuous Assessment												Descriptive Stat.		Rank
	N		SL		L		U		H		SH		Mean	SD	
	f	%	f	f	%	f	f	%	f	F	%	f			
Pupil Absenteeism	3	7.1	10	23.8	6	14.3	3	7.1	12	28.6	8	19	3.83	1.68	9 th
High work load	1	2.4	1	2.4	4	9.5	2	4.8	13	31	21	50	5.09	1.24	2 nd
Shortage of materials or equipment	1	2.4	6	14.3	4	9.5	1	2.4	18	42.9	12	28.6	4.54	1.48	4 th
The excessive time spent on remediation and enrichment	4	9.5	12	28.6	7	16.7	5	11.9	9	21.4	5	11.9	3.42	1.61	11 th
Disruptive students	2	4.8	6	14.3	3	7.1	2	4.8	17	40.5	12	28.6	4.47	1.56	5 th
Large class size	1	2.4	0	0	1	2.4	3	7.1	13	31	24	57.1	5.35	1.01	1 st
Low motivation of teachers	4	9.5	5	11.9	2	4.8	7	16.7	19	45.2	5	11.9	4.11	1.53	7 th
The presence of students with special needs	24	57.1	8	19	3	7.1	5	11.9	2	4.8	0	0	1.88	1.25	14 th
The range of student abilities in the class	4	9.5	1	2.4	6	14.3	2	4.8	21	50	8	19	4.40	1.49	6 th
The range of differences in students' backgrounds	7	16.7	3	7.1	9	21.4	4	9.5	16	38.1	3	7.1	3.66	1.61	10 th
Limits in my own background knowledge in the subject	6	14.3	7	16.7	15	35.7	9	21.4	3	7.1	2	4.8	3.04	1.30	12 th
Low support or lack of support of the school administration	3	7.1	8	19	4	9.5	7	16.7	15	35.7	5	11.9	3.90	1.54	8 th
Lack of training pertinent to continuous assessment	17	40.5	10	23.8	2	4.8	0	0	9	21.4	4	9.5	2.66	1.88	13 th
Uninterested students	1	2.4	4	9.5	2	4.8	1	2.4	23	54.8	11	26.2	4.76	1.30	3 rd

Frequency, SD= Standard Deviation, Sig.= Significance level, N= Never, SL=Strongly Low, L=Low, U=Uncertain, H=High, SH=Strongly High

As the researcher did for the t test, here also the formulating of the Null hypothesis (H_0) comes at the beginning. Besides, a one-way model I ANOVA is appropriate in the whole activities (1-18) because the independent variable for the two groups (teachers and students) consist of a controlled (fixed) treatment variable. So, therefore, the Null hypothesis (H_0) for activity 1(Oral presentation) is: *There is no significant difference between the responses of the teachers and their students on the practice of oral presentation in a classroom.*

According to the above table, since the computed F is 8.32 and exceeds the critical F for 0.05 level, the probability p for correctness of the H_0 is considered too low; so, it is inferred that there is a significant added treatment component (that is practice) between the groups, and so that there is a significant difference between the responses of the teachers and their students on the practice of oral presentation in a classroom ($p < 0.05$).

Similarly, as clearly seen in the above table, the computed F ratios for activities 4 (Poem), 7 (Practical Test), 9 (Interviews), 11 (Science Activity), 12 (Projects), 13 (Illustration/ Drawing), 15 (Invented Dialogue), 16 (Report), 17 (Composition/ Story), and 18 (Written Test/ Quiz) exceed the critical F for 0.05 level. Hence, the probability p for correctness of the Null hypotheses are considered too low in those activities; so, it is inferred that there is a significant added treatment component (that is practice) between the groups, and so that there is a significant difference between the responses of the teachers and their students on the practice of those activities mentioned in this paragraph ($p < 0.05$).

On the contrary, the computed F ratios for activities 2 (Dance/ Movement), 3 (Song), 5 (Dramatic Reading), 6 (Debate), 8 (Role Play), 10 (Athletic Skill), and 14 (Journals) respectively are 2.65, 0.34, 0.62, 2.84, 3.32, 3.50, and 0.48. These F ratios less than the critical F ,

3.90, for 0.05 level. Hence, the probability p for correctness of the Null hypotheses are considered too high in those activities; so, it is inferred that there is no significant added treatment component (that is practice) between the groups, and so that there is no significant difference between the responses of the teachers and their students on the practice of those activities mentioned in this paragraph ($p > 0.05$).

According to the aforementioned paragraphs and table 15, in 6 out of 7 of the Product activities and in 5 out of 11 of the Performance activities, there is a significant difference between the responses of the teachers and their students on the practice of continuous assessment activities. In other words, there was found greater proportion of activities' significances in the responses of the teachers and their students on the practice of Product activities than Performance activities.

The higher the weighted means of the activities the more frequent they are practiced. As a result, Rank 3rd shows a debate is the third most frequently practiced activity by the teachers, but Rank 18th confirms that project is the 18th, the least, frequently practiced activity by the teachers. The same logic is used for the rest of the activities to understand their degree of practice. As of Ajuonuma (2007:8), if students are not assessed using a wide variety of continuous assessment activities, the overall abilities of the students can not be assessed. Thus, their potentials are not maximally utilized for optimum development of the nation.

Indicated by the highest weighted mean 3.51, written test/ quiz is the most frequently practiced activity by the teachers. Hitherto, it is dreadful to find that written test/ quiz being the sole dominant activity, with a mean above 3, practiced in the classrooms of Second Cycles of the three primary schools of this study. The remaining

activities have means below the average (3), and this is a clear indication of having poor practice of these continuous assessment activities by the teachers.

As a final point, the findings in this research are in conformity with the findings of Objerinde and Falayajo (1984), Berhanu (2004), Muluken (2006), and Bogale (1994:71) as all emphasized the overriding of written test/ quiz to assess students. Fradd and Lee (2001) in Pierce (2002) also criticized that most teachers use the same type of assessment techniques especially those they were being assessed while they were in schools, and most importantly tests. Quite the reverse, Alausa (2005:3) accentuated using hordes of tests for successful implementation of the continuous assessment approach.

4.6. Looking through the Open Ended Questions

The teachers were asked to write their responses for the following 4 questions, and their responses are presented right below those questions under specific themes.

Question 1: How do you explain continuous assessment?

Question 2: what types of continuous assessment activities do you use in your classroom?

Question 3: Please, explain the strengths in the practice of continuous assessment in your school?

Question 4: Please, explain the weaknesses in the practice of continuous assessment in your school?

Theme 1: Defining Continuous Assessment

The teachers were asked to define the term Continuous Assessment. Though the way they defined the term varied, in totality their definitions are of two types. They defined the term in terms of its purpose/ use, and in terms of its scope.

Most of the teachers' (69.05 %) definitions were in relation to the purpose/ use of continuous assessment. For instance, a teacher defined the term in the following way:

Continuous assessment helps the student have good knowledge and skill, and enhance the understanding of the student on different matters.

However, the remaining teachers (19.04 %) defined the term in terms of its scope. One of the definitions remarked assessing students after teaching a topic. There were also teachers (11.91 %) who defined continuous assessment as a series of tests. Let alone defining continuous assessment as a series of tests which is wrong in fact, even defining the term only in terms of its purpose/ use, and scope is not good enough to fully understand the concept. The concept of continuous assessment goes beyond its purpose/ use, and scope. As Airasian (1997:3), and CODE (2006) explained, continuous assessment can be defined with respect to its nature, values to the teacher, students, parents, and the education system as a whole. Astoundingly, except 5 teachers, the rest of the teachers defined the term with respect to the values it gives to students. This is also one signal of weakness in understanding the term from different angles.

Theme 2: Types of Continuous Assessment Activities

Affirmed by the teachers, the major continuous assessment activities they are using in their classrooms are group works, pair works, assignments/ home works, class works, tests, and quizzes.

One thing the researcher could complement is good to use all of those- the tests, the group works, and the rest of all. Yet, to use only series of written tests and quizzes as it was explained previously in this research is an unadvisable way of assessing students. Even the remaining ones mentioned as activities are not really activities to be performed and may be marked rather they are strategies. Any activity performed in a class is a class work and the same for the home work. Similarly, an activity (the activity may be a project) which is done in a group is called a group work activity, and the same project activity which is done in a pair is called a pair work activity. To remember, the most commonly used continuous assessment activities, Performance and Product activities, could be done by the students in the form of group works, pair works, assignments/ home works and class works. So, to put it in short, written tests and quizzes are the most commonly used continuous assessment activities used by the teachers under study and this is in conformity with the findings explained in Table 4.10 of this research.

Theme 3: Strengths in the Practice of Continuous Assessment

All the respondent teachers forwarded their outlook to show the strengths in the practice of continuous assessment in their schools. Two teachers said that once in two weeks there is evaluation in departmental level on different issues, and this includes issues on continuous assessment. However, with interviews made with the school principals, there is no regular meetings with in two weeks at

departmental levels; meetings have been conducted when the need arises and with the annual schedules of the departments. With a cross checking, it seems that the principals told the truth regarding to meetings as the activities of the departments are under the principals' administration.

Some pointed out that there are supports from the school administration to effectively implement continuous assessment. The supports as they exemplified are basically arranging of trainings by the school administration though this becomes real in very long gap of time.

There were also teachers who alleged that there is nothing to be referred as strength in the practices of continuous assessment in their schools. The reality tells there is nothing absolute- absolutely weak or absolutely strong. Thus, one can't say there is no any strength in the practices of continuous assessment.

Theme 4: Weaknesses in the Practice of Continuous Assessment

Here is the summarize version of what the teachers said: Much of the blame fell on the students; teachers said that students frequently absent from classes, even when they come to class they don't show interest to their lessons. Being in a class also, a few of them are really disruptive. Giving assignments especially is pending to be an abortive exercise since students either copy assignments from their classmates or let others do for them. The worst thing, cheating in exams and tests these days are coming into sight as human right among many students.

Parents were referred to a source of obstacle for the practice of continuous assessment. They held responsible for experiencing weak supervision and control of their children. When they called to school

to discuss some matters on of their children, they usually do not come. Parents do not confirm whether their children complete their home work or not.

Principals were complained of causing hurdle to the practice of continuous assessment. Despite conducting meetings and giving orders on continuous assessment, they are lenient in checking its practice in their schools. They sometimes lose their ears to listen to the complaints of the teachers' particularly on issues like high teacher workload, and provision of teaching and learning materials. Principals' contact with the parents of the students is very poor, and this makes also difficult working with parents on the continuous assessment progress of their children.

Teachers themselves pointed their fingers on their colleagues as being barriers to effective practice of continuous assessment. They said that absenteeism and tardiness on the part of the teachers are currently one of the major problems to the practice of continuous assessment. Teachers' recklessness to the practice is also another very pressing setback to the practice.

What was said is said; including their colleagues, teachers blamed every one - the students, the principals and the parents. It is appalling to think that no teacher blame themselves for the weak practice of their own continuous assessment. The researcher stresses that teachers should never hurry to blame others, instead they ought to put the blame on themselves first. It is evident that teachers have rights and responsibilities, and a predominant source of discontent among them on the practice of continuous assessment is created by their fight to secure their rights. Maxwell (2000:62) stated that stopping fret about rights will turn one's focus to the right direction, and let focus on what one can control- her / his responsibilities. Thus, every teacher always needs to ask themselves 'what is expected

of me?', and as long as the teacher makes a move to satisfy this question, he/ she will accomplish their responsibilities. Then, they might solicit their rights keeping the rights and responsibilities of the other bodies- the principals, the parents and the students, in mind.

4.7. Classroom Assessment Observation

In this observation, eight teachers from the three schools were observed. Two subjects were observed in one grade level, and each subject was observed 2 times which made the total observations 4 in a grade level. All the subjects sampled (Civics, English, Mathematics, and Physical educations) under this study were observed 16 times totally. In other words, each subject was observed 4 times. The table below shows the Frequency, and Percentages of teachers' applicability of continuous assessment in their classrooms.

Table 4.11: Teachers' Applicability of Continuous Assessment in Their Classrooms

	Statement	Frequency	percentage
1	Students of all ability levels are able to demonstrate what they know and can do	2	12.50
2	The assessment is communicated in a transparent and coherent way to students	6	37.5
3	Immediate, meaningful feedback is provided to the students	5	31.25
4	The time allocated for the assessment is appropriate	3	18.75
5	The assessment is in lined with the objectives of the lesson	11	68.75

As the table above illustrates, the statement which was mostly observed being practiced was statement 5. It was practiced in 11 (68.75 %) of the observed sessions. This is relatively far greater figure than the rest of the statements 1-4. However, the result still implies source of a gap to be filled since the target is to achieve 100 % of practice.

The gap created attributed to the mismatch between the objectives of the lesson and assessment methods used. This is because, the teachers had been using assessment methods that don't best suit the objectives of the lesson. For instance in aiming knowledge mastery to achieve, the teachers were implementing performance assessment which is not a good choice for objectives that entails knowledge mastery. In accordance with this, the Joint Advisory Committee of Canada (1993:4) affirms that assessment methods should be in harmony with the instructional objectives to which they are referenced in order to enhance validity. Besides, Ministry of Basic Education and Culture of Namibia (1999:10) stated that the nature of the learning task, e.g., the ability to apply knowledge or the mastery of a practical skill like typing, will determine which assessment type will be most suitable to use to attain the objectives of the lesson.

The assessments were communicated in a transparent and coherent way to students in only 6 (37.5 %) of the observed sessions. If an assessment is not clearly articulated, students will have different understandings about it. Accordingly, they can't perform the assessment properly, and this results in a failure to achieve the targets of the assessment. The Joint Advisory Committee of Canada (1993:6) emphasized that lack of understanding of the assessment task may prevent maximum performance or display of the behavior called for.

Lack of providing immediate, meaningful feedback to the students was one problem observed during the classroom observation of 11 periods. Teachers were not giving a meaningful feedback (a feedback that facilitates student progress, motivates students for learning, and sufficiently solves the challenges of the students' on the assessment) to their students. Any meaningful feedback offered immediately to students is like the right medicine given to patients on time. As of

Rowntree (1987) feedback is the lifeblood of learning. So, giving a meaningful feedback had been a mandatory for the teachers, and still need to be.

Except for 3 periods the rest of the periods (13 in number) were not allocated with appropriate time for assessments. The teachers in the former 13 periods almost attempted to do their assessments almost within less than five minutes of their teaching sessions. They dominated the session time with discussing their lesson. Though they asked students some oral questions in the middle of their discussion, what they did was totally a teacher centered approach. Reversely, these days the role of the teacher is shifting from lecturing to facilitating by which students can get enough time to be assessed properly. Another reason definitely could be poor management of time by the teachers. The teachers were observed rushing after time to give assessments and this even could be possible for the 'luckiest' for a matter of fact I can say.

Since the teachers wanted to assess their students learning, not just their ability to use a method of assessment, it was best for them to use more than one assessment method, but they didn't. Students of all ability levels were not able to demonstrate what they know and can do. It was only in 2 sessions that the assessment was relatively fair to the students. Gardner (1985) has found that students have nine learning styles that demand varied teaching strategies to let them successfully and fairly exhibit their potential and get their best out of them. Thus, how could it possible to fairly assess students of different abilities and sundry learning styles with the same assessment technique? The answer is - it couldn't be unless to be careless about the results of the deeds. In almost all the sessions oral questioning and very large group discussions were the assessment methods. Perhaps, these methods serve as modes of assessing a good number of the students, but never are the right methods of assessing students of

all ability levels in such a way that enable them demonstrate what they know and can do. To this end, as Tesfaye (2005:199) enlightened assessment can take many forms, and it could be argued that the more diverse the methods of assessment, the more fair the assessment is to students.

Eventually, what all discussed in this section is a lead to one fundamental theme - poor practice of continuous assessment. The limited number of assessment activities and of course the solely were oral questions, debates, selected response questions and brief constructed response activities. All the assessment activities were done in the form of group and individual works, and no pair work was used at all. An imperative point to be noted is the fact that selected response questions and brief constructed response activities are commonly used for exams and testing, and yet not common in continuous assessment. Supporting this, Plessis (2003:16) explained selected response questions and brief constructed response activities under the title Activities Commonly Used for Exams and Testing. Hence, let alone the weakness in the practice of continuous assessment, the existence of the practice by itself is in question.

The findings of this section are in compliance with the findings in the other sections of this research.

4.8. Principals' Interview

Three principals from the three schools were interviewed and asked the following three questions. Their responses are presented right below those questions under specific themes.

Question 1: What kinds of actions have been taken by the school to improve the practice of classroom continuous assessment?

Question 2: How do you describe the current status of classroom continuous assessment in your school?

Question 3: How do you improve the practice of classroom continuous assessment in your school?

Theme 1: Actions taken by the schools to improve the practice of classroom continuous assessment

The interviewees allude to many taken actions to improve their schools' practice of classroom continuous assessment to the better. Among those actions, they all gave emphasis to the trainings that have been given to the staffs concerning the implementation of classroom continuous assessment. They said that teachers and the principals themselves had trained on the implementation of classroom continuous assessment and supervision and controlling of its quality. As the principals remarked, they still had plans to do more training on the areas of classroom continuous assessment. A point the researcher mentions is that the need for sound assessment practice for principals to share with teachers to the benefit of their students. In line with, Stiggins (2000) emphasized that many principals and teachers have

not been given the opportunity to develop sound assessment literacy needed to fulfill their assessment responsibilities. The other thing revealed by the principals was the issue of providing teaching materials to the teachers and text books to the students. There are still efforts to improve the student - text book ratio in one hand and the necessary teaching materials: teacher's Guide, reference materials, chalks, and stationery equipments on the other hand. Moreover, disruptive students which could be a problem to the practice of classroom continuous assessments have been advised and few numbers of them were suspended from the schools. Both lack of teaching-learning materials, and disruptive students were also referred in Table 4.9 as challenges of continuous assessment with ranks of 4th and 5th respectively.

Theme 2: The current status of classroom continuous assessment in the schools

The interviewees responded that their school current practice of classroom continuous assessments is better than what had been previously. Nevertheless, they admit there are blemishes in their practices that stipulate instant solutions. They said that a very few teachers are being observed careless to the practice of CA, and some do not correct students exercises, even they do so they do not return to the students on time. Students' absenteeism, cheating and lack of interest and misbehaved students are still also the confronting factors in classroom continuous assessment practices. All those problems are in conformity with the results of Table 4.9, and it is true that if all those blemishes do not offered with solutions, they may continue causing importunate hurdles to the practice of continuous assessment.

Theme 3: Improving the practice of classroom continuous assessment in the schools

The principals said that much effort is expected from the school community – the teachers, the students, the administration staff, and the parents of the students. The teaching learning profession cannot be specified to one party responsibility; all of those mentioned earlier and other bodies have to work together and put vigorous effort on it so that what we dream and wish for never be daydream. Above all things, as the interviewees remarked, teachers have to abide by their responsibilities if a real positive change in the practice of classroom continuous assessments is desired. The researcher of this study authenticates that what the principals has said is at any cost never be wrong; indeed, it is utterly a truth. Trachman (1993) also share this fact accentuating to the overriding roles of the teachers, the students, the administration staff, and the parents of the students in the functioning of the school in general and the best practice of classroom continuous assessment in meticulous.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

This section comprises of the summary of the main findings, conclusions and recommendations.

5.1. Summary

Since its commencement, this research has basically a general objective to explain second cycle primary schools teachers' practices of continuous assessment in three selected government primary schools (Betekihnet, Hawassa Haik, and Tabor) of Hawassa.

The research used quantitative method so that questionnaire, interview and classroom observation were the main instruments of data collection. Simple random, purposive, and stratified sampling techniques were applicable. Thus, in order to realize its purpose, the study aimed at treating the basic research questions below:

1. What is the level of understanding of second cycle primary school teachers on the basic concepts of continuous assessment?
2. What are the continuous assessment activities being applicable by second cycle primary school teachers?
3. What are the challenges for teachers in practicing continuous assessment?
4. To what extent is continuous assessment being applicable by second cycle primary school teachers?

In attempting all those four basic research questions, the research came up with the following major findings:

Findings of General Characteristics of Research Respondents'

- All the teacher respondents were College Diploma holders.
- Most of the teachers (33.34 %) had a teaching experience of 6-10 years.
- Among the teachers a greater number (57.14%) of them taught 21-25 periods in a week, but 42.86 % of the teachers taught 16-20 periods in a single week.
- The figure 45.24 % was the uppermost percentage for 51-70 pupils in a classroom.

Theme 1: Second Cycle Primary School Teachers' Understanding on Basic Concepts of Continuous Assessment

- All the teachers agreed that (78.6 % strongly agree and 21.4% agree) continuous assessment uses different types of assessment activities
- Except for items 8, 6, and 3 of Table 4.7, teachers' understanding on the basic concepts of continuous assessment found to be above the test value, 3.
- In statements 1, 2, 5, 7, and 8 of Table 4.7 there were significant differences among teachers in understanding the basic concepts of continuous assessment.
- There were teachers who defined continuous assessments as series of tests.

Theme 2: Continuous Assessment Activities Being Applicable by Second Cycle Primary School Teachers

- It was reported that written tests and quizzes are the most commonly used continuous assessment activities used by the teachers.

- Composition/ Story/ Essay were the 2nd and a debate was the 3rd frequently practiced activities by the teachers.
- Interviews, Journals and Project were the three least frequently practiced activities by the teachers.
- The assessment activities of the teachers' were oral questions, debates, selected response questions and brief constructed response activities.

Theme 3: Challenges for Teachers in Practicing Continuous Assessment

- As it was reported, class size, work load and uninterested students with means 5.35, 5.09, and 4.76 respectively are the three most frequently selected items as challenges that the teachers encountered.
- Limits in teachers' background knowledge in the subject, lack of training pertinent to continuous assessment, and the presence of students with special needs with means 3.04, 2.66, and 1.88 respectively were the three least frequently selected items as challenges that the teachers have been come across.

Theme 4: Extent in Applicability of Continuous Assessment by Second Cycle Primary School Teachers

- As it was reported by a mean of 4.54 with a standard deviation of 0.94 in item 4 teachers' gave an identical test, to be fair to all students, and this was the utmost figure, but a mean of 2.21 with a standard deviation of 1.60 in item 6 which was the action of teachers to make their questions too straight forward to their students was the bare minimum figure among the 9 items.
- The teachers assessments were in lined with the objectives of the lesson in 11 (68.75 %) of the observed sessions.

- ☉ Students of all ability levels were able to demonstrate what they know and can do only in 2 sessions out of the 16 sessions.

5.2. Conclusions

The following conclusions are made based on the findings of the research. Except from General Characteristics of Research Respondents' the conclusions shall be set under the thematic form of each basic research question.

General Characteristics of Research Respondents'

- ☉ There was the availability of qualified teachers in all the three schools.
- ☉ Most of the teachers were well experienced.
- ☉ All the respondent teachers had teaching work load of 16-25 periods per week.
- ☉ All the figures explained were evidences for the ease of use in high pupils to classroom ratio in the three schools.

Theme 1: Second Cycle Primary School Teachers' Understanding on Basic Concepts of Continuous Assessment

- ☉ All the teachers had clear understanding that continuous assessment uses different types of assessment activities.
- ☉ A mean of 4.78 by itself was still a reflection of having a sort of poor understanding in the basic concepts of continuous assessment though it was not embroidered as that of 2.24.
- ☉ Except for items 8, 6, and 3 of Table 4.7, teachers' understanding on the basic concepts of continuous assessment was found to be above the test value 3 and which is good. So, the teachers have a good understanding to the majority of the items on the basic concepts of continuous assessment. /

- ☉ Let alone defining continuous assessment as a series of tests which is wrong in fact, even defining the term only in terms of its purpose/ use, and scope was not good enough to fully understand the concept. So, teachers had poor understanding of the basic concepts of continuous assessment.

Theme 2: Continuous Assessment Activities Being Applicable by Second Cycle Primary School Teachers

- ☉ Written tests and quizzes were the most commonly used continuous assessment activities used by the teachers.
- ☉ Next to written tests and quizzes, Composition/ Story/ Essay were the 2nd and a debate was the 3rd frequently practiced continuous assessment activities of the teachers.
- ☉ Interviews, Journals and Project were the three least frequently practiced continuous assessment activities of the teachers.

Theme 3: Challenges for Teachers in Practicing Continuous Assessment

- ☉ Class size, work load and uninterested students respectively were the three most frequent challenges that the teachers encountered.
- ☉ Limits in teachers' background knowledge in the subject, lack of training pertinent to continuous assessment, and the presence of students with special needs were the three least frequent challenges that the teachers have been come across.

Theme 4: Extent in Applicability of Continuous Assessment by Second Cycle Primary School Teachers

- ☉ To be fair to all students, the majority of the teachers had given an identical test to their students, but the least number of teachers made their questions too straight forward to their students. Both cases reflected teachers' poor application of the items in their assessments.

- ☉ Almost all the teachers had a very poor and/ or wrong application of continuous assessment in their classroom.
- ☉ The teachers' assessments were in lined with the objectives of the lesson in most of the sessions.
- ☉ Lack of providing immediate, meaningful feedback to the students was one serious weakness.
- ☉ Almost all the teachers did not allocated appropriate time for their assessments'.
- ☉ In almost all the sessions, the teachers' assessments did not fairly let students of all ability levels demonstrate what they know and can do.

5.3. Recommendations

In light of the major findings of the study and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are forwarded with the hope that they improve the practices of continuous assessment in the three schools under the study.

- ❖ A community in all the three schools should establish a strong communication network within themselves and others outside their loops through workshops and trainings. This facilitates experience sharing among the schools.
- ❖ The schools have to mobilize the local authorities, parents, nongovernmental organizations, and investors to build more classes, to buy teaching-learning materials and equipments.
- ❖ The school community - the teachers, the students, the administration staff, and the parents have to abide by their responsibilities if a real positive change in the practice of classroom continuous assessments is petted.

- ❖ Principals should have a good communication with the parents of the students through educational conference, panel discussions, workshops, meetings and interviews, and this makes it easy working with parents on the continuous assessment progress of their children.
- ❖ Exhaustive trainings on the concepts and values to the best practices of continuous assessment should be organized especially to teachers in the form of non-job trainings, workshops, seminars and in-service programs.
- ❖ The schools should integrate the education that goes on in the school with education in the home. Parents and teachers are partners; they need to learn how to work together. In other words, there should be parent education program in the schools. This could be realized through notes and leaflets sent home; school visits; parent- teacher conferences and other meetings; study groups, and classes in child development through continuous assessment.
- ❖ The assessment should not be done just for the sake of formality; it needs to be continuous and bring an improvement on students learning. To put this in to an action, besides with arranging trainings, the classroom continuous assessment need to be propped up by remediation and enrichment in order to benefit the students primarily.
- ❖ Parents should contribute to the practice of continuous assessment; they need to experience good supervision, monitoring and control of their children progress.
- ❖ Teachers should allow time in each classroom day for active observation of children and listening to children, in addition to the normal use of observation in the learning process, in order

to construct as full a picture as possible of each child's progress and development through classroom continuous assessment. This helps the teachers to be vigilant in identifying learning difficulties in particular children, noting whether these relate to individual learning styles, and use assessment information in providing appropriate intervention and support.

- ❖ Teachers, through parent teacher conferences, interviews, and/or communication books, should maintain close and consistent contact with parents, in order to share information about children and to explore the interpretation of children's attitudes, actions and learning styles that influence the students' classroom continuous assessments.
- ❖ No matter what worse the situations could be, the teachers should always find out ways and work hard for the best practice of continuous assessment with in the existing situations.

5.3.1. Directions for Future Researches

Cognizant to the scope of this study, the researcher recommends study involving inter schools in order to find out how different schools are practicing continuous assessment. Therefore, the researchers recommend specifically that, future research should use larger sample size from other schools to validate these findings. The findings will help the individual students, scholars, teachers, parents, and the school principals in putting into place mechanisms that facilitates the practice of continuous assessment. The finding also will spur scholarly debate on continuous assessment in primary schools. Specifically future studies can be carried out using longitudinal method to find out the challenges of continuous assessment, their effects, and coping methods to be adopted to alleviate and / or confiscate the challenges.

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Department of Educational Planning and Management

TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

The following statement is a description of the instrument used in this study. It is a self-report questionnaire that is completed by teachers. The instrument is designed to measure the extent to which teachers use various instructional strategies in their classrooms. The instrument consists of 15 items, each of which is rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Always). The instrument is a measure of teacher self-efficacy and is used to assess the extent to which teachers believe they can effectively use various instructional strategies in their classrooms.

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Q / Co.....



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TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire will take you about 15 minutes to complete, and the purpose of the questionnaire is to assess the practice of classroom assessment in second cycle primary schools of Hawassa. It is addressed to teachers who teach in second cycle primary schools (Grade 5 - Grade 8). It asks about your professional background and your classroom assessment practices. Since your school is part of the town's sample, your responses are very important in helping to describe how classroom assessment is practiced in second cycle primary schools of Hawassa. It is therefore important that all questions be answered as carefully and accurately as possible. Please answer the questions according to the instructions only.

This questionnaire is confidential when completed. Your responses will not be used in any way that will allow you, your students, or your school to be identified.

Once you have completed this questionnaire, please return it to the researcher.

Thank you in advance for your assistance!

PART ONE: Contextual Information

Please read the instructions for each questions and respond accordingly. So, circle the numbers correspond to your responses.

1. What is your gender?
 - Male.....01
 - Female02

2. Which grade level(s) are you teaching now?
 - Grade 5.....01
 - Grade 6.....02
 - Grade 7.....03
 - Grade 8.....04
 - Any other (specify) _____.....05

3. What is your qualification?
 - Certificate01
 - Diploma02
 - Bachelor of Art03
 - Bachelor of Science04
 - Bachelor of Education05
 - Master degree in education.....06
 - Master of Art (M.A) degree07
 - Master of Science (M.Sc) degree.....08
 - Any other _____.....09

4. How many periods are you teaching per week?
 - 1-5 periods.....01
 - 6-10 periods02
 - 11-15 periods.....03
 - 16-20 periods.....04
 - 21-25 periods.....05
 - Above 25 periods.....06

5. How many years have you been teaching totally?
 - 0-4 years01
 - 5-9 years02
 - 10-14 years.....03
 - Over14 years04

6. What subject are you teaching now?
 - English.....01
 - Mathematics.....02
 - Social studies03

Science.....04
 Chemistry.....05
 Biology06

7. In average, how many students are you teaching in a class?
 40-5001
 51-7002
 71- 9003
 91-10004
 Above 10005

8. Do you have any other responsibility in the school other than teaching?
 Yes.....01
 No02

9. If your answer for QUESTION 11 is YES, please specify it (them)

10. Have you taken any training on assessment?
 Yes.....01
 No02

11. If your answer for QUESTION 13 is YES, please specify it (them).

Type of Training	Date and Duration of the Training
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

PART TWO: Fundamental Information

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Show by CIRCLING the numbers correspond to your responses.

Strongly Agree(SA)= 1
Agree(A)= 2
Undecided(U)= 3
Disagree(D)= 4
Strongly Disagree(SD)= 5

No.	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
001	CA helps the teacher to find out what the student know and capable of	1	2	3	4	5
002	CA helps a teacher to find out the progress of students	1	2	3	4	5
003	CA tells teachers about their teaching effectiveness	1	2	3	4	5
004	CA involves testing students after teaching any topic	1	2	3	4	5
005	CA uses different types of assessment activities	1	2	3	4	5
006	CA can reduce fear of testing	1	2	3	4	5
007	CA provides feedback to students	1	2	3	4	5
008	CA involves testing students before teaching any topic	1	2	3	4	5

2. How many times you have been doing the following? Show by CIRCLING the numbers correspond to the statements of your responses.

Always (A)=1
Usually (U)= 2
Sometimes (S)= 3
Rarely (R)= 4
Never (N)= 5

No.	Concepts of assessment	A	U	S	R	N
001	I tell students the criteria of the assessment	1	2	3	4	5
002	I perform all assessment at the end of the learning program	1	2	3	4	5
003	I make sure that I know the identity of the student who has done each element of work	1	2	3	4	5
004	In order to be fair to all students, I give each an identical test	1	2	3	4	5
005	When I set a coursework essay, I do set a word limit	1	2	3	4	5
006	I make my questions too straight forward	1	2	3	4	5
007	I give students written feedback	1	2	3	4	5
008	If I design a question paper that works well, I use it year on year	1	2	3	4	5
009	I always plan at least some questions on material that I haven't covered with the class	1	2	3	4	5

3. How often you did the following activities in your classes? Show by CIRCLING the numbers correspond to the statements of your responses.

Always (A)=1
Usually (U)= 2
Sometimes (S)= 3
Rarely (R)= 4
Never (N)= 5

No.	Types of assessment activities	A	U	S	R	N
001	Oral presentation	1	2	3	4	5
002	Dance/ Movement	1	2	3	4	5
003	Song	1	2	3	4	5
004	Poem	1	2	3	4	5
005	Dramatic Reading	1	2	3	4	5
006	Debate	1	2	3	4	5
007	Practical Test	1	2	3	4	5
008	Role Play	1	2	3	4	5
009	Interviews	1	2	3	4	5
010	Athletic Skill	1	2	3	4	5
011	Science Activity	1	2	3	4	5
012	Project	1	2	3	4	5
013	Illustration/ Drawing	1	2	3	4	5
014	Journals	1	2	3	4	5
015	Invented Dialogue	1	2	3	4	5
016	Report	1	2	3	4	5
017	Composition/ Story/ Essay	1	2	3	4	5
018	Written Test/ Quiz	1	2	3	4	5

4. To what extent do the following challenge your classroom assessment? Show by CIRCLING the numbers correspond to the statements of your responses.

Strongly High (SH)=1
 High (H)= 2
 Uncertain (U)= 3
 Strongly Low (L)= 4
 Low(L)=5
 Never(N)=6

No.	Challenges	SH	H	U	SL	L	N
001	Pupil Absenteeism	1	2	3	4	5	6
002	High work load	1	2	3	4	5	6
003	Shortage of materials or equipment	1	2	3	4	5	6
004	The excessive time spent on remediation and enrichment	1	2	3	4	5	6
005	Disruptive students	1	2	3	4	5	6
006	Large class size	1	2	3	4	5	6
007	Low motivation of teachers	1	2	3	4	5	6
008	The presence of students with special needs	1	2	3	4	5	6
009	The range of student abilities in the	1	2	3	4	5	6
010	The range of differences in students' backgrounds	1	2	3	4	5	6
011	Limits in my own background knowledge in the subject	1	2	3	4	5	6
012	Low support or lack of support of the school administration	1	2	3	4	5	6
013	Lack of training pertinent to continuous assessment	1	2	3	4	5	6
014	Uninterested students	1	2	3	4	5	6

PART THREE: Open Ended Questions

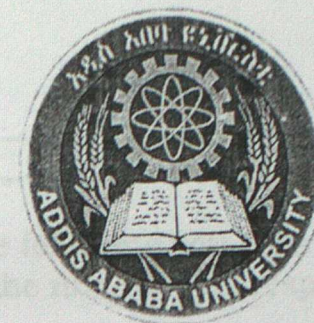
1. How do you explain continuous assessment? _____

2. What types of continuous assessment activities do you use in your classroom?
Why? _____

3. Please explain the strengths in the practice of classroom continuous assessment in your school?

4. Please explain the weaknesses in the practice of classroom continuous assessment in your school?

Q / Co.....



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STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire will take you about 20 minutes to complete, and the purpose of the questionnaire is to assess the practice of classroom assessment in second cycle primary schools of Hawassa. It is addressed to students who learn in second cycle primary schools (Grade 5 - Grade 8). It asks about your professional background and your classroom assessment practices. Since your school is part of the town's sample, your responses are very important in helping to describe how classroom assessment is practiced in second cycle primary schools of Hawassa. It is therefore important that all questions be answered as carefully and accurately as possible. Please answer the questions according to the instructions only.

This questionnaire is confidential when completed. Your responses will not be used in any way that will allow you, or your school to be identified.

Once you have completed this questionnaire, please return it to the researcher.

Thank you in advance for your assistance !!!

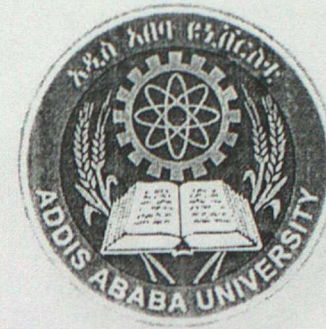
GRADE _____

SUBJECT _____

1. How often you did the following activities in _____ period?
Show by CIRCLING the numbers correspond to the statements of
your responses.

Always (A)=1
Usually (U)= 2
Sometimes (S)= 3
Rarely (R)= 4
Never (N)= 5

No.	Types of assessment activities	A	U	S	R	N
001	Oral presentation	1	2	3	4	5
002	Dance/ Movement	1	2	3	4	5
003	Song	1	2	3	4	5
004	Poem	1	2	3	4	5
005	Dramatic Reading	1	2	3	4	5
006	Debate	1	2	3	4	5
007	Practical Test	1	2	3	4	5
008	Role Play	1	2	3	4	5
009	Interviews	1	2	3	4	5
010	Athletic Skill	1	2	3	4	5
011	Science Activity	1	2	3	4	5
012	Project	1	2	3	4	5
013	Illustration/ Drawing	1	2	3	4	5
014	Journals	1	2	3	4	5
015	Invented Dialogue	1	2	3	4	5
016	Report	1	2	3	4	5
017	Composition/ Story/ Essay	1	2	3	4	5
018	Written Test/ Quiz	1	2	3	4	5

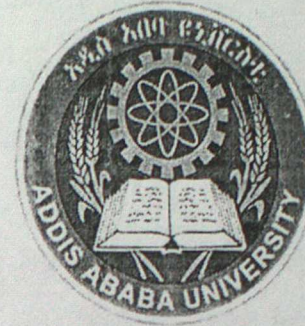


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**CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT
OBSERVATION CHECKLIST**

	CRITERIA	Yes	No	Evidence
01	Students of all ability levels are able to demonstrate what they know and can do	1	2	
02	The assessment is communicated in a transparent and coherent way to students	1	2	
03	Immediate, meaningful feedback is provided to the students	1	2	
04	The time allocated for the assessment is appropriate	1	2	
05	The assessment is in lined with the objectives of the lesson	1	2	

I / Co.....



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SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' INTERVIEW

Year of experience as a teacher _____

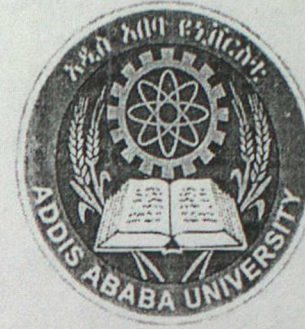
Year of experience as a principal _____

Year of experience as a principal in this school _____

Educational qualification _____

1. What kinds of actions have been taken by the school to improve the practice of classroom continuous assessment?
2. How do you describe the current status of classroom continuous assessment in your school?
3. How do you improve the practices of classroom continuous assessment in your school?

I / Co.....



Department of Educational Planning and Management

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Year of experience as a principal _____

Year of experience as a principal in this school _____

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