

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE STUDIES  
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES  
AND LITERATURE (GRADUATE PROGRAM)**

**THE PERCEPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF  
CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT OF EFL TEACHERS  
(THE CASE OF DEBUB ETHIOPIA TEACHER  
EDUCATION COLLEGE)**

**SILESHI ARAGAW**

**JULY 16, 2007**

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**BY**

**SILESHI ARAGAW**

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## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any university. Moreover, I declare sources or materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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## ***Abstract***

*As many scholars point out even though continuous assessment can be used to judge the language achievement of students, the primary purpose of using continuous assessment is to improve students' learning and guide teachers' instruction. In order to implement continuous assessment effectively teachers should have well developed knowledge and skills in this assessment type. In addition to this, teachers should employ various assessment devices, such as observation, self assessment, and reflective journals and involve students in the process of assessment. If continuous assessment is not practiced properly, it may hinder the instruction process.*

*The study was conducted to find out how EFL teachers of Debu Ethiopia Teacher Education College perceived continuous assessment and to determine to what extent they were implementing it. The participants of the research were 11 EFL teachers and 127 third year EFL students. Data for the study were gathered through questionnaire and interview. The results were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively.*

*The findings of the study revealed that EFL teachers of Debu Ethiopia Teacher Education College had inadequate knowledge about the principles and purposes of continuous assessment. They also indicated that the teachers used the assessment primarily to judge the English language achievement of the students. Moreover, the findings showed that the teachers did not allow students to actively participate in the different aspects of the assessment process.*

*Based on the findings, it was recommended that for the successful implementation of continuous assessment, the EFL teachers should get continuous training on principles, purposes and implementation of continuous assessment. In addition to this, they should implement this assessment for its prime goal by involving students in the assessment process.*

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Problem

English has a profound place in commerce, education, communication, politics, and technology of the world. It plays a great role in the different institutions and organizations of Ethiopia. It is a working language of banks, insurances and many international organizations. Moreover, it is a medium of instruction in high schools and higher institutions.

Although English has been given such a great position in the Ethiopian educational system, the English language competence of students is unsatisfactory for their level (Teshome, 2001). The poor performance of students in the English language is attributed to a variety of factors. Teachers methodology of teaching, quality of teacher training, quality of curricular materials, the evaluation methods/process, lack of continuous professional development (on job training), and attitudes of both teachers and students are some of the factors that affect the performance of students (Richards and Rogers , 2001; Cross, 1995).

As it is indicated above, the evaluation system that teachers use to assess their students' language performance is one of the determining factors for the success of the teaching learning process. Puhl (1997:1) asserts this point by saying:

*"... testing greatly influences instruction; and narrow testing has meant narrow instruction, teaching done 'to the test'. In order to transform the whole educational process, the change to assessment is being made hand-in-hand with the change to [the instruction system]. "*

Many scholars point out that the conventional/traditional assessment, i.e. giving tests or exams at the end of a unit, a term or a course does not represent the overall English competence of students as it focuses on specific parts of the unit or course; uses a limited

assessment devices, usually tests; and is a 'one-shot' that gives only one chance for students to show their language abilities (Plessis et al., 2003; Nijabili, 1999; Taiwo, 1998). To improve this situation, educational measurement experts and educational policy designers have come up with another type of assessment: continuous assessment.

Continuous assessment is a way of assessing the overall aspects of students' learning. Unlike the conventional assessment type, this one focuses on several parts of the course; is done on an on going basis; employs various kinds of assessment devices, such as projects, self assessment, observation; and provides students with many opportunities to show what they know and can do.

Continuous assessment helps teachers collect information about the progress of students continuously. This helps teachers to make sound decisions about their students and to adjust their teaching styles based on their decisions in order to make learners succeed in their learning. Plessis et al. (2003:8) advocate this point by saying:

*Continuous assessment is a way to ensure that all learners have opportunities to succeed in school. In most classrooms, the range varies, from slow to average to fast learners. By using continuous assessment, the teacher can adapt his or her instruction to the need of the learners so all of them will have the chance to learn and succeed.*

According to Passigna (2002), the prime objective of continuous assessment is to improve students' learning and guide teachers' instruction. In order to improve students' learning, teachers should find out the weaknesses and strengths of students and give remedial and enrichment activities. Nitko (2005:14) also asserts this:

*It is important for teachers to understand that assessment information can be used to improve learning and guide teaching... It is not enough to administer assessments to students and mark papers. Teachers must use the assessment results for guiding learning and teaching. An important principle for*

*assessment in the classroom is: **Each assessment taken must have an associated instructional action.** [\*The boldface is original].*

In the same way, Wallace and Larsen (1978:5) say that: “the results from the educational assessment process typically provide the teacher with information about implementing an instructional program.”

Many countries throughout the world have adopted this assessment type to their educational system. Similarly, Ethiopia has included continuous assessment in its educational system at a policy level; and years passed since it has been implemented in primary and secondary schools, and higher institutions (Educational Training Policy, 1994).

According to the Educational Training Policy (1994), seventy-five percent (75 %) of the final assessment of learners should be generated from continuous assessment, and the twenty five percent (25 %) should be obtained from end of term final examination.

The paradigm shift from the conventional assessment to continuous assessment urges teachers to have a well-developed knowledge and skills in this assessment type so as to implement it effectively. As many scholars state if continuous assessment is not well planned, organized and monitored carefully; and used for its prime goal, it may bring potential problems on the teaching learning process. Instead of improving the process, it may hinder it (Nitko, 2004; Ellington and Earl, 1997).

Hence, schools and higher institutions are expected to plan carefully and implement continuous assessment primarily for its formative role. However, as different scholars have indicated many educational institutions use continuous assessment as part of the summative assessment. Wallace and Larsen (1978:9) by citing Stephen (1970), and Wallace and Kauffman (1978) approve this observation and state: “In many schools, educational assessment has become an end in itself rather than a means of planning instructional program.”

Nitko (2005:12) also asserts the above point by saying: “teacher education institutions have thus far focused their efforts primarily on the summative aspects of continuous assessment. They have generally ignored using and teaching about the formative aspects of assessment.”

According to Nitko (2005), by giving attention only to summative aspect of continuous assessment, teacher education institutions cannot improve teachers’ instruction and students’ learning. The failure to use continuous assessment for its prime objectives in teacher education institutions may bring two clear negative impacts on the part of student teachers. Firstly, they miss the benefits that they can get from continuous assessment. Secondly, they may understand the basic purpose of continuous assessment in its incomplete form (Nitko, 2005).

## **1.2. Statement of the problem**

As it is mentioned above, Ministry of Education of Ethiopia has incorporated continuous assessment as the major assessment mode in teacher education colleges. The assessment scheme urges a large extent (75%) of learners' scores to be generated from continuous assessment.

Being one of the teacher education colleges in the country, Debu Ethiopia Teacher Education College has been using continuous assessment for the last few years. When I was in Awassa some years ago, I had a chance to visit the college and observe some teachers implement this assessment. The way they were implementing it contradicted with my understanding of continuous assessment. This triggered me to do this research.

Hence, this study will attempt to investigate EFL teachers' perception and implementation of continuous assessment. This being the target of the research, the study will try to find answers to the following questions:

1. Do EFL teachers have complete understanding of the principles and purposes of continuous assessment?
2. To what extent do EFL teachers implement continuous assessment?
3. What major problems do teachers face in using continuous assessment?
4. What major problems do students perceived in their teachers implementation of continuous assessment?

### **1.3. Objective of the study**

The general objective of the research was to investigate how teacher education college EFL teachers understood continuous assessment and how they were implementing it. The specific objectives of the research were:

- To find out how EFL teachers of Debu Ethiopia Teacher Education College perceived continuous assessment
- To determine to what extent the teachers were implementing it
- To identify the major problems the teachers faced in using continuous assessment
- To find out the major problems students perceived in their teachers implementation of continuous assessment

### **1.4. Significance of the study**

The findings of this research shall have the following benefits:

- Since the major participants of the study were EFL teachers of the Debu Ethiopia Teacher Education College, the research shall benefit them to examine their conceptions and practices of continuous assessment.
- It helps students of the college to get the advantages they should get from continuous assessment.
- It shall benefit the administrative bodies of the college to examine the major impediments of implementing continuous assessment in the College and re-plan for effectiveness of CA.

- It also provides valuable information for other similar colleges to evaluate their assessment perceptions and practices.

## **1.5. Delimitation of the study**

The problem may be a nation wide which needs a wide investigation. Also, it would have been good if the research had included the various teacher education colleges in the country so as to have more reliable information. However, to make the study manageable with the available time and with the limited budget, the study was delimited to Debu Ethiopia Teacher Education College EFL teachers and EFL 3<sup>rd</sup> year students of 10+3 program.

## **1.6. Limitations of the study**

The research would have been more reliable if observation and document analysis were used. So, this was the major limitation of the study.

## **1.7. Definitions of Terms and Acronyms**

### **1.7. 1. Definition of Important Terms**

**Assessment:** is a way of observing and collecting information and making decisions based on the information (Plessis et al., 2003).

**Continuous Assessment:** refers to making observations and collecting information periodically to find out what a student knows, understands, and can do (Plessis et al., 2003).

**Conventional Assessment:** is a method of assessing students' second/foreign language progress using written examinations such as multiple-choice items, binary-choice items, true-false, cloze-tests and essays (Puhl, 1997).

### **1.7.2. Definitions of Acronyms**

**CA:** Continuous Assessment

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**FCA:** Formative Continuous Assessment

**SCA:** Summative Continuous Assessment

**TEC:** Teacher Education College

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1. Language Teaching and Assessment**

Language teaching and assessment are so closely interrelated that it may be difficult to view them separately. Language assessment is an integral part of language teaching. That may be why; many scholars confirm that it is difficult to achieve the goals of language teaching without the practice of language assessment (Taylor, 2006; Irvine-Niakaris, 1997; Hughes, 1989; Heaton, 1988). “Without assessment it will be impossible to tell whether any learning has taken place” (NIED of Namibia, 1999:5).

Assessment contributes a lot for setting goals, planning, and practices of language teaching and learning. DES/WO (1988), as cited in Lambert and Lines (2000:109), states:

*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 educational steps in response to children's needs... it should be an integral part of the educational process, continually providing both 'feedback' and 'feed forward'. It therefore needs to be incorporated systematically into teaching strategies and practices at all levels.*

Even though many educators agree that language teaching and assessment have close relationship, they are not clear with which type of assessment may promote language teaching effectively. However, they indicated that tests and exams that are mostly given at the end of a unit, a semester or a course do not reflect the overall achievement of a learner. For example, Brown (1996: Online) states “These familiar aspects [end-of-unit tests...] of assessment do not capture the full extent or subtlety of how assessment operates every day in the classroom”

Tests and exams give a 'snapshot of the learner' that can be used for the purpose of judgment. This approach of assessment may have given the way to an alternative type of assessment. Puhl (1997:1) asserts this by saying: “One consequence of these influences [affecting education and how we assess it]... is the move away from the heavy use of conventional , more judgmental approaches to assessment toward alternative, more inclusive means of determining what learners know and can do”.

Hence, the need for using assessment to improve the teaching learning process paved the way for developing another type of assessment -- continuous assessment. Plessis et al. (2003:8) say:

*When more of the school age children are given a chance to attend school (as is happening these days in many countries), the range of abilities of the learners in a classroom is greater. In the past, tests were used to find the best students and pass them on to the next grade or level. Now, in many countries, the emphasis is on helping all learners succeed in school.*

It is important to know the meaning and purposes of assessment in order to understand the various characteristics and practices of continuous assessment. Hence, the meaning and purposes of assessment are discussed in some details below.

## **2.2 Definition and Purpose of Classroom Assessment**

Different scholars have given definitions for assessment. For example, Erwin (1991: 45) defines assessment as:

*A systematic basis for making inferences about the learning and development of students... The process of defining, selecting, designing, collecting, analyzing, interpreting and using information to increase students' learning and development.*

Assessment is a way of knowing the progress of students in their learning. This can be done by gathering valuable data about students, giving meaning to the data, and using them to improve students' learning. Plessis et al. (2003:6) give a more comprehensive definition of assessment.

*Assessment is a way of observing and collecting information and making decisions based on the information. In schools, assessment is concerned with observing learners and collecting information about those observations. Assessment of learners is a way of finding out what learners know, understand and can do.*

Assessment has a lot to do in the development and execution of every educational performance and every activity in education. It is even unthinkable to rule it out or try to do without it (Cone and Foster, 1991; Lambert and Lines, 2000). Educational assessment provides important feedback that assists students and teachers to maximize the outcomes of language teaching and learning.

Assessment aims at collecting information on the various aspects of the teaching learning process and making valuable decisions. According to Lambert and Lines (2000:4), the purposes of assessment are:

- To provide feedback to teachers and pupils about progress in order to support future learning: the formative role;
- To provide information about the level of pupils' achievement at points during and at the end of school: the summative role;
- To provide the means for selecting by qualification: the certification role;
- To contribute to the information on which judgments are made concerning the effectiveness or quality of individuals and institutions in the system as a whole: the evaluation role

Even though the first two purposes of assessment are adapted in this study, it should be noted that the more relevant is the first one, i.e. the formative role.

Many scholars have pointed out that the conventional assessment type cannot achieve the above purposes of assessment (Lambert and Lines, 2000; Puhl, 1997; McTighe and Ferrara, 1994). They stressed the need for developing an alternative assessment type that can help to fulfill the above purposes. Hence, educational experts have come up with continuous assessment. This assessment type is discussed in detail below.

### **2.3. Continuous Assessment (CA)**

Continuous assessment is a way of collecting information about learners on regular basis in order to improve the teaching learning process (Nitko, 2005; Puhl, 1997). Paigna (2002:5) defines continuous assessment as:

*..the process of gathering information to make decisions about learner based on what they know and can demonstrate as a result of instruction. The assessment is continuous because it: (1) occurs at various times as a part of instruction, (2) may occur following a lesson, (3) usually occurs following a topic, and (4) frequently occurs following a theme.*

Continuous assessment is not a mere process of collecting information about learners. Rather, it is a way that informs language teachers how students are progressing in their learning. In other words, continuous assessment enables language teachers know what the learners have acquired and what they have not mastered yet.

Continuous assessment is developed based on the premise that when language learners' performance is assessed in every stage of a lesson or a course, it may not be difficult to identify learners' problems and help them succeed in their learning (Plessis et al, 2003; Paigna, 2002; Ellington and Earl, 1997). In continuous assessment, students get on-going feedback on their performance. This helps them to see their performance critically and identify and improve their weaknesses.

Continuous assessment acknowledges individual differences in language performance and learning styles. As to this, Paigna (2002:7) states:

*Continuous assessment in the classroom is closely linked to the concept of mastery learning. ...The basic theory underlying mastery learning is that, given enough time and appropriate instruction, all students can learn a given objective. Individuals differ in the amount of time they need to learn different skills or concepts. They also learn in different ways. It is the responsibility of the teacher and the school to provide the conditions -- enough time to learn, appropriate teaching methods, and a good learning environment -- so that every single child is helped to become a successful learner.*

As it is indicated in the above quotation, assessment which is given in the process of teaching/learning at regular basis can be used to decide which students need remediation and which needs enrichment activities. Generally, continuous assessment encourages language teachers to help all learners succeed by considering individual differences.

According to many scholars, a more complete view of continuous assessment involves teachers' gathering of data about students continuously in the teaching learning process and use them to improve teaching and learning (Plessis et al, 2003; NIED, 1999). Nitko (2005:6) lists the following basic features of continuous assessment:

- It is an on-going process of gathering information about students' learning progress.
- It uses a variety of techniques to make decisions: about what to teach, about how to teach, and about how well students have learned
- It provides timely feedback to students about what they need to do to improve their learning
- It is aligned with curriculum goals and objectives.

It is important for teachers to understand that continuous assessment is not an additional activity and a task that is given at the end of a unit, a semester or a course. It is a fundamental part of the teaching learning process that should be used continuously. As Nitko (2005) explains if the teaching process is divided into three stages, continuous assessment plays different but unified roles in all the stages.

Before instruction, it can be used to gather information about what students already know about the forthcoming lesson or course and what misconception they may have. Continuous assessment can also be used to find out how students are progressing in their learning during instruction. This helps to reshape or reinforce the teaching process. Moreover, after instruction, continuous assessment helps to collect data how well students have learned the material for the purpose of assigning grades or reteaching students who have fallen behind (Nitko, 2005).

#### **2.4. Continuous and Conventional Assessments: Contrast**

Many scholars have indicated that conventional and continuous assessments differ in a variety of ways. These two paradigms of assessment are different in the time they are given. Conventional assessments are given at the end of a unit or a course or a term. On the other hand, continuous assessments are carried out on-going basis. Moreover, the two assessment types differ in their purposes. Conventional assessment is mainly given for the purpose of judgment. For instance, it may be carried out to determine whether students proceed to the next course or not. It may also be given to decide whether students be promoted to the next grade. Continuous assessment primarily aims at improving students' learning.

Plessis et al (2003) advocate the differences explained above. They also assert that conventional assessment is given at a certain point of a course; therefore; it does not show the knowledge and skills the students acquired through out the course. On the other hand, continuous assessment is carried out many times at the different parts of the course. Hence, it shows what the students know and can do in the course. Furthermore, in the conventional approach, very limited devices, such as tests, assignments and final exams are used to assess the students. In continuous assessment; however, besides the devices used in the conventional assessment, a variety of devices like reading logs, journals, observation, portfolios, etc are employed to gather information about each student.

Table 1 comprehensively summarizes the differences between conventional and continuous assessments. The table is adapted from Puhl (1997:12).

**Table 1:** Differences Between Conventional And Continuous Assessments

Dimension	Conventional assessment	Continuous assessment
Purpose	Summative; it “sums up” what has been happening Judgmental; forces learners to study	Formative; it generates input to inform and guide teaching Developmental; diagnostic: directs instructional attention
Focus	Product of instruction Teacher-created activity Heavy on memorization De-contextualized	Process of instruction Learner-created activity Heavy on thinking, integration Holistic
Feedback	A score or mark; final, no changing it.	A range of comments from peers, teachers; happens during the process while still time to change
Test task	Typically written work Medium: paper and pencil Narrow focus Exercises (for the future) Formal	Typically range of tasks Multimedia Multidimensional Authentic (real life tasks for now) Informal
Classroom Management	Instructive; interrupts class process One-shot; only one chance to show competence Results need time to be determined Books closed	Integrated; part of class routine Over time; chance to revise, improve, add Feedback comes quickly Reference available
Frame of reference	Norm-reference Learner compared against norms based on other test-takers	Criterion-reference Learner compared against specified criteria of achievement
Stakeholders	Learners, parents, principal receive results	Learners, parents, principal invited to help assess

## 2.5. Rationales for Using Continuous Assessment

As it is discussed above, the conventional assessment focuses more on the end results that students get. Some scholars argue that although it is important to judge the achievement of students at the end of a semester or a course, assessment should mainly be used to improve the teaching learning process (Plessis et al, 2003; Pasiona, 2002; Ellington and Earl, 1997). Hence, they advocated a paradigm shift from conventional assessment to continuous assessment. “The central characteristic of this shift [a paradigm shift in

educational assessment] is the moving of assessment from a judgmental role to a developmental role...This move reflects evolving ideas on the nature of assessment and its purposes” (Puhl, 1997:3).

The scholars present a number of rationales for using continuous assessment in schools and colleges. Continuous assessment is a way of collecting information about students to find out the strengths and weaknesses of them and provide important remediation in order to maximize their learning. Bock, Elago and Kunyanda (2003: 9-10) point out the following rationales as to why continuous assessment is used in language classrooms. Continuous assessment helps:

- To diagnose learner strengths and needs (so that appropriate teaching can be provided)
- To provide feedback to teachers about how well they are teaching (so that they can make needed changes and continue doing things that are effective)
- To inform and guide instruction (for example, to help a teacher decide if remedial teaching is needed by some learners or if the whole class needs more teaching on a topic)
- To inform learners how well they are learning (so they continue to do good work and so that they know when they need to improve)
- To make clear to learners what they are expected to learn
- To motivate and focus learner attention and effort (to help them learn better)
- To evaluate and grade learner achievement
- To provide a record of progress (for the teaching school, parents and learners)
- To predict a learner’s readiness for future learning
- To provide a basis for instructional placement (for example, in groups during lessons, for remedial work, and for promotion)
- To ensure and improve the effectiveness of your school

Generally, by assessing students continuously, it is possible to get regular information about teaching, learning and the achievement of learning objectives and competencies.

Moreover, teaching and learning is not a process that can be completed in a short period of time, so it needs on going assessment.

## **2.6. Benefits and Drawbacks of Continuous Assessment**

Continuous assessment has its own benefits and drawbacks. This section analyzes these in some details.

### **2.6.1. Benefits of Continuous Assessment**

In the previous section some issues that are related to the advantages of CA are discussed in general. But here the benefits of continuous assessment are presented from the advantages it provides to EFL teachers and students.

#### **A. Benefits of Continuous Assessment for EFL Teachers**

The role of EFL teachers is to make sure that learners in EFL classroom have opportunities to succeed in their learning. They may do this by using different kinds of teaching techniques. But, this is not enough by itself. Learners should also be assessed continuously so that the progress of the learners is known. Plessis et al (2003:14) lists the following benefits of CA for teachers:

*Continuous assessments may tell a teacher:*

- *Which learners are struggling with a topic or skill;*
- *What aspect of the topic;*
- *Which learners are grappling the topic and skill; and*
- *Whether the teaching was effective at helping learners learn.*

As it is indicated above, CA provides EFL teachers the chance to differentiate which learners are progressing well and which learners are lagging behind. This in turn helps the teachers to make decisions on what kind of assistance they should give to the learners who are not progressing well.

CA also informs EFL teachers which part(s) of the course is difficult for the learners. This enables the teachers to know what kind of remedial works they should give.

Moreover, CA may tell EFL teachers whether their teaching has brought the expected changes on the knowledge and skills of the learners or not. This may make the teachers to be confident on what they are teaching.

### **B. Benefits of Continuous Assessment for Learners**

As it is pointed out before, the basic aim of continuous assessment is to find out the problems of learners and help them succeed in their learning. Continuous assessment can promote this in many ways. When learners are assessed continuously, they get feedback from their teachers frequently. This helps the learners to identify their problems and re-correct themselves or get correction from their friends or teachers (Plessis et al, 2003; Pasigna, 2002; Pasigna, 2000).

Continuous assessment can help the learners to get remediation. Plessis et al (2003:13) define remediation as: "...a way of helping those learners who are learning the knowledge and skills more slowly than others in a class." After identifying the difficulties of learners by assessing continuously, EFL teachers can help the learners by preparing appropriate remedial works. Remediation can provide learners different ways of learning knowledge and skills. Pasigna (2000:5) summarizes the reasons of giving remedial instruction in the following way:

*We provide remedial instruction because:*

- 1. We want every pupil in our class to succeed.*
- 2. We believe that every individual can be helped to succeed.*
- 3. It is our responsibility to provide every child the opportunity to succeed in school.*

Continuous assessment can also help learners get enrichment activities. These activities may further develop the knowledge and skills that learners have got in their classroom learning.

To summarize, continuous assessment helps students to monitor their progress, develop discipline in studying, get insights into misconceptions, be motivated, and have realistic expectations (Pasigna, 2002).

### **2.6.2. Drawbacks of Continuous Assessment**

Even though continuous assessment is a preferred way of assessing learners for some scholars, it is not without some drawbacks. These drawbacks are discussed in some details below.

Learners who are assessed continuously may feel that they are always under surveillance for every mistake they commit (Nitko, 2005; Plessis et al, 2003). This may have a negative impact on the learners' performance. Continuous assessment may also bring a profound negative effect if it is not well planned and properly practiced. As to this, Ellington and Earl (1997) state that:

*Unless continuous assessment is carefully planned and coordinated, there is a very real danger that student may be grossly over-assessed -- particularly at certain times of the year, when several lecturers are asking simultaneously for assignments to be handed in.... Continuous assessment can, if not properly managed, adversely affect the relationship between students and their tutors, with the latter being regarded with suspicion and (in some extreme cases) enmity and occasionally even introducing malpractice, as in imposing penalties for seeking help.*

In order to enhance the effectiveness of CA, it is important and necessary to minimize the drawbacks. As Ellington and Earl (1997) point out EFL teachers need to have a well developed knowledge and skills, and be creative in their implementation of CA. Teachers should also have a well organized plan of assessment to maximize the success of CA: "all the problem areas listed above can be overcome or obviated by carefully planning and good practice" (Ellington and Earl, 1997:online).

### **2.7. Continuous Assessment Devices**

Continuous assessment involves various kinds of assessment devices. These help EFL teachers to collect reliable information about the knowledge and skills of students (Nitko, 2005, Plessis, et al., 2003). One assessment device may allow EFL teachers to better

assess a certain learning objective than another assessment device. For example, projects may be a better device to assess students' speaking ability than multiple-choice tests. Moreover, students may show their ability of the English language in one device better than in another device (NIED, 1999; Puhl, 1997). Some of these continuous assessment devices are discussed in some details below.

### **2.7.1. Self-assessment**

Assessment which does not involve the learners may contribute little for the teaching learning process. Learners should be allowed to participate in the many aspects of assessment. As Ellington and Earl (1997:online) "Student participation becomes a key component of successful assessment strategies at every step: clarifying the target and purpose of assessment, discussing the assessment methods, deliberating about standards for quality work, reflecting on the work." Since learners are in charge of their learning, they should also be concerned about assessment. As Lissitz and Schafer (2002) state assessment is not a teacher centered activity that is done for EFL teachers' needs. It is rather a learner-centered activity that typically aims at improving learners learning. EFL teachers should be aware of this and they should involve learners in assessment activities. When learners are given a chance to assess themselves, they develop a sense of confidence and responsibility for their own learning.

Self-assessment is a way that learners use to evaluate their performance. EFL learners can assess their learning if they are given proper conditions (Puhl, 1997). Students should be provided with essential criteria and formats to carry out effective self-assessment. A Handbook and Policy Guide of St. John's (2000:33) explains: "To help students think about what they are doing and what they need to do, they should be taught to ask the following questions during a self-evaluation exercise: What have I done well? What have I done not so well? What do I need to do now?"

EFL teachers can provide the students different self-assessment methods, such as checklist, evaluation sheets and tutorial meetings to promote the assessment effectively. Lambert and Lines (2000:149) elaborate this by saying:

*It [self-assessment] needs practice and it can lead to a deepening understanding of an individual's own strengths and how to counter weaknesses. Difficult to standardize and verify, though one of the benefits is to deepen a shared understanding of access criteria.*

Involving students in assessing themselves helps EFL teachers to share their responsibility for students. It also enables students to know their position in relation to the objectives of language learning (Institute for Interactive Media and Learning, 2007; Plessis et al, 2003).

In spite of the benefits that are pointed out above, self-assessment may pose some problems. If self-assessment is not well planned and properly implemented, it may provide false data to teachers. A Handbook and Policy Guide of St. John's (2000:33) states: "There is a threat to validity where students are not honest about their efforts and achievements."

To enhance the benefits of self-assessment, EFL teachers should properly design and implement it. They should orient students with the purpose, importance, criteria and formats of self-assessment (A Handbook and Policy Guide of St. John's, 2000; Puhl, 1997). For students to develop the ability of assessing themselves, self-assessment should be incorporated in the various daily activities of the classroom. Black and William (1998:55) also assert this point: "...self-assessment by the students is not an interesting option or luxury; it has to be seen as essential."

### **2.7.2. Peer-assessment**

One approach to obtain information about EFL students' learning is to use peer-assessment. It is an assessment type that allows students to assess their classmate's works. Phul (1997:7) defines peer-assessment as:

*...a response in some form to others' work. It can be given by a group or an individual, and it can take any of a variety*

*of coding systems: the spoken word, the written word, checklists, questionnaires, non-verbal symbols, numbers along a scale, colors, etc.*

Peer assessment gives chance for students to examine the works of other students and give constructive comments. The feedback that learners give about the works of their colleagues may provide useful information for both teachers and students (Plessis et al., 2003).

Peer assessment can promote the building of learners' ability of making independent judgments of their own and others' work. Weaver and Cotrell (1986) state that peer assessment can encourage a greater sense of involvement and responsibility, promote excellence, direct attention to skills and learning and provide increased feedback.

Peer assessment has its own advantages and disadvantages. Brown (1996:online) summarizes these in the following way:

**Table 2:** Advantages and Disadvantages of Peer Assessment

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Peer assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps students to become more autonomous, responsible and involved.</li> <li>• Encourages students to critically analyze work done by others, rather than simply seeing a mark</li> <li>• Helps clarify assessment criteria.</li> <li>• Gives students a wider range of feedback</li> <li>• More closely parallels possible career situations where judgment is made by a group</li> <li>• Reduces the marking load on the lecturer</li> </ul>	<p>Students may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack the ability to evaluate each other</li> <li>• Not take it seriously, allowing friendship, entertainment value, etc to influence their marking</li> <li>• Not like peer marking because of the possibility of being discriminated against, being misunderstood, etc.</li> <li>• Misinform each other without lecturer intervention.</li> </ul>

EFL teachers should strive a lot to maximize the strengths and minimize the drawbacks of peer assessment. They can do this by clearly explaining the purposes, uses, principles and criteria of peer assessment (TQA Manual, 2003; Puhl, 1997).

### **2.7.3. Portfolio Assessment**

Portfolio is a meaningful collection of students' work that demonstrates the knowledge and skills students acquired in EFL classroom. Burke (1999:6) define portfolio as: "...a collection of student work gathered for a particular purpose that exhibits to the student and others the student's efforts, progress or achievement in one or more areas."

Tierney, Carter, and Desai (1991), as cited in Burke (1999:6), define portfolios as on going assessments that are composed of purposeful collections that examine achievement, effort, improvement, and processes, such as selecting, comparing, sharing, self-evaluation, and goal setting. Portfolio is not a mere collection of learners' work; rather it is a purposeful activity that includes different contents. According to Gottlieb (1995), as cited in Puhl (1997:8), there are six portfolio prototypes. He lists these in ascending order of complexity based on purpose: collecting, reflecting, assessing, documenting, thinking, and evaluating.

In the collecting stage learners store their works based on criteria pre-specified by the school, EFL department, or teachers and learners. The second stage is reflecting. In this stage, students reflect their views why they chose some of their works in the collecting stage. Burke (1999:70) states the importance of reflection in a portfolio as:

*A portfolio without reflections is a notebook of stuff! The power of the portfolio is derived from the descriptions, reactions, processing patterns, and meta-cognitive reflections that help students achieve their goals.*

Students should think about their thinking by reflecting how they succeed and why they fail in their learning. When students are aware of their language learning processes, they likely establish goals for their learning and they may also more involved in the processes

(Burke, 1999). But, it should be known that learners cannot develop the skill of reflecting at once. Hence, EFL teachers should encourage and assist learners with different ways to reflect on their learning effectively (Burke, Fogarty and Belgrad, 1999; Puhl, 1997).

By using definite criteria, learners can assess the works they have collected. This may be done by self-assessment or peer-assessment. Puhl (1997:8) advocates this point by saying: “Certainly portfolios embrace peer-and self-assessment, and they may become a workhorse of CA.” Learners’ portfolios can be documented and used for further learning. Teachers can also use these for summative assessment.

Just like other continuous assessment devices, portfolio has its own strengths and weaknesses. Tierney, Carter, and Desai (1991:59) (writing specifically of reading and writing, but this can be extended to other skills) express that portfolios help students to:

- Make a collection of meaningful work;
- Reflect on their strengths and needs;
- Set personal goals;
- See their progress over time;
- Think about ideas presented in their work;
- Look at a variety of work;
- See effort put forth;
- Have a clear understanding of their versatility as a reader and a writer;
- Feel ownership for their work;
- Feel that their work has personal reference

In spite of the various advantages of portfolio assessment, it has some drawbacks. Ellington and Earl (1997: Online) list the following weaknesses of portfolio:

- Portfolios take a lot of looking at! It can take a very long time to assess a set of student portfolios and do full justice to the work and effort that has gone into them.
- Portfolios are much harder to mark objectively than most other outcomes of student work. Because of the highly individual nature of portfolios, it is

extremely difficult to decide on a set of assessment criteria which will be equally valid across a diverse set of portfolios.

- The ownership or provenance of the evidence presented in portfolios can sometimes be in doubt, particularly if the portfolio was compiled out with the setting in which it is being assessed.

Since portfolio is a vital continuous assessment tool, EFL teachers should utilize it systematically. They should plan and manage it properly and also pair it with other continuous assessment devices to minimize its drawbacks. As to this, Dickins (2000: 391) states:

*Making the best use of portfolios requires careful management on the part of the teacher. Students, too, need to be introduced to this mode of assessment and sensitized to the ways in which portfolios can be used as the basis for dialogue with the teacher, identifying developments in their own work, and monitoring their own progress.*

#### **2.7.4 Projects**

Project work involves giving the students a project to complete in a specified amount of time. Project provides students a great chance to use and practice what they have learnt in real life situations (NIED of Namibia, 1999). It may encourage students to bring real problems into language classrooms. Project can involve various kinds of activity. Trigwell (1992) states some of the activities students do in a project work:

*In it [project work] students have to use their initiative to identify problems they wish to solve or questions they wish to explore, decide on the information, materials, equipment which they need and how they can obtain them, use this information to plan the work, attempt to solve the problem or answer the question and present their results coherently.*

EFL teachers should plan and explain to their students how they are going to assess the activities they have given in a project work. If the teachers decide to assess the product of the project, they should consider as it is important to give feedback to every stage of

the project process. Such kinds of feedback should help the learning process. If EFL teachers do not give feedback on the activities of the project process, students may focus on the end product of the project by neglecting its process (Elton, 1987).

Projects can be done individually or in groups. Group projects may be easy to organize, but it may not be simple to monitor and assess the participation of each student in the projects (Baye, 2006; Brown, Bull and Pendlebury, 1997; James, 1994). Hence, EFL teachers should consider what the roles of each student in a group, how marks are given to a group and its members, how the activities are done, etc when they plan project work. Students should also be aware of these facts so that they try hard to achieve what is expected of them.

Project work can have various benefits for EFL students. According to A Handbook and Policy Guide of St. John's (2000), students develop the skill of dealing with their own problems as they are encouraged to do projects based on problems of their choice. This kind of opportunity may allow students to show their hidden talents which may not be seen in written or oral test. Group projects give chances for students to share experiences with their colleagues. They also provide opportunity for students to get exposure to several language items and language functions. This in turn may help students to develop fluency in the target language (Nation, 1993).

Even though projects provide students various advantages, they cause potential problems if they are not properly handled. Mostly projects are done in a home environment. If parents or other persons do the whole project work, the students may learn little from the project work (A Handbook and Policy Guide of St. John's, 2000). Projects may also be time-consuming when they are done and marked.

EFL teachers should strive a lot to minimize the drawbacks and enhance the benefits of project assessment. The guidelines presented by A Handbook and Policy Guide of St. John's (2000:30-31) for assigning and grading projects may help to alleviate the problems of project assessments.

- Ensure students fully understand the project and have some basic methodology formulated. The teacher should be satisfied students know how to complete a project before they begin work on it.
- Teach students to use such references as encyclopedias, vertical files, CD-Rom and the Internet to obtain information.
- Ensure projects are not too difficult so students may derive personal satisfaction from doing them.
- Allow students to start project in the classroom.
- Provide students with a written outline of the project. This outline should include: a written description of the project; the intended outcomes of the project; the due date (or deadlines for phases of the project); evaluation criteria (including a marking scheme), and suggestions concerning sources.
- Continuously monitor the progress of students. This ensures projects are manageable and realistic in scope and time. It also ensures students do not get off track.
- Provide marks or comments regarding the student's completed projects on a separate sheet of paper. Do not place any markings on the project itself. This allows the work to be displayed. However, work should not be displayed without the consent of the student, and never for comparison or competition, unless it is assigned for that purpose.
- Allow students to volunteer for group projects with the understanding each member receives the same grade for the completed work.

When EFL teachers assess the project works of students, they should consider the two aspects of the project: the process and the product. In the process assessment, EFL teachers can focus on student' s willingness to be involved in the assigned task; taking additional tasks voluntarily; readiness of students to be commented; knowing the purpose of the project; giving encouragement to others; consideration of the needs of others; and the demonstration of the project process. These points can help the teachers to assess the affective and the cognitive domains. On the other hand, the teachers can give attention in the attainment of the goals of the project when they assess the product of the project.

Marks should be given in relation to the outcomes of the project (A Handbook and Policy Guide of St. John's, 2000)

Generally, projects are widely accepted as a means of assessment in higher education. If project assessment is wanted to bring effective results, EFL teachers should take their time and plan, organize, and grade projects properly (Baye, 2006).

### **2.7.5 Observation**

Observation is a process of watching what students can say and do; and record what one had seen (Brooks, 2002; Maxwell, 2001). According to Crown (2007), in order to get information by observing students, EFL teachers should have observation skills: looking -- knowing what they are looking for; listening -- focusing on the interaction of a student with others; recording -- writing down important features of student's responses, behavior, learning and development immediately after observation; thinking -- thinking about what is observed and then assessing and planning; and questioning -- asking in order to refine ideas about what is observed.

Observation is a day-to-day activity that EFL teachers do in language classrooms: it is part and parcel of the teaching learning process. As to this, the Queensland School Curriculum Council Position and Guidelines on Assessment, as cited in Maxwell (2001: iii), states:

*Observation involves teachers in observing students as they participate in planned activities. Teacher observation occurs continually as a natural part of the learning and teaching process and can be used to gather a broad range of information about students' demonstrations of learning outcomes.*

Observation can help EFL teachers to know each student as an individual, because it provides information about students that cannot be got from other assessment techniques (A Handbook and Policy Guide St. John's, 2000). For example, the process a student uses when he expresses his ideas and views to his colleagues may provide the teacher

valuable evidence about the performance of the student. The data collected by observation can be used to improve the teaching learning process as well as to judge the achievement of the student (Maxwell, 2001).

Even though observation has various uses as a means of assessment, some scholars argue that observation may not be a reliable way of collecting information about students. They say that the natural settings may not allow students to demonstrate what they know; EFL teachers may not observe the performance of students properly, teachers' judgments may not be reliable as all the students may not respond to a task equally; and teachers' judgments may be affected by several biases, such as gender, race, etc (Maxwell, 2001).

Hence, EFL teachers should work hard to minimize the above mentioned drawbacks.

Teacher observation is a useful means of assessment if it is well planned and implemented. Maxwell (2001:2) confirms this:

*Handled carefully, teacher observations can provide important evidence for assessment judgments. In some cases, they provide the only way of obtaining evidence about particular learning outcomes, especially those involving practical techniques, performance activities, 'real life' projects and group work.*

In order to enhance the reliability of observation as a means of assessment, EFL teachers should record what they have observed in language classrooms immediately after observation using different recording devices. According to A Handbook and Policy Guide of St. John's (2000), there are three recording devices: checklist, anecdotal records and rating scales.

Checklists are lists of specific criteria that teachers can prepare using curriculum outcomes. Qualitative information is not included in checklists as it is difficult to value them objectively. Checklists show the presence or absence of particular language behaviors. They give immediate descriptive data and rapid feedback (A Handbook of Policy Guide of St. John's, 2000).

Anecdotal records allow for the recording of indepth observation and information. The anecdotal record must be based upon what actually was observed, since it is a description of some specific episode (Maxwell, 2001).

During observation, it is not always convenient to make detailed anecdotal records. Therefore, when the observation reveals important data about the student's development, the teacher can make notes of circumstances, dates and names. After the observation has been conducted, these notes can be used to write the actual anecdotal record. Interpretations should be kept separate from observations in the event the teachers would like a second opinion.

Rating scales are similar to checklists, but they also include a measure of performance quality. As an assessment instrument, a rating scale is useful in determining a student's strengths and needs and in planning a suitable program (Spandel and Stiggins, 1990).

### **2.7.6 Quizzes and Tests**

Quizzes and tests are widely used continuous assessment devices in language classrooms. These two terms differ in their purpose and dimension rather than in their item content. Tests are pre-announced and they cover a particular unit of instruction. Unlike tests, quizzes may not be announced beforehand and they can be both in written and oral medium (Valette, 1977).

Well designed and administered tests or quizzes can have positive impacts on the performance and achievement of students. These devices can improve the teaching learning process, develop students' confidence, and show students' strengths and weaknesses (Norris, 2000; Taiwo, 1998).

According to Hedge (2000:378), good tests are tests that provide:

*..the opportunity for learners to show how much they know about language structure and vocabulary, as well as how they are able to use these formal linguistic features to convey meanings in classroom language activities through listening, speaking, reading and writing.*

Conventional assessments that are used for summative purposes contain useful information for teachers and students, but these assessments are usually too infrequent, come too late for action, and are too coarse-grained. Tests that are given before the end of a unit can provide both teacher and student with useful information on which to act while there is still opportunity to revisit areas where students were not able to perform well. Hence, tests and quizzes in continuous assessment can be used for reshaping the teaching learning process as well as for judging student's performance (Plessis et al, 2003; Struyven, Dochy and Janssens, 2002).

### **2.7.7. Learning Logs and Journals**

Learning logs and reflective journals are one kind of continuous assessment device that can be employed by EFL teachers in higher education institutions. According to Burke (1999), logs can be made of short, objective entries of questions about the lecture or readings, lists of outside readings, homework assignments, and anything that can be recorded. Log entries are mostly brief, factual and impersonal. On the other hand, the contents of reflective journals are responses to pieces of literature, description of events, reactions to events, reflection on personal experiences and feelings, and connection of lesson learned with life outside the classroom. Journal entries are often long, subjective, opinion-based and personal.

Brownlie et al (1988), as cited in Burke (1999:117), list the following purposes of using learning logs and journals:

1. To *record* key ideas from a lecture, movie, presentation, field trip, or reading assignments.

2. To *make* predictions about what will happen next in a story, movie, experiment, the weather, or in school, national or world events.
3. To *record* questions.
4. To *summarize* the main ideas of a book, movie, lecture, or reading.
5. To *reflect* on the information presented
6. To *connect* the ideas presented to other subject areas or to the student's personal life.
7. To *monitor* change in an experiment or event over time.
8. To *respond* to questions posed by the teacher or other students.
9. To *brainstorm* ideas about potential projects, papers, or presentations.
10. To *help* identify problems.
11. To *record* problem-solving techniques
12. To *keep* track of the number of problems solved, books read, or homework assignments completed.

Learning logs and journals can be used to assess the different aspects of English language, particularly reading and writing skills. A Handbook and Policy Guide of St. John's (2000:24) identifies the following benefits of learning journals:

*Learning journals are quite acceptable as source of data concerning achievement. They are also, practical, since they are not time-consuming and they provide for increased achievement and provide for increased achievement and practice in such Language Arts areas as writing. Learning journals encourage reflective thought and metacognition as students are required to think about their learning.*

Since these assessment devices are not a complete way of collecting information about students, it is important and necessary to use them systematically. EFL teachers should use these assessment devices with other ones in order to increase the reliability of them.

### **2.7.8. Interviews/Conferences**

Teacher-student interviews or conferences can be used to assess the progress and achievement of students. According to A Handbook and Policy Guide of St. John's

(2000), these assessment devices give a good opportunity for EFL teachers to know the full picture of students' growth and development. During an interview, EFL teachers get a chance to ask students various questions. This helps them to explore several aspects of students' progress.

EFL teachers should fulfill certain conditions in order to implement teacher-student interviews or conferences. A Handbook and Policy Guide of St. John's (2000:34) states:

*Where the teacher structures the interview to answer particular questions, these questions should be written down before the conference. The interview environment should be relaxed and non-threatening. The teacher should ensure the student is at ease. The students should be encouraged to do most of the talking or ask questions.*

Even though teacher-student interviews or conferences are practical and direct way of gathering information about students, it is essential to make them reliable. EFL teachers should use these assessment tools with other assessment tools to increase their reliability (A Handbook and Policy Guide of St. John's, 2000).

## **2.8. Aligning Assessment with Curriculum Objectives, Teaching and Learning**

According to Nitko (2005), there are three new emerging visions of education. These are the purpose of curriculum and schooling, how learning develops, and how assessment should be conducted in the classroom. These emerging visions should align in order to implement continuous assessment effectively and achieve the goals of language teaching in higher education.

EFL teachers should understand the importance of aligning assessment with desired curriculum objectives and with the goals of language teaching and learning to use continuous assessment effectively. As to this, Nitko (2005:3) states:

*The more a teacher understands about these emerging visions, and aligns teaching and assessment practices with them, the more a teacher will be able to use continuous assessment to improve teaching and students' learning.*

If the alignment among assessment, curriculum objectives, and learning and teaching is weak, the assessment practice will also be less effective in improving the teaching learning process and achieving the goals of the language curriculum (Shepard, 2000). Hence, EFL teachers should confirm that their assessment practice is compatible with the objectives of the language course, and learning and teaching (Nitko, 2005; Shepard, 2000).

## **2.9. Perceptions of Students on Assessment**

Students' perceptions of assessment may have a great impact on achieving the goals of continuous assessment. Knowing the perceptions of the students may provide valuable information as how to alleviate the problems that occur in the process of assessment (Crossman, 2004; Sambell and Johnson, 1998).

As some scholars have indicated most EFL students have preferred continuous assessment to conventional assessment. Reflection on learning, assessment over a long period of time, ample feedback, cooperative learning opportunities, greater sense of language progress and achievement are some of the factors that make students have positive perceptions about continuous assessment devices (Apple and Shimo, 2004; Puhl, 1997).

However, the perceptions of EFL students on assessment may be affected by various factors. To begin with, students' perceptions of assessment can be influenced by their previous assessment experiences. If students had a painful past experiences, they would develop a kind of assessment avoidance behavior or the development of defense mechanisms attributing failure to assessment irrelevance (Crossman, 2004).

Secondly, the relevance of assessment to the real life experience may have an impact on students' perceptions of assessment. According to Crossman (2004), when assessments are connected with the outside world of work, they may create a positive influence on students' learning. However, if there is no relationship between assessments and the actual activities of the outside world of work, students may develop a negative attitude towards assessment. Hence, EFL teachers should relate assessments with the situation of the real world and also explain the relevance of assessment to their students.

According to Crossman (2004), assessment anxiety can also affect the assessment perception of students. Many students feel uneasiness when they think of or face any kind of assessment in their course. However, some assessment devices, such as examinations, oral presentations cause higher levels of anxiety than other assessment devices (Crossman, 2004). As many students indicated they preferred exam-free courses particularly in situations where examinations are graded for certification (Crossman, 2004).

In order to make students have more positive attitude towards CA, teachers should use CA for improving their instruction and students' learning. They should also encourage and involve students in the various aspects of assessment (NIED of Namibia, 1999).

## **2.10. Teachers' Practices of Assessment**

One of the factors that affect assessing students accurately and fairly is teacher's perceptions and practices of assessment (Pierce, 2002). Most teachers state that they are not comfortable with the assessment type proposed by educational institutions. Teachers preferred to use the same type of assessment techniques they experienced when they were students (Pierce, 2002). Genesee and Upshure (1996) explain that lack of time, lack of facilities, teachers' knowledge and commitment, number of students and attitude of teachers to assessment innovation are constraints of assessing students.

As Black and William (1998) have indicated teachers do not have adequate understanding of continuous assessment. This contributes a lot to their weak practices of

continuous assessment. Nitko (2005) also indicates that teachers have incomplete understanding of CA and this has a negative impact on their implementation of it. Hence, it is necessary for teachers to revise their perceptions and practices of CA (MOE, Youth, and Culture Kingston, Jamaica, 2004).

The studies by Crooks (1988) and Black (1993), as cited in Black and William (1998: 65), has pointed out the following problems that led teachers' practices to be weak in putting continuous assessment into practice.

- The assessment practices usually encourage superficial and rote learning that concentrates on recall of isolated details, usually items of knowledge which pupils soon forget.
- Teachers do not usually review the assessment questions they use and do not discuss them with colleagues that lead teachers to have little or no reflection on what is being assessed.
- The emphasis of assessment is on grading function rather than the learning function of assessment.
- There is a tendency to use a normative rather than a criterion-based approach that emphasizes competition between students rather than the personal progress of each. The evidence in such type of practices is that the feedback is to teach the weaker students visualize their own weaknesses that de-motivate and lose confidence in their own capacity to learn.

In order to implement continuous assessment effectively, teachers must have a full understanding of it. As to this, Nitko (2005: 21) says:

*Before teacher training institute instructors can teach teacher candidates the preceding [formative and summative assessment] skills, it is necessary to have learned them. If the instructors do not have the knowledge and skills to apply both FCA and SCA, then some in-service training will need to be delivered for those instructors at the teacher training institutes.*

On the whole, it is necessary and essential to develop teachers' awareness of CA constantly through continuous training/workshops, seminars, or any other program for the successful implementation of CA (Passigna, 2002; Pierce, 2002).

### **2.11. Review of Local Research**

Some local studies were done on continuous assessment. For example, a research by Nibret (2005) was done to evaluate high school EFL teachers' implementation of continuous assessment. His findings indicated that high school EFL teachers did not use continuous assessment for improving the instructional process. This research did not investigate the teachers' perception of continuous assessment.

A study by Baye (2006) was done to see the extent to which EFL teachers use alternative assessment methods. His findings showed that EFL teachers used limited assessment devices to assess their students. This study focused on continuous assessment devices.

This research was done to fill the gap observed in the above studies. Hence, the purpose of this research was to find out how EFL teachers perceived continuous assessment and see the extent to which the teachers' implementation of continuous assessment.

# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

### **3.1. Subjects of the Study**

The study was carried out in Debu Ethiopia Teacher Education College. The college is located in Awassa, the capital of South Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region. The participants of the study were EFL teachers and students of this college.

There were 12 EFL teachers (all male) in Debu Ethiopia Teacher Education College. All of them were involved in the research, but one did not return the questionnaire. Therefore, the actual number of the participants was 11.

Regarding student participants, third year EFL students of 10+3 program were selected for the study. They were selected because they had more experience in continuous assessment than first and second year students. There were 270 (193 male and 77 female) EFL third year students in the college in 2006/07 academic year. Fifty percent of these students (89 male and 46 female) was selected randomly for the research. However, only 127 students were involved in the study as 8 students (6 male and 2 female) returned incomplete questionnaire.

### **3.2. Instruments Used for the Study**

Questionnaire and interview were used for the study. Questionnaires were developed for both teachers and students. Interview was also developed for the two groups of participants to supplement the data gathered using questionnaire. The instruments were prepared based on the objectives of the study and the literature.

### **3.2.1. Teachers' Questionnaires**

Teachers' questionnaires had closed-ended and open-ended questionnaires. The closed-ended questionnaire had three parts. The first one was prepared to find out teachers' understanding of the principles and purposes of continuous assessment. In this part, 15 items adapted from Hedge (2000) were used. The response modes of the items were 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'uncertain', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'.

The second part was developed to see teachers' primary use of CA results and way of giving feedback to students' CA activities. Seven items were prepared for this part. The response modes used were checklists (yes/no) and 5-point Likert scale (always (5) to never (1)). The items were adapted from Nitko (2005) and the available literature.

The last part was developed to find out EFL teachers' implementation of CA devices. Eleven 5-point Likert –scale items were prepared. These items were adopted from the American Institutes for Research (2003). The scale ranges from always (5) to never (1). The open-ended questionnaire was prepared to investigate mainly the problems that teachers faced in their implementation of CA. The teachers were also asked to suggest solutions for the successful implementation of CA. Moreover, some items that were intended to investigate teachers' participation in any CA related training /workshop and the contents of the training and its impacts on them were included in this section of the questionnaire. Interview was also conducted as a follow-up tool.

### **3.2.2. Students' Questionnaires**

These had closed-ended and open-ended questionnaires. The closed-ended questionnaire had two parts. The first one was developed to investigate teachers' implementation of the various aspects of CA as perceived by students and the problems students faced in their teachers' practices of CA. The questionnaire consisted of 15 items that were adapted from Apple and Shimo (2004), and the available literature. It had a 5-point scale whose response mode was 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'uncertain', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'.

The second part was prepared to see teachers' implementation of CA devices as perceived by students. Eleven 5-point scale items, which ranges from always (5) to never (1), were prepared.

In the open-ended questionnaire, the students were asked what strengths and weaknesses they observed in their teachers' practices of CA. Interview was also developed and conducted to support the data obtained from the questionnaire.

### **3.2.3 Teachers' and Students' Interview**

For teachers' interview, five items adapted from the available literature were used. The items were prepared to support the data obtained from the questionnaire. They mainly focused on the problems teachers faced in their implementation of CA.

In students' interview, four items were included. These were developed to support the data collected through the questionnaire. The focus of the items was on the strengths and weaknesses of teachers' implementation of CA.

Five teachers and ten students were involved in the interview. They were selected based on a random sampling technique. For both teachers and students, the interview was recorded. Students' interview was transcribed and translated for analysis.

### **3.3. Procedure of Data Collection**

As it is indicated above, data for the research were collected through questionnaire and interview. Before administrating the questionnaires to teachers and students, a short explanation was given on the purpose of the, questionnaires. Teachers' questionnaires were collected one day after the day they were administered. In the interview, the consent of the interviewees was asked and approved before it was conducted.

### **3.4. Data Analysis**

All the data collected were organized and analyzed in a way appropriate to answer the statement of the problem. The data were organized based on teachers' perception of continuous assessment, teachers' implementation of CA, and teachers' and students' problems in the implementation of CA.

Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods were used in the research. The data collected through closed-ended questionnaire were analyzed quantitatively. To determine teachers' primary use of CA and their implementation of CA devices, mean and standard deviation were calculated. The expected (ideal) mean was three. Zero standard deviation means there was no variation among teachers in using that particular point whereas the highest variation would be two. Therefore, if the calculated mean of a particular point was above the ideal mean, it can be said that the teachers implemented that particular point in their CA process. Percentage was used to find out teachers' perception of CA and students' perception of their teachers' practices of CA.

Finally, the data collected using open-ended questionnaire and interview were analyzed qualitatively for both teachers and students.

# **CHAPTER FOUR**

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **4.1. Teachers' Perception of Continuous Assessment**

In this sub-section, 15 items were presented which focus on teachers' understanding of the principles and purposes of CA. The items particularly focus on general principles of CA (item 1), feedback (items 2-4), purpose of CA (item 5), benefits of CA (items 6-9), students' roles in CA (items 10-13) and the alignment of assessment with the objectives of the lesson or the course (items 14-15). The items were presented to find out if the teachers had adequate knowledge about CA. Table 3 shows the summary of teachers' response to their understanding of the principles and purposes of CA.

**Table 3:** Summary of Teachers' Responses to Their Perception of CA

Ser  No	Questionnaire Items	Agreement		Total		Uncertain		Disagreement		Total	
		Strongly Agree	Agree	f	%	f	%	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	f	%
		f	f					f	f		
1	Giving feedback is an integral part of continuous assessment	7	4	<b>11</b>	<b>100</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	Feedback in CA focuses on what students' can't do rather than what they can do	3	6	<b>9</b>	<b>81.82</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9.09</b>	1	-	<b>1</b>	<b>9.09</b>
3	Feedback should be given by the teacher; not by the students in continuous assessment	-	3	<b>3</b>	<b>27.27</b>	-	-	6	2	<b>8</b>	<b>72.73</b>
4	Feedback in CA mainly consists of reporting right and wrong answers to the learners	-	2	<b>2</b>	<b>18.18</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>27.27</b>	4	2	<b>6</b>	<b>54.55</b>
5	The emphasis of continuous assessment is more on products than the process	1	5	<b>6</b>	<b>54.55</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9.09</b>	3	1	<b>4</b>	<b>36.36</b>
6	I feel that continuous assessment helps to see students strengths and weaknesses better than conventional assessment	6	4	<b>10</b>	<b>90.91</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9.09</b>	-	-	-	-
7	I feel that continuous assessment is used just to label students	2	5	<b>7</b>	<b>63.64</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>27.27</b>	-	1	<b>1</b>	<b>9.09</b>
8	I know that continuous assessment motivates students to be engaged in their learning	4	6	<b>10</b>	<b>90.91</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9.09</b>	-	-	-	-

9	I believe that continuous assessment addresses students' interests and needs more than the conventional assessment	3	6	<b>9</b>	<b>81.82</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>18.18</b>	-	-	-	-
10	CA prevents teachers from being the central authority in decision making	1	4	<b>5</b>	<b>45.45</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>27.27</b>	3	-	<b>3</b>	<b>27.27</b>
11	It is the teacher who is responsible for deciding the marking criteria; not the students in continuous assessment	-	6	<b>6</b>	<b>54.55</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>18.18</b>	2	1	<b>3</b>	<b>27.27</b>
12	It is definitely possible for students to make an assessment of their own progress in continuous assessment	4	-	<b>4</b>	<b>36.36</b>	-	-	6	1	<b>7</b>	<b>63.64</b>
13	I feel that there is a lack of individual accountability in continuous assessment: students depend on the work of others	2	4	<b>6</b>	<b>54.55</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>18.18</b>	3	-	<b>3</b>	<b>27.27</b>
14	I know that attendance and punctuality are given marks as part of continuous assessment	2	5	<b>7</b>	<b>63.64</b>	-	-	2	2	<b>4</b>	<b>36.36</b>
15	Continuous assessment does not differentiate students according to their language ability	-	2	<b>2</b>	<b>18.18</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9.09</b>	6	2	<b>8</b>	<b>72.73</b>

f= frequency

As can be seen from Table 3, all teachers reported that continuous assessment is an integral component of the teaching learning process (item1). In item 2, 81.82% of them said that feedback should focus on what students cannot do. On the other hand, 72.73% of the teachers indicated that students should be involved in giving feedback (item 3), but in item 4 more than half of the respondents (54.55%) claimed that feedback does not only consist of right and wrong answers but also it contains the comments that indicate what was right and wrong.

In item 5, 54.55% of the teachers agreed that the emphasis of continuous assessment should mainly be on the product. Most of the respondents (90.91%) reported that continuous assessment helps to find out the strengths and weaknesses of students more than conventional assessment (item 6). However, 63.64% of the teachers agreed that continuous assessment is used to label students (item 7).

In item 8, 90.91% of teachers indicated that continuous assessment motivates students to be engaged in their learning. Similarly, in item 9, most of them (81.82) reported that continuous assessment addresses the needs and interests of students more than the conventional one.

In item 10, 45.45% of the respondents claimed that continuous assessment prevents teachers from being the central authority in decision making. On the other hand, more than half of the teachers (54.55%) reported that it is the responsibility of the teacher to decide the marking criteria (item 11).

In item 12, about two-thirds of the teachers (63.64%) replied that students are not able to make an assessment of their own progress in continuous assessment. In addition, more than half of the respondents (54.55%) reported that the lack of individual accountability in CA makes students be dependent on the work of others (item 13). More than sixty percent (63.64%) of the teachers agreed that attendance and punctuality should be given

marks as part of continuous assessment (item 14). Finally, in item 15, 72.73% of the respondents indicated that continuous assessment differentiates students according to their language ability.

As can be seen in Table 3, the EFL teachers have varied understanding about the principles and purposes of continuous assessment. For example, in item 1, all of the teachers (100 %) indicate that CA is an integral component of the instructional system. However, in item 5, more than fifty percent of them reported that the focus of CA should be more on the product than the process.

According to several scholars, the main purpose of continuous assessment is to improve learning and to shape the instructional process (Nitko, 2005; Plessis et al, 2003; Pasigna, 2002). Even though the marks which are gathered using CA in combination with the marks of the end-of-year examination can be used for summative purpose, the main focus of CA is not more on the product than the process. Hence, what the teachers responded to item 1 contradicted with what they responded to item 5.

In item 2, more than eighty percent of the respondents reported that feedback in CA mainly focuses on what students' cannot do rather than what they can do. Almost three quarters (72.73%) of the teachers, in item 3, agreed to students' involvement in the process of giving feedback. Contrary to item 2, over a half of them believed that feedback should include not only the right and wrong answers but also comments on the answers (item 4). From the above contradictory responses of the teachers, it can be deduced that they have incomplete knowledge about feedback in CA. Though many scholars agree with the teachers' response to item 4, they do not approve the teachers' response to item 2. They point out that feedback should focus not only on students' weaknesses but also on their strengths.

In item 6, all but one of the respondents reported that CA helps to see the strengths and weaknesses of students. However, about two third (63.64%) of them claimed that continuous assessment is used just to label students (item 7). These contradictory ideas

show that the teachers do not have clear understanding about the two items. In spite of the teachers' responses, many experts state that CA helps teachers to find out the strengths and weaknesses of students and assist the students to improve their weak sides (Nitko, 2005, 2004; Plessis et al, 2003; Puhl, 1997). In addition to this, Policy Guide Document of Namibia (1999) points out that the purpose of CA is not to label students, rather it is to help students succeed in their learning.

Almost all of the respondents agreed that CA initiates students to be engaged in their learning (item 8). More than three-quarter of the teachers (81.82%) also indicated that CA addresses the needs and interests of students more than the conventional assessment (item 9). In these respects, the EFL teachers have adequate knowledge of CA as a means of motivating students and addressing the needs and interests of students.

About half of the teachers (45.45%) responded that CA prevents teachers from being the central authority in decision making (item 10). However, more than a half of them (54.55%) reported that the marking criteria should be decided by the teacher, not by the students (item 11). Likewise, in item 12, 63.64% of the respondents agreed that students are unable to make an assessment of their own progress in CA. From the above analysis, it is clear that the teachers do not negotiate with the students how the works of the students should be marked. This negates with their beliefs that CA prevents teachers from being the central authority in decision making. Furthermore, since the teachers consider the students are incapable of assessing their own progress, they do not give opportunity for them to make self- and peer-assessment. In spite of the teachers' responses, several scholars indicate that students' active participations in deciding the assessment purpose, determining the assessment method, setting the assessment criteria, and assessing students' work play a vital role for a successful assessment practice (Pasigna, 2002; Boud, 1995). Moreover, Plessis et al. (2003) indicate that if students have clear assessment criteria, they can assess their own and others' work properly.

In item 13, 54.55% of the EFL teachers reported that CA makes individual student not be accountable for his or her work. In other words, they indicated that CA encourages individual student to be dependent on the work of others. In spite of the teachers' response to item 13, many scholars have indicated that CA promotes individual accountability in the process of assessment. For instance, Plessis et al. (2003) have ascertained that CA encourages students to be autonomous and accountable for their learning if it is well planned, organized and implemented.

Items 14 and 15 are concerned about the alignment of the objectives of a lesson and its assessment. In item 14, about a two-third of the respondents (63.64%) claimed that attendance and punctuality should be given marks as part of continuous assessment. However, the experts in the field have stated that assessment should be based on the objectives of the lesson. For instance, Nitko (2005:20) asserts this point by saying:

*Properly determining grades means that the grade must reflect only the achievement of the student, not extraneous factors such as attendance or deportment (social behavior). The latter factors may be important educational goals and the attainment of these goals should be assessed and reported, but their assessments should not be mingled with achievement information when determining and reporting grades. To do so lowers the validity of grades as SCAs [Summative Continuous Assessments] of subject matter achievement.*

The above discussion shows that the respondents are not clear which of students' learning variables should be assessed and graded.

On the other hand, 72.73% of the EFL teachers agreed that CA differentiates students according to their language ability. However, Plessis et al (2003) state that teachers need to use the different CA devices, such as observation, reflective journal, projects effectively in order to find out the language abilities of students and differentiate them.

## 4.2. Teachers' Responses to Their Primary Use of Continuous Assessment

In items 1 and 2 the respondents were asked whether they used CA as an integral part of the instructional system and if they had included CA in their yearly and daily plans. All of the teachers reported that they used CA as part of the instructional system and they had included CA in their yearly and daily plans.

In item 3, they were asked if they had specified the purpose of CA, the time schedule, the assessor, and the assessment device to be used in their plans. On average seven of the eleven respondents replied that they had not specified the purpose of CA, the time schedule, the assessor, and the assessment device to be used in their daily and yearly plans.

Items 4, 5 and 6 are concerned about the teachers' way and frequency of giving feedback. In their responses to these items, all of the respondents indicated that they often gave feedback to the assessment activities their students had done. However, in item 6, eight of the respondents reported that they gave feedback with right and wrong answers.

In item 7, the teachers were asked what kind of decisions they made based on the data they had collected using CA. The responses of the teachers are summarized in Table 4 below.

**Table 4:** Summary of Teachers' Responses to Their Primary Use of CA

Ser. No.	Questionnaire Items	Scales and Frequencies					Mean (X)	Standard Deviation (SD)
		Always (f)	Usually (f)	Sometimes (f)	Rarely (f)	Never (f)		
1	Plan instruction	-	1	5	4	1	2.55	0.82
2	Adjust your teaching during the lesson	1	3	2	5	-	3.00	1.10

3	Re-teach a lesson	-	1	3	5	2	2.27	0.90
4	Monitor students' learning	2	2	4	3	-	2.55	1.04
5	Give feedback for improvement	2	3	5	1	-	3.55	0.93
6	Evaluate students' application of their knowledge to real world situations	-	2	3	5	1	2.55	0.93
7	Judge students' language achievement	6	4	1	-	-	4.45	0.69

As can be seen from Table 4, the EFL teachers reported that they used CA results primarily to judge students' language achievement ( $X=4.45$ ) and give feedback for improvement ( $X=3.55$ ) with little variation among them ( $SD=0.69$  and  $0.93$  respectively). They also used CA results to adjust their teaching during the lesson ( $X=3.00$ ) in a significant way though not as frequently as the former two decisions.

Moreover, the teachers sometimes used CA results to monitor students' learning ( $X=2.64$ ). However, the respondents replied that they did not as such used CA results to plan instruction ( $X=2.55$ ), re-teach a lesson ( $X=2.27$ ) and evaluate how well a student can apply what was learned to real-world situations ( $X=2.55$ ).

Several scholars state that CA should be used in every stage of the teaching learning process as it is an integral component of the instructional system (Nitko, 2005; Plessis et al., 2003; Passigna, 2002; Puhl, 1997). They also point out the necessity of including CA in the daily and yearly plans and specifying the purpose, the time schedule, the assessor and the assessment device to be used in the plans. For example, NIED of Namibia (1999:20) asserts this point by saying: "Planning of assessment means you know before you begin to teach, what assessment methods you will use, why you want to use them, and when you will use them."

In items 1 and 2, the teachers reported that they included CA in their plans and used it in the instructional system. These responses of the teachers agree with the views of the experts. However, in item 3 the respondents indicated that they did not express what assessment method used, why it used and when it would be used. This contradicts with the principle of CA. Merely expressing that CA will be used in a lesson does not make teachers have plan of assessment unless they specify the details of assessment in the daily and yearly classroom plans and effectively implement it accordingly.

In items 4 and 5 the teachers indicated that they usually gave feedback for their students. In item 6, most of them reported that they gave feedback with right and wrong answers. Even though the scholars in the field agree with the teachers' responses of giving feedback frequently, they contradict with their way of giving feedback. Contrary to the practice of the teachers, the scholars state that simply showing the right and wrong answers provides little help for students' improvement. Nitko (2005:17) confirms this point by saying: "Teachers may give feedback with marks or with grades, but that type of feedback is not what is needed. Teachers need to use specific feedback to help students improve their learning." So, it can be possible to say that the teachers' way of giving feedback did not help the students to improve their learning, as such.

Feedback provides students a lot of chances to learn. To enhance its effectiveness, feedback should be positive and constructive. Negative feedback does not give students an opportunity to learn, rather it demotivates them. Plessis et al (2003:12) assert this point by saying:

*Usually, negative feedback does not help learners and it should be avoided. Negative feedback makes learners feel unsuccessful, ashamed and unable to do the work. Instead of motivating learners, negative feedback tends to push learners away from accomplishing the desired tasks.*

Regarding this, students in the interview indicated that their teachers' way of giving feedback had not given them much benefit as the teachers did not give timely feedback; they focused on mistakes and gave repressive remarks.

As the teachers reported in item 7 of Table 4, they used the data they collected using CA mainly to evaluate students' achievement of the English language curriculum goals and objectives. However, many scholars in the field state that even though the information gathered through CA should be used for both formative and summative purposes, it should mainly be used to improve learning and guide teaching. For instance, Nitko (2005:14-15) advocates this point by saying:

*Teachers must use the assessment results for guiding learning and teaching. An important principle for assessment in the classroom is: each assessment taken must have an associated instructional action.*

He further explains how the various CA devices can be used for different instructional purposes. Pretest and group discussion can be used to plan instruction, observation and oral questioning to adjust teaching or reteach lesson, homework and quizzes to monitor learning or give feedback that improves learning; projects and independent investigations to see if pupils can apply what they have learned; and end-of-unit test to assign grades.

Generally, the teachers used the data they gathered using CA primarily to make judgment on the language achievement of the students. In other words, the teachers used CA mainly for summative purposes. This practice of the teachers goes with their responses to item 5 of Table 3. In that item more than half of them claimed that the focus of CA is more on products than the process.

### **4.3. Students' Responses to Teachers' Implementation of CA**

Table 5 below shows the responses of students to their teachers' implementation of CA and problems students faced during the implementation of CA.

**Table 5:** Summary of Students' Response to Their Teachers' Implementation of CA

Ser  No	Questionnaire Items	Agreement		Total		Uncertain		Disagreement		Total	
		Strongly Agree	Agree	f	%	f	%	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	f	%
		f	f					f	f		
1	In CA I usually make self-assessment on my own work	9	24	<b>33</b>	<b>25.98</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9.44</b>	55	27	<b>82</b>	<b>64.56</b>
2	My teachers and peers give me feedback on my progress in CA	3	44	<b>47</b>	<b>37.00</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5.51</b>	62	11	<b>73</b>	<b>57.48</b>
3	My teachers' assessment in CA focuses on what I do rather than on how I do	15	65	<b>80</b>	<b>62.99</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>21.25</b>	8	12	<b>20</b>	<b>15.74</b>
4	I feel that my teachers use CA to label or grade us, not to see our language learning progress	19	53	<b>72</b>	<b>56.69</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12.59</b>	30	9	<b>39</b>	<b>30.70</b>
5	CA helped me in understanding what I should improve next	27	17	<b>44</b>	<b>34.64</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10.23</b>	49	21	<b>70</b>	<b>55.11</b>
6	I feel that my teachers and I (we) negotiate how our assignments are going to be scored or graded	10	24	<b>34</b>	<b>26.77</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>13.38</b>	48	28	<b>76</b>	<b>59.84</b>
7	I believe that the grades my works are awarded in CA are fair	13	30	<b>43</b>	<b>33.85</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>18.11</b>	54	7	<b>61</b>	<b>48.03</b>
8	If I fail in CA I know that I will get another chance to improve it	-	11	<b>11</b>	<b>8.661</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3.93</b>	22	89	<b>111</b>	<b>87.40</b>
9	CA has given me the opportunities to establish my own study programs	8	13	<b>21</b>	<b>16.53</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7.08</b>	51	41	<b>92</b>	<b>72.44</b>
10	CA has given me the opportunities to consider my strong and weak sides in my language learning	16	21	<b>37</b>	<b>29.13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9.44</b>	68	10	<b>78</b>	<b>61.41</b>

11	CA improved my training in English better than the conventional ones	38	17	<b>55</b>	<b>43.30</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>18.11</b>	17	32	<b>49</b>	<b>38.58</b>
12	CA makes me be an independent learner more than the conventional assessment	3	21	<b>24</b>	<b>18.89</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7.08</b>	23	71	<b>94</b>	<b>74.01</b>
13	CA has given me the chance to work on tasks cooperatively with my peers	22	78	<b>100</b>	<b>78.74</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5.51</b>	16	4	<b>20</b>	<b>15.74</b>
14	I do not worry when my teachers give me tasks in CA as I do in conventional assessment	13	33	<b>46</b>	<b>36.22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>18.11</b>	48	10	<b>58</b>	<b>45.66</b>
15	Individual student's accountability in CA does not exist; students depend on the work of others	67	20	<b>87</b>	<b>68.50</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8.66</b>	23	6	<b>29</b>	<b>22.83</b>

f= frequency

As can be seen from Table 5, about two-thirds (64.56%) of the students reported that they did not make self-assessment on their own work in CA. More than half of them (57.48%) also indicated that they did not get feedback on their progress from their teachers and peers. In item 3, 62.99% of the respondents replied that their teachers' assessment focused on the products rather than on the process. The students' response to item 3 is supported by their responses to item 4. More than half of them (56.69%) agreed that their teachers used CA not to see the students' language learning progress, but to label or grade them. Moreover, 55.11% of the respondents reported that CA did not help them in understanding what they should improve next.

As it can be seen from the above discussion (items 1-5), the students did not as such get a chance to assess their friends' and their own work. However, various scholars have asserted that self-and peer-assessment help students to develop higher level skills. For instance, an internet article states:

*One of the desirable outcomes of education should be an increased ability in the learner to make independent judgments of their own and others' work. Peer and self assessment exercises are seen as means by which these general skills can be developed and practiced.*

Even though the purpose of incorporating CA in the instructional system is mainly to improve teaching and learning, the EFL teachers have used CA in order to judge the achievement of the students. Moreover, the students' report of not getting improvement from CA confirms that the teachers focus more on the outcome than on the process of the instructional system.

In item 6, 59.84% of the respondents replied that they did not negotiate with their teachers how their assignments were going to be scored or graded. This finding agrees with the teachers' response to item 11 of Table 3. In that item more than half of the teachers (54.55%) claimed that setting criteria for scoring or grading assignments was the duty of the teacher. About half of the students (48.03%) also indicated that they did not

get fair grades for their works (item 7). Moreover, 87.40% of the respondents reported that they would not get another chance to improve if they failed in CA (item 8).

From the above findings, it is clear that the EFL teachers rarely allowed students to participate in how their works should be scored or graded. However, Plessis et al (2003:22) stress the importance of involving students in setting criteria: “It is helpful to involve learners in developing the criteria for assessing their own work.” Generally, when students are involved in the process of developing criteria, they will benefited as they know the target of the assessment and on which part it to focus, they assess their work in the light of the criteria and they participate actively in giving feedback to the work of others.

In item 7, the respondents said that they did not get fair marks to their work. NIED of Namibia (1999:13) states: “Prior to instruction which will be followed by a formal assessment, learners should be aware of what criteria will be used to assess them.” When students are involved in the setting of grading criteria and are told what parts of the assessment activity the teachers will give marks for, they work hard to achieve those criteria. They know or can guess which part of their work fulfilled the criteria and which did not. However, if teachers do not set grading criteria and make the students know them; they may be subjected to different kinds of biases when they mark the students' works. In addition to this, students may consider the marks given for their work as unfair.

In item 8, the students reported that their teachers would not give them another chance to improve if they failed in CA. In spite of this, a number of scholars have ascertained that one of the purposes of CA is to find out the strengths and weaknesses of students and assist them and make them succeed in their learning. NIED of Namibia (1999:10) advocates this point by saying:

*Continuous assessment creates more assessment opportunities and the use of more assessment methods,*

*creating opportunities for a variety of learners to demonstrate their mastery of learning objectives.*

In item 9, 72.44% of the students responded that CA had given them few opportunities to establish their own study programs. 61.41% of them also reported that they did not get chances to know their strong and weak sides in their language learning (item 10). On the other hand, 43.30% of the respondents in item 11 agreed that CA had improved their training in English course better than the conventional ones. Almost equal percentage of them (38.58%) disagreed with this point.

Since CA addresses the need and interest of individual student, it encourages each individual to have his own study program and progress according to his own pace. As it has been expressed several times in this paper, CA helps students to know their strong and weak sides. This in turn helps them know what to enrich and what to improve in their learning. However, as the students reported they did not get these benefits from their teachers' implementation of CA, because the teachers might not give them specific feedback on their weaknesses and strengths. Unless students are involved in the assessment practice and encouraged to develop confidence in assessing their own works, it may be difficult to attain the primary goals of CA.

Almost three-quarters of the students (74.01%) replied that CA did not make them independent learners more than the conventional assessment type (item 12). However, 78.74% of them in item 13 agreed that CA had given them the chance to work on tasks cooperatively with their peers. In item 14, 45.66% of the respondents indicated that they worried when their teachers gave them tasks in CA. Moreover, 68.50% of them in item 15 reported that individual student's accountability in CA did not exist and students depended on the work of others.

Brown (1996) states that involving students in self-and peer-assessment can encourage students to develop a sense of involvement and responsibility. Puhl (1997:2) also supports this concept by saying: "It [CA] puts the learner more in control of his/her own

learning.” In spite of this, the students indicated that their teachers’ practice of CA did not make them independent learners. Actually, teachers’ conception that students are incapable of assessing themselves (Table, 3) supports the students’ response.

CA promotes students to do tasks cooperatively and helps them to learn from each other. Moreover, it creates opportunities for students to feel ease by addressing their needs and interests when they do various CA activities. Contrary to this, the students reported that CA did not give them comfort and made them depend on the work of others. They also asserted this point in the interview.

According to Plessis et al (2003), teachers should involve students in assessing their own and others’ work so that they become responsible for their own learning. In addition to this, teachers are expected to monitor each student’s participation in group project in order to avoid students’ dependability on others’ work.

#### **4.4. Teachers’ Practices of CA Devices**

In this sub-section the frequencies of teachers' and students' responses to teachers' practices of CA devices are included for each scale. The statistical findings (mean and standard deviations) that show the extent to which teachers used CA devices. Tables 6 and 7 show the data obtained from teachers and students respectively.

##### **4.4.1. Teachers’ Practices of CA Devices (as Rated by Teachers)**

Table 6 shows the responses of teachers how often they used the given CA devices. It also indicates the means and standard deviations of the ratings in each CA device.

**Table 6:** Summary of Teachers’ Response to Their Practices of CA Devices

Ser. No	Questionnaire Items	Scales and Frequencies					Mean (X)	Standard Deviations
		Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never		
1	Self-assessment	2	2	4	2	1	3.18	1.25
2	Peer-assessment	--	3	6	1	1	3.00	0.89

3	Portfolio	--	3	4	3	1	2.81	0.98
4	Group projects (assignments)	3	5	1	2	--	3.81	0.67
5	Individual projects (assessments)	1	3	5	2	--	3.27	0.90
6	Observation	1	3	6	1	--	3.36	0.81
7	Quizzes /tests	1	5	4	1	--	3.55	1.08
8	Reflective journal (grid)	--	--	2	4	5	1.72	0.79
9	Interviews and questionnaire	-	1	2	6	2	2.18	0.87
10	Student-teacher conference	--	--	2	4	5	1.72	0.79
11	Oral presentation	3	2	5	1	--	3.64	1.02

As can be seen from Table 6, the most frequently used CA device by the EFL teachers was group project ( $X = 3.81$ ). Even though it is not as often as group project, they also used oral presentation ( $X = 3.64$ ), quizzes/tests( $X=3.55$ ) and observation ( $X = 3.36$ ) in a significant way. The teachers sometimes used individual projects ( $X = 3.27$ ), self-assessment ( $X = 3.18$ ) and peer-assessment ( $X = 3.00$ ) with high variation among them ( $SD = 0.90, 1.25$  and  $0.82$  respectively). Moreover, they rarely used portfolio ( $X = 2.81$ ) to assess their students with little variation among teachers ( $SD = 0.94$ ).

However, the teachers did not tend to use reflective journal ( $X = 1.72$ ), interview and questionnaire ( $X = 2.18$ ), and student-teacher conference ( $X=1.72$ ) with little variation among them ( $SD = 0.79, 0.87$  and  $0.79$  respectively).

#### **4.4.2. Teachers' Practices of CA Devices (as Rated by Students)**

Table 7 shows the responses of students to how often their teachers used the various CA devices, and the means and standard deviations of the ratings given for each CA device.

**Table 7:** Summary of Students' Responses to Their Teachers' Practices of CA Devices

Ser. No	Questionnaire Items	Scales and Frequencies					Mean (X)	Standard Deviations
		Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never		
1	Self-assessment	15	21	18	38	35	2.55	1.36
2	Peer-assessment	31	25	42	22	7	3.40	1.19
3	Portfolio	7	12	49	32	27	2.53	1.09
4	Group projects (assignments)	27	29	42	22	7	3.37	1.16
5	Individual projects (assessments)	19	22	54	23	9	3.15	1.10
6	Observation	21	30	48	19	9	3.28	1.12
7	Quizzes /tests	35	40	41	10	1	3.77	0.96
8	Reflective journal (grid)	25	12	17	18	55	1.96	1.07
9	Interviews and questionnaire	21	17	51	28	10	2.30	1.08
10	Student-teacher conference	20	11	29	37	30	2.11	1.12
11	Oral presentation	26	43	50	7	1	3.68	0.88

As shown in Table 7, the two most frequently used CA devices were quizzes/tests ( $X = 3.77$ ) and oral presentation ( $X = 3.68$ ) with little variation in using them ( $SD = 0.96$  and  $0.88$  respectively). As the students reported, the teachers used peer-assessment ( $X = 3.40$ ) in a significant way, but with high variation ( $SD=1.19$ ) in using it among teachers. The students also indicated that group project ( $X= 3.37$ ), observation ( $X=3.28$ ), and individual project ( $X= 3.15$ ) were used to some extent to assess them, but with high variations ( $SD=1.16$ ,  $1.12$ , and  $1.10$  respectively) among teachers.

According to students, portfolio ( $X=2.53$ ) and self-assessment ( $X=2.55$ ) were infrequently used CA devices by their teachers. On the other hand, the students rated reflective journal( $X=1.96$ ), interviews and questionnaire ( $X=2.30$ ) and student teacher

conference( $X=2.11$ ) as the least used CA devices by their teachers with average variation of  $50 = 1.09$ .

As can be seen from Tables 6 and 7, teachers reported they used group projects and oral presentation to a great extent to assess their students. However, students indicated that quizzes/tests and oral presentation were the most frequently used CA devices by their teachers. In other words, teachers rated group projects as the first frequently used CA device, where as students rated quizzes /tests as the first frequently used device.

As can be observed from the summary of the above two tables (Table 6 and 7), the most frequently used CA devices to assess EFL students of Debub Ethiopia Teacher Education College were quizzes/tests, group projects and oral presentation. These CA devices help teachers to judge students' language achievement and evaluate students' application of what they have learned in real world situation. Frequently using these three CA devices may not allow teachers to find out what they should know about the performance of students in the different language skills. According to Nitko (2005) the various CA devices assist teachers to find out what students already know and can do; which parts of the lesson are difficult to students; which students are lagging behind; and the strengths and weaknesses of students.

In addition to this, the above three CA devices help to assess mainly the speaking and writing skills of students. They do not as such help to assess the other basic and sub skills. Focusing on limited CA devices may not allow students to show their language abilities. Plessis et al (2003) state that when teachers use a variety of assessment devices, they give a lot of opportunities for students to perform their language abilities.

#### **4.5. Summary of Teachers' Response to Open-ended Questionnaire and Interview**

In the open-ended questionnaire and interview, the EFL teachers were asked how they implemented CA and what problems they faced in the implementation of CA.

In the first item of the open-ended questionnaire, the teachers were asked: whether they had participated in any CA related training /workshop or not, what the contents of the workshop had been and what the impacts of the training had been in their practice of CA.

Nine out of the eleven respondents reported that they had taken training which was related to CA. Most of the teachers also indicated that the main contents of the training were about the purposes, benefits, implementation and problems of CA. Moreover, they replied that the training helped them in revising their way of giving feedback, in readjusting their implementation of CA and in exercising the various CA devices. For example, one of the respondents stated the following points as to the contents and the benefits he got from the training:

*The contents of the training were the purposes, benefits, and implementation of continuous assessment. The training also helped me to use different types of CA devices, and to improve my way of giving feedback to students' various activities.*

The above responses of the teachers contradict their responses to their way of giving feedback. Here they indicated that the training they took helped them in improving their way of giving feedback to students' various activities. However, in item 6 of the sub-section 4.2 the teachers indicated that they gave feedback to their students only with right and wrong answers. As many scholars state in order to use feedback as a means of improving students' learning, it should include specific comments on both right and wrong answers.

In item 2 of the open-ended questionnaire, the respondents listed various problems that they faced while they were implementing CA. The common problems that most of the teachers reported were large classroom size, time constraint, high work load, students' lack of awareness about CA, students' background, teachers' lack of adequate knowledge and skills of CA, and teachers' lack of experience in using it.

In the interview also the teachers mentioned most of the above problems as setbacks to their implementation of CA. In addition to this, one teacher in the interview commented: “When and how I use continuous assessment by itself has been the primary problem.”

The teachers also suggested some points as how to solve the problems they had raised. Most of them pointed out the need of continuous training or workshops on the principles, importance, and implementation of CA. In addition to this, they mentioned the benefit of raising the awareness of the students about CA. For instance, one respondent stated: “Conducting various workshops on continuous assessment is essential in order to provide more concepts and knowledge for the teachers as well as the students. This enhances their potential and confidence of using CA.”

On the whole, the EFL teachers have inadequate and incomplete views about the principles and purposes of CA though they have adequate knowledge on limited points. This may be one reason for teachers to use CA mainly for the summative purpose. Moreover, they used a limited number of CA devices to assess their students. Plessis et al (2003) point out that using a limited number of CA devices denies the opportunities students should get to show their language skills.

#### **4.6 Summary of Students’ Response to Open-ended Questionnaire and Interview**

In item 1 of the open-ended questionnaire, the students were asked what major strengths and weaknesses they had observed in their teachers’ use of CA. For this item, the students gave a wide variety of answers. However, their responses, generally, focused on some basic points. These are summarized below.

Regarding the strengths of the teachers, the students reported that their teachers encouraged them to develop their language abilities. Some students indicated that the projects teachers gave helped them to refer various materials. For instance, one student in the open-ended questionnaire commented:

*My teacher gave me opportunities to express my views and feelings though it was not frequently. He also helped and guided me when I did different activities. In addition to this, the projects my teacher gave made me read many books.*

On the other hand, the students raised a number of weaknesses about their teachers' practice of CA in both the open-ended questionnaire and the interview. They reported that their teachers did not give them specific feedback on their weaknesses and strengths that could improve their language skills. They also indicated that the teachers were not well planned and they did not keep their records properly. As to this, one student, in the interview, stated:

*The teacher did not collect, mark and give feedback to our portfolio activities. Even he did not record our marks properly. As he did not give us complete feedback to our work, we did not get the advantages we should have got from the process of continuous assessment.*

Moreover, they pointed out that the teachers made unfair discrimination among students. They also stressed that their teachers' infrequent use of CA devices had not benefited them much.

Finally, the students gave various suggestions for the successful implementation of CA. They suggested their teachers to be well planned and organized in their use of CA. One student advised her teacher to monitor each student's participation when he gave them group work activities. She also suggested her teacher to use different CA devices and to give opportunities for individual students to show their language skills.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

### 5.1. Summary of the Findings

The major objective of this study was to find out how EFL teachers of Debu Ethiopia Teacher Education College perceived continuous assessment and to determine to what extent the teachers were implementing CA. The minor objectives of the research were to identify teachers' problems of implementing continuous assessment, and find out the problems students faced while their teachers were using CA.

In order to see teachers' perception of CA, a set of closed-ended questionnaire consisting of fifteen items were prepared and administered for teachers. The answering modes were "strongly agree", "agree", "uncertain", "disagree" and "strongly disagree". The responses were later analyzed in percentage.

To find out teachers' primary use of CA to make decisions and teachers' way of giving feedback, a set of closed-ended questionnaire was prepared for teachers. The questionnaire had seven items. Items 1-6 were analyzed in percentage. However, the response mode for item seven, which consisted of seven sub-items, was in likert scale from always (5) to never (1). The responses to this item were analyzed using mean and standard deviation.

In order to find out to what extent teachers use the different CA devices, two sets of closed-ended questionnaire which consisted of eleven items were prepared for both teachers and students. The answering mode of these items was in likert scale from always (5) to never (1). The analysis was done using mean and standard deviation.

Moreover, to see teachers' implementation of CA as perceived by students, a set of closed-ended questionnaire which consisted of 15 items were developed and administered to students. The answering modes of these items were "strongly agree", "agree",

“uncertain”, “disagree” and “strongly disagree”. The responses were analyzed in percentage.

To find out the problems that teachers faced in their implementation of CA, open-ended questionnaire and interview were used. The findings were analyzed in a qualitative data analysis method. In order to see the problems that students faced while their teachers were implementing CA, open-ended questionnaire and interview were developed and administered. The collected data were later analyzed qualitatively.

After analyzing the data, the following results were obtained. The responses of the teachers indicated that they had limited understanding in some of the principles and purposes of CA. For example, teachers reported that feedback should involve both teachers and students, and it should include not only right and wrong answers but also specific comments on the answers. The teachers also indicated that CA helps to see students' strengths and weaknesses, and addresses students' interests and needs.

However, the teachers had inadequate understanding in many of the principles and purposes. For instance, they reported that students should not be involved in deciding the marking criteria of assessment activities. They also believed that students are not able to make an assessment of their own progress in continuous assessment. The teachers perceived that CA encourages students to be dependent on the work of others. Moreover, they believed that attendance and punctuality are given marks as part of CA.

The responses obtained from teachers revealed that teachers used CA as an integral part of the instructional system and they also included CA in their daily and yearly plans. However, they did not specify the assessment type to be used, the assessor, when the assessment will be given and the purpose of the assessment in their plans. This indicates that the teachers did not have a comprehensive plan of CA.

The responses of the teachers also indicated that they gave feedback for their students frequently. But, they gave feedback with marks (right and wrong answers). This shows that the teachers did not use feedback to improve students' learning. They ascertained this by responding that they used CA mainly for judging students' language achievements. In other words, they used CA primarily for summative purpose, rather than formative purpose.

The responses of both teachers and students indicated that the teachers used mostly quizzes/ tests, group projects and oral presentation to assess their students in Debu Ethiopia Teacher Education College. They did not as such use other CA devices, for example, reflective journal, interview and questionnaire, and student-teacher conference to collect information about their students.

Moreover, the responses found from teachers indicated that large classroom size, time constraint, high work load, students' lack of awareness about CA, and teachers' lack of adequate knowledge and skills of CA were the major impediments in teachers' implementation of CA.

## **5.2. Conclusion**

The results obtained from this study lead to several conclusions given below:

1. Even though the EFL teachers had limited understanding in some of the principles and purposes of CA, they did not have adequate and complete understanding in most of them.
2. The EFL teachers primarily used continuous assessment to make decisions about students' English language achievement. Though CA can be used for summative purpose, it is mainly used for improving the teaching learning process. They also did not make a comprehensive plan of assessment in the instructional system. The EFL teachers of the college used a limited number of CA devices to assess their students. Quizzes/tests, group projects and oral presentation were the frequently

- used CA devices in the EFL classroom of the college. The teachers did not utilize the other useful CA devices.
3. Teachers faced some problems in the process of implementing CA. Large classroom size, time constraint, high work load, and teachers' and students' lack of awareness about CA were the main problems.
  4. Students indicated that CA did not help them to be independent and confident learners as their teachers did not monitor students' learning in the assessment process, for example, in group assignments. This made students be dependent on the work of others. Moreover, the students revealed that their teachers were not well planned and organized in the process of implementing CA. They also pointed out that the teachers were not supportive and initiative, as such.

### **5.3. Recommendations**

Based on the findings, discussion and conclusions made above, the following recommendations are given:

1. *Teachers need to get continuous training on the principles, purposes and implementation of continuous assessment.*

If EFL teachers do not have adequate and complete understanding about the various aspects of CA, it may be very difficult for them to implement CA for its prime objective (Nitko, 2005). Hence, it is essential and necessary to develop EFL teachers' awareness and skills of implementing CA continuously through training, workshops, seminars, etc. The administrative bodies of the college in collaboration with Regional/Zonal Education Office should organize and conduct continuous workshops on the principles, purposes and implementation of CA. However, conducting training /workshops infrequently may have little value for teachers' successful implementation of CA.

**2. *EFL teachers should implement CA primarily for improving and guiding the teaching learning process.***

As it was indicated in the findings and conclusions, EFL teachers of Debu Ethiopia Teacher Education College used CA mainly for judging the English language achievement of students. However, this is not the principal purpose of CA. Although CA can be used for both formative and summative purposes, the prime goal of CA is to improve and guide students' learning and teachers' instruction. Therefore, teachers, particularly EFL teachers, of the college should implement CA for this basic objective.

As Nitko (2005) points out teachers should plan assessment comprehensively by including which formative and summative assessments will be used and for what purposes they will be used in order to make CA effective. Teachers should also employ a wide range of CA devices to collect valid data about students and make sound decisions based on these data.

The teachers' implementation of CA for its prime goal should be monitored by a committee that is formed by the department or college. The committee should focus on developing teachers' knowledge and skills of implementing CA, not on evaluating teachers' performance.

**3. *Students should be involved in the process of CA to enhance the effective implementation of CA.***

Involving students in the various aspects of assessment helps them to take responsibility for their learning, to develop confidence in their knowledge and skills, to learn several issues about assessment, and to know that assessment is not only the duty of teachers (Plessis et al, 2003; Passigna, 2004; NIED of Namibia, 1999). Involving students in assessment also helps teachers to alleviate some of the problems that they faced in their implementation of CA. For instance, teachers can reduce their workload by allowing students to participate in self-and peer- assessment. Moreover, working with students enhances cooperativeness between teachers and students and among students themselves.

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## Appendix- 1

**Addis Ababa University**  
**School of Graduate Studies**  
**Department of Foreign Languages and Literature**

### **A questionnaire to be filled by teachers**

The main purpose of this questionnaire is to gather relevant information about the perception and implementation of continuous assessment in Debub Ethiopia Teacher Education College, particularly in EFL Department and to suggest possible recommendations based on the findings. So, you are kindly requested to respond to all statements or questions based on the instruction given. Your information is used only for research purpose and is; therefore, kept confidential.

Thank you for your cooperation

### **Part I. General information**

- Sex: \_\_\_\_\_
- Level of education: \_\_\_\_\_
- Total number of years in teaching English: \_\_\_\_\_
- Total number of years in teaching English in the college: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part II.** For each of the following statements, please indicate your agreement or disagreement by putting (✓) in the box according to the following scale. SA (strongly agree), A (agree), U(uncertain), D(disagree), SD (strongly disagree).

No	Questionnaire items	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	Continuous assessment is an integral part of the teaching learning process					
2	Feedback in CA focuses on what students' can't do rather than what they can do					
3	Feedback should be given by the teacher; not by the students in continuous assessment					
4	Feedback in CA mainly consists of reporting right and wrong					

	answers to the learners					
5	The emphasis of continuous assessment is more on products than the process					
6	I feel that continuous assessment helps to see students strengths and weaknesses better than conventional assessment					
7	I feel that continuous assessment is used just to label students					
8	I know that continuous assessment motivates students to be engaged in their learning					
9	I believe that continuous assessment addresses students' interests and needs more than the conventional assessment					
10	CA prevents teachers from being the central authority in decision making					
11	It is the teacher who is responsible for deciding the marking criteria; not the students in continuous assessment					
12	It is definitely possible for students to make an assessment of their own progress in continuous assessment					
13	I feel that there is a lack of individual accountability in continuous assessment: students depend on the work of others					
14	I know that attendance, punctuality and management of learning materials are given marks as part of continuous assessment					
15	Continuous assessment does not differentiate students according to their language ability					

**Part III:** For each of the following questions give your response by putting (√) mark in one of the boxes

1. Have you used continuous assessment as an integral part of the teaching learning process?

Yes  No

2. Have you included continuous assessment in your yearly and daily plans?

Yes  No

3. If your response to question no 2 is 'Yes', have you specified:

- |                                     | Yes                      | No                       |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • the purpose?                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • the time schedule?                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • the assessor?                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • the assessment device to be used? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

4. Do you give feedback for your students?

Yes  No

5. If your response to question no 4 is “Yes”, how often do you give feedback?

Always  Usually  Sometimes  Rarely  Never

6. How do you give feedback to your students?

I give feedback with marks

I give marks with clear and specific feedback that describes what students must do to improve.

7. How often do you make the following decisions based on the data you collect using CA?

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
a. Plan instructions for next lesson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Adjust your teaching during the lesson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Reteach a lesson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Monitor students’ learning					
e. Give feedback for improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Evaluate how well a student can apply what was learned to real world situations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Judge the language achievement of students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Part IV.** For each of the following continuous assessment devices, show how often you use to assess students by putting (√) in one of the boxes in the scale.

No	Type of alternative assessment methods	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1	Self-assessment					
2	Peer-assessment					
3	Portfolio					
4	Group projects (assignments)					
5	Individual projects (assessments)					
6	Observation					
7	Quizzes /tests					

8	Reflective journal (grid)					
9	Interviews and questionnaire					
10	Student-teacher conference					
11	Oral presentation					

### Part V. Open-ended Questionnaire

Answer the following questions briefly.

1. Have you every participated in any training program or workshop related to continuous assessment?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer to question 1 above is 'yes':

- 1.1. What were the contents of the training or workshop?

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- 1.2. What were the impact of the training or workshop in

A. Enhancing your practice to provide feedback to tests and assignments?

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B. Increasing your use of CA?

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2. What major problems (if any) have you faced in using continuous assessment to assess your students' learning over the last three years?

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3. What do you think should be done for the successful implementation of continuous assessment in EFL classroom in the college?

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## Appendix-2

**Addis Ababa University**  
**School of Graduate Studies**  
**Department of Foreign languages and Literature**

### A questionnaire to be filled by students

The purpose of this questionnaire is to see EFL students' perception of continuous assessment. You are kindly requested to respond to all the questions according to the instruction given. The information you give will be used for research purpose and nothing else.

Thank you in advance!

### Part I. General Information

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part II.** For each of the following statements, please indicate your agreement or disagreement by putting (√) in the box according to the following scale. SA (strongly agree, A (agree), U (uncertain), D(disagree), SD (strongly disagree).

No	Questionnaire items	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	In CA I usually make self-assessment on my own work					
2	My teacher and peers give me feedback on my progress in CA					
3	My teacher assessment in CA focuses on what I do rather than on how I do					
4	I feel that my teacher use CA to label or grade us, not to see our language learning progress					
5	CA helped me in understanding what I should improve next					
6	I feel that my teacher and I (we) negotiate how our assignments are going to be scored or graded					
7	I believe that the grades my works are awarded in CA are fair					
8	If I fail in CA I know that I will get another chance to improve it					
9	CA has given me the opportunities to establish my own study programs					
10	CA has given me the opportunities to consider my strong and weak sides in my language learning					
11	CA improved my training in English better than the conventional ones					
12	CA makes me be an autonomous learner more than the conventional assessment					

13	CA has given me the chance to work on tasks cooperatively with my peers					
14	I do not worry when my teachers give me tasks in CA as I do in conventional assessment					
15	Individual student's accountability in CA does not exist; students depend on the work of others					

**Part III.** For each of the following continuous assessment devices, show how often your teachers use to assess your learning by putting (√) in one of the boxes in the scale.

No	Type of continuous assessment devices	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1	Self-assessment					
2	Peer-assessment					
3	Portfolio					
4	Group projects (assignments)					
5	Individual projects (assessments)					
6	Observation					
7	Quizzes /tests					
8	Reflective journal (grid)					
9	Interviews and questionnaire					
10	Student-teacher conference					
11	Oral presentation					

**Part IV. Open-ended questionnaire**

Write your view for each of the following questions

1. What major strengths and weaknesses have you observed in your teachers' use of CA?

A. Strengths

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B. Weaknesses

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2. If you have anything to say about the assessment practices of your teachers in the CTE, please write briefly.

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4	በተከታታይ የመመዘኛ ስልቶችን መምህራን የሚጠቀሙባቸው ተማሪዎች (አኛ) በቋንቋው ስልጠና ያሳየውን መሻሻል ለመመዘን ሳይሆን ውጤት ለመስጠት ነው።					
5	በተከታታይ የመመዘኛ ስልት ለወደፊት ምን ምን ማሻሻል እንዳለብን እንድረዳ አድርጎታል።					
6	የተሰጡት የተለያዩ ስራዎች በምን ሁኔታ እንደሚመዘን መምህራንና እኛ (ተማሪዎች) የጋራ ስምምነት እናደርጋለን።					
7	በተከታታይ የመመዘኛ ስልቶች ለሰራጊቸው ስራዎች የተሰጠኝ ውጤት ትክክለኛ (ለስራዬ ተመጣጣኝ) እንደሆነ አምናለሁ።					
8	በተከታታይ የመመዘኛ ስልቶች የሰራሁት ስራ አጥጋቢ ባይሆን እንደገና በመስራት የመሻሻል እድል ይኖረኛል።					
9	በተከታታይ የምዘና ስልቶች የራሴ የጥናት ፕሮግራም/መርሃ ግብር/ እንዲኖረኝ አድርገውኛል።					
10	በተከታታይ የምዘና ስልቶች የራሴን ጠንካራና ደካማ ነገሮች የማየት እድል አግኝቻለሁ።					
11	በጽሁፍ ፈተና ላይ ከተመሰረተ ምዘና ይልቅ ተከታታይ የምዘና ስልት እንግጫዘ ኛ ቋንቋ የምወስደውን ስልጠና የተሻለ እንደሚያደርገው ይሰማኛል።					
12	ከጽሁፍ ፈተና ይልቅ ተከታታይ የመመዘኛ ስልቶች በትምህርቱ የራስ ተነሳሽነትና ሃላፊነት እንዲሰማኝ አስችኛል።					
13	ተከታታይ የመመዘኛ ስልቶች ከጓደኞቼ ጋር ተባብሮ የመስራት እድልን ፈጥረውልኛል።					
14	ተከታታይ የመመዘኛ ስልቶች የሚደረገው ምዘና የጽሁፍ ፈተናን ተጠቅሞ የሚደረገውን ምዘና ያክል አያስጨንቁኝም።					
15	ተከታታይ የመመዘኛ ስልቶች እያንዳንዱ ተማሪ ለሰራው ስራ ተጠያቂነት የጠፋ ይመስለኛል። ምክንያቱም አንዱ በሌላው ስራ ላይ ጥገኛ ስለሚሆን።					

**ክፍል ሁለት: ስለመጠይቁ አሞላል**

ለ. የሚከተሉትን የተከታታይ የመመዘኛ ስልቶች መምህርዎ ምን ያህል የእርስዎን ስራ ለመመዘን እንደሚጠቀሙት በተሰጠው ደረጃ በአንዱ የ(✓) ምልክት በማድረግ አሳዩ

ተ.ቁ	ተከታታይ የመመዘኛ ስልት ዓይነት	ደረጃ
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		ሁልጊዜ	በተደጋጋሚ	አንዳንድ ጊዜ	በጣም አልፎአልፎ	ምንም ጊዜ
1	ራስን መመዘን (self-assessment)					
2	የእርስ በርስ ምዘና (pre-assessment)					
3	ፓርትፎልዮ (portfolio)					
4	የቡድን ፕሮጀክት					
5	የተናጥል (የግል) ፕሮጀክት					
6	ምልከታ (ፎክ ሊስትና ፊትንግ ስኬል በመጠቀም)					
7	ሙከራ(quizzes))					
8	በተማሪዎች የሚሞላ የየዕለቱ ትምህርት ሂደት መገምገሚያ ቅጽ(reflective grid					
9	ቃለ መጠይቅና የጽሁፍ መጠይቅ (Interview and questionnaire)					
10	የተማሪና መምህር ውይይት/ ኮንፈረንስ (student-teacher conference)					
11	ተማሪዎች ስራቸውን ለክፍል ተማሪዎች እንዲያቀርቡ ማድረግ (oral presentation)					

**ሐ. ሐተታዊ መጠይቅ**

ለሚከተሉት ጥያቄዎች መልስ ይሆናሉ ብላችሁ የምታስቡትን በተሰጠው ክፍት ቦታ ጻፉ።

1. መምህራችሁ ተከታታይ የምዘና ስልቶችን በመጠቀም የአናንተን ስራ በሚመዘንበት ወቅት ያዩትን (ያስተዋሉትን) ጠንካራና ደካማ ጎን ጻፉ።

**ሀ. ጠንካራ ጎን**

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**ለ. ደካማ ጎን**

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2. መምህርዎ በሚያካሂዱት የተከታታ ምዘና ተግባር ላይ ሌላ የሚጨምሩት ነጥብ ካለ ከዚህ በታች በተሰጠው ቦታ በአጭሩ ጻፉ።

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## Appendix-4

### Teachers' and Students' Interview Questions

#### A. Teachers' Interview Questions

1. Which CA device do you frequently use to assess your students? What problems did you face that inhabit your use of other CA devices?
2. In what ways do you think your students are benefited from your assessment practices?
3. Do you find CA devices helpful in identifying the level of students' language abilities? How?
4. What do you think should be done for the successful implementation of CA in EFL classroom in the CTE?
5. Is there any point that you would like to raise in relation to the assessment of students in the CTE?

**B. Students' Interview Questions**

1. What assessment devices does your teacher use in order to assess your learning?
2. What major strengths and weaknesses have you observed in your teachers use of CA?
3. In what ways do you think the different assignments given by your teachers help you?
4. What solution(s) do you suggest for the improvement of teachers use of CA?

**Appendix-5**

**የተማሪዎች የቃል መጠይቅ**

1. መምህራችሁ የቀሰማችሁትን ትምህርት ለመመዘን ምን ዓይነት የምዘና ስልቶች ይጠቀማል?
2. የተከታታይ ምዘና በሚያካሂዱበት ጊዜ ምን ዓይነት አብይ ጠንካራ ጎኖችንና ደካማ ጎኖችን አስተዋልክ?
3. በናንተ አመለካከት መምህራችሁ ከሚሰጡት የተለያዩ ምዘናዎች በምን ዓይነት ምገድ ተጠቅመዋል::
4. መምህራችሁ የሚያካሂዱትን የተከታታይ ምዘና ለማሻሻል ምን መደረግ አለበት ትላለህ/ትያለሽ?

