PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOL CLUSTER CENTERS OF ASSOSA WEREDA, BENISHANGUL GUMUZ REGIONAL STATE

BY:

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APPROVAL SHEET

The undersigned certify that they have read and hereby recommend to the Addis Ababa university to accept the Thesis submitted by Degu Bihonegn this thesis entitled with the "Practices and Challenges of Implementing Continuous Assessment in Primary School Cluster Centers of Assosa Wereda, Benishangul Gumuz Regional State." in partial fulfillments of the requirements for the award of a Master of Arts Degree in Curriculum and Instruction.

Signed by the Examining committee:

Chairperson _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Advisor Lemma Setegn (PhD) Signature _____ Date _____

External Examiner_____Signature _____ Date _____

Internal Examiner_____Signature _____ Date_____

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my dear aunt; Tsehay Beyene Shumye for having struggled tirelessly in educating me to what I am. She were a base to my education and contributed special effort throughout my life career.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AfL	Assessment for Learning
AoL	Assessment of Learning
AZCBED	Assosa Zone Capacity Building & Education Department
BGRSEB	Benishangul Gumuz Regional State Education Bureau
CA	Continuous Assessment
CBE	The Calgary Board of Education
CCEA	Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment
TGE	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IEQ	Improving Educational Quality
MoE	Ministry of Education
NCCA	the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NEAEA	National Educational Assessment and Examination Agency-
PARE	Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation
PSLCE	Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination.
REB	Regional Education Bureau
SDA	School Development Agent
SLOA	Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment
SSCT	Stark State College of Technology
WEO	Wereda Education Office.

Abstract

The objective of this study was to examine the practices and challenges of the implementation of continuous assessment in primary school cluster centers of Assosa Wereda. A descriptive survey design and both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed. The sampling techniques used included simple random sampling method, and purposive using Critical Case Sampling. *300 sample respondents were involved from primary school cluster centers as well as woreda education offices. The data were collected using questionnaires, focus group discussions, structured interviews, classroom observations and document analysis. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentage, frequency, and mean values. The qualitative data were analyzed thematically using a case by case and cross case analysis. Finally, the study came up with the following findings. The status of the implementation practices of continuous assessment is still continued traditional, unsatisfactory and poor. It has deficiency and it is at a low level of implementation in primary school cluster centers of Assosa Wereda. The challenges teachers & students encountered during the implementation practices of continuous assessment were overpopulation, teachers lack of competencies and skills to carry out classroom assessment, lack of motivation, focus on the cognitive level and emphasis to the knowledge domain ignoring the affective and psychomotor domains, over concentration in written test, inadequate monitoring and support to the teachers and students absenteeism are the other challenges. The education sector professionals at all level should accept that the assessment at classroom level is at low level of performance and it is their faliuarity. So, they need to prepare guidelines and documents on continuous assessment at the beginning of each academic year to fill the gap, on record keeping avoiding distribution of simple and inappropriate assessment format. To improve the contribution of continuous assessment to the promotion it requires setting the average cutting score at the beginning academic year even during registration that make all concerned bodies to plan, strive and do their best in transition from the old/traditional continuous assessment practices/customs to the new contemporary continuous assessment.*

Key words*: Assessment, Continuous Assessment, Record Keeping, and Challenges.*

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives, significance of the study, research questions, delimitation, limitation and organization of the study are presented.

1.1 Background of the Study

Assessment is central to the process of teaching and learning. It is used to monitor learning processes and to ascertain achievement in each area of the curriculum. Through assessment, the teacher constructs a comprehensive picture of the short-term and long-term needs of the child and plans future work accordingly. Assessment is also used to identify children with specific learning difficulties so that the nature of the support and assistance they need can be ascertained if appropriate strategies and programs are put in place to enable them to cope with the particular difficulties they are encountering. Assessment assists communication about children's progress and development between teacher and child, between teacher and parent and between teacher and teacher (NCCA, 2004:16).

Moreover, it states that assessment is integral to all areas of the curriculum and it encompasses the diverse aspects of learning. In addition to the products of learning, the strategies, procedures and stages in the process of learning are assessed. Assessment includes the child's growth in self-esteem, interpersonal and interpersonal behavior, and the acquisition of a wide range of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. Additionally, the above document reminds us that assessment is concerned with children's progress and achievement. More specifically, classroom assessment may be defined as the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using and communicating information about a child's progress and achievement during the development of knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes(Ibid).

Assessment, therefore, involves much more than testing. It is the ongoing process that encompasses many formal and informal activities designed to monitor and improve teaching and learning in all areas of the curriculum. Assessment can be made on the day-

to-day process of teaching and learning, while giving due weight to its role creating a cumulative record of children's progress and attainment(Ibid)). Additionally, scholars need to think ahead that assessment is one of the most powerful educational tools for promoting effective learning. But it must be used in the right way. There is no evidence that increases the amount of testing enhancing learning. Instead, the focus needs to be on helping teachers use assessment, as part of teaching and learning, in ways that will raise pupils' achievement. Its value has been recognized in many official statements, as illustrated by the following examples: 'Promoting children's learning is a principal aim of schools. Assessment lies at the heart of this process. It can provide a framework in which educational objectives may be set and pupils' progress charted and expressed. It can yield a basis for planning the next steps in response to children's needs ... it should be an integral part of the educational process, continually providing both "feedback" and "feed forward". Therefore, assessment results remind us, that need to be incorporated systematically into the teaching strategies and practices at all levels. As mentioned above in the education and training system of Ethiopia developing competent citizens who contribute to social, economic, political and cultural development through creation and transfer of knowledge and technology is a priority. The Education Sector Development Plan –V(ESDP - V) reminds us that this will be successful when the assessment practices is improved as a result of standardizing regional and national examination of students.

As noted in the Education Training Policy of Ethiopia; "Education is a process by which man transmits his experiences, new findings, and values accumulated over the years, in his struggle for survival and development through generations. Education enables individuals and society to make all-rounded participation in the development process by acquiring knowledge, ability, skills and attitudes" (TGE, 1994: 1). The Education and Training Policy envisages bringing-up citizens endowed with human outlook, countrywide responsibility and democratic values having developed the necessary productive, creative and appreciative capacity in order to participate fruitfully in development and the utilization of resources and the environment at large (TGE,1994: 6).

In the same document in article 3.3 about Educational Measurement and Examination: sub article 3.3.1 "Continuous assessment in academic and practical subjects, including

aptitude tests will be conducted to ascertain the formation of all round profile of students at all levels". Article 3.3.3 states that " in order to get promotion from one level to the next, students are required to have a minimum of 50% (fifty percent) achievement" (TGE, 1994).

As stated by the Republic of Macedonia Minister of Education and Science 2008, the term assessment, in its widest meaning, denotes a process of collecting and interpreting information about learning and achievement of students that are used to: (1) provide information to students and their parents about the progress in acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes; (2) provide support to teachers to modify their instruction and the learning activities of their students; and (3) provide information to other stakeholders that make decisions about educational policy related to students such as decisions about promotion of students, students' involvement in particular educational programs and types of practices.

This study, therefore, tries to examine the practices and challenges of implementing continuous assessment in primary school cluster centers of Assosa wereda. In this research, the researcher intended to analyze the understanding, planning, record keeping and implementation practices as well as the contribution of classroom assessment result for student promotion that succeeds the direction predetermined in the education policy of 1994 by checking the classroom result to that of the result of Primary School Leaving Certificate Exam (PSLCE) of Grade eight Regional standardized Examination. Furthermore, this study is believed to throw light on the continuous assessment's classroom practices and to motivate other researchers for further investigation.

The researcher was motivated to conduct this study to investigate, the practices and challenges of implementing continuous assessment at primary school cluster centers because of two main reasons. First, the researcher observed that continuous assessment was not well practiced as expected in the school. Second, the knowledge of the researcher, since continuous assessment is such a well-researched area one would assume that teachers broadly implement this approach though the area that the researcher focused

on was not researched well. Therefore, this research, apart from investigating other researchers, thus, believed to contribute to its part in this regard.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia promulgated in 1994, states that as curriculum component, assessment should receive greater attention in order to lever the attainment of curriculum goals at all levels of education. Though the Ethiopian education policy gives priority for student-centered teaching-learning process and the teacher as facilitator, due attention to educational measurement and examination issues. It gives directions that continuous assessment in academic and practical subjects, including aptitude tests will be conducted to ascertain the formation of all round profile of students at all levels. In order to get promotion from one level to the next, students are expected to have a minimum of fifty percent achievement. (TGE,1994:18).

The Ministry of Education of Ethiopia also exerted considerable efforts for the quality of education at all levels and established a National Learning Assessment system since 2000 which were be done in every four years interval to monitor and evaluate the quality at regular scheme with the purpose of checking the healthiness of the system, which is administered at national level in primary education Grade 4 & 8. The content for fourth grade are Mother tongue Reading, English, Mathematics & Environmental Science, while that of Grade Eight comprises English, Mathematics, Physics, chemistry & Biology. Moreover, Early Grade Reading Assessment focused on EGRA, Mother Tongue, EGRA English and EGMA(NELAEA,2015: 4).

However, the quality of education as indicated in the successive National Learning Assessment result show that still it is a crucial challenge of the education system. The responsibility of using the findings is shared with various stakeholders such as policy makers, administrators, curriculum developers, teachers training institutions, school principals, assessment experts, teachers, students, parents and other stakeholders(NELAEA,2015:5 & 7). In the researcher's understanding and view, thus, National Learning Assessment results indicate that the deficiency of classroom practices.

As a result when students take the Standardized, Regional & National Examination their achievement became below the minimum standard.

Benishagul Gumuz Regional State with the initiative of the Regional Government gave assignment to the Regional Education Bureau to conduct research on " The Challenges of Benishangul Gumuz Regions' Indigenous Students' Learning Outcome " the findings of this study showed continuous absenteeism from a class, drop out from the school and repeating the same class the indigenous students' learning outcome was at low level. The study elucidates that the five indigenous students of the region from the year 2009 – 2014 showed the increment of dropout rate. In the same year interval those who took the final examination in each year, the promotion rate did not show significant improvement, 2013 40.04% and in 2014, 36.3% of students were not promoted to the next grade level.

The cutting score of Grade eight standardized regional examination of the year 2014, was decided by the Regional Education Bureau Management to all students of the region to promote the average scores for male were 35% and 33% for female This indicates that how far the cutting score is below the expected minimum national standards (50% and above) of the Education Training policy of Ethiopia (REB, 2014.: 54 & 181). If the cutting score were not decided to be less than the expected of the promotion direction of the education policy of Ethiopia, it was possible to estimate that huge number of students of the region were not promoted to secondary school (grade nine). On the other way, the cutting score below the minimum national standard is also affecting the quality of education in the region.

In 2017, 16,053 (6,541 Females) grade eight regular students of the region took the regional examination. However, according to the Regional Education Bureau Assessment Case Team report, among them, only 5,049 (2,033 females) 31.45% of students scored 50% and above. Even this is the highest result compared to previous years. Although the cutting scores of 2017, whereas decided by the Regional Education Bureau were for males 35% and 33% for female students' due to these cutting and passing scores' decisions, 13,504 (5,643 females), and 84.1% of regular students' promoted to grade nine. One can understand how it is challenging to meet the quality of education and

raised students' achievement of the region is unsatisfactory because if the REB Management bodies were deciding the cutting scores to be 50% and above as mentioned in the education policy, lead it not seen lower, 68.55% of students was not promoted.

Recently, the Benishangul Gumuz Education Bureau released it's 2009 E.C.(2016/17), Education Statistics Annual Abstract and the abstract showed , the Primary Repetition Rate (Grades 1-8) for the period 2004-2008 E.C were 12.6%, 14.9%, 16.7%, 14.5% and 14.6% respectively (BGRSEB,2016/17: 56 – 57). As one observes from the five year trends the rate fluctuates. Specifically, when one observes Grade One repetition's rate for the same five years were 18.9%, 2o.6%, 23.3%, 21.0 % and 22.5% respectively without any improvement when it is compared to that of 2011/12 (REBa,,2017).

Moreover, Benishangul Gumuz Regional Education Bureau 2016/2017 General Education Sector annual report presented on June /2017 for the concerned bodies and stakeholders. The report gave attention to see the achievement of students' result analysis (classroom assessment and exam result) in comparison to the previous years. The report elucidated the result of students who scored 50% and above in each subject were as follows. The analysis of 2015 were 51.8%, in 2016 it was 49.5%, and 2017 the first semester result were 47.6 %. This shows that still there is no improvement except decreasing the previous year's result (REBa, 2017: 27).

The Regional Education Bureau General Education Inspection Directorate'' Education Assessment Study of the year 2017 of the second semester student result report analysis shows that the number of primary school students who took second semester final classroom examination were 44,5542 (20,2996 Females). Those achieved 50% and above in each subject were 22,8878 (9,8134 Females). Only 51.37% students achieved the minimum result. Finally, it is concluded that students' result for three consecutive year (2015 - 2017) did not show improvement. It stressed its recommendation for the concerned bodies to work hard at 2017/2018 academic year (REBb, 2017: 6).

The number of student in each year became increased but students' result does not show improvement rather declined . Among those problems stated in the report were lack of education materials/ inputs, support of cluster supervisors did not bring the intended result, students' low motivation to become successful, teachers lack skills, lack of

awareness about continuous assessment as well as parents' motivation, follow up and pressuring their students not to be absent from schools were the main factors raised by the report. Mostly, the report showed that there was deficiency in implementing continuous assessment.

Among the three Zonal Capacity Building and Education Departments of the Benishangul Gumuz Region, in which Assosa wereda is located under Assosa zone. The report was presented on August 2017 at zonal level, on the annual evaluation program of the zone. Initially, the plan intended to promote 75 % of students with a score of 50% and above in all subjects aligning to the policy direction. But the result analysis showed that Grade 1- 4 students achieved 55.7% and grade 5 - 8 students achieved 37.9%. The report also explained the 2017 primary student repetition rate was planned to decrease from 12.9% to 5%. But the achievement was 12.6% (10,902 students repeated (AZCBED, 2017).

Although some researchers have done studies that related to the idea of continuous assessment, they were not comprehensive in accessing all round aspects of continuous assessment. For instance, Tefera (2014) conducted a research on Teachers` Perceptions and Practices of Continuous Assessment in Mathematics Class at high school level and his findings showed that the mathematics teachers did not use different assessment methods and techniques of continuous assessment in their Schools. But he did not see the record keeping practices, and the contribution of classroom assessment result to General Secondary School Education Leaving Standardized Exam. Besides, Focus Group Discussion was not used for triangulation.

Takele (2012), carried out a research on "The State of Continuous Assessment Practices in Secondary Schools". His findings showed that teachers had skill gap about continuous assessment in that they concentrated on summative components of assessment; they didn't include a variety of continuous assessment tools in their plan and did not use the class room activities. Moreover, it was found that most of the teachers considered continuous assessment as a series of paper and pencil test activities to measure students' performance. Most teachers see continuous assessment as tiresome and more time

consuming. Finally, he concluded that the practice of continuous assessment in secondary schools of the study area is low without elaborating the reason behind. Azebe (2013) conducted research on "The challenges of implementing continuous assessment in physical education classes in high schools." The major findings of her study were a very weak document handling and poor record keeping of learners' continuous assessment achievement. Many assessment techniques were used improperly. But her study did not show the rubrics that teachers used for record keeping.

Solomon (2014), conducted a study on "The Practice and Challenges of Implementing Continuous Assessment in Government First Cycle primary schools". But he did not include students as source of data and classroom exam result of the students was not analyzed. One of his basic question was " What are the potential solutions to overcome implementation gaps and the challenges related to implementing continuous assessment in the government first cycle primary schools?" His finding showed a very weak document handling, and poor record keeping of learners' continuous assessment achievements, less learners' involvement in their own assessment. But in his instrument he did not set questions to examine record keeping mechanisms of teachers.

As mentioned above most research's focused on perceptions or attitude toward continuous assessment. They did not address the level of understanding of teachers and students about the issue of continuous assessment. They did not see the result of continuous assessment and contribution to regional or national examinations. As most research findings and reports showed that less attention has been given to the practices and challenges of continuous assessment's planning, record keeping and the contribution of classroom assessment result to the students' promotion as reflected in the policy document. Therefore, there is a gap in this area that needs to be filled. Hence, the multifaceted problems of implementing continuous assessment is very much challenging in Benishangul Gumuz Region in general & specifically in the study area (Assosa wereda). It requires further research so as to understand, describe, and explain issues, identify challenges and thereby indicate and implement Continuous assessment focused intervention programs.

Generally, it is possible to understand that internal efficiency of the zone was not improved as it was planned. Therefore, the process of Teaching – Learning and implementation practices of Continuous Assessment has a gap. Additionally, the researcher has worked at wereda level (Menge) about 17 years as a teacher, vice principal and Principal for seven year , in the program of World Learning: Community-Government Partnership Program (CGPP) as School Development Agent (SDA) for 3 years in selected 16 primary schools located in Homesha wereda 5 schools & Menge wereda 11 schools. He has the experience in Menge wereda Education office at Curriculum preparation, supplement and implementation process in a position of process coordinator and planner for seven years and finally at Benishangul Gumuz Regional Education Bureau in a position of Teaching Learning and Assessment expert. Though the researcher's, experience was participating in supportive supervision, he observed that teachers were facing many challenges in implementing continuous assessment.

When observing the way teachers teach at classroom level, teachers were expected to explain the objectives of the lesson & assessment criteria. Even if they were preparing a lesson plan and checked by responsible bodies of the schools, they were not communicating to their students. It was kept secret to students. Additionally, when observing teachers continuous assessment record keeping practice was poor. Teachers' teaching methods made students passive participants and merely observant, which contradicts with the policy and those of learning theories and training that they took in the pre - service and probably in the in-service training.

Generally speaking, it seems that the practice of classroom teachers' assessment was for the purpose of doing assessment and writing a report & mostly a waste of time. The reality in implementing continuous assessment is still a problem that challenging the education sector. The researcher feels that the way classroom teachers' continuous assessment implementation practices are still unsatisfactory & still remained area of further research. So far, various researches have been conducted on the areas of continuous assessment. However, the challenges of implementing continuous assessment

are still widely seen as an investigable issue in Ethiopian primary schools in general and specifically in Benishangul Gumuz Region.

Hence, this research is valuable in terms of the time it was undertaken, the different methods it used, and the gaps and experiences it took from previous research findings. Based on this rationale, this paper was designed to identify, examine, and analyze the challenges, the current implementation status, and future prospects of continuous assessment in Asossa wereda, Benishangul Gumuz Regional State.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is the status of the implementation practices of continuous assessment in primary school cluster centers of Assosa Wereda?
2. What is the perception of teachers about continuous assessment information record keeping, grading & reporting practices in the primary school cluster centers of Assosa Wereda?
3. To what extent has continuous assessment results contribute to the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination(PSLCE) and to the promotion of secondary schools in primary school cluster centers of Assosa Wereda?
4. what are the challenges that teachers encountered during the process of the implementation of continuous assessment in primary school cluster centers of Assosa Wereda?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 General Objective

The overall objective of this study was to examine the practices and challenges of the implementation of continuous assessment in primary school cluster centers of Assosa Wereda.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

The Specific Objectives of this study were to:

1. examine the existing practices of the implementation of continuous assessment in primary school luster centers in Assosa Wereda;

2. assess the perceptions of classroom teachers & students for the proper implementation of continuous assessment in primary school cluster centers.
3. assess the contribution of classroom continuous assessment results to the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination(PSLCE) and to the promotion of secondary schools; and
4. identify major challenges faced by classroom teachers in the process of implementing continuous assessment in the wereda.

1.5 Significance of the Study.

The researcher believe that the study is very significant since it examines the proper understanding, implementation, the functionality & the challenges of continuous assessment in the teaching-learning process and then those factors that affect this process. Therefore, this research findings:

1. Help curricular specialists, assessment experts, policy and decision makers at all levels of the education system. Other concerned bodies may see it how to improve the teaching - learning process and student achievements through proper implementation practices of continuous assessment in primary schools.
2. Provide awareness for all stakeholders of school such as school principals, teachers, cluster supervisors, Wereda, Zonal & Regional Education Bureau experts. So that they can support the implementation of continuous assessment since the government is dedicated very much to improve quality of education by focusing on the assessment that is practiced in classroom.
3. Improve students' achievement and teaching - learning process through appropriate implementation of continuous assessment by minimizing those challenges encountered during the assessment process; and
4. Serve as a spring board and as a reference for other researchers to conduct further research on the practice, challenge and other aspects of continuous assessment in the wereda and beyond.

1.6 Delimitation of the Study

This study was delimited to Assosa Wereda selected primary school cluster centers as a result of its cost, time consuming and limited resources.

1.7. Limitations of the Study

It is obvious that research work could not be free from limitation, that matter this study was also constrained with some limitations. Among the limitations of this study was challenging to get organized and meaningful data at school level. For instance, Basha Buda primary school cluster centers' 2013 students roster and Kush Mengel primary school cluster center 2013 – 2015 PSLCE result roster were not found at the school level. For some respondents lacked attention to respond appropriately to the questions presented to them. The researcher tried to find the data from Assosa Wereda Education Office by communicating the responsible expert. Then, the above mentioned three years PSLCE students' result were organized, analyzed and incorporated to the analysis as well as the interpretation. The data collectors tried to reorient the respondents the significance of the study to fill the questionnaires with care and it was possible to manage the study.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

Challenge:–Situations/conditions or something that hinder the operation of continuous assessment.

Continuous Assessment – Assessment is done formally and informally on a regular and continuous basis. It is integrated with instruction to improve, help, shape and direct the teaching learning process.

Continuous Assessment Practices - The overall efforts made in the implementation of continuous assessment or any activity that was made in relation to continuous assessment implementation.

Implementing – Putting in to effect by means of definite plan or procedures.

1.9 Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter has background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, significance, objectives and delimitation of the study. The second chapter deals with related literature review, The third chapter states the design & methods of the study; source of data , population, samples and sampling techniques, data gathering instruments and procedures. Data organization; analysis and interpretation are described in chapter four. The last chapter, chapter five is concerned with the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Conceptualizing Assessment and the Continuous Assessment

2.1.1 Defining Assessment

Several definitions of assessment are mentioned in literature. According to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment; NCCA. 2005; (2007), the term "Assessment" mean to sit beside or with (Assess - from Latin).

Assessment is a process which can serve different purposes. It informs teaching and planning. It informs parents about their child's achievements and progress. It is also a means for certification (Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education, 2007: 17).
Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment(NCCA 2007), considers assessment as part of good teaching and learning. It provides the teacher with information to make decisions about what and how the child is learning. This information in turn enables the teacher to identify the next steps in progressing the child's learning and adapts his/her teaching strategies and/or the learning activities, as appropriate. Using assessment information to inform teaching and learning in this way can make learning a more enjoyable and challenging experience for the child, and can contribute to a more enriching and rewarding professional experience for the teacher.

Assessment is an evaluation of student success in acquiring/demonstrating specific behaviors or skills. It is an ongoing process designed to monitor and improve student learning. Faculty explicitly define what they want students to learn, verify that the curriculum is designed to foster that learning, collect empirical data that indicate the extent of the learning, and use these data improve the program (Astin Alexander et al. 2014:21).

Stark State College of Technology (SSCT. 2010), on its Handbook of Assessment noted, that learning theory emphasizes learning with understanding. This means that teaching approaches should emphasize understanding rather than memorization and teachers should assess for understanding rather than surface knowledge and recall of facts. People develop deep knowledge organized around important conceptual frameworks. This means

that teachers should assess students' ability to assimilate concepts in new conceptual frameworks, apply knowledge and solve problems. Learners construct knowledge and understandings on the basis of what they already know and believe. This means that teachers should establish students' prior knowledge and monitor students' changing conceptions as teaching and learning proceeds. Learners learn and create understandings through social interaction. This means that teachers should engage learners in collaborative activities and use assessment practices that provide information on the learner's level of development and level of potential development. Meaningful learning occurs when learners are actively involved and have the opportunity to take control of their own learning. This means that teachers should provide sensitive and constructive feedback to students and use assessment practices that encourage self-assessment and meta cognition (Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education. 2005:1-2).

Assessment is the process which guides courses, academic programs, and support programs toward improvement by continually asking one question over and over: Are you doing what you think you're doing? (OIART. 2006: 23). The main reason using the assessment data is to identify strengths and weaknesses in student performance, and to improve the quality of teaching and learning as a result helping students meet certain standards (Dumit, 2012).

2.1.2 Continuous Assessment

As Peacock,(1985), noted, that Continuous Assessment is a process of monitoring pupil attainment in certain basic or essential skills, which provides feedback for both teacher and pupil on success at each important stage in learning. It is specifically not a judgment on pupil's final attainment in any subject. Continuous assessment is the ongoing cyclical practice of setting goals, checking to see how well they have been achieved, and making appropriate adjustments to courses, programs, and assessment methods to improve results over time. Assessment in schools, concerned with observing learners and collecting information about those observation. Assessment of learners is a way of finding out what learners know, understand and can do. Teachers use continuous teaching.

Continuous assessment tells teachers if they need to teach something, which students need to be rethought, and what the students need in order to improve their learning.

Teachers are given the responsibility to find out what students in their class know and are able to do. When this is done in a variety ways over time and used to improve instruction, then it is considered continuous assessment. Continuous assessment is used to help evaluate the learners overall. Continuous assessment help teachers to evaluate the learners performance (Improving Educational Quality (IEQ) Project, 2003: 6 -7).

Continuous assessment is the ongoing process of understanding, improving, and documenting student learning. It provides the teacher with useful information about students, including their qualities as learners and their readiness for learning. Ongoing assessment informs the teacher about the pace and the progress of student learning in the classroom. (SSCT, 2010: 4).

Continuous Assessment - This relates to both formative and summative assessment. Continuous formative assessment identifies with the ongoing assessment used in a formative way, as described above. Continuous summative assessment refers to the regular use of written and oral assignments (coursework, homework, presentations, tests, etc.) to inform judgments and measure attainment (Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education. 2007: 17).

When it focused on formative aims, continuous assessment can contribute amply and vitally to a student's learning and, in turn, bolster results on her/his graded and reported assessments and other summative assignments. Muskin (2017) & Jabbarifar (2009), clarify that as assessment is a process that includes four basic components: 1) Measuring improvement over time. 2) Motivating students to study. 3) Evaluating the teaching methods. 4) Ranking the students' capabilities in relation to the whole group evaluation. The purpose of classroom assessment and evaluation is to give students the opportunity to show what they have learned rather than catching them out or to show what they have not learned.

Classroom assessment (teaching and learning) is an integral part of assessment. Without sound assessment practices, we may not know if students are progressing as planned. Further, we may not be able to effectively plan for students' future learning opportunities.

Also assessment is the determination of the ways how to improve expressed weaknesses, gaps and lack of knowledge (Harizaj and Kadriu 2015: 13).

2.2 Principles of Continuous Assessment

The seven fundamental principles were described by Ontario schools. (2010), to ensure that assessment, evaluation, and reporting are valid and reliable, and that they lead to the improvement of learning for all students, teachers use practices and procedures that:

1. are fair, transparent, and equitable for all students – Fairness in assessment and evaluation is grounded in the belief that all students should be able to demonstrate their learning regardless of their socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender, geographic location, learning style, and/or need for special services. Transparency is achieved when student learning is assessed and evaluated according to the clear standards outlined in the curriculum expectations.
2. support all students, including those with special education needs – Treating all children exactly the same means that children who need accommodations or modifications to the program in order to succeed will be disadvantaged. Some students require more or different support than others in order to work at a level appropriate to their abilities and needs.. For some students, therefore, assessment, evaluation, and reporting will be based on modified expectations.
3. are carefully planned to relate to the curriculum expectations and learning goals and, as much as possible, to the interests, learning styles and preferences, needs, and experiences of all students;
4. are communicated clearly to students and parents at the beginning of the school year or course and at other appropriate points throughout the school year or course;
5. are ongoing, varied in nature, and administered over a period of time to provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate the full range of their learning;

6. provide ongoing descriptive feedback that is clear, specific, meaningful, and timely to support improved learning and achievement;
7. develop students' self-assessment skills to enable them to assess their own learning, set specific goals, and plan next steps for their learning.

The above seven fundamental principles lay the foundation for rich and challenging practice. When these principles are fully understood and observed by all teachers, they will guide the collection of meaningful information that will help inform instructional decisions, promote student engagement, and improve student learning. Teachers have a leading role to play in the implementation of the seven fundamental principles. On a daily and hourly basis, teachers make professional judgments that ensure effective implementation of these principles, making decisions with respect to individual students and groups of students that have profound implications for them. How students feel about themselves as learners and whether they enjoy learning and strive for excellence are closely related to their teachers' professional skills both in differentiating instruction and assessment and in helping students understand how they can improve. Teachers create environments in which all students feel valued and confident and have the courage to take risks and make mistakes. (Ontario schools.2010:6 - 8).

2.3 Reasons for Using Continuous Assessment in the Classroom.

Many reasons exist for using continuous assessment. These reasons are listed and as stated by the Project of Improving Educational Quality (IEQ).(2003), it is described, that the reasons using continuous assessment are to :

1. find out what students know and can do
2. gain confidence in what we say our students know and can do
3. provide all children with opportunities to show what they know
4. promote learning for understanding
5. improve teaching
6. help determine what kind of remediation and enrichment activities to provide, and to identify which students need assistance
7. let the students know how well they are progressing in their own learning.
8. let parents know how their children are progressing.

9. lead to overall evaluation efforts to determine whether a student should pass to the next grade or not is often a difficult task. A well designed and ongoing continuous assessment carried out throughout the year, the teacher has a strong basis from which to evaluate a learner's overall progress (Improving Educational Quality (IEQ) Project. 2003: 9 - 10).

2.4 Assessment Processes and Learning Cycle

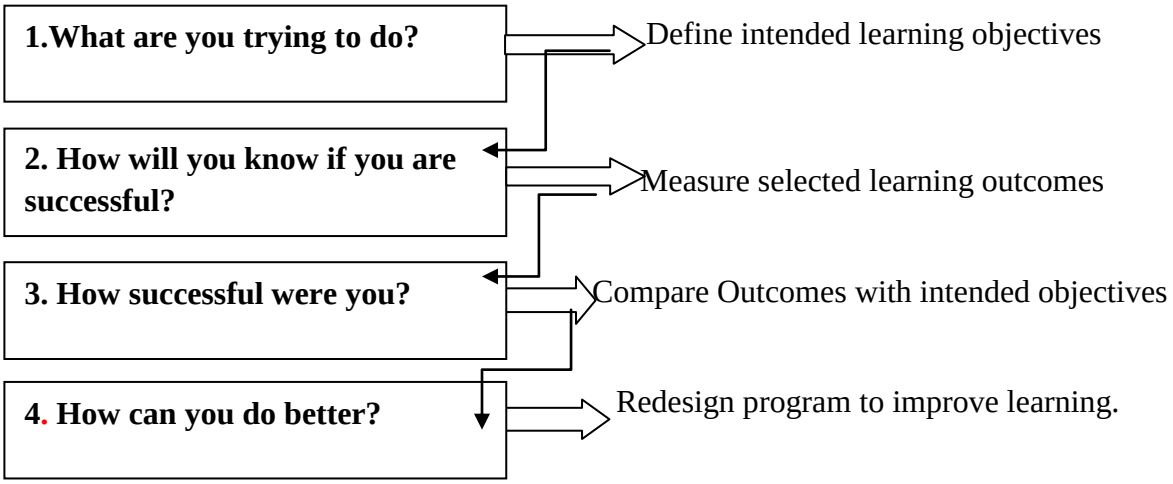
As clearly elaborated the assessment process by Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education. (2007). The following points should be considered in assessment process:

1. Assessment should relate to the learning outcomes prescribed in the syllabus.
2. Where practicable, assessment should be a cooperative activity between the student and the assessor.
3. Students should be encouraged and enabled to carry out self-assessment throughout their schooling and beyond.
4. Assessment should identify students' strengths and weaknesses and directions for further learning. Assessment opportunities are also learning opportunities.
5. Assessment should essentially be criterion based rather than norm based.
6. The distribution of the assessment results (or grades) should not follow a predetermined formula.
7. Assessment should not be premised on success for some and failure for others.
8. A range of valid assessment strategies should be employed. Strategies should reflect the complexity of student learning and the full range of curriculum objectives
9. Effective assessment takes into account that students will progress at different rates in relation to the learning outcomes. It takes into account that individual students could progress at different rates in relation to learning outcomes in different strands and key learning areas.
10. Assessment opportunities take into account that individual students may demonstrate their learning in different ways.

11. Assessment should be an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Assessment should be ongoing and students should be provided with more than one opportunity to meet assessment requirements.
12. Learning, teaching, assessment and reporting are planned concurrently.
13. Assessment tasks should be sensitive to gender, culture, linguistic background and physical disability.
14. School based assessment should be the major process by means of which individual student achievement is monitored. Schools should have procedures for enabling classroom-based student assessment information to follow each student from year to year.
15. Assessment methods, samples of assessment, scoring guides or rubrics, and examples of work of varying kind and quality are discussed and understood by students and teachers.
16. Assessment activities that contribute to the professional development of teachers, such as moderation meetings, should be employed wherever possible. Schools use assessment information to improve curriculum and teacher effectiveness.
17. Assessment should be recognized as a complex and inexact process that involves varying degrees of errors of observation, description, measurement and judgment
18. .Judgments about students' demonstration of learning outcomes are based on a broad range of evidence gathered and recorded over time.
19. Teacher judgments about students' demonstration of learning outcomes are consistent with the judgments of other teachers in their own school and other schools.
20. Teachers use current principles and technical concepts of assessment, particularly validity and reliability, in developing and analyzing their classroom assessments(Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education 2007: 4 - 5).

2.4.1 Assessment Learning Cycle

OIART. (2006), has noted that, the assessment of learning should pass the following cyclic process.



As mentioned in the document "Tools and Techniques for Program Improvement: A Handbook for Program Review and Assessment of Student Learning", of OIART(2006); it advise to consider the assessment learning cycle by asking the question "Are you doing what you think you are doing"? …. as follows: Are you doing what you think you're doing?

Step One: What are you trying to do? - Define intended program learning objectives: specifically, what do you want your graduates to know and actually to be able to do?

Step Two: How will you know if you are successful? - Define observable, measurable, actual outcomes that will tell you how well each objective has been met.

Step Three: **How successful were you?** - Compare observed outcomes to intended outcomes: how well did you meet your objectives in general, and your student learning objectives in particular?

Step Four: What should you do about it? - Accept or modify program objectives, outcomes, and assessment measures to better achieve target objectives in next cycle(Ibid).

2.5 Benefits of Assessment

Assessment can facilitate improvement through a variety of venues. When all teachers are directly involved in the development, implementation, and analysis of assessment activities, a number of specific benefits results are gained which is mentioned as below:

- Provide information about the knowledge and skills students have as they enter a course
- Design instruction to target the knowledge and skill levels students should have upon finishing a course and better determine the levels of thinking or reasoning appropriate for the course.
- Provide reliable data on student learning
- Make available richer data about the effects of the curriculum or teaching methods.
- Yield more reliable data about instruction.
- Provide evidence that faculty make a difference in student learning
- Offer a larger view of student needs and accomplishments
- Rely less on the comments that appear on student evaluations as indicators of their success in teaching
- Engage in more productive conversations about the status of student achievement and make better decisions about how it might be improved
- Make reliable decisions about innovations or experimental projects in instruction and share successes more easily
- Enjoy greater satisfaction in their work as educators.

  identify directions for future instructional development. (OIART. 2006 :25).

2.6 Types of Assessment

Waterloo Region District School Board. (2013) describe the types of assessment as below: First, it reminds us assessment should have as its goal the development of students as independent and autonomous learners. Assessment, classified according to its purpose, can be thought of as assessment for, as or of learning.

A) Assessment as Learning - Teaching students to develop their capacity to be independent, autonomous learners who are able to:

- ✓ set individual learning goals
- ✓ monitor their own progress
- ✓ determine next steps
- ✓ reflect on their thinking and learning

B) Assessment for Learning - The teacher provides students with descriptive feedback and coaching for improvement.

C) Assessment of Learning - The teacher assesses a student's summative work at the end of a period of learning to determine to what degree (at what level) the student has achieved the learning goal. More detailed about Purpose/Components of assessment as stated in Chignecto-Central Regional School Board. (2013), assessment is the systematic gathering of information about student learning. It also explains the three categories of educational assessment as follows:

2.6.1 Assessment as Learning

Assessment as learning is a critical part of assessment for learning where teachers include students in the assessment process through a gradual release of responsibility, beginning with explicit instruction and moving towards independence. Students will, over time, develop their capacity to be independent, autonomous learners who are able set individual goals, monitor their own progress, determine next steps, and reflects on their learning. Assessment as learning is a mega–cognitive process in which students take ownership on their learning. Assessment as learning' is a process of developing and supporting meta-cognition for students. Assessment as learning focuses on the role of students as the critical connector between assessment and learning. When students are active, engaged and critical assessors, they make sense of information, relate it to prior knowledge and use it for the new learning. This is the regulatory process in meta-cognition. It occurs when students monitor their own learning and use the feedback from this monitoring to make adjustments, adaptations and even major changes in what they understand. Assessment as learning places the student at the center of the assessment process and becomes a routine component of classroom practice that helps students view

their performance objectively and make adjustments in order to learn more and improve the quality of their work. Assessment as learning occurs as students reflect upon their strengths and needs, set goals for improvement, and identify strategies to accomplish these goals.

Harlen and Johnson, 2014, Teachers engage in assessment as learning by helping all students develop their capacity to be independent, autonomous learners who are able to set individual goals, monitor their own progress, determine next steps, and reflect on their thinking and learning. (Ontario schools. 2010: 28).

2.6.2 Assessment for Learning

Assessment for Learning it occurs during teaching and learning and used to inform teachers and students of what has been learned and provide direction for instruction and student improvement. Evidence of student achievement is collected over time from three different sources: observations, conversations, and students projects. By using multiple sources of learning evidence, teachers increase the reliability of and validity of assessment information (Chignecto Central Regional School board, .2013: 6). As part of assessment for learning, teachers provide students with descriptive feedback and coaching for improvement (Ontario schools. 2010: 28).

The Government of Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth. (2008), were described, as Assessment for learning is designed to give teachers information to modify and differentiate teaching and learning activities.

As Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA. 2007) noted, assessment for Learning (AfL) focuses on the learning process (rather than the end product) and attempts not to prove learning, but rather improve it. It is a way for us to take stock during the learning process and can help inform us of how the learning is progressing. Summative assessment and AfL (formative assessment) are not opposing or contradictory practices. That is, the use of AfL in the classroom does not mean you will suddenly stop marking pupils' work; summative assessment will always have a place in educational practice. Instead, they are complementary approaches, as the use of AfL can help pupils perform better on summative assessment tasks and summative assessment can reflect the impact of AfL. Therefore assessment for Learning is the process of seeking

and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go next, and how best to get them there (Ibid).

Harizaj, and Kadriu, (2015), described Formative assessment (assessment for learning) is performed continuously for obtaining information of students achievements in learning process. Formative assessment is designed to help learners learn more effectively through giving them feedback on their performance indicating how it can be improved. Assessment carried out as part of teaching and learning for the purpose of helping learning is described as 'formative' assessment, or assessment for learning. It involves teachers and students in using evidence of learning as it takes place to feed back into decisions about how to help progress towards lesson or unit goals. (Harlen, and Johnson, 2014: 12).

The concept of assessment for learning (AfL) extends the potential of formative assessment. In essence, Assessment for Learning helps teachers and children to focus on three key questions: 1). Where are children now in their learning? 2). Where are children going in their learning? And 3).How will children get to the next point in their learning? Providing feedback to children is therefore central to AfL. This feedback is based on evidence of how and what the children are learning. Feedback focused on the learning or task in hand, can help children identify and celebrate their progress and achievements, pinpoint challenges they experience, and decide what the next steps should be. This level of involvement in shaping their own learning can heighten children's awareness of themselves as learners and encourage them to take more personal responsibility for, and pride in, their learning. (NCCA. 2007).

CCEA.(2007), were elucidated as assessment for learning requires the application of specific elements to produce the desired results. These are:

- **learning intentions and success criteria** – so that pupils understand what they are trying to learn, why and what is expected of them;
- **Feedback** – about the quality of their work and what they can do to make it better;

- **Questioning** – to create a classroom climate where pupils come up with their own ideas, think aloud and explore their understanding; and
- **peer and self-assessment and self-evaluation** – to enable them to recognize success in their own and others' work and to focus on how they are learning as well as what they are learning. These elements have most value when they are seen as integrated and mutually supportive of the process of learning rather than having discrete effects.

According to "The Calgary Board of Education's (CBE), (2015)", Formative assessment, assessment for learning, is part of the continuous interaction between the student and the teacher. Through ongoing cycles of feedback and instruction, students and teachers check learning in order to make decisions about next steps.

Additionally, as Ontario schools, (2010), stated the essential steps in assessment for learning and as learning, teachers need to:

- plan assessment concurrently and integrate it seamlessly with instruction;
- share learning goals and success criteria with students at the outset of learning to ensure that students and teachers have a common and shared understanding of these goals and criteria as learning progresses;
- gather information about student learning before, during, and at or near the end of a period of instruction, using a variety of assessment strategies and tools;
- use assessment to inform instruction, guide next steps, and help students monitor their progress towards achieving their learning goals;
- Analyze and interpret evidence of learning;
- give and receive specific and timely descriptive feedback about student learning;
- help students to develop skills of peer and self-assessment.

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth. (2008) noted that, assessment is not something that teachers do to students; it is a process of collaborative communication in which information about learning flows between teacher and student. This two-way exchange of information is at the heart of assessment for and as learning. If assessment for and assessment as learning are to improve the quality of students' work, then students

must be involved in their own assessment. Assessment for learning and assessment as learning both occur constantly throughout the teaching/learning process, often as part of the same assessment opportunity. They are powerful because the assessment is frequent, dynamic, and responsive to student needs. Assessment for learning helps the teacher adjust instruction and provides information to students to help them improve the quality of their work. This requires two-way communication between the teacher and the learner.

2.6.3 Assessment of Learning. (Summative assessment)

It provides evidence of student achievement at a specific time throughout the grade/course/program, often at the end of a period of learning. Assessment of learning captures learning to data at specific point in time. The teacher periodically records children's progress and achievement for the purpose of reporting to parents, teachers and other relevant persons Assessment of Learning (Chignecto - Central Regional School board.2013: P7 & NCCA. 2007).

According to, "The Calgary Board of Education's (CBE), (2015)", Summative assessment, assessment of learning, is a comparison at a particular moment in time between individual student achievement and established provincial expectations and/or individual program plans.

Assessment of learning provides a record of the child's progress and attainment, whether at class or school level, at the end of a given period of learning (at the end of a unit of work, at the end of a term, or at the end of a year).Examples of activities for the purpose of assessment of learning include: reviewing a child's written work for a term, making an overall judgment according to agreed and specified criteria, and assigning a grade.

In general Harizaj, and Kadriu, (2015), remind us, summative assessment is more expressed as the product and assesses the final product, and formative assessment is the process leading to the finalization of this product. It's not so important to try to find the differences between formative and summative assessments. Rather, it is important to plan an evaluation strategy that will align with the aims set out at the beginning of each period or along the school year.

2.7 Balancing Assessment

As teachers gather information/data about student learning, several categories may be included. In order to better understand student learning, teachers need to consider information about the products (paper or otherwise) students create and tests they take, observational notes, and reflections on the communication that occurs between teacher and student or among students. When a comprehensive assessment program at the classroom level balances formative and summative student learning/achievement information, a clear picture emerges of where a student is relative to learning targets and standards. Students should be able to articulate this shared information about their own learning. (Garrison and Ehringhaus. 2011: 3).

The Calgary Board of Education's (CBE), (2015), noted, formative and summative assessment influence and inform one another. Both contribute to understanding a student in order to make personalized decisions for learning.

2.8 Assessment Planning.

Assessment should be included as part of the School Plan to guide assessment planning and practice in classrooms and schools. A useful assessment policy should provide information on: assessment for learning, assessment of learning, dimensions of the child's learning and development to be assessed, assessment of children throughout their primary school education, diagnostic assessment and the early identification of learning difficulties, recording assessment information, reporting assessment information and managing assessment records. (NCCA. 2005:11).

As an integral part of teaching and learning, assessment should be planned concurrently with instruction and integrated seamlessly into the learning cycle to inform instruction, guide next steps, and help teachers and students monitor students' progress towards achieving learning goals. (Waterloo Region District School Board. 2013: 12). The issue of designing student assessments, were briefly noted by Charlotte (2013), as follows: good teaching requires both assessment of learning and assessment for learning.

Assessments of learning ensure that teachers know that students have learned the intended outcomes.

These assessment must be designed in such a manner that they provide evidence of the full range of learning outcomes; that is, the methods needed to assess reasoning skills are different from those for factual knowledge. Furthermore, such assessments may need to be adapted to the particular needs of individual students; some student, for example, may need an alternative method of assessment to allow demonstration of understanding. Assessment for learning enables a teacher to incorporate assessments directly into the instructional process and to modify or adapt instruction as needed to ensure student understanding. Such assessments, although used during instruction, must be designed as part of the planning process. These formative assessment strategies are ongoing and may be used by both teachers and students to monitor progress toward understanding the learning outcomes. Charlotte. (2013), remind us during designing student assessments, the elements of components should be:

A). **Congruence with instructional outcomes** - Assessments must match learning expectations.

B). **Criteria and standards -** Expectations must be clearly defined.

C). **Design of formative assessments** - Assessments for learning must be planned as part of the instructional process.

D). **Use for planning -** Results of assessment should guide future planning.

Waterloo Region District School Board. (2013), state that, Teachers need to plan assessment concurrently and integrate it seamlessly with instruction. Also it advice the assessment and evaluation process should pass and focus ; planning for assessment **(Good Plan),** gathering evidence of Learning (**Good Data**) and applying professional judgment (**Good Judgment**). Additionally, Waterloo Region District School Board. (2013), it elucidated briefly as follows:

> **1) planning for assessment:–** during planning teachers should emphasize on the following points**:** Starting with the curriculum**,** establishing learning goals, developing success criteria**,** planning demonstration of student learning – assessment of learning, planning demonstration of student learning for students

with special education needs, determining student strengths and needs – diagnostic assessments, embedding assessment for and as learning and Including descriptive feedback.

2) Gathering Evidence of Learning:- during gathering evidence of learning teachers should focus on**:** triangulation of assessment data, Evidence of Learning – a balanced approach, Responding to the evidence – providing descriptive feedback, Recording and tracking assessment data, managing group work, managing late/missed assignments and managing homework completion.

3) Applying Professional Judgment:- Content standards – curriculum expectations, Performance standards – the achievement chart, Assessment data for evaluation, Weighting assessment data, The role of final evaluations, managing missing assessment data for evaluation, applying achievement levels to judge overall performance and Grading - assigning a percentage grade. Moreover it remind us in planning for evaluation, the following guideline is to be used:

- 70% of the grade will be based on assessment data for evaluation conducted throughout the course, reflecting the student's more recent, most consistent evidence of achievement.
- 30% of the grade will be based on a final evaluation, ideally made up of 2 or 3 components, administered at or towards the end of the course.

The Chignecto-Central Regional School board. (2013) explain that at the beginning of each unit, identify the curriculum outcomes that will be addressed during the period of instruction. Identify the key understandings that emerge from these outcomes determine appropriate assessment of those understandings. The assessment of learning (summative) will provide evidence of the extent to which students have achieved the targeted understandings. Those summative assessments need to be identified first, and then the smaller, enabling "practice" assessment for learning (formative) can be as building blocks toward them. Finally, plan learning experiences and instruction that make such understanding possible. There are three stages of assessment planning.

Stage 1. Desired result "Curriculum outcomes" - What curriculum out comes will this plan address?

Stage 2. Assessment evidence – includes both formative and summative: Valid, reliable and sufficient measures of the desired results.

- Through what authentic performance task(s) will students demonstrate the desired understandings?,
- By what criteria will "performance of understanding" be judged?
- Through what other evidence (i.e. quizzes, tests, observations and homework) will students demonstrate achievement of the desired results?

Stage 3. Learning Plan. Explicit instruction: What learning experiences and instruction will enable students to achieve the desired results? How will the plan:

- Help students know what is expected?
- Engage all students and hold their interest?
- Provide opportunities to rethink and revise their understandings and work?
- Allow students to evaluate their works and its implications?
- Be tailored to individual needs and abilities of learners?
- Be designed to maximize initial and sustained engagement? (Chignecto Central Regional School board.2013: 26 - 27).

2.9 Test Design

A test or examination is an assessment instrument to measure the knowledge and the skills of students. It is the most well-known and used form of assessment, so given its importance of accurately assessing students' learning, it's very important to know how to design a valid and well-written test. It might seem obvious, but one of the most important steps of test composition is to consider the learning results and to determine which aspects you intend to assess with this test, bearing in mind that a formal test or exam is not always the best way to evaluate the desired learning outcomes. Once you identified which results you want to measure, consider what type of question best facilitates the students' reflection of that result. In addition, asking only good questions does not necessarily guarantee that the test would reflect good standard, because we understand that the test as a whole, is comprised of more than a set of questions. That is why it is important to know initially what we want to measure, which learning outcome and which competence we want to achieve.. (Harizaj, and Kadriu, 2015: 19).

2.9.1 The Blueprint /Table of Specifications

NEAEA (2017) described the test blueprint (or test specifications) that identifies the objectives and skills which are to be tested and the relative weight on the test given to each. These specifications provide a "blueprint" for test construction. In the absence of such a blueprint, test development can potentially proceed with little clear direction. The development of such a set of specifications is the crucial first step in the test development process.

2.9.1.1 Constructing the Table of Specifications

There are ten steps to be followed in constructing table of specifications. Those are:

Step - 1 Determine the topics to be Included in the Test - In the first step the following points should be considered by teachers: Representative sample of course content, representative sample of skills, cognitive level across content and analyze results by level and content area.

Step - 2 Determine the objectives to be assessed by the test

Step - 3 Determine the number of total number of test items

Step - 4 Determine the number of items per topic or content area

formula : $\frac{\text{Total Number of Items}}{\text{Total Number of Periods}}$ = Result X Allotted Periods of a Topic

Step - 5 Determine the level of difficulty and their percentages, in the examination – Considering bloom's taxonomy for test blueprint construction (**Easy -** knowledge (Remembering) and Comprehension (Understanding) = 30% **Average** – Application (Applying) and Analysis (Analyzing) = 50% and **Difficult** – Synthesis (Evaluating) and Evaluation (Creating) = 20%

Step – 6 Determine the number of items for each pertinent topic per level of difficulty (Formula: Multiply the Allotted Number of Items Per Topic with the Level of Difficulty).

Step - 7 Make sure the vertical and the horizontal sum of the items are correct

Step - 8 Write the item placement for each number of items

Step - 9 Complete the table of specifications, making sure everything is in place

Step - 10 Always have your TOS side by side your examination draft. Generally, it advises teachers make sure you have followed the number of items, levels of difficulty,

and levels in the Bloom's Taxonomy as basis for your test Construction. (NEAEA. 2017: 26 - 35)

2.10 Assessment Methods

There are a variety of methods for gathering and using information about how well children are learning across the curriculum. The methods range from observation and questioning as part of daily teaching and learning to the more formal and structured method, standardized testing. By using a combination of methods over time, the teacher gathers evidence of children's progress and achievement. In partnership with colleagues, the teacher can use the Primary School Curriculum to prioritize what the child should be enabled to do and understand in terms of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and dispositions. He/she will sometimes focus on the child's learning in a particular subject but at other times look at the child's learning across different subjects. Having decided what is to be assessed, the teacher considers how it will be assessed and how the assessment information will be used (NCCA.2007: 12).

In the classroom we assess formally through assignments, tests, quizzes, performances, projects, surveys,; or informally through questioning and dialogue, observing, and anecdotal note taking. Teachers will obtain assessment information through a variety of means, which may include formal and informal observations, discussions, learning conversations, questioning, conferences, homework, tasks done in groups, demonstrations, projects, portfolios, developmental continua, performances, peer and self-assessments, self-reflections, essays, and tests (Ontario schools. 2010: 28), and Harizaj and Kadriu, (2015).

As mentioned by NCCA, (2007). among a variety of methods the following assessment methods were described: self-assessment, conferencing, portfolio assessment, concept mapping, questioning, teacher observation, teacher-designed tasks and tests, and standardized testing.

1) **Self- and peer-assessment:** Involve students in using this technique to assess their own work and the work of their peers. Self- and peer-assessment allow teachers to take account of students' perceptions when gathering evidence (Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education 2007: 8).

Charlotte Danielson. (2013), described that the culmination of students' assumption of responsibility for their learning is when they monitor their own learning and take appropriate action. Of course, they can do these things only if the criteria for learning are clear and if they have been taught the skills of checking their work against clear criteria.

Ontario schools. (2010), were elucidated, about student self-assessment - the process by which a student, with the ongoing support of the teacher, learns to recognize, describe, and apply success criteria related to particular learning goals and then use the information to monitor his or her own progress towards achieving the learning goals, make adjustments in learning approaches, and set individual goals for learning. The culmination of students' assumption of responsibility for their learning is when they monitor their own learning and take appropriate action.

2) Conferencing: Conferencing in the context of assessment means that those concerned with the child's learning share their knowledge and understanding of the child's work, its processes and outcomes during a planned or intuitive meeting. The value of conferencing is it provides an opportunity to share information in order to increase understanding about the child's learning. Through conferencing the teacher listens to the child's ideas about what he/she finds easy or difficult in learning, and encourages this kind of openness in the child. If conferencing is done regularly, for example weekly, the teacher will probably be able to devote only a few minutes to each child. Children also need to see the conference as an opportunity to learn something about themselves as learners (NCCA.2007:24).

Ontario schools (2010), were explained, Conferencing is a teacher's planned dialogue with an individual student about the student's learning. Conferences offer teachers opportunities to get to know their students' strengths and the challenges they face in relation to specific learning strands or expectations, to monitor their progress, and to plan future instruction based on identified needs and interests.

3) Portfolio assessment: The NCCA's guidelines, Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools (2007) note that a portfolio is a collection of the child's work, reflecting his/her learning and development over a period of time. It can provide evidence of progress in learning in a curriculum area, a subject, a strand, or a across a number of these, using a topic or theme as the focus. Portfolios also provide

opportunities for collaborative assessment whereby the teacher and child together look at and talk about the child's work, identifying positive features and points for improvement. In the Project Improving Educational Quality (IEQ). (2003), it gives detailed explanation about portfolio and how can we use it with learners as follows. A portfolio of student work is a systematic collection of student's work over a year, a term or a topic. The work can be collected in a carton box, folder, filing cabinet or other suitable container.

A profile of student achievement and accomplishments is an important mechanism for documenting a student's educational progress through the curriculum. The student and teachers collaborate on selections for the portfolio, which may contain examples of the student's work: A learner portfolio also helps you assess your teaching. To make a learner portfolio, find or make a folder to contain learners' work. (NIEDMBEC, 1996: 10).

4) Questioning Strategies: As noted in NCCA, (2007), questioning underpins all classroom assessment methods. Teachers regularly ask children oral questions about their work to find out what they have done and why. Teachers use these questions to assess knowledge and understanding and to guide children in their learning. Children also use questions to help them to learn, for example they ask their teacher and their peers questions. Part of the teacher's work in using questioning as an assessment method is to model good questioning. This in turn helps children to become more skillful at asking good questions to aid their own learning. Questions can also be used to assess learning (AoL) and to assist learning (AfL) although the distinction is not clear cut and questions may perform both functions to some degree (NCCA. 2007: 42).

Questioning is a natural component in interactive teaching and learning. A 'question' can be modified into an instruction and have the same power to elicit evidence of knowledge and conceptual understanding (Harlen, and Johnson, 2014: 27).

According to, "The Calgary Board of Education (CBE), (2015), thoughtful teacher questioning invites students to explore their ideas and understandings, as well as their learning processes and personal strategies. Student questioning provides opportunities for teachers to explore their own content knowledge, instructional methods and understanding of the student.

5) Teacher Observation: Teacher observation, spontaneous or planned, can happen any time a teacher and child interact. Observations made by the teacher in the classroom provide some of the most immediate and accurate information about a child's learning. When teacher observation is compiled as a written record it allows the teacher to describe a child's learning in context. These records can make the planning of further work for an individual, group or whole class more focused and systematic (NCCA, 2007: 46). Observation as a method of assessment is an unobtrusive tool that can yield significant information about how and why students learn. This tool is generally used when you are interested in how students study, are concerned about the effectiveness of study sessions or other supplementary activities, or when you are focusing on the relationship between out-of-class behavior and in-class performance. Data collected through observation can be correlated with test scores and/or course grades to help provide further insight into student learning. Data collected through observation can yield important insight into student behavior that may be difficult to gauge through other assessment methods (OIART. 2006: 94).

Garrison, and Ehringhaus, 2011, stated that observations assist teachers in gathering evidence of student learning to inform instructional planning. This evidence can be recorded and used as feedback for students about their learning or as anecdotal data shared with them during conferences. Teachers observe their students at work on these tasks and informally assess the relevant aspects of learners' development on an ongoing basis, using the evidence to guide further work; over time they build up a range of informal assessments of each student that they can eventually use as a basis for a summative judgment at some future point in time (Harlen, and Johnson, 2014: 29).

6) Teacher-designed tasks and tests: A test or examination is an assessment instrument to measure the knowledge and the skills of students. It is the most well-known and used form of assessment, so given its importance of accurately assessing students' learning, it's very important to know how to design a valid and well-written test.. Tests have been and are still an important source of information regarding what students learn and what they need to do better. This means that teachers must develop the skills and understanding to know how to develop and use a quality assessment regime and how to

design a geed, reliable and accurate test Tasks and tests can take the form of written or oral assessments or practical assignments developed by the teacher to assess children's learning. They can be used throughout the school year as a basis for continuous assessment (AfL). Tasks and tests can also be used at the end of an academic year or at the end of a period of learning about a certain topic for the purpose of AoL. However, tasks and tests can serve both AoL and AfL at the same time, since teachers may firstly report the results of tasks and tests and then use the results to decide what they should teach and how they should approach each topic. (Harizaj, and Kadriu, 2015: 5 & 18).

As elucidated in the document of NCCA, (2007), the value of teacher-designed tasks and tests –are that tasks or tests provide opportunities for children to demonstrate their levels of understanding (or misunderstanding) and their skills, and offer valuable information that can be used to plan future work directed towards the children's needs. Many teacher-designed tasks involve children working in small groups. For assessment purposes, a high level of interaction between the teacher and the group of children is recommended.

7) Standardized testing: Standardized tests are used to measure a child's reading and mathematical skills, and to determine children's progress in those areas. Information from the tests is important given the vital role of literacy and numeracy in enabling children to access the full curriculum. A standardized test is an assessment instrument that contains standardized procedures for its administration and scoring and for the interpretation of its results. In other words, the test is administered, scored and interpreted the same way no matter when or where it is used. Standardized testing is generally seen as AoL, indicating the child's performance at the end of a period of learning (NCCA. 2007: 60 -61).

Ontario schools. (2010), explained the standardize test as it is a type of test commonly used to provide valid, reliable, and unbiased information about students' knowledge in various areas. The same questions are used and the same directions are given for each group to whom the test is administered. Specific time limits are set, and each student's performance may be compared with that of all other students taking the same test.

8) Homework Completion: Homework completion (e.g., practice of the day's learning) is not a curriculum expectation, but it is a very important learning skill. Marks must not be assigned for doing homework, but summative classroom tasks can be designed that use the learning from the homework assignments (Waterloo Region District School Board, 2013:18).

9) Group Work: Self and peer assessment promote learning. Students are provided opportunities to understand and assess their own work and the work of others, but the task of marking is the responsibility of the teacher. The student's mark must reflect the judgment of the teacher, and not the judgments of students. (Waterloo Region District School Board. 2013:18)

2.11 Assessment Activities

In the document of National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, NCCA. (2007), Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools noted and remind us about gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting assessment information it describes these assessment activities as follows:

A) Gathering assessment information:- Gathering information for AfL is generally part of the classroom routine, and does not break the flow of teaching and learning. To the child, a question and answer session with the teacher can be a conversation, but the skilled teacher can glean valuable assessment information from it about what and how the child is learning. A learning support teacher for reading explains, I am constantly observing and listening to the children and I regularly make changes to my plans to take account of what I have seen and heard. In addition, the child can consider with the teacher what the learning criteria are. The teacher leads the assessment and the child is aware that he/she is being assessed (NCCA. 2007: 70).

B) Recording assessment information:- The purpose of an assessment determines what and how information is recorded. The teacher can make immediate use of much of the information gathered from AfL in structuring and supporting the child's learning. The teacher can judge what assessment information is important for recording in his/her

notes. The child too can record information about his/her progress in learning, for example as part of portfolio assessment. In the case of AoL, the results of tests at the end of a learning period are usually recorded by the teacher, used to write reports, and stored in the child's Pupil File (NCCA. 2007: 70).

The National Council of Teachers of English, (1997), as noted and remind us effective, continuous record keeping lies at the heart of our best teaching and learning. It enables us to plan, to organize, and to create the best learning environment for each child. Record keeping is an effective tool for tracking contributions made by individual students in our classroom, for assessing students, for informing students and parents about growth over time, and for setting goals - by both students and teachers. Keeping track of our students with classroom observations and systematic notes yields information that cannot possibly be gleaned from a traditional checklist, report card, or standardized test. Information from classroom record keeping may be shared with parents throughout the year so that they too can see specific examples of student progress. Teachers create their own recordkeeping systems to fit the environment in which they teach, their beliefs about teaching and learning, and their time constraints. Classroom record keeping might include the following: Individual student: reading lists and/or writing records, student proofreading or editing lists, portfolios, student self-evaluations, teacher's notes on the status of the class, teacher/student conference, notes on teacher/student/parent conferences, checklists, letters by students about their growth as learners, narrative reports by teachers and students, report cards, student observations and anecdotal records—"kid watching", home reading records, tape recordings of oral reading, running records, oral responses (retelling stories, sequencing, and summarizing), oral reading to determine strategies used by individual students, writing notebooks, folders to collect work in progress, teacher notebooks for teacher reflection and student artifacts.

As National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA. 2007), in the guideline for schools noted, Schools create and maintain individual records of children's learning while they are attending school. They provide parents with assessment reports which contain accurate and clearly accessible information about their children's progress and

achievement. Three kinds of records are maintained by the school: A) the teacher's day-to-day records B) the Pupil File C) the Report Card (Ibid).

C) Interpreting Assessment Information:- The teacher's knowledge of the children in his/her class informs his/her interpretation of information from AfL. The teacher decides what information is valuable and how it can be used to enhance the child's learning. The analysis and reflection of assessment results helps to close the outcome loop; it allows us to celebrate successes or to address any deficiencies discovered through the assessment process by making action plans. Analysis and reflection needs to be a group dialogue and us to tie assessment results to the college planning cycle. If the action plan requires allocation of resources, requests/recommendations can be made at the end of the program review document (Astin Alexander et al. 2014:32).

D) **Using Assessment Information:**- The principal use of information from AfL is to improve the child's learning on a daily basis. When the teacher notes a child's difficulties as they occur, or gains insight into a child's preferred ways of learning, the teacher can use this information to adapt his/her teaching to suit the child learning. All assessment information should lead to improvement in the child's learning. Just how the information is used is related to the original purpose of the assessment activity. The teacher can use this information in different ways in planning the next steps in the child's learning. Information gathered at the end of the year is also useful to the teacher in planning the program for the next year. Information from AoL is used to compile a child's report, which can inform discussion between teacher and parents about the child's learning strengths and weaknesses (NCCA. 2007: 71).

E) Reporting assessment information:– Reporting is communicating the knowledge gained from assessing students' learning. (Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education. 2007: 3).

Reporting is the process of communicating information, obtained from the assessment process, about students' demonstrations of learning outcomes. Reporting may be formal or informal. Reporting provides information on assessment opportunities, evidence gathered and judgments made about students' demonstrations of learning outcomes. The main purposes of reporting are to acknowledge and to support student learning (Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education 2007:6).

Teachers and children often share information from AfL on a daily basis. Children constantly communicate information to teachers. Assessment of Learning information is generally communicated through parent/teacher meetings, report cards, staff meetings, and so on. Teachers can interpret assessment information for parents, highlighting how it can be used to improve the child's learning. Likewise, parents can respond to the outcomes of assessment. Thus there is a two-way process between teacher and parent. In general the two complementary approaches to assessment, assessment for learning and assessment of learning, which could be on the assessment information presented in the primary school curriculum. together, provide teachers with evidence of children's progress and achievement in learning. This information enables teachers to make decisions about adjusting teaching to meet children's learning needs more effectively. In essence, AfL and AoL enable teachers to create the most supportive learning environments in which children are more motivated to learn. (NCCA. 2007: 71 – 72).

Reporting takes the form of written reports and conferences. Conferences are face-to-face events involving teacher, student and parents in various combinations for different purposes (e.g. students taking the lead in sharing their learning with their parents serves the purpose of encouraging them to take responsibility for their learning). Written reports are records for the students, parents and the schools which 'reinforce the underlying values of the program (Harlen, and Johnson, 2014: 6).

In general Chignecto-Central Regional School Board. (2013), in the document of" handbook of Assessment / Evaluation / Reporting of Student Learning" clarify as grade communicate a summary of student achievement in the form of a percentage grade. This percentage grade communicates achievement in relation to criteria as stated in the reporting rubric as follows in the table below:

Demonstration of performance in relation to the expected learning outcomes for this course.

90-100%	The student demonstrates excellent or outstanding performance.
80-89%	The student demonstrates very good performance.
70-79%	The student demonstrates good performance.
60-69%	The student demonstrates satisfactory performance.
50-59%	The student demonstrates minimally acceptable performance.
Below 50%	The student has not met minimal requirements.

2.12 Challenges in Implementing the Continuous Assessment

As noted in the study on "The implementation of school based continuous assessment (CA) in Zambia", by Kapambwe, (2010), in the study finding remind us the teachers encountered various challenges in implementing the formative school-based assessment among them he explains the following barriers/challenges:

- **Large class size** – One of the major challenges was the large class sizes. Teachers cited the large class sizes in most primary schools as major challenge. Teachers indicated that the workload became higher as they were required to mark and keep records of the progress of all learners.
- **Staffing –** The high pupil to teacher ratio was another challenge. Due to lack of adequate staffing levels, some teachers were found to handle more than one class.
- **Remediation and enrichment** – Although continuous assessment should be well integrated with the teaching and learning processes, a good number of the teachers still felt that the CA took a lot of time for teachers. As a result, teachers got concerned that the time spent on remediation and enrichment was excessive and many teachers did not believe that they would finish the syllabus with CA.
- **Pupil absenteeism:–** Absenteeism also posed an obstacle to the smooth management of pupil performance CA records as some pupils' attendance was irregular. Some absenteeism eventually leads to pupils dropping out of schools completely.
- **Teaching and learning resources**:- Inadequate teaching and learning materials affect the implementation of continuous assessment. The difficulty with learning

materials mainly affected the availability of appropriate teaching and learning materials.

- **Teacher networking**:- It was found difficult to implement on the ground the collaboration of groups of schools in the districts to work together so as to develop common end of term tests. schools experienced difficulties in coming together due to various reasons. Some of the reasons were due to lack of materials and coordination.
- **Monitoring and feedback**:- Monitoring was another area in which the overall implementation experienced challenges. Inadequate monitoring and support the teachers in implementing CA from the District offices to closely monitor the teachers' implementation so that they could be given the necessary support (Kapambwe, 2010).

In the same way, Berihu, (2016), conducted research on "Implementation of Continuous Assessment and Its Effectiveness in Adwa College of Teacher Education, Ethiopia", and the findings showed, large class size, shortage of time and low readiness of students are the main factors that hinder to implement continuous assessment appropriately**.**

Additionally, as correctly pointed out by Adaramaja, (nd.). In its document "The Use and Principles of Continuous Assessment in the Classroom, University of Ilorin"; Problems of Implementing Continuous Assessment in Schools are Finance, Training of Teachers, Overpopulation, Over concentration in Written test, Uniformity, Transfer of Continuous Assessment, and Mode of operation. The author elucidated more details as bellow:

Finance: The major problems to the successful implementation a continuous assessment is lack of funds. Money will be needed to buy textbooks that are relevant to the syllabus, stationeries, equipment and book shelves for record keeping. The absence of all these materials will pose a great danger to the successful implementation. Special budgetary allocation should be given to principals in order to purchase these necessary materials.

Training of Teachers: The haphazard way of implementing the program in schools is as a result of lack of adequate training of teachers. Teachers saddled with the responsibilities of handling continuous assessment are either not trained or not properly trained. Due to the fact that teachers are the sole operators of continuous assessment in schools, it is

imperative that they should be adequately trained. Training of teachers should commence in schools**.**

Overpopulation: There are cases — whereby pupils are overpopulated. In such a case, it will be practically difficult for teachers to conduct accurate assessment. As a result students population in each class should be streamlined to manageable size.

Over concentration in Written test:- Some teachers are of the wrong view that continuous assessment is synonymous to continuous written test. As a result written test is used as the only method of assessment leading to over testing. Continuous assessment is meant for assessing cognitive, affective and psychomotor

Uniformity:- There is also the problem of ensuring a uniform format of continuous assessment in all schools. Since all pupils from various schools will sit for the same final external examinations it is necessary that a uniform assessment he used in all schools specifically for the final year pupils in our primary institutions.

Mode of Operation:- Due to lack of adequate training on the part of teachers, the implementation/administration of continuous assessment is carelessly handled. The motives and objectives behind the system are not even clear to most teachers and students alike.

As Webber, (2008), noted, at "The Alberta Student Assessment Study :in its Stage One Findings", at least three main issues have been identified as barriers to student assessment being perceived as a positive educational endeavor: (1) teachers weak understanding of fair assessment practices; (2) teachers' perceptions of external accountability initiatives; and, (3) the impact of inappropriate assessment of at-risk students. As a consequence, external assessment such as the provincial achievement tests, may provoke the view that assessment is one of the most disliked and resisted components of teaching. Generally, teachers are not proficient in appropriate student assessment practices. This is attributed to several causes including, for example, poor planning. That is, teachers carry out unfocussed assessment planning, using hastily constructed assessment activities as an afterthought for grading purposes only, thus contributing to invalid inferences of student achievement. Second, many teachers use few and single-purpose assessment strategies instead of the multiple and varied approaches recommended for effective evaluation. Third, Teachers tend to ask low-level cognitive test questions. and as a result omit

important curricular outcomes, by testing trivia instead of using items that reveal depth of understanding. Reporting to stakeholders clearly, accurately, and sensitively is among the most difficult and uncomfortable parts of evaluation for teachers. This is due partly to their lack of understanding about how to assess fairly and also to the multiple uses (and misuses) of assessment information by teachers, administrators, parents, and the larger community (Webber, 2008. P3 - 4).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHDOLOGY

The major purpose of this study is to examine the practices and the challenges of the implementation of continuous assessment in primary school cluster centers of Assosa Wereda. Scholars remind us that a research is an attempt to search for truth. This part to devoted to the research design and methodology. It contained data sources, sample, sampling techniques, and data gathering tools, procedures of data collection and methods of data analysis.

3.1 Design of the Study

The purpose of this study was examining the practices and challenges of the implementation of Continuous Assessment in Primary School Cluster Centers of Assosa Wereda. To achieve the main purpose and objectives of the study, descriptive survey design was used. Because descriptive survey research design sets out to describe and to interpret what the phenomenon is and it looks at individuals, groups, institutions, methods and materials in order to describe, compare, contrast, classify, analyze and interpret the entities and the events that constitute the various fields of inquiry (AAU, 2009: 29 - 31).

Descriptive survey design is employed with the assumption that it has helped gather sufficient data related to the subject under study. Regarding this, Sharma (2000) stated that descriptive survey design is appropriate to gather data from relatively large number of population. So the researcher committed to use descriptive survey design in examining the practices and challenges of the implementation of continuous assessment in primary school cluster centers of Assosa Wereda.

3.2 Method

The methods /procedures section is really the heart of the research. Methods/procedures show how the researcher is going to achieve the objectives of the research and answer the questions. In this study, the researcher has used both quantitative and qualitative methods

to generate, examine and analyze the information in which the researcher obtained from diverse group of respondents.

The quantitative method is used by the researcher to analyze the quantitative data obtained through the use of a questionnaire with close-ended question items. The qualitative method is also used in analyzing the data obtained through the use of semi-structured interview guide, focus group discussion (FGD), document analysis, and observation checklist. Therefore, in this study data is collected from students, teachers, school principals, vice principal, department heads, unit leaders, cluster supervisors, Wereda education experts, WEO head office, and documents analysis from rosters. After gathering the information from respondents and documents, the data is coded, organized, analyzed & finally interpreted. Then, the result and recommendation of the study is presented. Generally, this both quantitative and qualitative methods increases the validity and reliability of the given data. To manage the data presentation and report of the study, data collected from all categories of respondents' cumulative response were analyzed and interpreted through cumulative frequency, percentage and mean. Additionally, the evidences of respondents' response is attached separately at the appendix part.

3.3 Source of Data

In this study, the researcher has used two sources of data - primary and secondary. The primary data sources were school principals, vice principals, department heads, unit leaders; cluster supervisors; teachers, students of the four sample primary school cluster centers ; Wereda education experts and head of education office of Assosa Wereda. The secondary data sources were documents such as of roster, continuous assessment record keeping materials or formats, staff meeting record annual reports and records.

3.4 Population, Samples and Sampling Technique

3.4.1 Population

There are 53 primary schools in Assosa wereda in 2017/18 academic year. In this academic year the number of students enrolled in First Cycle (Grade 1 – 4) are 12,340 (5,950 Females) and second cycle (Grade 5 -8) were 9,956 (4,545 Females). Totally there are 22,296 (10,504 Females) primary school students are enrolled & were attending

classes. The number of teachers in the same academic year, First Cycle are 100 (23 Females) and Second Cycle are 5,18 (1,67 Females). Totally there are 6,18 (1,90 Females) teachers were carry out teaching and learning process in the fifty three primary schools of Assossa wereda.

All primary schools of the wereda were clustered by eight Primary School Cluster Centers namely Mengele Kutir 2, Urra, Hoha Kutir 2, Basha Buda, Hoha Kutir 4, Selga kutir 2 ,Kush Mengel and Budir. Under these eight cluster centers there were 45 satellite schools. The main purpose, of clustering the schools was for resource mobilization, and utilization, mainly for the provision of supervision support to satellite schools and improving quality of education & academic achievement by making the cluster Centers' education serve as center to share and scale up experiences among the satellite schools.

Due to the scarcity resources to conduct the research on the whole mentioned schools, the researcher has decided to undertake the study in primary school cluster centers. Moreover, the researcher believes that it is possible to generalize the result. Because the assumption is that the experiences and practices of cluster centers are shared by satellite schools with the support of cluster supervisors and it is expected that they establish experience sharing system. Therefore, the target population of the study is the eight primary school cluster centers students and teachers of the primary schools.

3.4.2 Samples and Sampling Techniques

As it is described by many scholars sampling is the process of selecting a group of subjects for a study in such a way that the individuals represent the larger group from which they were selected. It is representative portion of a population under study. Often research focuses on a large population. For practical reasons, it is only possible to include some of its members in the investigation. The researcher then has drawn a sample from the total population.

At the outset the researcher decided to take sample of the participants among the eight primary school cluster centers of Assossa Wereda that the sample were taken from the four cluster centers using random sampling. Accordingly, the samples are taken using random sampling method from the four cluster centers. Secondly, from the study population the researcher has taken the sample from the students of second cycle (Grade

5 – 8) purposive using Critical Case Sampling. Because in critical case sampling it looks at cases that will produce critical information. This method permits logical generalization and maximum application of information to other cases because if it's true of this one case, it's likely to be true of all other case (Crossman, 2017).

Therefore, grade 5 and grade 8 students were selected and filled the questionnaires. These grade level students have more experience of schooling and their maturity and stability relative to that of first cycle to understand the questionnaires. Because grade five students has at least five year experiences as a student. Whereas grade eight students at least they do have eight years experiences as a student in their learning. Due to researcher's experience, knowledge and personal judgment, the first cycle students were taken in to account that their age, maturity and attention as well as understanding to answer the questions presented with questionnaires as mentioned above might be difficult to participate in questionnaires. Though the researcher decided to include first cycle students' experience & idea about their assessment practices in Focus Group Discussions (FGD), also their teachers took part in the study. Thirdly, the researcher included all teachers, school principals and cluster supervisors in the study. Because this total population sampling is a technique where the entire population that meet the criteria, such as specific skill set, experience, etc. are included in the research being conducted. This technique it is commonly used to generate reviews of events or experiences. Besides this it is more commonly used where the number of cases being investigated is relatively small (Ilker, et al. 2016; and Crossman, 2017). Therefore, this technique helped to obtain valid, reliable and representative data on the practices and challenges of continuous assessment in classroom level. Additionally, to ensure the participants large enough in specific grade level as well as getting appropriate and sufficient data from them among the second cycle (grade 5 - 8) students of grade 5 & grade 8, the two grade levels filled the questionnaires using random sampling. The selection of the samples of students was done using stratified sampling technique. The reason is to give equal chance for male and female students of the schools. Therefore, the participants are selected proportionately following random sampling (Lottery method). Because in random sampling it is that all members of the population have an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample. Finally to decide the number of participants in the study scholars such as

Gay, 1987; Gay & Diehl, 1992, suggested that 10% of large populations and 20% of small populations as minimums. Additionally, other scholars suggest for descriptive research the sample should be 10% of population. But if the population is small then 20% may be required (Ibid).

Furthermore, Alreck & Settle (1995) state that it is seldom necessary to sample more than 10%. Therefore, using Gay's, Gay & Diehl's suggestions the sample of representative portion of population of student is determined to 10 %. The researcher has considered the number of teachers in all the four sample primary school cluster centers 62 and he decided all teachers of the sample school to participate in the study. Cluster supervisors of the schools, vice principals/unit leaders, department heads, WEO experts as well as student representatives have participated in Focus Group Discussion and school principals and head of WEO took part in interview, because of their responsibility & the position they hold. Therefore, the sample determination is mentioned below and it is described in details as follows.

3.4.2.1 The sample size determination of students

No	Primary School Cluster Centers	Number of Students G5 - G8	Sample size in each cluster centers of 10 % the population **(A)**	Share of % among the four sample cluster centers.	FGD Participant **(B)**			Total (A + B)
					G1 -G4	G5 - G8	Total	
1	Mengele Kutir 2	622	62	44.93%	12	12	24	86
2	Basha Buda	406	41	29.71%	12	12	24	65
3	Kush Mengel	234	23	16.67%	12	12	24	47
4	Budir	115	12	8.69%	12	12	24	36
Total		1377	138	100%	48	48	96	234

3.4.2.2 The sample and Participants in the questionnaires, Focus Group Discussion and interview

No	Primary School cluster centers	number of Teachers G 1 - G 8	Number of participants in Questionnaires & Focus Group Discussion				Interview Plan & participant (Principals & office head)	Total participants
			Questionnaires		Focus Group Discussion department heads, unit leaders and vice principals			
			plan	Partici-pants	plan	Partici-pants		
1	Mengele Kutir 2	25	20	14	5	5	1	20
2	Basha Buda	16	11	11	5	5	1	17
3	Kush Mengel	12	7	7	5	5	1	13
4	Budir	9	4	4	5	4	1	9
5	WEO experts	15	0	0	6	6	0	6
6	Head of WEO	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total		62	42	36	26	25	5	66

3.5. Data Gathering Instruments and Procedures

3.5.1 Data Gathering Instruments

For this study the researcher used the following instruments: observation checklists, interview, FGD, questionnaire, and document analysis to answer the four research questions. Both open ended and close ended questionnaires were used. The secondary were collected from published documents, books, annual reports and records. The following description clearly shows how and when the researcher used these instruments so as to collect the relevant data for the study.

1. QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaires were prepared for teachers and students. The researcher has prepared the questionnaires with close-ended and open-ended categories after familiarizing & collecting data from various literature. Then the questionnaires were presented to the advisor for comment. Finally the researcher tried to include the advisor's constructive comments into the questionnaires. The pilot tested questionnaires were corrected and used for data collection. The questionnaires for teachers were consisted of four parts. The first part deals with the teachers' personal information, the 2nd part consisted of items of close-ended questions related to the understanding and implementation of continuous assessment and the 3rd part consisted items with close-ended and open-ended questions about record keeping practices, whereas the 4th part was concerned with challenges encountered during the implementation of the continuous assessment in classroom. Similarly the students' questionnaires consisted of four parts. In this way the researcher tried to identify the practices of teacher implementation to the direct beneficiary of the pupils.

2. INTERVIEW

Another way of gathering data was interview. The purpose of the interview was to gather relevant information about teachers and students' feelings and implementation practices of continuous assessment, which could not be assessed properly by other instruments. To this end, the researcher purposively used interview with school principals and Wereda Education Office Head, based on their responsibility and willingness. Totally, the writer of this thesis has collected information from five responsible bodies as mentioned above. The researcher and participants were scheduled in the interview time and place together. Accordingly, the researcher conducted the interview with them by taking short note of their responses. The interview items were both structured and semi-structured.

3. Observation Checklist

Garson, 2006 and Delamont 2001 stress that classroom observation is a core instrument of collecting data from a real scene. In this study, the observation was carried out inside the classroom. Therefore the cluster supervisors tried to observe the actual classroom environment while teaching - learning is taking place for about two periods in each school in one randomly selected subject to collect factual information. After getting

permission from the school principals of each school and the teachers, the cluster supervisors observed attentively for that subject teacher. This observations were conducted in randomly selected in first cycle (Grade 1- 4) one grade level and sections were selected in lottery method were grade 4 section A, Environmental Science was seen. Also in second cycle (Grade 5 - 8) the selection was carried out in the same way as the first cycle and it was Grade 8 section A Biology that was observed. Therefore, the classroom observations were done in two days (periods) in each .grade & subject totally sixteen classroom observation were held and triangulated to the analysis and interpretation.

4. Focus Group Discussion

The decision to use focus groups among one set of participants in this study was based on the argument that," the focus groups method also allows the facilitator the flexibility to explore unanticipated issues that arise during the discussion". In order to triangulate and verify the reliability and validity of data that were not addressed by quantitative data collection tool focus group discussion was conducted. Checklist was prepared based on the basic question of the study and related issues. Totally, three focus group discussions were administered in each primary school cluster centers and one at Wereda education office with education experts. The participants in the FGD were selected purposively due to their responsibility of those 3 department heads, 1 cluster supervisor,1 vice principal/ if not unit leader of the school having five members, which are group together in one FGD session. In the other group representatives of students in each section were in the Focus Group Discussion and finally the information were used to the triangulation of research questions.

5. Document Analysis

To find out the attention was given to keep the recorded assessments, there was a great challenge to get the necessary documents in the schools. However, the researcher tried to collect data from school records such as paper works by teachers (assessment format), roster, mark list, staff meeting records, and lesson plans to substantiate the data.

3.6 Piloting

Those questionnaires prepared to teachers and students were pilot tested for validity and reliability. It was tested in schools under Assosa City Administration Education Office in two primary school cluster centers, namely Assosa and Selamber primary school cluster centers. The participants selected from each school were 8 male and 8 female teachers. The same number of students of grade 5 and grade 8 from each. Totally 32 students and 32 teachers participated in the pilot test. Accordingly the reliability statistics (chrombach alpha) asserted that the result of students and teachers were .925 and .928 respectively, and this implies that reliability is in a good position and this help the researcher to distribute the questionnaires to the study (Yalewu, 2011. P221). Moreover, to see the validity the researcher were seek information from the participants in the pilot study to determine the degree of clarity of questions and to identify problem areas that need attention. Therefore after the administration of the pilot – test, the researcher made cross check for errors and correction and then the corrected instrument were printed for data collection purpose.

3.7 Data Gathering Procedures

Data collection instruments for this study were developed and prepared on the basis of the stated research questions to examine the teachers' performance across variables. Before the data collection activities the questionnaires were first prepared in English language by considering different reviews in the area of continuous assessment. For the sake of clarity the questionnaires were translated into Amharic language and checked by language experts whether the items contain an equivalent meaning with Amharic language.

To manage the time frame properly, data gathering and classroom observation has taken place by four data collectors who were selected from Assosa Wereda Education Office whose responsibility was primary school cluster supervisor. The researcher gave a one day training on ethical consideration for the data collectors. Following this the data collectors gave a brief orientation for the participants how to fill the questionnaires and its purpose. Thereafter, the questionnaires were distributed to the respondents and

collected when they have finished filling. Interview and Focus Group Discussions were managed by the researcher himself.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

After the relevant data were collected, the processing of the data was carried out first by checking the completeness and consistency of responses of all questionnaires. Then the collected data was transformed to SPSS to be analyzed. After processing the data through edition, coding, classifying and analysis were done to ascertain the constituents of data. After the data were categorized and organized to the data descriptive statistics such as mean, percentage, and frequency were used to analyze. SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 23 was used. In addition, data obtained through different qualitative techniques (Observation, interview and Focus Group Discussions) were analyzed using thematic/content analysis to identify and strengthen implicit and explicit ideas within the data. The qualitative data were described qualitatively in narrative form. In addition the researcher's reflective analysis was used for triangulation and the details are presented below in chapter four.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

The main concern of this study was to examine the practices and challenges of the implementation of continuous assessment in primary school cluster centers of Assosa Wereda, as a result the researcher will show the solutions that should be done by all stakeholders in the education sector. Therefore, in this section the collected data through Focused Group Discussion, Interview, Classroom Observation and Document analysis were systematically analyzed, interpreted and presented in percent, frequency counts, and the mean score values of qualitatively to analyze the closed ended questionnaire & interview questions.

4.1 Background Characteristics of the Study Group

In this study, 300 (129 female) respondents were participated. These were 234 (78%) students, 36 (12%) teachers, 12(4%), department heads, 3(1%) unit leaders, 3(1%) cluster supervisors, 4(1.34%) school principals, 1(0.33%) vice principal, 1(0.33%) Wereda Education Office head and 6(2%) Wereda Education office experts. Among this, 174(58%) respondents filled the questionnaires, 121(40.33%) participated in Focus Group Discussion and 5 (1.67%) in interview giving their own answers to the study. From this one can understand that the participants are diversified group which implies, they are appropriate and possible to get sufficient information. Additionally the study were participatory from the wereda education office and at school level.

Table 1A Personal Background Information of Teachers

No	Background Questions	Classification		Respondents					
				Frequency			%		
				M	F	T	M	F	T
1.1	Respondents by Primary School Cluster Center	1	Megele Kutir 2	8	6	14	22.2	16.7	38.9
		2	Basha Buda	8	3	11	22.2	8.3	30.6
		3	KushMengel	6	1	7	16.7	2.8	19.4
		4	Budir	3	1	4	8.33	2.8	11.1
		Total		25	11	36	69.4	30.6	100
1.2	Sex	Male		25			69.4		
		Female		11			30.6		
		Total		36			100		
1.3	Age:	20-30		33			91.67		
		31-40		1			2.78		
		41-50		2			5.56		
		Above 50		0			0		
		Total		36			100		
1.4	Educational Background	Under Certificate		2			5.6		
		Certificate		4			11.1		
		Diploma		29			80.6		
		Degree		1			2.8		
		Second Degree		0			0		
		Total		36			100		

As shown above in Table 1A, when we see the background information's of teachers who participated in filling in the questionnaires according to their primary school cluster centers 36 respondents were 14(38.9%) from Mengele Kutir 2, 11(30.6%) from Basha Buda, 7(19.4%) from Kush Mengel and 4(11.1%) were from Budir primary school cluster centers. In terms of their sex category, were 25(69.4%) were male and 11(30.6%) were female teachers. When we see the age group, those between ages of 20 - 30 years were 33(91.67%), age 31- 40 were only 1(2.78 %) and above 41-50 years were 2(5.56 %). This shows that respondents between age group 20 – 30 were 91.67%, which shows that they are youth and this group is critical to strive to change if a motivating situation is created at school level. This indicate that the different group of participates can contribute to the study as a result to fill the gap of the implementation of continuous assessment.

The Education Background of the participants shows that 2(5.6%) were under certificate, Certificate 4 (11.1%) , Diploma 29(80.6%) and Degree were 1(2.8%) .This shows that even if 6(16.67%) were not holding diploma which shows in-service training is need and the rest 30(83.33%) are appropriate for the primary education teaching if they are committed to change the situation of implementing of continuous assessment.

Table 1B Personal Background Information of Teachers

No	Background Questions	Classification	Respondents	
			Frequency	%
1.5	Experience in teaching	1 – 3years	15	41.7
		4 – 6years	12	33.3
		Above 7 years	9	25
		Total	36	100
		1 – 10 periods	5	13.9
1.6	Teaching load per week in period.	11 – 20 periods	13	36.1
		21 – 30 periods	18	50
		Total	36	100
1.7	In which class level/Cycle you teach?	First Cycle	11	30.6
		Second Cycle	17	47.2
		Full Cycle (G1 – G8)	8	22.2
		Total	36	100

In Table 1B, above respondents were asked about their experience in teaching. Among them, 1 – 3 service years were 15(41.7%), 4 – 6 years were 12(33.3%) and Above 7 years teaching experience were 9(25%). This shows that from their teaching experience, they can respond to the real implementation practices and challenges they face in classroom/continuous assessment and they can help each other in the form of inbuilt supervision because of their diversities in service. Teachers were asked to explain their teaching load per week in period. Their responses show that those who teach for 1 - 10 periods were 5(13.9%) , 11 - 20 periods 13(36.1%) and 21 - 30 periods were 18(50%). Here it shows that 50/50 which are 50% of teachers experienced by holding the maximum teaching load and a vice versa. Additionally, they were asked as in which class level/Cycle they teach? First cycle (G1 - G4) were 11(30.6%), Second Cycle (G5 - G8) were 17(47.2%) and full cycle (G1 - G8) were 8(22.2%). From this almost it is possible that whole class/grade level implementation practice is incorporated.

Table 2A Teachers' answer for Preliminary/Initial questions about continuous assessment

No	Preliminary/Initial questions about the implementation of continuous assessment	Classification	Respondents	
			Frequency	%
1.8	The school teachers prepare assessment plan and Table of Specification for each subject they teach.	never (no one)	11	30.6
		some teachers	17	47.2
		All teachers	8	22.2
		Total	36	100
1.9	Have you got training on the contemporary continuous assessment	Yes	8	22.2
		No	28	77.8
		Total	36	100
1.10	If your answer is yes for question number 9, where did you get the training?	Not took training	28	77.8
		at school level	3	8.3
		at cluster level	2	5.6
		at wereda level	3	8.3
		at zonal level	0	0
		at regional level	0	0
		Total	36	100
1.11	Is there assessment manual or guideline at your school?	Yes	19	52.8
		No	17	47.2
		Total	36	100
		by the school	2	5.6
		by the wereda	10	27.8
		Zonal level (ZED)	1	2.8
		by the Region (REB)	7	19.4
		at national (MoE)	0	0
		Total	36	100
1.12	How do you judge the level of the implementation practice of Continuous Assessment in your school and its effectiveness?	Outstanding	2	5.6
		Satisfactory	6	16.7
		Need improvement	23	63.9
		Unsatisfactory	5	13.9
		Total	36	100

As shown above in Table 2A, Teachers were asked as they were prepare assessment plan specifically Table of Specification for each subject they teach? 25(69.4%)of them responds never prepare, 10(27.8%) some teachers were prepare, 1(2.8%) responded all teachers were prepare. About 69.4%) respondents were respond as teachers did not prepare Table of specification. Even if some of the respondents answered teachers prepared assessment plan and Table of Specification but the participants of all Focus

Group Discussion were agreed that teachers were not prepare Table of Specification. This shows that still continuous assessment is traditional.

Teachers were asked did you get training on the contemporary continuous assessment, out of 36 28(77.8 %), teachers said no. Among them 8(22.2%) took the training; 3 of them at school level, 3 teachers at cluster level, and 3 of them took at Wereda level. This indicates that most of the teacher did not took training on contemporary training which is difficult to manage classroom assessment. It was asked that if there is assessment manual or guideline at their school, 19 (52.8%) said yes, and 17(47.2), said no. The researcher were asked for FGD and interview participants the presence of manual & guideline even if the Wereda Education Office participants said yes we distributed a copy to all schools. But all participants of teachers, students ,school principals and cluster supervisors said there is no any manual/guideline. This shows teachers classroom practices were not supported by manual/guideline to facilitate the implementation of CA. Also they were asked to judge level of the implementation practice of contemporary continuous assessment at their school and its effectiveness, 2(5.6%) of them said outstanding, 6(16.7%) said satisfactory, 23(63.9%), said need improvement and 5(13.9%), said unsatisfactory. Almost 28(77.8) of the participant responded there is a gap and this shows the implementation practices is at low level. The responses of the respondents of the preliminary/initial questions which shows there is deficiency. Therefore, the demographic information were visible and that contribute to this study.

Table – 2B Teachers answer for Preliminary/Initial questions of continuous assessment

No	Preliminary/Initial questions about the implementation of continuous assessment	Classification	Respondents	
			Frequency	%
1.14	How does student promotion decision is done at your school?	the cutting score/Average pass rate is predetermined at the beginning of the school year and known by the pupils	0	0
		Decision made by school Committee at the end of the year	16	44.4
		Decision is made by all teachers on meeting at the end of the year	20	55.6
		Total	36	100
1.15	Does your school consider the promotion policy stated that, students should pass from one grade level to the other by scoring 50% and above?	Yes	35	97.2
		No	1	2.8
		Total	36	100

As shown in Table 2B, the students promotion decision were done at their school, 20(55.6%) of them said decision is made by all teachers on meeting at the end of the year, whereas 16(44.4%) said decision made by the school committee at the end of the year. This indicate that students were not informed the minimum requirements to full fill through the academic year this show the disagreement with the literatures. At the end they were asked did your school consider the promotion policy stated that, students should pass from one grade level to the other by scoring 50% and above?, 35(97.2%) teacher said yes. But in Focus Group Discussion and interview participants responded that in the promotion decision practice there were a decision that, students promoted to the next grade level without the above requirement even the decisions of the school committee has a criteria stated like students who score under 50% in one subject shall be pass when their average score is 48%, students who score under 50% in two subject shall be pass when their average score is 49%, and students who score under 50% in three subject shall be pass when their average score is 50% respectively. Teachers who

participate in the questionnaires were hide the real promotion decisions and the school practice. This promotion decision has a negative impact as well disagree with the Education policy intention. As presented above the respondents of this study showed that they were proper and the frontline stockholders to participate in the implementation practices and challenges of continuous assessment in primary school cluster centers. It is possible to say that the participants gave response with the real implementation practices.

Table – 3 Personal Background Information's of the Students

No	Background Questions	Classification	Respondents					
			Frequency			%		
			M	F	T	M	F	T
1.1	Respondents by school	Megele Kutir 2	34	28	62	24.64	20.29	44.93
		Basha Buda	18	23	41	13.04	16.67	29.71
		Kush Mengel	13	10	23	9.42	7.25	16.67
		Budir	7	5	12	5.07	3.62	8.69
		Total	72	66	138	52.17	47.83	100
1.2	Sex		72	66	138	52.18%	47.82	100
1.3	Age	11 – 14			82			59.42
		15 – 20			50			36.23
		above 21			6			4.35
		total			138			100
1.4	Grade	Grade 5	36	40	76	26.09	28.99	55.07
		Grade 8	36	26	62	26.09	18.83	44.93

As shown above in Table 3, we can see that the respondents by their primary school cluster center 62(44.93%) were from Megele Kutir 2, 41(29.71%) Basha Buda , 23(16.67%) Kush Mengel and at Budir were 12(8.69%). This ratio is according to the number of students and taken proportionally. When we see the respondents by sex, 72(52.18%) were male and 66(47.82%) were female. This shows even if there is gender gap almost 47.82% female students were participated. The respondents age category shows that those between ages 11 – 14 were 82(59.42%), age 15 – 20 were 50(36.23%) and above 21 age were 6(4.35%). This shows that the respondents age group, 59.42% were appropriate to the grade level and the rest respondents seem overage students because of their maturity it facilitate the study to respond and judge the implementation practice of continuous assessment in their school. The respondents' education

background, grade 5 were 76(55.07%) and Grade 8 were 62(44.93%). This show that almost at both grade level sufficient number of students were participated proportionally.

Table 4: Student' answer for Preliminary/Initial questions of continuous assessment

No	Preliminary/Initial questions about the implementation of continuous assessment	Classification	Frequency	%
1.5	Teachers prepare Table of Specification for each subject they teach.	never	106	76.8
		some teachers	23	16.7
		All teachers	9	6.52
		Total	138	100
1.6	Have you got information on the contemporary continuous assessment	Yes	66	47.8
		No	72	52.2
		Total	138	100
1.7	Is there any assessment manual or guide at your school?	Yes	31	22.5
		No	107	77.5
		Total	138	100
1.8	How do you judge the level of the implementation practice of Continuous Assessment in your school and its effectiveness?	Outstanding	21	15.2
		Satisfactory	7	5.1
		Need improvement	33	23.9
		Unsatisfactory	77	55.8
		Total	138	100
1.9	promotion decision is done	9.1)At the beginning of the school year	2	1.45
		9.2)by Committee at the end of the year	28	20.3
		9.3) by all teacher on meeting at the end of the year	108	78.3
		Total	138	100
1.10	Considering the promotion policy that, students should pass from one grade level to the other by scoring 50% and above?	Yes	79	57.3
		No	59	42.8
		Total	138	100

As shown above in Table 4, Students were asked as teachers were prepare assessment plan and Table of Specification for each subject they teach among 138 participants as shown above in the table 106(76.81%) respondents answer by saying never(no one) teachers prepared as well as in each primary school cluster center the result of Focus

Group Discussion were show that the Wereda Education Office experts and the head of the education office explained that some schools have assessment plan. But the rest the four school Focus Group Discussion participants and the principals in the interview explained as well as agree that as teachers did not have assessment plan as well Table of specification even they are not familiar to the issue. Next to this they were asked as they were you got information on the contemporary continuous assessment (Assessment as Learning, Assessment for Learning and Assessment of Learning)? The response shows that 66(47.83%) said yes we get information but 72(52.17%) said they were not informed about contemporary continuous assessment this shows that most student are not familiar even in the Focus Group Discussion session almost they said no awareness about the three types of continuous assessment (Assessment as Learning, Assessment for Learning and Assessment of Learning). This shows that still continuous assessment practiced traditionally.

Thirdly, they were asked, if there was any assessment manual or guide at their school? Even if 31(22.5%) respondents answer saying "Yes", the rest 107(77.5%) answered no. Additionally, among the five interview participants only the Wereda Education Head Office and the Wereda Education experts who participated in FGDs explained as they distributed a copy of national assessment manual for each school, the four school principals (Mengel Kutir 2, Basha Buda, Kush Mengel and Budir primary school cluster centers) principals in interview said that there is no manual/guideline at school level to facilitate the contemporary continuous assessment and related issues. Moreover department heads, unit leaders, and cluster supervisors agreed as there is no manual at each school.

The participants of Mengel Kutir 2, Basha Buda, Kush Mengel and Budir primary school cluster centers of students representatives the FGDs participants said there is no assessment manual even they did not have any information about the guideline. The fourth question asked was "How do you judge the level of the implementation practice of continuous assessment in your school and its effectiveness?" Out of 138 respondents, 77(55.8%) responded unsatisfactory and 33(23.9%) answered saying it needs improvement. This shows at the poor implementation practices of contemporary

continuous assessment at school level. The fifth question was “How does student promotion decision is done at your school?” 28(20.2%) responded that decision is made by school Committee at the end of the year and 108(78.26%) said that all teacher on meeting at the end of the academic year. This shows that the promotion average cutting score/mark is not predetermined at the beginning of the school year and not known by the pupils. The Focus Group Discussion made by all group showed that the decision was made at the end of the academic year. The sixth question to the student was “Does your school consider the promotion policy stated that a students should pass from one grade level to the other by scoring 50% and above in each subject?” Their response show that 79(57.25%), said “Yes”, 59(42.75%) said no. Nearly half of the students do not agree. In the FGDs session said “No” because students who score below 50% was promoted to the next grade level by committee decision.

4.2 Analysis of the Result

In this study both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods were used to generate, examine and analyze the information in which the researcher obtained from diverse group of respondents. Therefore the written questionnaires were collected from teachers and students. The Focus Group Discussions were made with Wereda Education Office experts, department heads in each school, vice principal, unit leaders and cluster supervisors, students and interview with school principals and Wereda Education Office Head and classroom observation were collected. These all, collected data were organized, analyzed and interpreted. Then after the results are presented as per research questions respectively below.

To answer the first question, respondents were asked first - “How do teachers use and apply guiding principles and technical concepts of continuous assessment?”, Second – “ How often do classroom teachers carry out the assessment methods or strategies in their classroom assessment practice?” Third – “How do you feel or judge that specific elements, essential steps and procedures, in assessment for learning and as learning are addressed in your classroom teaching and learning practice?” and fourth – “How does assessment plan is addressed in their school at classroom level?” Therefore, the result of the first question is presented as follows:

4.2.1 The status of the implementation practices of continuous assessment in primary school cluster centers of Assosa Wereda.

As it is mentioned in chapter one, the overall objective of this study is to examine the practices and challenges of the implementation of continuous assessment in primary school cluster centers of Assosa Wereda. The results are presented as follows:

When the assessment principles are fully understood and observed by all teachers, they will guide the collection of meaningful information that will help inform instructional decisions with respect to individual students and groups of students that have profound implications for them, promote student engagement, and improve student learning.

How do teachers use and apply these guiding principles and technical concepts of continuous assessment in developing and analyzing their classroom assessments on a daily and hourly basis to improve students' performance and ensure effective implementation of these principles.

Table 5: Response on the Guiding Principles of Continuous Assessment

No	Guiding Principles of Continuous Assessment. **Assessment in our classroom is:**		Levels of Agreement/frequency/					total	SD	mean
			Strongly Agree	Agree	undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree			
1.1	transparent for all students	N	0	31	6	118	19	174	0.88	2.28
		%	0	17.8	3.4	67.8	10.9	100		
1.2	support all students, including those with special education needs	N	5	22	7	127	13	174	0.89	2.3
		%	2.9	12.6	4	73	7.5	100		
1.3	carefully planned to relate to the curriculum expectations and learning goals	N	1	34	5	104	30	174	0.99	2.26
		%	0.6	19.5	2.9	59.8	17.2	100		
1.4	communicated clearly to students at the beginning of the school year & throughout the school year	N	4	29	6	115	20	174	0.96	2.32
		%	2.3	16.7	3.4	66.1	11.5	100		
1.5	ongoing, varied in nature, provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate the full range of their learning;	N	2	43	9	107	13	174	0.98	2.51
		%	1.1	24.7	5.2	61.5	7.5	100		
1.6	provides ongoing descriptive feedback that meaningful, and timely to support improved learning and achievement;	N	1	38	5	111	19	174	0.96	2.37
		%	0.6	21.8	2.9	63.8	10.9	100		
1.7	develops students' self-assessment skills to enable them to assess their own learning and plan next steps for their learning.	N	0	44	6	97	27	174	1.03	2.39
		%	0	25.3	3.4	55.7	.15.5	100		
									Average mean	2.34

NB. The range of the level of agreement is; 1.00 - 1.49 Strongly Disagree, 1.50 - 2.49 Disagree, 2.50 - 3.49 undecided, 3.50 - 4.49 Agree and 4.50 - 5.00 Strongly Agree (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

In Table 5, above respondents were asked how do teachers use and apply the guiding principles and technical concepts of continuous assessment in developing and analyzing their classroom assessments on a daily basis to improve students' performance and ensure effective implementation of these principles. As can be seen in Table 5, among the seven guiding principles of continuous assessment only the fifths principle, "Assessment in the classroom is ongoing, varied in nature, and administered over a period of time to provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate the full range of their learning were scored mean value of 2.51. The rest six guiding principles was scored below average

mean. Those principles; “Assessment in the school develops students’ self-assessment skills to enable them to assess their own learning and plan next steps for their learning “got a mean value of 2.39. “Assessment in our class provides ongoing descriptive feedback that is clear, specific, meaningful, and timely to support improved learning and achievement” with a mean value of 2.37. Assessment in our school is communicated clearly to students and parents at the beginning of the school year & throughout the school year got a mean value of 2.32. Assessment in our school support all students, including those with special education needs with a mean value of 2.30 Assessment in the classroom is transparent for all students got a mean value of 2.28 and assessment in a classroom is carefully planned to relate to the curriculum expectations and learning goals were with a mean value of 2.26. This shows that low degree of attention given to implement and apply the six principles that scored below average mean (2.5). Moreover, when we see in general, the implementation practice of these guiding principles and technical concepts of continuous assessment in developing and analyzing their classroom assessments lacks attention. This depicts that, the existing school principals, cluster supervisors and classroom teachers may not be in a position to perform, implement and apply those guiding principles and technical concepts of continuous assessment that determine the success of overall students’ achievement in the Wereda as expected from the school principals, cluster supervisors teachers and students. This indicated, teachers and students did not applying continuous assessment principles in their classroom teaching and learning session. Therefore, their practices were poor and the level of implementation is at low level.

Table 6A The Frequency of the Application of Different Assessment Methods

No	Assessment Methods or Strategies		Always	Often	Some times	Rarely	Never	total	SD	Mean
2.1	Teacher Observation	N	18	12	61	79	4	174	0.99	2.78
		%	10.3	6.9	35.1	45.4	2.3	100		
2.2	Checklists	N	5	14	35	89	31	174	0.94	2.27
		%	2.9	8	20.1	51.1	17.8	100		
2.3	Oral Tests	N	6	10	37	80	41	174	0.98	2.2
		%	3.4	5.7	21.3	46	23.6	100		
2.4	Questionnaires	N	5	8	35	77	49	174	0.96	2.1
		%	2.9	4.6	20.1	44.3	28.2	100		
2.5	Project work	N	5	23	60	69	17	174	0.94	2.6
		%	2.9	13.2	34.5	39.7	9.8	100		
2.6	Group Work/Group discussion	N	25	42	66	38	3	174	1.02	3.28
		%	14.4	24.1	37.9	21.8	1.7	100		
2.7	Homework completion	N	12	39	67	55	1	174	1.02	3.28
		%	6.9	22.4	38.5	31.6	0.6	100		
2.8	Creative assignment	N		10	22	83	59	174	0.83	1.9
		%		5.7	12.6	47.7	33.9	100		
2.9	Written Tests	N	24	47	61	41	1	174	1	3.3
		%	13.8	27	35.1	23.6	0.57	100		
2.1	Recap exercises	N	21	39	52	59	3	174	1.06	3.09
		%	12.1	22.4	29.9	33.9	1.72	100		
2.11	Portfolios of student	N	2	2	5	22	143	174	0.68	1.26
		%	1.15	1.15	2.87	12.6	82.2	100		
2.12	Quizzes	N	0	3	62	105	4	174	0.56	2.37
		%	0	1.72	35.6	60.3	2.3	100		
2.13	Teacher-designed tasks	N	9	17	60	84	4	174	0.88	2.67
		%	5.17	9.77	34.5	48.3	2.3	100		
2.14	Anecdotal note taking	N	28	54	56	35	1	174	1	3.42

NB. The range of the level of agreement is; 1.00 - 1.49 Never, 1.50 - 2.49 Rarely, 2.50 - 3.49 some times, 3.50 - 4.49 Often and 4.50 - 5.00 Always.

Table 6B: The Frequency of the Application of Different Assessment Methods

No	Assessment Methods or Strategies		Always	Often	Some times	Rarely	Never	total	SD	Mean
2.15	Conferences /Dialogue	N	2	9	17	87	59	174	0.86	1.9
		%	1.15	5.17	9.77	50	33.9	100		
2.16	Self-assessment	N	3	10	11	39	111	174	0.96	1.59
		%	2	6	6	22	64	100		
2.17	Peer-assessment	N	0	2	12	46	114	174	0.68	1.44
		%	0	1.15	6.9	26.4	65.5	100		
2.18	Class work	N	27	51	57	38	1	174	1.01	3.37
		%	15.5	29.3	32.8	21.8	0.58	100		
2.19	Standardized tests	N	1	14	59	94	6	174	0.72	2.48
		%	0.57	8.05	33.9	54	3.45	100		
2.2	Classroom activities	N	39	24	48	57	6	174	1.21	3.19
		%	22.4	13.8	27.6	32.8	3.45	100		
2.21	Worksheet	N	6	8	45	66	49	174	1.01	2.17
		%	3.45	4.6	25.9	37.9	28.2	100		
2.22	Class presentation	N	11	15	40	70	38	174	1.11	2.37
		%	6.32	8.62	23	40.2	21.8	100		
2.23	Question and Answer	N	23	15	84	48	4	174	0.99	3.03
		%	13.2	8.62	48.3	27.6	2.3	100		
2.24	Board work	N	46	24	45	50	9	174	1.27	3.28
		%	26.4	13.8	25.9	28.7	5.17	100		
2.25	Exam (mid/Final).	N	83	25	34	31	1	174	1.2	3.91
		%	47.7	14.4	19.5	17.8	0.57	100		
2.26	Interview	N	5	8	35	59	67	174	1.02	1.99
		%	2.87	4.6	20.1	33.9	38.5	100		
								Average mean		2.59

NB. The range of the level of agreement is; 1.00 - 1.49 Never, 1.50 - 2.49 Rarely, 2.50 - 3.49 some times, 3.50 - 4.49 Often, and 4.50 - 5.00 Always.

As can be seen from Table 6A in the previous page and 6B above, respondents were asked how often they carry out different tools as assessment methods or strategies in their classroom assessment practice?" Mean scores of 3.91 showed exam (mid/final), anecdotal note taking 3.42, class work 3.37, written tests 3.30, group work/group discussion, homework completion and board work mean value of 3.28, classroom activities 3.19, recap exercises 3.09, question and answers 3.03.

These ten assessment strategies were used more than the other. The following three assessment strategies scored near to the average mean, i.e. teacher observation 2.78, teacher-designed tasks 2.67 and project work 2.60.

As the mean values indicated above, the rest 13 assessment strategies 50% of the strategies were below average mean value(2.5), especially Portfolios of student work 1.26, peer-assessment 1.44, self - assessment 1.59, conferences /dialogue 1.90, creative assignment 1.90, and interview 1.99. These six assessment strategies were very vital to make the assessment effective as well as to enhance and empower students to improve their achievement. But these strategies did not get more attention. From this analysis, it is possible to understand that the application of assessment strategies got low attention and teachers practices indicated that mostly they use traditional assessment tools at school level.

The application of the following specific elements, essential steps and procedures, in assessment for learning and assessment as learning that is required to produce the desired results in classroom teaching and learning process. They were asked “How do you feel or judge that these issues are addressed in your classroom teaching and learning practice?“ and Indicate their level of agreement.

Table 7A: The Applications of Issues of Assessment for Learning and as Learning

No	Issues of Assessment for and as Learning		Levels of Agreement					total	SD	Mean
			Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree			
3.1	Learning intentions and success criteria is explained to the students	N		48		64	62	174	1.2	2.2
		%		27.6		36.8	35.6	100		
3.2	Continuous feedback is given to all individual students r	N	9	30	1	96	38	174	1.14	2.29
		%	5.17	17.2	0.57	55.2	21.8	100		
3.3	Questioning strategies are applicable in every class	N	1	93	1	50	29	174	1.23	2.93
		%	0.57	53.5	0.57	28.7	16.7	100		
3.4	Peer and Self-assessment are applicable by all teachers in the assessment activities	N		55		78	41	174	1.16	2.4
		%		31.6		44.8	23.6	100		
3.5	Teachers try to balance the three components of assessment	N	3	48	1	62	60	174	1.24	2.26
		%	1.72	27.6	0.57	35.6	34.5	100		
3.6	Teachers plan assessment concurrently and integrate it seamlessly with instruction	N		89		28	57	174	1.38	2.7
		%		51.2		16.1	32.8	100		
3.7	Teachers share learning goals with students at the outset of learning	N		51		64	59	174	1.21	2.25
		%		29.3		36.8	33.9	100		

Table 7B: The Applications of Issues of Assessment for Learning and as Learning

No	Issues of Assessment for and as Learning		Levels of Agreement					total	SD	Mean
			Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree			
3.8	Teachers gather information about student learning before, during, and at or near the end of a period of instruction	N	1	74	1	45	53	174	1.32	2.57
		%	0.57	42.5	0.57	25.9	30.5	100		
3.9	Use assessment to inform instruction, guide next steps, and help students	N		75		21	78	174	1.42	2.41
		%		43.1		12.1	44.8	100		
3.1	Analyze and interpret evidence of learning	N		89	2	23	60	174	1.39	2.69
		%		51.2	1.15	13.2	34.5	100		
3.11	The feedback of teachers encourage all student in the class.	N	2	62		53	57	174	1.3	2.42
		%	1.15	35.6		30.5	32.8	100		
3.12	Teachers help students to develop skills of peer and self-assessment	N		70		30	74	174	1.38	2.38
		%		40.2		17.2	42.5	100		
									Average Mean	2.46

As can be seen in the previous page Table 7A and 7B above, the analysis shows that questioning strategies are applicable and scored a mean value of 2.93, plan assessment concurrently and integrate it seamlessly with instruction 2.7, analyze and interpret evidence of learning scored 2.69, gather information about student learning before, during, and at or near the end of a period of instruction, using a variety of assessment strategies and tool scored a mean value of 2.57 from the explained 12 issues of assessment for and as learning only, the above 4 issues scored above average score.

The other eight issues of assessment as learning and assessment for learning scored under average mean. Those issues, which were not applicable well were the following:

Learning intentions (sharing learning goals) and success criteria which was explained to the students. So that pupils understand what they are trying to learn, why and what is expected of them scored 2.2. During classroom observation, this has been true that the

issue was not practiced in classroom teaching. It seems, daily lesson objectives and assessment criteria are secret to students. The other issues that did not get attention in balancing Assessment – teachers try to balance the three components of assessment (Assessment as Learning, Assessment for Learning and Assessment of Learning). Continuous feedback is given to all individual students about the quality of their work and what they can do to make it better scored 2.29. Additionally, in classroom observation, the type of immediate feedback teachers use some encouraging words like very good, good, clever, lion, clapping hands to those who did good work used by teachers.

Their practice has been still a traditional one as earlier. It was observed that teachers were use negative feedback which makes students frustrate & demoralize. Such as you are not right, no one answered all questions. You are lazy. Did I teach you like this?, you! If there is no answer, am I saying like this? This shows that feedback not properly used by teachers. The other issue was helping students to develop skills of peer and self-assessment which scored 2.38, peer and self-assessment – are also applicable by all teachers in the assessment activities, to enable pupils to recognize success in their own and others' work and to focus on how they are learning as well as what they are learning whose score was a mean value of 2.4. Use of assessment to inform instruction, guide next steps, and help students monitor their progress towards achieving their learning goals was rated to 2.41 and give and receive specific and timely descriptive feedback about student learning and the feedback encourage all student in the class got a mean value of 2.42.

In general as shown above average mean value score was 2.46 which is below average. So specific elements, essential steps and procedures, in assessment for learning and as learning were not addressed and practiced in the contemporary continuous assessment. Recently, assessment for learning and assessment as learning had pivotal role in continuous assessment. Both must be embedded as part of normal classroom practice, which improve planning and delivery of learning. But the analysis showed this has not been recognized by primary school teachers.

An assessment plan is very vital to teaching learning process to improve learners' performance. How does assessment plan is addressed in the school and at classroom level? was the question raised and the responses showed the following:

Table 8A: Key Issues Addressed in the Assessment Plan

No	Key issue addressed in the assessment plan		Levels of Agreement					total	SD	Mean
			Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree			
4.1	Teachers plan assessment concurrently and integrate it seamlessly with instruction that match learning expectations	N		70	1	25	78	174	1.39	2.36
		%		40.2	0.57	14.4	44.8	100		
4.2	Criteria and standards are clearly defined and help students know what is expected .	N	4	63	1	61	45	174	1.28	2.54
		%	2.3	36.2	0.57	35.1	25.9	100		
4.3	Assessments for learning were planned as part of the instructional process and guide in the determining of instructional next steps	N	2	65		36	71	174	1.37	2.37
		%	1.15	37.4		20.7	40.8	100		
4.4	Diagnostic assessment is planned, and teachers gather data about student interests, preferences, prior knowledge before instruction begins	N	5	55	1	56	57	174	1.31	2.4
		%	2.9	31.6	0.6	32.2	32.8	100		
4.5	Teachers provide a calendar or timetable for classroom assessment	N	12	71	3	35	53		1.43	2.74
		%	6.9	40.8	1.72	20.1	30.5			
4.6	Teachers explain to their students the assessment methods to be used and provide a rationale for their chosen assessment methods	N	12	38	1	71	52	174	1.3	2.35
		%	6.9	21.8	0.57	40.8	29.9	100		
4.7	Teachers plan the way of assigning average grade/marking methods that clarify planning for evaluation & the weight of continuous and summative assessment	N		50		51	73	174	1.25	2.16
		%		28.7	29.3	42	100			

Table 8B: Key Issues Addressed in the Assessment Plan

No	Key issue addressed in the assessment plan		Levels of Agreement					total	SD	Mean
			Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree			
4.8	Teachers describe how and when requirements for record-keeping and quality assurance processes will be met	N		83		40	51	174	1.33	2.66
		%		47.7		23	29.3	100		
4.9	Teachers describe how the assessments are to be administered, taking account of practical issues	N	10	82	1	21	60	174	1.47	2.78
		%	5.75	47.1	0.57	12.1	34.5	100		
4.10	Teachers prepare/plan the table of specification/test construction to follow, the number of items, levels of difficulty, and levels in the Bloom's Taxonomy as basis for their test construction	N	6	64	1	21	82	174	1.46	2.37
		%	3.45	36.8	0.57	12.1	47.1	100		
4.11	Teachers have experiences of making Item Analysis (Item Difficulty & Item Discrimination), to get more information on each question, to determine retention, deletion, or review and discus with their student	N	3	52	1	54	64	174	1.28	2.29
		%	1.72	29.9	0.57	31	36.8	100		
4.12	The school/teachers have plan to communicate with parents & community about student performance, so that it is discussed as it is planned.	N	1	54		47	72		1.29	2.22
		%	0.57	31		27	41.4			
4.13	Teachers use assessment results for future planning.	N	6	78	2	25	63	174	1.44	2.65
		%	3.45	44.8	1.15	14.4	36.2	100		
4.14	Teachers give attention, planning to assess higher order thinking skills in test and final exam.		1	61	3	35	74	174	1.35	2.31
		%	0.57	35.1	1.72	20.1	42.5	100		
									Average mean	2.44

As can see in Table 8A in the previous page and 8B above, respondents were asked to respond to the question," How does assessment plan is addressed in their school and at classroom level?" They responded as follows; Teachers describe how the assessments are to be administered, taking in to account the practical issues which scored 2.78. The next issue "Teachers provide a calendar or timetable for classroom assessment" scored 2.74, and criteria

and standards are clearly defined and help students know what is expected" score 2.54, but in the classroom observation teachers did not clarify criteria. Even the lesson objectives were not told to the students. Teachers describe how the requirements for record-keeping and quality assurance processes will be met, mean value of 2.66 and teachers use assessment results for future planning. Scored, 2.65.

The rest ten issues mentioned above about assessment plan scored under average mean value. These were on teachers plan the way of assigning average grade/marking methods that clarify planning for evaluation & the weight of continuous and summative assessment was 2.16. The school/teachers have plans to communicate with parents and community about student performance, so that it is discussed as it is planned scoring 2.22. Teachers have experiences of making item Analysis (Item Difficulty & Item Discrimination), to get more information on each question, and to determine retention, deletion, or review and to discus with their student scored 2.29, teachers give attention, planning to assess higher order thinking skills in test and final exam 2.31respectively. Teachers explain to their students about the assessment methods to be used and provide a rationale for their chosen assessment methods is 2.35. Teachers plan assessment concurrently and integrate it seamlessly with instruction that matches learning expectations was 2.36. Assessments for learning was planned as part of the instructional process and guide in the determining of instructional next steps and teachers prepare/plan the table of specification for test construction to follow, determine the number of items, levels of difficulty, and levels in the Bloom's Taxonomy as basis for their test construction score the same score value i.e. 2.37. Diagnostic assessment is planned, and teachers gather data about students' interests, preferences, prior knowledge before instruction begins were scored mean value of 2.4. In general in this analysis, the result showed that the assessment planning practices on average mean was 2.44. For proper implementation of the issues of contemporary continuous assessment planning is the first start and step. But the result show deficiency of assessment plan due to this reason the planning practice is poor and it is at low level of implementation.

Therefore, in the above analysis the result indicates that the status of the implementation practices of continuous assessment in primary school cluster centers of Assosa Wereda has not been satisfactory mainly for traditional practices were more dominant than the issues of

contemporary continuous assessment. This shows that it lacks attention from all concerned bodies in the education sector. So the level of the implementation practice is at low level.

4.2.2 The Perception of Teachers about Continuous Assessment Information Record Keeping, Grading & Reporting Practices in the Primary School Cluster Centers of Assosa Wereda.

The second research question was on the perception of teachers about continuous assessment information record keeping, grading & Reporting practices in the primary school luster centers of Assosa Wereda. To understand and judge their perception on continuous assessment record keeping practices the above question were asked to the respondents and the analysis and its interpretation are presented below:

Table 9A: Responses on the Perceptions of Continuous Assessment Record Keeping

No	Issues of Record keeping in classroom assessment		Levels of Agreement					Total	SD	Mean
			Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree			
1.1	help measure and evaluate higher-order skills	N	69	65	19	13	8	174	1.11	4
		%	39.7	37.4	10.9	7.47	4.6	100		
1.2	help clarify vague, fuzzy goals	N	55	70	9	32	8	174	1.21	3.76
		%	31.6	40.2	5.17	18.4	4.6	100		
1.3	help students understand expectations	N	60	72	19	14	9	174	1.11	3.92
		%	34.5	41.4	10.9	8.05	5.17	100		
1.4	help students self-improve	N	74	63	17	8	12	174	1.16	4.03
		%	42.5	36.2	9.77	4.6	6.9	100		

Table 9B: Responses on the Perceptions of Continuous Assessment Record Keeping

No	Issues of Record keeping in classroom assessment		Levels of Agreement					Total	SD	Mean
			Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree			
1.5	can inspire better student performance.	N	60	71	17	21	5	174	1.09	3.92
		%	34.5	40.8	9.77	12.1	2.87	100		
1.6	improves feedback to students	N	61	76	14	17	6	174	1.07	3.97
		%	35.1	43.7	8.05	9.77	3.45	100		
1.7	Record keeping makes scoring easier and faster	N	69	60	15	19	11	174	1.22	3.9
		%	39.7	34.5	8.62	10.9	6.32	100		
1.8	makes scoring more unbiased.	N	63	65	18	18	10	174	1.18	3.88
		%	36.2	37.4	10.3	10.3	5.75	100		
1.9	reduces arguments with students	N	63	61	16	17	17	174	1.3	3.78
		%	36.2	35.1	9.2	9.77	9.77	100		
1.10	improves feedback to students and teachers	N	63	62	11	29	9	174	1.24	3.81
		%	36.2	35.6	6.32	16.7	5.17	100		
1.11	improves providing diagnostic information about student strengths and weaknesses	N	71	72	9	15	7	174	1.08	4.06
		%	40.8	41.4	5.17	8.62	4.02	100		
1.12	can help the teacher make daily instructional decisions	N	46	87	11	23	7	174	1.09	3.82
		%	26.4	50	6.32	13.2	4.02	100		

Table 9C: Responses on the Perceptions of Continuous Assessment Record Keeping

No	Issues of Record keeping in classroom assessment		Levels of Agreement					Total	SD	Mean
			Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree			
1.13	the scoring procedures are identified for each outcome	N	77	58	20	9	10	174	1.13	4.05
		%	44.3	33.3	11.5	5.17	5.75	100		
1.14	Scoring procedures will produce adequate information	N	65	67	11	20	11	174	1.21	3.89
		%	37.4	38.5	6.32	11.5	6.32	100		
1.15	Where data will be collected is identified	N	64	62	15	19	14	174	1.26	3.82
		%	36.8	35.6	8.62	10.9	8.05	100		
1.16	The purpose of assessment is to monitor students' learning progress and to motivate students	N	66	73	13	17	5	174	1.05	4.02
		%	37.9	42	7.47	9.77	2.87	100		
1.17	Student effort should be considered when assigning student grades	N	72	53	11	24	14	174	1.32	3.83
		%	41.4	30.5	6.32	13.8	8.05	100		
1.18	Giving individualized comments for student learning is more important than giving grades	N	71	60	11	19	13	174	1.26	3.9
		%	40.8	34.5	6.32	10.9	7.47	100		
									Average Mean	3.91

In the previous two pages Table 9A, 9B and Table 9C above, respondents were asked to explain their personal perceptions record keeping of classroom assessment. The analysis shows that each issue of record keeping got mean values as follows: record keeping in classroom assessment improves providing diagnostic information about student strengths and weaknesses got 4.06; record keeping in classroom assessment the scoring procedures are identified for each outcome scored 4.05, and record keeping in classroom assessment help students self – improve got 4.03. The purpose of assessment is to monitor students' learning progress and to motivate students got 4.02, record keeping in classroom assessment help measure and evaluate higher-order skills scored 4.00. These were the highest mean scores and the minimum mean score were on record keeping reduces arguments with students which

was 3.78. In general and the average mean score is 3.91. Therefore, the result indicated that respondents' perceptions about the necessity of record keeping is nice and they accepted it positively. But in the reality record keeping practices in continuous assessment was not at the level of satisfaction. Their practices were poor, which lacks attention.

Table 10A: Responses on Tools Used in Classroom Assessment Record Keeping

No	Tools used to record keeping in classroom assessment		Always	Often	Some times	Rarely	Never	Total	S. D	Mean
2.1	Individual student portfolios/Students record sheets	N		4	6	17	147	174	0.62	1.24
		%		2.3	3.45	9.77	84.5	100		
2.2	Teacher's portfolio	N	8	11	15	45	95	174	1.13	1.8
		%	4.6	6.32	8.62	25.9	54.6	100		
2.3	Teacher/student conference anecdotal records	N	6	8	45	68	47	174	1	2.18
		%	3.45	4.6	25.9	39.1	27	100		
2.4	Observation Checklists	N	13	24	57	49	31	174	1.15	2.65
		%	7.47	13.8	32.8	28.2	17.8	100		
2.5	Narrative reports by teachers and students	N	8	13	47	56	50	174	1.1	2.27
		%	4.6	7.5	27	32.2	28.7	100		

Table 10B: Responses on Tools Used in Classroom Assessment Record Keeping

No	Tools used to record keeping in classroom assessment		Always	Often	Some times	Rarely	Never	Total	S. D	Mean
2.6	Mark list/Mark book	N	74	47	39	13	1	174	1	4.03
		%	42.5	27	22.4	7.47	0.57	100		
2.7	Roster	N	70	47	45	11	1	174	0.99	4
		%	40.2	27	25.9	6.32	0.57	100		
2.8	Writing note books/anecdotal record	N	23	28	37	51	35	174	1.31	2.73
		%	13.2	16.1	21.3	29.3	20.1	100		
2.9	Notes on teacher/student/parent conferences	N	12	14	49	66	33	174	1.1	2.46
		%	6.9	8.05	28.2	37.9	19	100		
2.10	Oral responses (retelling stories, sequencing, and summarizing)	N	29	24	55	50	16	174	1.21	3
		%	16.7	13.8	31.6	28.7	9.2	100		
2.11	Reading skill portfolio	N	7	6	15	18	128	174	1.06	1.54
		%	4.02	3.45	8.62	10.3	73.6	100		
2.12	Class unit checklist	N	17	15	38	63	41	174	1.22	2.45
		%	9.77	8.62	21.8	36.2	23.6	100		
2.13	Report Cards	N	73	43	30	22	6	174	1.18	3.89
		%	42	24.7	17.2	12.6	3.4	100		
									Average Mean	2.63

As can be seen in the previous page Table 10A, Table 10B above, respondents were asked on which classroom record keeping tools were applicable and included in assessment process. The mean values show that mark list/mark book got 4.03, Roster 4.00, Report Cards 3.89, Oral responses (retelling stories, sequencing, and summarizing) 3.00 which that got attention and these by their nature they were summative type record keeping practices.

But the more important record keeping tools which scored under the average mean showed low mean values. In the implementation practice the following tools lack attention by the school and teachers were student portfolios/Students' record sheets which scored 1.24, reading skill portfolio 1.54, teacher's portfolio 1.80, teacher/student conference anecdotal records 2.18, narrative reports by teachers and students 2.27, Class unit checklist 2.45, and notes on teacher/student/parent conferences 2.46. The first three were not implemented properly to improve the record keeping practices in continuous assessment.

Additionally, during classroom observation teachers were asked to show their record keeping tools. The above mentioned formative assessment results were not found being practice by teachers. They were using a uniformly prepared format by the Wereda Education Office to record marks/scores in number where the format has a negative impact on contemporary continuous assessment and the shift to ongoing formative assessment from summative. Attendance and students' discipline problem record books were utilized by teachers. Therefore, the result showed that the perception for record keeping practices were good and it was seen as positive but in practice the record keeping exercise was the same as before and still it was traditional form. Recently, students' learning progress was recorded using various events and information with various tools, to show accumulate learning progress & evidences throughout the year. The classroom observation showed that their recorded practices were very poor because the observed teachers were not recording any narrative progress and they were not using different tools of record keeping, what is observed is that they use a ready-made format, which put grades/marks but no information as how that mark is achieved.

Therefore, for the above two question, the result showed that the perception for record keeping practices were in a very good position and it was positive but in practice, the record keeping was the same as before, which was seen traditional and poor record keeping practice.

4.2.3 The Extent has classroom exam and Continuous Assessment Results Contributed for Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE) and the Promotion Policy in Primary School Cluster Centers of Assosa Wereda.

As explained above the third research question was set on the contribution of continuous assessment and teacher made exam for PSLCE result aid to promote to the secondary school, grade nine. Therefore, to see this issue critically, document analysis was made from the school roster and PSLCE result. The analysis of the roster and the final result interpretation is presented as below.

Table 11: Continuous Assessment and Teacher Made Exam Result Analysis of Grade 8th

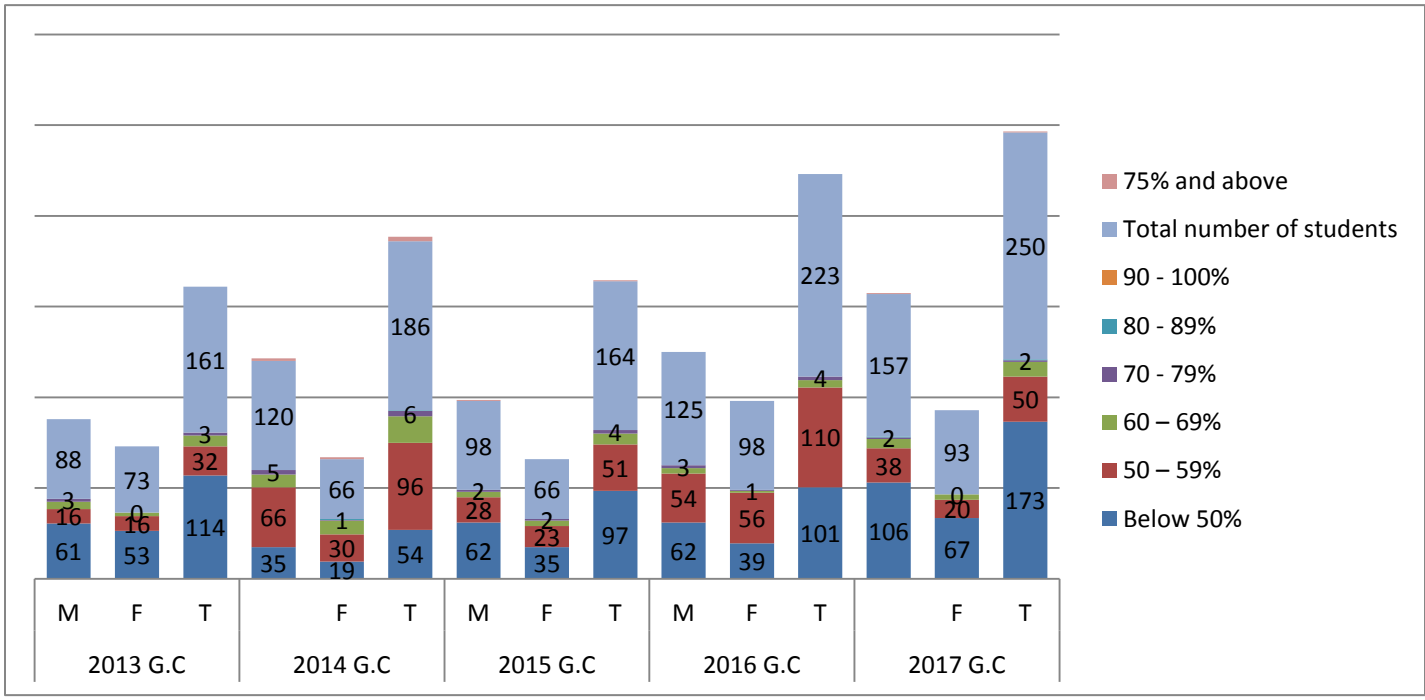
Demonstration of Performance in Relation to Continuous Assessment and Teacher made Exam Results of Grade 8th students of the four primary school cluster centers (of the year 2013 – 2017.															
Marking/ Grading	2013			2014			2015			2016			2017		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Below 50%	61	53	114	35	19	54	62	35	97	62	39	101	106	67	173
50 – 59%	16	16	32	66	30	96	28	23	51	54	56	110	38	20	58
60 – 69%	8	4	12	14	15	29	6	6	12	6	2	8	10	6	16
70 - 79%	3	-	3	5	1	6	2	2	4	3	1	4	2	-	2
80 - 89%	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
90 - 100%	-	-	-				-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	88	73	161	120	66	186	98	66	164	125	98	223	157	93	250
75% and above	-	-	-	3	2	5	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1

Source: The row data was collected from the four schools (Mengele kutir 2, Basha Buda , Kush Mengel & Budir) and the data above was organized by the researcher.

In Budir primary school cluster center grade 8 were opened at 2017. Therefore there is no data for this school from 2013 – 2016 and additionally, Basha Buda primary school cluster center the 2013 roster is lost, so that the data for this year is not include due to the absence of roster from the school. As shown in the Table 11 above, students in classroom exam scored below 50% in 2013 were114(70.81%) and who scored above 50% were 47(29.19%), whereas out of 161 students, who scored 75% and above there was no one student. Therefore, grade 8th students' classroom or teacher made exam result in 2013 was unsatisfactory and it was at low level of achievement. At 2014 the classroom teacher made exam students ,scored below 50% were 54(29.03%) and those who scored 50% and above were 132(70.97%), whereas out of 186 students who scored 75% and above was only 5(2.68%). In this academic year the result is better than 2013 but who scored 75% and above was still very few students. In 2015, the classroom teacher made exam students scored below 50% were 97(59.15%) and who scored 50% and above were 67(40.85%), whereas out of 164 students who scored 75% and above were only 1(0.61%). In this academic year the result is lower than 2014.

At 2016 students scored below 50% were 101(45.29%) and who scored 50% and above were 122 (54.71%), whereas out of 223 students who scored 75% and above did not exist. In this academic year the result shows better improvement than 2015, but those who scored 75% and above was as mentioned above there was none. In 2017, students scored below 50% are 173 (69.2%) and who scored 50% and above were 77(30.8%), whereas out of 250 students who scored 75% and above were only 1 (0.4%). In this academic year, the result is low than 2016, but those who scored 75% and above was only 1(0.4%). In general when we see the five consecutive years (2013 – 2017) students results showed that out of 984 students those scored below 50% was 539 (54.78%) and those who scored 50% and above was 445 (45.22%), whereas out of 984 students who scored 75% and above are only 7(0.71%). This shows that even in classroom assessment/teacher made exam students' performance was not at satisfactory level of achievement. This is clearly shown by the Figure below:

Figure 1 - Continuous Assessment and Teacher Made Exam Result of Grade 8th by Graph



Source: The row data was collected from the study four schools (Mengele kutir 2, Basha Buda , Kush Mengel & Budir) and the graph above was made by the researcher.

As can see in the figure 1, The number of students who score below 50% were high and the number of students who score above 50 % was low, whereas the number of students above 75% were very low and insignificant as the score increased the absence of higher achiever is clearly seen in this graph and the result show poor and at low level of performance.

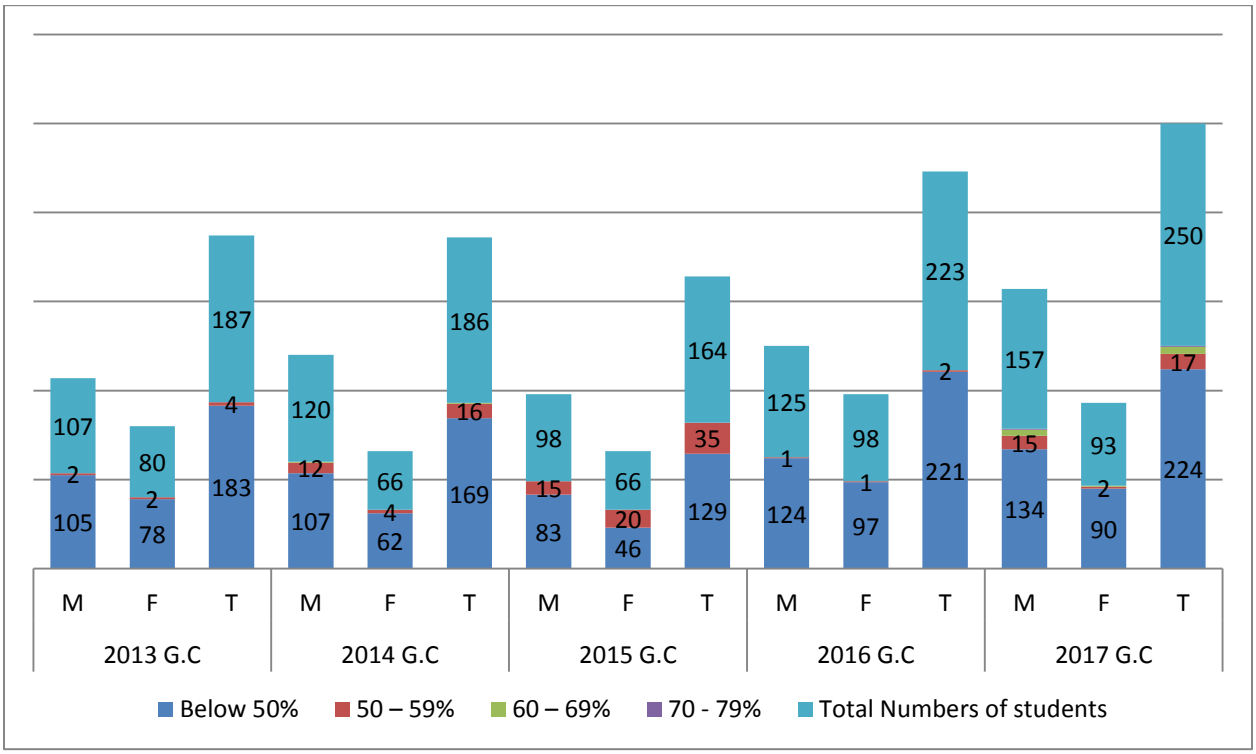
Table 12: Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination Results Analysis of Grade 8th

Demonstration of Performance in Relation to Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE) Results of Grade 8th students (Regional Exam Result document analysis from the Roster), of the year 2013 – 2017 primary school cluster centers of Mengele kutir 2, Basha Buda , Kush Mengel & Budir															
Marking/ Grading	2013			2014			2015			2016			2017		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Below 50%	105	78	183	107	62	169	83	46	129	124	97	221	134	90	224
50 – 59%	2	2	4	12	4	16	15	20	35	1	1	2	15	2	17
60 – 69%	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	1	8
70 - 79%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
80 - 89%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
90 - 100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	107	80	187	120	66	186	98	66	164	125	98	223	157	93	250
75%& above	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Budir primary school cluster center, Grade 8 were opened at 2009 E.C/2017 G.C. Therefore, there was no data for this school from 2013 – 2016. As shown in the Table 12, above out of 187 students who took Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE), those who scored below 50% in 2013 were 183(97.86%) and who scored above 50% were only 4 (2.14%), whereas among all students who scored 75% and above was none. Therefore, grade 8th students PSLCE exam result in 2013 was unsatisfactory and it was at a very low level. In 2014, among 186 students who scored below 50% were 169 (90.86%) and who scored 50% and above are 17(9.14%), whereas among all students who scored 75% and above was no one. In this academic year, the result seems better improved than 2013 but many student still have scored under 50% and students who scored 75% and above is nil. In 2015, out of 164 students who scored below 50% were 129(78.66%) and who scored 50% and above were 35(21.34%), whereas among all students who scored 75% and above were still none. In 2016, among 223 students who scored below 50% were 221(99.1%) and who scored 50% and above was only 2(0.9%), whereas among students who scored 75% and above was none of them. In this academic year the result shows that it is worse than the other previous three years.

In 2017, out of 250 students who scored below 50% were 224(89.6 %) and who scored 50% and above were only 26(10.4 %), whereas among all students who scored 75% and above are the same as the previous four years which is none. In general, when we see the five consecutive years student result in grade 8th PSLCE exam, out of 1010 students who scored below 50% were 926 (91.68%) and who scored 50% and above were only 84(8.32%), whereas among1010 students who scored 75% and above was none. This shows that PSLCE students' performance did not improve and the result was unsatisfactory and its achievement was at low level. To show this clearly, it is presented by graph as follows:

Figure 2. Graph of Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE) of 8 Grade students Regional Examination of the year 2013 – 2017.



As shown in the Figure 2, above students who score 50% and above in Primary School Leaving Certeficate Examination (PSLCE) were very low students. Whereas students who score below 50% were very high. Therefore the contribution of continuous assessment/classroom exam results to the PSLCE results as well as to the students promotion were insignificant and it is under question.

Table 13: Primary school Leaving Certificate Examination(PSLCE) Cutting Average Score

Academic Year	Yearly Promotion Decisions of the Benishangul Gumuz Regional Education Bureau (2013 -2017) and Percent/Share of Students who score 50% and above in each year.			
	Cutting Average score of each Years' (2013 – 2017)		Percent/Share of Students who score 50% and above in each year at Regional Level from all student (Regular & Private)	Percent/Share of Students who score 50% and above in each year at Regional Level Regular student
	For Male Student	for Female Student		
2013	35%	34%	13.50%	the data were not identified
2014	35%	33%	15..7%	the data were not identified
2015	35%	33%	19.40%	the data were not identified
2016	35%	32%	18.60%	19.60%
2017	35%	33%	30.20%	31.40%

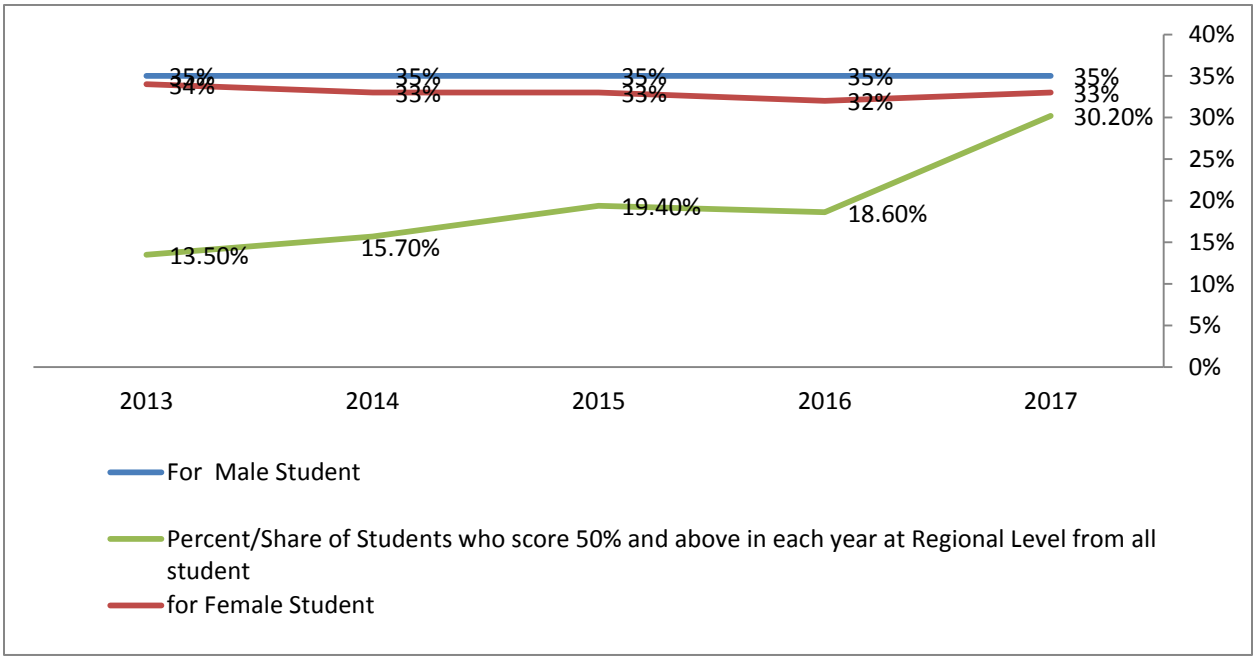
Source: Benishangul Gumuz Regional Education Bureau Management bodies yearly decision minutes, and the result of each year were collected from the regional Assessment and Examination case team.

As shown in table 13, grade 8th students Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE) average cutting score in percent at regional level is decided by Regional Management bodies. They make promotion/average cutting score decisions each year. The analysis shows that for male students, it was constant 35% for the five consecutive years without any improvement and for female students in 2013 it was 34%, in 2014 and 2015, it was 33% whereas in 2016, it was decreased by one percent and become 32% and in 2017 it was 33% . This shows that PSLCE result/achievement shows low performance. Additionally, when one see students who scored 50% and above at regional level, it shows a little improvement up to 2015 and in 2016 it e decreased and finally at 2017, when compared with the previous years, it shows improvement and it was 30.2% students scored 50% and above.

Generally, the achievement of PSLCE result and the promotion decision made by Benishangul Gumuz Regional Bureau management bodies was unchanged. It is clear that this has a negative impact on students' motivation as well the quality education. As it is clearly stated in the Ethiopian Education and Training Policy on promotion, students will pass from grade to grade when they score 50% and above. But the regional decision is to the opposite. The Document Analysis of Grade 8^{th} students' Primary School Leaving Certificate

Examination Average Cutting Score (PSLCE), decision made by Regional Education Bureau Management bodies for five years, 213-2017 was not show any improvement. For more clarification the Regional Education Bureau Management bodies' promotion decisions on the average cutting score, see the graph below:

Figure -3. The graph of Cutting Average Score of PSLCE for Grade 8



As shown above in the Figure 3, the average cutting score decisions made by Benishangul Gumuz Regional Bureau management body were not improved and students who score 50% and above at regional level were very low. Therefore, regarding contemporary assessment implementation practice and students' achievement, there was a clear deficiency and it requires transformation of assessment from traditional to contemporary continuous assessment.

Table 14: Promotion Practices of Grade 8th Students to Secondary school/Grade Nine

Academic Year	Grade 8th students promotion to secondary school/grade 9 of the school Mengele kutir 2, Basha Buda , Kushmengel & Budir, document/roster analysis PSLCE							
	No of students who take PSLCE			No of students who pass to secondary school/Grade 9			Share of student in percent who pass to Secondary Cycle/Grade nine	Share of student in % who pass to secondary school /Grade 9 by scoring 50 % and above
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total		
2013	107	80	187	81	67	148	79.14%	4 (2.19%)
2014	120	66	186	78	61	139	74.73%	17 (9.14%)
2015	98	66	164	92	67	159	96.95%	35 (21.34%)
2016	125	98	223	84	84	168	75.34%	2 (0.90%)
2017	157	93	250	58	31	89	35.60%	26 (10.40%)

As shown in Table 12, grade 8th students' Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE) Share of student in percent who passed to secondary school/Grade 9 (nine) in 2013 were 79.14% . The rest 20.86% did not pass to grade nine even when the cutting score for this academic year was 35% for male & 34% for female students. If the policy was applicable the among 187, only 4 (2.19%) of the students would have passed to grade nine. In the subsequent academic year, 74.73% passed to the next grade level and 25.27% were detained. When we see the 2015 academic year, 96.95% students were promoted to grade nine with the cutting average score for male being 35% and for female 33%. Students who score 50% and above were 35(21.34%),and it was better than the previous. In 2016 academic year 75.34% were promoted to grade nine with cutting score of 35% for male and 32% for female. But students who score 50% and above were only 2 (0.90%), which was decrease. In 2017, academic year out of 250 student only 89 (35.60%) students were promoted to grade nine with cutting score being 35% for male and 33% for female. From this, 161(64.40%) did not pass to the next grade level. In the same academic year among 250 students who score 50% and above were only 26(10.40%). In general, from 2013 – 2017 academic year, 1010 students took grade 8th PSLCE. Among this in the five years, only 84(8.32%) students scored 50 % and above average score. But most of the students who score under

50%,703(69.6%) of them promoted to secondary school grade nine through the five years. Therefore, this indicates that students achieve low performance and it shows that teachers' continuous assessment practices were under question mark. Because students were promoted from grade 8 to secondary school grade nine without meting minimal requirements. Moreover, from the result as shown above, it is possible to say that the contribution of continuous assessment and teacher made exam result to the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination result and for the promotion to grade nine were not significant and it has unsatisfactory contribution.

Table 15A: Challenges of Continuous Assessment

No	Challenges of implementing continuous assessment		Levels of challenge							
			Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low	Total	SD	Mean
1.1	Teachers lack of competencies and skills to carry out classroom assessment.	N	64	68	25	10	7	174	1.05	3.99
		%	36.8	39.1	14.4	5.75	4.02	100		
1.2	Overpopulation/ large number of pupils in a class	N	78	59	22	6	9	174	1.08	4.1
		%	44.8	33.9	12.6	3.45	5.17	100		
1.3	Lack of finance &unavailability of resources like books, assessment manuals furniture, photocopiers, printers and papers.	N	26	43	37	38	30	174	1.33	2.98
		%	14.9	24.7	21.3	21.8	17.2	100		
1.4	Teachers & students lack of motivation	N	48	74	30	14	8	174	1.07	3.8
		%	27.6	42.5	17.2	8.05	4.6	100		
1.5	Absenteeism - This made it difficult for the teachers to teach and assess the progress of pupils.	N	61	50	28	21	14	174	1.28	3.71
		%	35.1	28.7	16.1	12.1	8.05	100		
1.6	Teachers used summative assessments more than formative, ones	N	51	43	30	29	21	174	1.38	3.43
		%	29.3	24.7	17.2	16.7	12.1	100		
1.7	Lack of time	N	29	57	34	33	21	174	1.27	3.23
		%	16.7	32.8	19.5	19	12.1	100		
1.8	Lack of uniformity	N	54	47	26	36	11	174	1.29	3.56
		%	31	27	14.9	20.7	6.32	100		
1.9	Over concentration in written test	N	57	62	21	19	15	174	1.26	3.73
		%	32.8	35.6	12.1	10.9	8.62	100		

Table - 15B Challenges of Continuous Assessment

No	Challenges of implementing continuous assessment		Levels of challenge							
			Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low	Total	SD	Mean
1.10	Teachers assess & measure pupils at the cognitive level it they in tendency to emphasize the knowledge domain with the affective and psychomotor domains virtually ignored	N	61	50	33	22	8	174	1.19	3.77
		%	35.1	28.7	19	12.6	4.6	100		
1.11	Much power is placed in the hands of teachers and this	N	33	59	41	26	15	174	1.2	3.4
		%	19	33.9	23.6	14.9	8.62	100		
1.12	Record keeping and continuity of records for each student throughout the child's period of schooling.	N	10	48	56	41	19	174	1.09	2.94
		%	5.75	27.6	32.2	23.6	10.9	100		
1.13	Lack of adequate training of teachers	N	62	56	24	18	14	174	1.26	3.77
		%	35.6	32.2	13.8	10.3	8.05	100		
1.14	Inadequate monitoring and support to the teachers	N	60	52	29	18	15	174	1.28	3.71
		%	34.5	29.9	16.7	10.3	8.62	100		
1.15	Teachers & pupils were disturbed by other activities that were run in the schools during learning periods.	N	32	56	36	28	22	174	1.29	3.28
		%	18.4	32.2	20.7	16.1	12.6	100		
1.16	Lack of teachers collaboration with groups of schools	N	27	61	33	29	24	174	1.29	3.22
		%	15.5	35.1	19	16.7	13.8	100		
1.17	Lack of remediation and enrichment	N	22	59	45	30	18	174	1.18	3.21
		%	12.6	33.9	25.9	17.2	10.3	100		
									Average Mean	3.52

As we can observe above in the two consecutive pages Table 15A and 15B, Respondents were requested to rate the degree of challenges encountered in the implementation practices of continuous assessment. The challenges were scored as follows, Overpopulation scored mean value 4.1. Teachers lack of competencies and skills/insufficient assessment skills to carry out classroom assessment were scored 3.99. Teachers & students lack of motivation got 3.8. Teachers assess & measure pupils at the cognitive level showed a tendency to emphasize

on the knowledge domain with affective and psychomotor domains virtually being ignored and lack of adequate training of teachers scored the same mean of 3.77. Over concentration in written test of 3.73, inadequate monitoring and support to the teachers and absenteeism scored of the same mean 3.71, lack of uniformity 3.56 etc...were scored respectively and these are very serious & they are the challenges of implementing continuous assessment in classroom. Generally, all the challenges mentioned above in the Table 13A and 13B, got average mean of 3.52. This indicates that all are challenges and affect the implementation practices of continuous assessment. But according to their mean score, need prioritizing to find solutions. Moreover in the Focus Group Discussion and interview session participants were asked to explain the challenges among them they mentioned teachers and students lack attention and commitment, teachers lack awareness and training about contemporary continuous assessment, large class size, language problem to communicate with students, teachers see this continuous assessment as additional work, low interest and participation of pupils, absenteeism, students' discipline problems and none of the manual/guideline were raised. Even the researcher checked discipline problem, low participation, absenteeism and skill gap were seen during classroom observation.

Therefore, these challenges need to be resolved by the education sector and stakeholders at all levels. As indicated above, the most challenges of the teachers and students were Firstly, overpopulation/ large number of pupils in a class, this is true during classroom observation of 120 students were in one class. Secondly teachers lack of competencies and skills/insufficient assessment skills to carry out classroom assessment. Thirdly, teachers & students lack of motivation. Fourthly teachers assess & measure pupils at the cognitive level there is a tendency to emphasize on the knowledge domain with the affective and psychomotor domains virtually ignored. Fifthly, lack of adequate training of teachers and the last of challenges was over concentration in written test and inadequate monitoring and support to teachers were the most and dominant challenges of contemporary continuous assessment.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. SUMMARY, CONCULUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Summary

The main concern of this study were to examine the practices and challenges of the implementation of continuous assessment in primary school cluster centers of Assosa Wereda with the aim of indicating the solutions that should be done by all stakeholders in the education sector, especially at school level. To realize the objective as it is intended and to get answer for the study, the following research question were approached/raised.

1. What is the status of the implementation practices of continuous assessment in primary school cluster centers of Assosa Wereda?
2. What is the perception of teachers about continuous assessment information Record keeping, grading & reporting practices in the primary school cluster centers of Assosa Wereda?
3. To what extent has classroom exam and continuous assessment results contribute to Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE) of grade eight to the promotion of secondary schools in primary school cluster centers of Assosa Wereda?
4. what are the challenges that teachers encountered during the process of the implementation of continuous assessment in primary school cluster centers of Assosa Wereda

To get answer for these questions, data were gathered from respondents of grade 5 and grade 8 students as well as primary school teachers through questionnaires, from both cycle students' representatives, department heads, vice principal, unit leaders, cluster supervisors and wereda education office experts participated in the Focus Group Discussion. Head of Wereda Education Office and principals of the study school participated and gave their opinion by interview. Additionally, classroom observation were made in each school grade 4 taking Environmental Science, from grade 8 Biology, who were observed twice by the help of the prepared observation checklist. Finally, data were gathered through document analyses of grade eight continuous assessment result/teacher made exam result and Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination results. Therefore, the collected data from respondents with

questionnaires and document analysis checklist were presented, analyzed and interpreted using percentage mean score as statistical tools for quantitative data analysis.

Qualitative data gathered through open – ended questionnaires, Focus Group Discussion, interview and classroom observation were analyzed and interpreted simultaneously under each table. Through the study /investigation process the researcher has drawn the following findings:

Current Status of the Implementation Practices of Continuous Assessment:

1. Teachers who got training on the contemporary continuous assessment (Assessment as Learning, Assessment for Learning and Assessment of Learning) were only 8(28%), whereas 28(72%) of teachers did not get training;
2. Student promotion decision is done at school where 16(44.4%) agreed that decision made by school Committee at the end of the year and 20(55.6%) of teachers was agreed that decision is made by all teachers on meeting at the end of the academic year;
3. Students judge the level of the implementation practice of continuous assessment in their school and out of 138 respondents of students 110(79.7%) of student indicated as there is a gap;
4. The implementation practice of the guiding principles and technical concepts of continuous assessment in developing and analyzing their classroom assessments, the average mean value was 2.34. This is, under the average mean value. Therefore, it lacks attention and it indicates teachers do not use and apply the guiding principles and technical concepts of continuous assessment.
5. Classroom teachers used to carry out different assessment methods/strategies in their classroom assessment practice. Among the 26 assessment methods given 13(50%) assessment strategies were below average mean value, especially Portfolios of student work, peer-assessment, self-assessment, conferences/dialogue, creative assignment, and interview.
6. These assessment strategies were very vital to make the assessment effective as well as to enhance and empower students to improve their achievement

But these strategies/tools frequently used were exam (mid/final), anecdotal note taking, class work, written tests, group work/group discussion, homework completion and board work. These indicates that teachers focus on traditional tools and the contemporary tools was not get any attention;

7. Teachers and students judged and indicated their level of agreement that the application of issues of Assessment for Learning and Assessment as Learning(specific elements, essential steps and procedures), the result shows only 4/12 of them score above average mean score whereas 8(66.67%) of the issues that scored under average mean were those that were not applicable well to the students. During classroom observation this was true that the issues was not addressed in classroom teaching. It seems daily lesson objectives and assessment criteria are secret to students. The other issue that did not get attention was balancing assessment, teachers was not tried to balance the three components of assessment (Assessment as Learning, Assessment for Learning and Assessment of Learning). This issue is a very deficient practice of the contemporary continuous assessment which does not get consideration;
8. The way teachers apply continuous feedback in their class was not good it lacks special care. It was observed that in classroom observation, teachers were using negative feedback which make students frustrate & demoralize. In general the implementation practice of Assessment for Learning & Assessment as Learning the average mean value score 2.46, is below average. So specific elements, essential steps and procedures, in assessment for learning and assessment as learning were not addressed and practiced in the contemporary continuous assessment form showing low attention, traditional customs and practices continued in the classroom assessment.
9. The study result shows that out of 14 questions asked about key issues addressed in the assessment plan, 10/14 issues were rated under average mean value(2.5). In general an assessment plan is very vital to teaching learning process, to improve learners' performance & for proper implementation of the issues of contemporary continuous assessment

planning is the first start and step. But in the analysis the result shows that the assessment planning practices were score average mean 2.44. This shows that the deficiency of key issues of assessment planning. due to this reason the assessment planning practice were not addressed in good way it indicates poor and low level of implementation practices.

Therefore the status of the implementation practices of continuous assessment in primary school cluster centers of Assosa Wereda were not satisfactory mainly for the traditional practices were more dominant than the issues of contemporary continuous assessment issue. This shows that it lacks attention from all concerned bodies of education sectors, so that the level of the implementation practice is at low.

Perceptions about the Necessity of Record Keeping in Continuous Assessment:

The Perceptions of record keeping in continuous assessment were nice and they were accepted positively scoring average mean value of 3.91. But in the real way, record keeping practices in continuous assessment is not at the level of satisfaction. Their practices show poor which lacks attention because:

1. in the implementation practices those record keeping tools that lack attention by the school/teachers were individual student portfolios/students record sheets, reading skill portfolio, teacher's portfolio, teacher/student conference anecdotal records, narrative reports by teachers and students, Class unit checklist, and notes on teacher/student/parent conferences these all tools were not applicable properly to improve the record keeping practices in continuous assessment.
2. The classroom observation teachers showed that their record keeping tools and their practices were not as expected. Teachers used uniform prepared format by the Wereda Education Office to record marks/scores in number. The format has a negative impact on contemporary continuous assessment and it needs the shift to ongoing formative assessment from summative. Generally, the perception for record keeping practices in continuous assessment were in a very

good position and it was positive but in practice the record keeping were the same as before, which is seen as it is traditional and poor record keeping practice.

Contribution of Continuous Assessment and Teacher Made Exam Result to The Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination Result and its Contribution to the Promotion Decision to Grade Nine:

1. In the classroom continuous assessment/teacher made exam students achieve 50% and above were better than the result of Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE) result.
2. In 2013 – 2017 academic years 1010 students were took grade 8th PSLCE out of which only 84(8.32%) students were score 50 % and above. But most of the students who score under 50% 703(69.6%) were promoted to secondary school/grade nine.
3. The cutting average score in which decision made by Regional Education Bureau Management body for students promotion to grade nine were not show any improvement throughout the five consecutive academic years (for male students 35% and 33% were fore female students).

Therefore, this indicates that students achieve low performance and teachers' continuous assessment implementation practices is under question mark. Thus the contribution of continuous assessment/teacher made exam result to the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE) result and for the promotion to grade nine were unsatisfactory and low as well as insignificant;

Challenges that teachers encountered during the implementation practices of continuous assessment:

The fourth research question results showed that out of the 17 challenges mentioned, scored the average mean value of 3.52 indicates that all are challenges, which affect the implementation practices of continuous assessment.

Among them the most challenges raised: 1) overpopulation, 2) teachers' lack of competencies, and skills/had insufficient assessment skills to carry out classroom assessment, 3) teachers' & students' lack of motivation, 4) teachers' focus on pupils cognitive level and emphasizing on the knowledge domain with less attention to affective and psychomotor

domains,5) lack of adequate training of teachers, 6) over concentration in written tests, 7) inadequate monitoring and support to teachers and 8) absenteeism were the most prioritized challenges that teacher and student encountered during the implementation practices of continuous assessment.

5.2. CONCULUSIONS

Based on the findings of the research the following major conclusions are drawn:

Teachers and school administrators and cluster supervisors believe as they were devoted to implement continuous assessment in their teaching – learning process at classroom level. However, in this study the results showed that the implementation practices of contemporary continuous assessment at classroom level is being implemented without being transformed from the previous customs. The implementation practices showed that teachers continued implementing the traditional assessment/customs of continuous assessment for the guiding principles and technical concepts of continuous assessment did not get emphasis & were not applicable, teachers practices indicated that mostly they use traditional assessment methods. And the application of assessment for learning and as learning (specific elements, essential steps and procedures) were not addressed and practiced in the way contemporary continuous assessment still traditional/customs and practices continued. Fourthly, the issues of continuous assessment demands. Planning in continuous assessment were not done in good ways. Therefore, the status of the implementation practices of continuous assessment is unsatisfactory, with deficiency and it is at a low level of implementation practices in primary school cluster centers of Assosa Wereda.

The perception for record keeping practices in continuous assessment grading & reporting practices were in a very good position and it was positive but of the practice of record keeping were the same as before, which seen as traditional and poor record keeping practice. The recently used contemporary continuous assessment record keeping tools were not used. Therefore, there is mismatch between perception and the real implementation practices of classroom teachers.

The extent of the contribution of continuous assessment/teacher made exam result to the primary school leaving certificate exam (PSLCE) of grade eight result for the promotion to

secondary school/grade nine were not significant and it shows unsatisfactory. The result showed that in the five consecutive years the number of students who scored 50% and above in continuous assessment/teacher made exam was relatively high. But in Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination(PSLCE) insignificant numbers of students were scored 50 % and above. The Regional Education Bureau Management body's promotion decisions of average cutting score did not show improvement throughout 2013 – 2017, of the five consecutive years . As a result through the five year most of the students who score under 50% were promoted to secondary school grade nine without met minimal requirements which opposes the policy promotion intention. Overpopulation, teachers' lack of competencies and skills/insufficient assessment skills to carry out classroom assessment, teachers & students lack of motivation, teachers focus were assessing pupils' cognitive level and emphasis to the knowledge domain with little or no attention to the affective and psychomotor domains, lack of adequate training of teachers, over concentration on written test, inadequate monitoring and support to the teachers and students' absenteeism were the influential challenges that teachers and students encountered in the implementation practices of contemporary continuous assessment at classroom level.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study findings , the following possible solutions are forwarded:

1. Assessment and teaching are indispensable which need giving equal value and attention for the teaching learning. Professionals in the wereda need to initiate change and mobilize the education sector practitioners at all level. This can be done by the wereda education office by preparing assessment document that aid continuous discussion at all levels at the beginning of each academic year to reach consensus to shift the traditional practice to the contemporary continuous assessment.

2. Training on the contemporary continuous assessment and empowering teachers in assessment knowledge as well as skills, in both pre-service and in-service training are equally important to build teachers' capacity. Thus teachers' training college in the region should revisit the courses and the way they train candidate teachers because teachers were not familiar with the contemporary assessment (Assessment as Learning, Assessment for Learning and Assessment

of Learning) as well as teachers were not prepared assessment plan in general and specifically they do not prepare Table of Specification in test/exam construction process.

3. College and a University in the region, Regional Education Bureau, Zone Education Department, Wereda Education Office and the primary schools should invest their knowledge at their hand to implement contemporary continuous assessment by allocating budget. This is possible by making panel discussion on the findings about the issue of implementation practices of the continuous assessment with appreciate inquire methods and initiate their knowledge in supportive or inbuilt supervision to contribute for their responsibilities and profession.

4. Teachers are implementing continuous assessment without the aid of assessment manual/guideline, to implement contemporary continuous assessment effectively manuals/guideline should be prepared at each level of the education sector and be distributed to individual teachers and adaptation is expected from each primary school by considering the instructional medium/ issues of languages.

5. Pupils lack awareness about continuous assessment school principals need to establish mechanisms of accountability and transparency. It is possible to facilitate especial programs like dialogues, speeches, seminars, conferences with students followed by awareness creation & announcement using mini - media clubs of the schools about continuous assessment implementation.

6. Feedback must be provided timely, making it supportive, directly related to the assessment criteria, specific, and with information on how to improve. Therefore, devising feedback mechanisms such as, facilitating weekly discussion with students about their progress.

7. Ongoing assessment in primary school would emphasis to the formative aspect of assessment. The implementation practices result shows that teachers mainly implement summative assessment as usual. At the outset both REB and WEO should see painfully continuous assessment is their priority area of plan and the focus of supportive supervision issue in the education system and need to initiate practitioners and stakeholders to play their role. This custom should be changed, it is possible by making the Regional Education Bureau prepare and distribute pamphlets about the issues of balancing assessment by giving concern to assessment for learning Additionally, the Wereda Education Office should prepare and distribute leaflets to primary schools about assessment as learning, assessment for learning

and Assessment of learning and teachers should incorporate this in their Continuous Professional Development Program.

8. Record keeping practices of primary school teachers were poor and they use common scale format throughout the year to record students' progress and achievement. Education experts, school principals, cluster supervisors and teachers should give special attention to improve the practice. To facilitate the difficulties school administrators with the collaboration of department heads need to prepare record keeping guideline.

9. The practices of promotion decisions should be done at the beginning of the academic year. The promotion of Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE), decisions made by Regional Education Bureau management body, that the average cutting score did not encourage teachers and students. Therefore, the decision made by the management body at the region should be revisited.

10. Overpopulation is the main challenges of the primary schools. This has a profound impact to the assessment process and students' achievement. This issue should not continue for many years as usual and the number of pupils should be reduced. This can be done collaboratively with Regional Education Bureau, Wereda Education Office, primary schools and school community. Wereda Education Office should construct additional classrooms at primary schools by mobilizing the school community to construct in low-cost and allocate sufficient budget for teacher recruitment. The school and the community should generate financial income and mobilize the materials to construct additional classroom to decrease overpopulation in one class. 11. The transition from the old/traditional continuous assessment practices/customs to the new contemporary continuous assessment requires careful management. This is possible to select and empower professionals in the field to be able by giving appropriate support to teachers at classroom level. This is done by all education sector personnel at all level by creating mechanisms and due attention for supportive supervision.

12. Assessment should be the main issue and specific concern of the education sector workers at all level. So that it needs a person who highly skilled in a specific field or need to allocate assessment experts/specialist with special care to facilitate monitoring and support effectively. This should be done by the Regional Education Bureau and Wereda Education Office.

13. Student absenteeism is the one challenging issue in the implementation practices of continuous assessment. This should get special attention. Parents should participate in their children, education. This can be done by making continuous discussion with all concerned bodies at school level.

Finally, changes in primary schools', practices on contemporary continuous assessment requires further work. All experts, cluster supervisors, school principals and teachers needs to improve the implementation of continuous assessment by considering their responsibilities.

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Declaration

I declared that “this thesis entitled with the practices and challenges of implementing continuous assessment in primary school cluster centers of Assosa Wereda, Benishangul Gumuz Regional State Benishangul Gumuz regional state is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other universities, and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledge.”

Declared by:

Degu Bihonegn ---------- ----------

Name of the Researcher Signature Date