

The practice and challenges of implementing continuous assessment in government

First Cycle primary schools of Yeka Sub-City

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Solomon Negash, entitled: The practice and challenges of implementing continuous assessment in government first cycle primary schools of Yeka Sub-City and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of master of Arts (Educational Research and Development) complies with the regulations of the university and meets the accepted standard with respect to originality and quality.

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## **Abstract**

The practice and challenges of implementing continuous assessment in government first cycle primary schools of Yeka Sub-City.

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The purpose of this study was to examine the scope of activities and problems of practice of continuous assessment at the first cycle primary school level in Yeka Sub-City. To answer the basic research questions, descriptive survey research method was employed. The major findings of this study include very weak document handling, and poor record keeping of learners' CA achievements, less learners' involvement in their own assessment. Many assessment techniques were used in properly. The study also found that large class sizes, inadequacy of text books and school infrastructures, lack of manuals, weak follow up, support and feedback system on the implementation of learners' CA, lack of training opportunity for teachers were the major challenges of CA. For further improvement, school based trainings, adequate and updated manuals, advanced follow up, support and immediate feedback on the learners' CA implementation, and fulfillment of school infrastructures are suggested as potential solutions to the proper implementation of CA.

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## Acronyms

As	Attitude Score
CA	Continuous Assessment
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
MoE	Ministry of Education
EPRC	Educational Policy Review Commission
MBECM	Ministry of Basic Education and Culture of Malawi
NIED	National Institute for Education and Development
UNEB	Ugandan National Examination Board
USAID_AED	United States Agency for International Development_ Academy for Educational Development



## **Chapter One : Introduction**

### **1.1. Back ground of the study**

Educational assessment is the process of documenting usually in measurable terms, knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs. Assessment can focus on the individual learner, the learner, the learning community (class, workshop, or other organized group of learners), the instruction, or the educational system as a whole. The final purposes and assessment practices in education depends on the theoretical frame work of the practitioners and researchers, their assumption and beliefs about the nature of human mind, the origin of knowledge and the process of learning.

Different scholars discussed about the importance and accomplishment of CA. From these;

Alaus (1999), argued continuous assessment is an assessment approach which involves the use of a variety of assessment instrument, assessing various components of learning, no only the thinking processes but also including behaviors, personality traits and manual dexterity. Continuous assessment will also take place over a period; such an approach would be more holistic, representing the learner in his/her entirety. It will begin with the decisions that the teachers perform on the first day of school and end with the decisions that the teachers and administrators make on the learners regarding end-of- year grading and promotion.

Craft, (1996, p.35) also stated the following;

“The development of performance assessment techniques is an increasingly characteristics feature of the education system of the world. The urgent need to promote the learning of skill and competencies that can not be tested by more traditional techniques. And to report on these lies behind a range of related development in international assessment and reporting practice.”

Depending on this concept Ethiopia introduced continuous assessment techniques since 1994 to implement it in all standards of schools. The advantages of continuous assessment (CA) over the traditional examination system were also introduced and several efforts have been made by the government and concerned bodies to implement CA. These challenges of implementation include external and with-in the school problems.

Similarly, Mulu and Daniel, (2005,p.6), cited in Hailu (2012) suggested that:

“..... a one time final examination or test does not bring complete or true picture of student’s performance including the higher order thinking skills. That is to say, examinations can not measure all that the student learns because their effectiveness is limited to assess the entire complex learning out-comes. To overcome this, it will be much more helpful if the assessment is employed on a continued base using different strategies.”

The researcher stayed in the targeted sub-city for several years being a teacher and school director. During this time, the researcher have seen many challenges related to the practice of implementing continuous assessment in the government first cycle primary schools of Yeka sub-city, due to lack of training, experience, and large class size. So he decided to conduct this research.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

A number of factors affect the implantation of continuous assessment in schools. Some of the factors arise with-in the schools themselves. Keeping records and portfolios of the learners in large class has its own impact in the implementation of continues assessment. In conformity with this, Ellington and Earl (1997) in Muluken (2006, p. 20) suggested that,

Continuous assessment is carried out on going bases while students are actually working their way through courser.

Implementation problems include the school infrastructure, if there is lack of school infrastructure it affects the instructional process in general and the assessment method in particular, related this fact Kapambwe (2010), argued,

The difficulty with learning materials mainly affected the availability of appropriate teaching and learning of the curriculum.

The other was that, many researchers conducted different studies related to validity, reliability and feasibility of CA and recommended the way of implementing, learners CA in the government first cycle primary schools relatively different from the normal expected implementation of CA.

e.g. Muluken(2006), Status of CA and factors affecting its implementation,

Bogale (1994), teacher's perception in implementing CA, and Hailu (2012) practice and challenges of implementing CA.

However, none of these issues were addressed as related to the existing practice and challenges of CA in the context of Yeka Sub-City government first cycle primary schools. Then, the research was intended to fill this gap. Thus, this study is designed for examining the practice gaps related to the implementation of students CA and then to, suggest alternative solution to improve the existing practice gap and challenge of CA implementation.

### **1.3. Objectives of the study**

The general objective of the study is to survey the implementation and challenges of continuous assessment in the government first cycle primary schools of Yeka Sub-City.

The specific objectives of this study are to:

1. Investigate the challenges in the implementation practice of continuous assessment in the selected government first cycle primary schools of Yeka Sub-City.
2. Identify the major challenges in the implementation of CA in Yeka Sub-City primary schools.
3. Describe the internal and external factors affecting continuous assessment in Yeka Sub-City primary schools.
4. Provide alternative suggestions for effective use of continuous assessment.

#### **1.4 Research Question**

The following basic research questions will be used to guide the study of the existing practice of students continuous assessment, its implementation, challenges and alternative solutions to overcome the implementation gaps;

1. What is the status of practices of implementing continuous assessment in the government first cycle primary schools of Yeka Sub-City?
2. What are the major challenges that affect the proper implementation of continuous assessment in the government first cycle primary schools of Yeka Sub-City?
3. Is there a significant difference between teachers' attitude, implementation, challenge and alternative solution score based on their sex, qualification and experience in the government first cycle primary schools of Yeka Sub-city?
4. What are the potential solutions to overcome implementation gaps and the challenges related to implementing continuous assessment in the government first cycle primary schools of Yeka Sub-City?

#### **1.5 Significance of the study**

The findings of this study were significant to;

Teachers, based on the suggested alternative solutions they should get different training opportunity to improve teachers' practice of implementing continuous assessment at first cycle primary schools level to fill the gaps of implementation. It is also useful for school principals and supervisors; this study provides them important feedbacks about the existing practice of implementing continuous assessment and its challenges. More over, it provides information for learner as they will get opportunity to involve in their own assessment with different techniques

of CA. Finally these findings could be significant to other researchers to conduct similar researches at a higher level.

### **1.6 Definition of key terms**

Continuous assessment; a way of judging a student's ability by looking at the work they have done during the year rather than by an examination.

Challenges; Something that tests strength, skill, or ability of teachers in government first cycle primary school, especially in a way that is interesting.

Practice; activities of teachers, often regularly, in order to improve their skills or to prepare for a test.

Implementing; putting in to effect by a means of definite plan or procedure.

First Cycle Primary School; it is a general school for children, which include grade1-4.

### **1.7 Delimitation of the study**

The study was limited to some selected government first cycle primary schools of Yeka Sub-City government of Addis Ababa. It is delimited to explore practice and challenges of implementing CA and it has not considered other Sub-Cities. Yeka Sub-City has about 25 government first cycle primary schools. Out of these, the research was limited to those 14 government first cycle primary schools in Yeka Sub-City with targeted population.

The other delimitation was that the students of first cycle primary schools of the targeted sub-city were no included in the study, this is due to their age factor.

### **1.8 Limitation of the study**

The difficulty of getting adequate and relevant locally prepared studies on continuous assessment and its implementation is the limitation of this study. Due to this fact, this study was not supported with literature reviews on the context of Ethiopia adequately.

## **Chapter Two Review or related literature**

### **2.1. Concept of continuous assessment**

#### **2.1.1. Assessment**

Many scholars wrote about what mean assessment and how it could be implanted.

Regarding this Marzano, Pickering and Mctghe (1993, p. 13) have documented the following:

“Performance assessment refers to variety of tasks and situations in which students are given opportunities to demonstrate their understanding and thoughtfully apply knowledge, skills, and habits of mind in variety contexts. These assessments often occur over time and result in a tangible product or observable performance.”

According USAID\_AED (2009) , assessment is the process you use to collect information about students that you will use to make educational decision about them. It means that assessment refers to the process of gathering relevant information, for the expressed purpose of making educational decision, not to the instrument for gathering it. Assessments are no decisions. Rather, assessment provides information to help you make the decision.

Other scholars, like Harlan and W. (1994, p, p.1-2), argued that:

Assessment is the process of making judgment about a students’ performance on a particular task. The result will clearly depend up on what the task is and how the judgment is made, in relation to what standard or criteria. It also depends up on other factors, which affect performance such as student’s motivation, perception of the relevance of task and anxiety about the consequences of success or failure.

Arends (1997) on his side added, the term assessment usually refers to the full rage of information gathered and synthesized by teachers for making decision about their students



and their classroom. Information about students can be gathered in informal ways, such as through observation and verbal exchange. It can also be gathered through formal means such as homework, tests, and written reports. Information about classroom and a teacher's instructions can also be part of assessment.

### **2.1.2. Continuous assessment**

According to Chilora, et al (2003), Plessis, et al (2003) and Desalegn (2004, p. 2) state it "continuous assessment refers to making observations periodically to find out what a student knows, understands and can do." Airasian (1997, p. 3) on his side cited;

Continuous assessment is the process of collecting, synthesizing, and interpreting information to aid in decision-making is called assessment. Assessment involves much more than scoring and grading than paper-and-pencil tests.

Curzon (1990, p. 352) expressed that;

"Opposed to the concept of a once-for-all assessment and evaluation in the form of an end-of-course examination, is the principle of the continuous assessment. In practice, this substitutes for the single examination a series of continuously updated measurements and judgments by the teacher of the learner's attainments. These judgments may be based on, say, weekly tests of the learner's performances in a variety of situations. His written practical work and his contribution to the work of the class as a whole may be taken into account and assessed."

As MoE of Zambia (2005) cited in Kapambwe (2010) "continuous assessment is defined as an on-going, diagnostic, classroom-based process that uses a variety of assessment tools to measure learner performance." Finally, Airasian (1991) cited in Alausa (1999) describes continuous

assessment as ““an assessment approach which should depict the full range of sources and methods teachers used to gather, interpret and synthesis information about learners; information that is used to help teachers understand their learners, plan and monitor instruction and establish a viable classroom culture.””

### **2.1.3. The purpose of assessment**

Assessment has to be very comprehensive in a system of education, which aims at the many-sided development of personality of the child. According to Airasian (1997, p .24), There are many purposes for classroom assessment, diagnosing pupil problems, judging pupils’ academic performance, providing feedback to pupils; placing pupil, planning and conducting instruction, and establishing the classroom society.

Similarly, Aggrawal (1994) identified eight important purposes of assessment of personality. These include:

To appraise the status and changes in pupils personality development, to find out pupils needs and possibilities of development, to aid student teacher planning, to familiarize the teacher with the nature of pupil learning. Additionally, it helps to assess development and progress, to serve as a means of improving school community relations, to facilitate the selection and improvement of assessment instruments, to appraise the teacher’s competence, and to serve as a guiding principle for selection, and application of supervisory techniques.

Wintle and Harrison (2000, p. 8) wrote that:

“Assessment is at the very heart of the teaching and learning process. It helps us: evaluate our own teaching; to consider the strength and weaknesses of curriculum; to prioritize our effort most productively; to diagnose difficulties with individual children and to allow us to pass on information to parent about pupils. Thus, assessment interacts with the curriculum, parents, the learner, and the teacher.”

Dr. Lorna Earl and Katz (2008); also stated the following three purposes of assessment;

1. Assessment for learning; It is designed to give teachers information to modify and different teaching and learning activities. It acknowledges that individual students learn in idiosyncratic ways, but it also recognizes that there are predictable patterns and pathways that many students follow. It requires careful design on the part of teachers, so that they use the resulting information to determine not only what students know. Teachers can also use this information to streamline and target instruction and resources, and to provide feedback to students to help them advance their learning.

It occurs throughout the learning process. It is interactive, with teachers.

### **Teachers' Roles in assessment for learning**

- Aligning instruction with the targeted outcomes.
- Identifying particular learning needs of students or groups.
- Selecting and adapting materials and resources.
- Providing immediate feedback and direction to students.

2. Assessment as learning; It is a process of developing and supporting Meta cognition for students. Assessment as learning focuses on the role of the student as the critical connector between assessment and learning. When students are active, engaged, and critical assessors, they make sense of information, relate into prior knowledge, and use it for new learning. This is the regulatory process in Meta cognition. It occurs when students monitor their own learning and use the feedback from this monitoring to make adjustments, adaptations, and even major changes in what they understand. It requires that teachers help students develop, practice, and become comfortable with reflection, and with a critical analysis of their own learning.

**Teacher's role in assessment as learning.**

- Model and teach the skills of self assessment.
  - Guide students in setting goals and monitoring their progress to ward them.
  - Work with students to develop clear criteria of good practice.
  - Monitor students' Meta cognitive process as well as their learning.
  - Provide regular and challenging opportunities to practice.
3. Assessment of learning; It is summative in nature and is used to confirm what students know and can do, to demonstrate whether they have achieved the curriculum out comes,

and occasionally to show how they are placed in relation to others. Teachers concentrate on ensuring that they have used assessment to provide accurate and sound statements of students' proficiency, so that the recipients of the information can use the information to make reasonable and defensible decision.

### **Teachers' Roles in assessment of learning**

- A rationale for undertaking a particular assessment of learning at a particular point in time.
- Clear descriptions of the intended learning
- Processes that make it possible for students to demonstrate their competence and skill
- A range of alternative mechanisms for assessing the same outcomes
- Public and defensible reference points for making judgments.

## **2.2. Issues in classroom assessment**

### **2.2.1. Types of assessment**

Assessment is often divided into initial, formative and summative categories for the purpose of considering different objectives for assessment practices.

- ❖ **Initial assessment:** - referred to as pre-assessment or diagnostic assessment, initial assessments are conducted prior to instruction or intervention to establish a basic line from which individual student growth can be measured.

❖ **Formative assessment:** - formative assessment is generally carried out through out a course or project. Formative assessment also referred to as “educative assessment,” is used to aid learning. In an educational setting,

Formative assessment might be a teacher (or peer) or the learner, providing feedback on a student’s work and would not necessarily be used for grading purposes. Formative assessments can take the form of diagnostic standardized tests.

❖ **Summative assessment:** - summative assessment is generally carried out at the end of a course or project. In an educational setting, summative assessments are typically used to assign students a course grade. Summative assessments are evaluative.

Educational Researcher Robert Stake (2003) stated in Linn and Miller (2005, p.35) explains the difference between formative and summative assessment with the following analogy:

When the cook tastes the soup, that’s formative.

When the guests taste the soup, that’s summative

Summative and formative assessments are often referred to in a learning context as assessment of learning and assessment for learning respectively. Assessment of learning is generally summative in nature and intended to measure learning outcomes and report those outcomes to students, parents and administrators.

### **2.2.2. Teachers practice on assessment and the problem they face**

Aggrawal (1994, p.366), mentioned difficulties of assessing individuals; several difficulties are encountered in the assessment of personality.

There are three basic reasons for not arriving at exact conclusions including complex nature of the individuals whose personality to be assess, complex nature of the assessor, and personality and nature of assessment instrument.

Penny Tassoni and Kate Beith (2007) stated in the child care and education book that, “in order for records of children to be accurate several observations should be made preferably using different recording techniques. This allows early years practitioners to gain an overview of a child’s learning and development. This should make observations more objectives.”

Teachers should be skilled in choosing assessment methods appropriate for instructional decision. And also should be skilled in administering, scoring and interpreting the result of the learners.

In addition to this teachers should be skilled in developing valid pupil grading procedures which use pupil assessment.

On the other side the number of students in a class should be limited so as to implementing continuous assessment properly.

### **2.2.3. Children’s involvement in their assessment**

The more the learner involved in their own assessment, the more they understand the subject matter. On the other hand, if the students do not get chance to directly involve in their own assessment, the more difficulties they faced in understanding the subject matter. Regarding this Wintle and Harrison (2000, p. 28), stated the following points:

Children should be involved in the assessment of their own work and progress. This is more than go away and mark it yourself, it involves an understanding and acceptance of the targets set for

the lesson, the half term, the year, and a growing ability by children to make judgment about their own progress.

#### **2.2.4. Parents and governments involvement in assessment**

The other important issue related to the students' assessment is the active involvement of parents in their children's assessment. This can enhance the teaching and learning process by creating two-way communication between schools and parents. Parents and governments should be involved in the creation and monitoring of the assessment policy.

As Shipman (1993) mentioned in Wintle and Harrison (200, p. 37):

““The progress charted on each child can be used not only by the teacher to help the child, but involve the parents. They will discuss the results they receive with the teacher. That is a short step from encouraging them to see and discuss detailed progress sheets on which the report is based. This promises a wealth of information as base for cooperation over learning between teacher, child and parents.””

#### **2.2.5. Giving a receiving feedback in continuous assessment**

A cited in USAID-AED (2009) ... ““feedback is information; you give to student to let them know about their performance or achievement. Feedback is not a simple number or symbol, rather good feedback is descriptive of the students' work, is specific to the work and learning outcomes, and contains help for the student on how to improve. It describes to a student strengths, improvements needed, and way of improving.””

Similarly, Brook hart in USAID-AED (2009) added good feedback contains information a student can use. That means, first, the student has to be able to hear and understand it. The most



useful feedback focuses on the qualities of students' work or the process of strategies used to do the work. According to Conell, and Deci, (1985) in USAID-AED (2009, p. 41):

“Additional ways of giving feedback tells the student specific about the work or just provide overall evaluation comments. There are two methods in this system of giving feedback. These are; descriptive feedback- your feedback tells the students information about the work, especially how the work meets quality criteria. Evaluative feedback- your feedback tells the student only your overall judgment on the work, without describing particular qualities about the work.”

### **2.3. Basic requirements for continuous assessment**

According to Quansah (2005), the addition of continuous assessment in the instructional and testing process is intended to achieve two major purposes: to improve both the validity and reliability of the results of pupils' performance on tests and exercises, and secondly to help the pupil to develop effective learning and work habits. The present continuous assessment system is based on frequent test taking, and does not really serve the two critical purposes of continuous assessment. The advantage to use CA is:

Longer time for collecting assessment information-to obtain accurate and reliable assessment data on a pupil, the assessments could be spread over a longer time, allowing the pupil to take tests and other assignments at different times throughout the course. The average of the scores for the various assessments is a more reliable indicator of the pupil's performance in the subject than the score the pupil obtains in a one-time examination.

Use of different test forms and different test situations by extending the time span for collecting assessment information throughout the duration of a course, different forms of testing and different assessment situations including acquisition and demonstration of practical skills can be introduced in the continuous assessment process. Practical skills such as the skills and competencies involved in conducting interviews, writing and presenting reports, presenting and analyzing data in graphical forms, and production of three-dimensional objects in a variety of subjects could be encouraged in schools to provide a more comprehensive and more valid assessment of pupils' ability.

Inclusion of more complex thinking skills in the test program- by extending the period of collecting assessment data, forms of knowledge and competencies that can not be easily assessed under strictly timed conditions can also be assessed. Teacher assistance and remediation- a further purpose of the continuous assessment process is to foster cooperation between the pupil and teacher especially in the area of pupils' class project. The process requires the teacher to provide assistance in the form of advice on various aspects of pupils' projects. The pupil learns to consult the teacher, classmates and other sources on aspects of his/her project work, while maintaining his/her position as the leader in the project undertaking. This is the normal work procedure in the adult world where population is essentially based on cooperation and not on timed test situation.

Besides offering assistance as needed, the teacher is able to offer remedial help by using pupils' common mistakes and misunderstandings for further improvement in class learning.

## **2.4. Major challenges in implementing continuous assessment**

As Quansah (2005, p, p .2-3) mentioned, some of the problems are;

High level stress in test taking and test marking; the first problem is the large numbers of assessment pupils have to go through, and the larger number of mark recordings, teachers have to make reduction in teacher/pupil contact hours. The large number of assessments also tends to reduce the number of contact hours for instructions in many public schools. In a number of schools, the two weeks before the vacation are used for marking outstanding tests and for completing the continuous assessment record books very little instruction is carried out. Lack of emphasis on project works, teachers have not been trained on “project marking” and they therefore concentrate mainly on “homework”. In effect, the current continuous assessment system involves class tests, class exercises and homework. No attention is given project work, which is the most important learning medium that allows pupils to take active part in their own learning. Tests are used to collect data on pupils’ learning in the continuous assessment process. Tests by themselves do not lead to improved learning. By their nature, lead to greater learning.

Quansah (2005) additionally addressed the issues of using simple questions that help for simple marking, the lack of similarity between teachers while assessment as major challenges of implementation of CA. He also added the problem of controlling those assessment question prepared by the teachers for assessment.

Kapambwe (2010) on his side stressed on the following factors as the challenges of implementing continuous assessment.

## Staffing

The high pupil to teacher ratio was another challenge. Due to lack of adequate staffing levels, some teachers were found to handle more than one class. Coupled with the low staffing level is the constant change in the staffing levels at the schools.

## Remediation and enrichment

Although continuous assessment should be well integrated with the teaching and learning processes, a good number of the teachers still felt that the CA took a lot of time for teachers. As a result, teachers got concerned that the time spent on remediation, enrichment was excessive, and many teachers did not believe that they would finish the syllabus with CA. This means before the implementation of teachers develop resistance to the proper implementation of CA. As can be seen above they thought as there is time constraints before really practicing it.

## Pupil absenteeism

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

## Teacher networking

It was found difficult to implement on the ground the collaboration of groups of schools in the districts to work together to develop common end of term tests. The finding from the monitoring visits and the Formative Evaluation Study revealed that schools had trouble in coming together due to various reasons. Some of the reasons were due to lack of materials and coordination.

## **2.5. Continuous assessment in context of Ethiopia.**

The education and training policy (1994) declared continuous assessment in academic and practical subjects, including aptitude tests will be conducted to ascertain the formation of all round profile of students at all levels.

Students in the first cycle of primary education should be assessed using conventional examination given. Their promotion will depend only on the continuous assessment. The primary purpose of assessment at this stage must be diagnostic and remedial.

As MOE (2010), every teacher should carry out regular check on the progress of all students in each subject. This is done through continuous and formal assessment. It is intended to be spontaneous and natural parts of the teaching and learning process, not merely an activity that takes place at the end of term or year.

The main requirement of the implementation of the revised curriculum will be the planning of assessment tasks as part of the school program that will show teachers whether, or not students are achieving the expected competencies. These tasks are intended to be under taken through out the year. Such assessment is known as continuous assessment. As the MOE (1999) cited in education quality assurance package blue print, short coming related to assessment in clued;

- Lack of understanding of policy guide line by some implementers.
- Lack of proper control and supervision mechanisms, especially at school and regional levels.

- Lack of commitment on the part of teachers and learners regarding continuous assessment, which at the end of the day, results in unrealistic or fabricated continuous assessment marks.

## **2.6. Related studies pertaining continuous assessment**

Under this topic the implementation of CA in Malawi is treated.

### **2.6.1. Continuous assessment at lower primary level in Malawi.**

What continuous assessment methods (types) can be used in grade 1-4?

According to the NIED of Malawi, (1999) only informal continuous assessment and no examinations are allowed in this school phase. A distinction can however be made between more structured and less structured informal continuous assessment. Teachers must link their assessments to the syllabus' objectives and competencies. In Grade 1-3, the assessment methods should primarily be oral questioning and observation. Assessment by reading and writing must be implemented progressively as learners acquire the necessary reading and writing skills. Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, Circular No: Form ED 19/97 (1997, p. 3-4).

How many continuous assessments should be recorded for the summative continuous assessment grade?

The pilot Curriculum Guide for Formal Basic Education (1996) cited in NIED of Malawi (1999, p. 30) recommends that all assessments at the lower primary level consist of informal continuous assessments. Two kinds of informal assessments exist in the lower primary phase:

(1) Informal more structured and

(2) Informal less structured.

Nine selected graded informal more structured continuous assessments, at least two per term, should be graded and recorded for this school phase. These nine selected graded informal more structured continuous assessments will contribute to the final continuous assessment grade. Therefore, these nine continuous assessments must be carefully planned and marked according to marking scheme or memorandum. Informal more structured continuous assessments are meant to require a relatively short administration time. For example, the administration time of a quiz should not exceed the common attention span of the learners. In cases of homework and projects, the learners should be taught to spend time in parts where a single part does not exceed their attention span. Teachers must be careful not to make unrealistic demands on the time of their learners. Evidence of the work produced by good, average and poor learners on the informal more structured continuous assessment as well as a description of the assignment and the marking scheme or test memorandum has to be kept at school until the end of February of the next year. Teachers may choose to grade and/or record more than nine continuous assessments, but only nine may contribute to the final summative continuous assessment grade. In the lower primary level, the information gathered with less structured continuous assessment is of great importance as immediate feedback to the teacher and learner. It enables them to; continuously monitor the mastery of critical literacy and numeracy skills and understandings. Done over time, less structured continuous assessment gives the teacher a more all around picture of learners' performance, which should complement the information, gathered from the more structured informal continuous assessment. The information gathered using less structured continuous assessments should be emphasized lower primary level when the promotion of borderline cases

is considered at the end of the school year. At the end of each term and for each subject, teachers must determine and record an overall grade based on less structures continuous assessment of each learner.

According to NIED of Malawi, (1999, p. 33) Advisory teachers and school management are also expected to assist teaches with the planning and implementing of continuous assessment.

### **2.6.2. Ugandan national examination board continuous assessment**

According to UNEB (2010), the government of Uganda made a review of its education system in 1987 when it appointed an Education Policy Review Commission (EPRC). The EPRC in its report (1989) noted among other short comings that the education system was examination ridden and there were very few attempts to assess practical skills. The EPRC made recommendations to improve the education system. On assessment and examination, the EPRC, recommended inter alia, the introduction of continuous assessment in primary and post primary training institutions. The government, in its white paper on education, approved this recommendation in 1992.

UNEB mission of CA

To improve the quality of classroom teaching and learning by using valid and reliable teacher-made assessment.

CA framework

The conceptual framework guiding the systemization and formalization of CA is one, which seeks to use CA to improve classroom instruction and enhance holistic learners' achievement. At the same time, it should contribute to terminal assessment of learners.



CA in primary One to Four will be used by the school and the data integrated in to the District level EMIS and used for planning purpose, and also for monitoring learning and teaching.

From P5 to p7, apart from the school and district, CA data will be used by UNEB for reporting on end of cycle achievement. The package will be a percentage contribution (25%) to terminal assessment at P.L.E in four subjects. In the practical subjects, a separate report on pupils' achievement will be included in the results.

UNEB, CA effort in primary schools needs;

1. Development of materials for CA

Prior to 2004, UNEB together with classroom teachers prepared sample materials for use of CA program. These included.

Tests with solutions score record books, cumulative record cards, sample class progress record sheets, a manual on assessment and a module that helps teachers for continuous assessment implementation.

2. Orientation of teachers

Teachers were retrained for effective use of the CA materials and implementation of the CA program.

3. Implementation plan

CA was to begin with second term of 2004 and official date for launching was to be May 2004 begging p5 and p6 in the four subjects. The original plan was to have CA contribute 25% to the PLE final written examination for p7 candidates in 2005. observations were to be done daily,

written formal tests were to be done once a month and a record kept to submit it on data forms to UNEB at the end of term one in p7.

#### 4. Monitoring and Audit checklist

The monitoring of implementation were to be done by responsible Ministry of Education and Sports agencies such as District Inspectorate, teacher education through coordinating center tutors (CCT) and Directorate education standards (DES). UNEB was to do technical audit checks for quality control and assurance.

#### 5. Changes

The program was no launched because the Ministry of Education and Sports directed that the primary schools syllabus/ curriculum be reviewed.

#### 6. Current CA effort

With the introduction of the thematic curriculum in lower primary schools, the CA components have been in built. Therefore, UNEB has been involved in the implementation of CA in the thematic curriculum.

The implementation of CA in all countries like Malawi, Uganda and Ethiopia is almost similar. This means in all countries the objective of implementing CA is that to develop all rounded personality of the learners.

The different that in Malawi there is fixed technique of assessment, while the rest countries do not have fixed assessment technique. The experience of Malawi, Uganda and Ethiopia in implementing CA is almost the same in using varieties of assessments, using assessment on-going basis and etc.

## **Chapter Three: Research methods**

### **3.1. Research Design**

Descriptive survey research method was employed to conduct this study. This method is employed to get detail of data from many participants to assess the status of the phenomena.

### **3.2. Sources of data**

The primary data sources were the teachers from seven targeted schools, the supervisors from three weredas and the three directors from three targeted schools.

Secondary data source of this study included the recorded documents such as students' profile, in the selected three government first cycle primary schools.

### **3.3. The samples and sampling techniques**

From the ten Sub-Cities in Addis Ababa, Yeka was selected purposefully for its ease of accessibility of information for the researcher.

In Yeka Sub-City, there are 25 first cycle primary schools. Then, the researcher selected 14 government first cycle primary schools using stratified random sampling technique. In the selected schools the total numbers of teachers were 201. By giving equal chances for all the five subjects, the researcher selected five teachers from each school /totally 73 teachers were selected/. Three supervisors and three directors are also selected by simple random sampling technique (lottery method)

### **3.4. Instruments and Procedure of data collection**

The data collection mechanisms were questionnaires, interview, the focus group discussion and document analysis with class room observation.

For 70 teachers, according to the nature of their duty and responsibility 17 questions were prepared.

The open-ended interview questions were prepared for 3 supervisors and 3 directors.

The numbers of interview questions were 6. The whole interviews recorded properly using field notes.

The focus group discussions were conducted using Amharic language for more clarity and active interaction among all participants. The focused group discussions were held to strengthen the questionnaire and interview responses. The participants of focused group discussion included 3 teachers, 3 supervisors and 2 school directors. The whole focused group discussions were recorded by using field notes. It had guide line.

Documents regarding continuous assessment including mark lists and students portfolios were properly analyzed and important notes were taken from 14 targeted schools.

The class size of each school and other information's were observed by observational checklists.

### **3.5. Pilot testing the instrument**

The data collecting instrument/the questionnaire/ was tested before the real date of questionnaire data gathering. The purpose of the pilot project was to find out ambiguities,

omissions or misunderstandings in the instruments and also to check reliability of the instruments. The pilot study was conducted at Miazia 23 and St Markos First Cycle Primary Schools, as a result of pilot study some questionnaires were rejected from the questionnaires. The participants of this pilot testing were ten teachers from which five male and five females.

### **3.6. Data analysis method**

The data were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative method/mixed approach/ of the data analysis technique. Depending on the nature of collected data through questionnaire, interview and FGD, different statistical techniques were employed in the study. Those data were organized, code, summarized, analyzed and interpreted both qualitatively and quantitatively. To analyze the quantitative data percentage and frequency, mean value, independent sample t-test and ANOVA were used by the help of SPSS of version 20. These statistical tests were used for the purposing of testing different variables between the respondent groups. In all case the different obtained for statistical significant at alpha level ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.05 in two tailed direction and statistical books tables.

Besides the statistical process of the qualitative data was a narrated qualitatively using words, phrases, statements and paragraphs obtained from interviews, open-ended questions and FGDS. Hence the qualitative data was used as the complement of quantitative data.

## Chapter Four: Data presentation, analysis and interpretation

In this section, focused group discussion and document analysis were systematically analyzed and interpreted. Frequency counts, percentage, independent t-test and ANOVA were used to analyze the closed ended questionnaire questions. On the other hand the researcher used attitude score to identify and analyze the attitude differences between sex, qualification and experience of the respondents.

### 4.1 Background characteristics of the study group

For clear information about respondents characteristics related to sex, qualification, service year and their responsibility were examined in the following table.

Table1: Respondents by sex

Respondents	Male		Female		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Teachers	36	49.3	37	50.7	73	100
Supervisors	3	50	3	50	6	100
School directors	3	60	2	40	5	100
Total	42	50	42	50	84	100

As can be seen from table 1: from the whole participants 50% were males and 50% were females. This shows that the researcher gave equal chances for both sexes.

Table 2: Respondents by qualification

Respondents	Qualification			Share in %		
	diploma & below	Degree	Total	diploma & below	degree	Total
Teachers	58	15	73	79.4	20.6	100
Supervisors	-	6	6	-	100	100
School directors	-	5	5	-	100	100
Total	58	26	84	69.1	30.9	100

Table 2 shows that 69.1% of the respondents were at diploma and below level. The other 30.9% of the respondents have degrees. This indicates that there are few teachers who are qualified very well. But 100% of the supervisors and school directors were at degree level. So they have enough potential to assist and to give trainings for the teacher at first cycle primary school.

Table 3: Respondents by service

No	Respondents	Service years				Share in %			
		1-10	11-20	>20	Total	1-10	11-20	>20	Total
1	Teachers	47	23	3	73	64.4	31.5	4.1	100
2	Supervisors	4	2	-	6	66.6	43.4	-	100
3	School directors	5	-	-	5	100	-	-	100
	Total	56	25	3	84	66.6	29.8	3.6	100

Table 3: shows that 66% of the respondents have 1-10 years experience, 29.8% of the respondents have 11-20 years experience. This directly implies that, as there are more productive work forces in the first cycle primary school level. And most of the teachers, directors, and supervisors have got the new educational training policy.

#### 4.2 Data presentation and interpretation

In this section depending on the attitude score the researcher tried to test the attitude difference of the respondents by sex, qualification and experience. And also three item categories were prepared according to the nature of the questionnaires. The first category was the implementation of CA, the second one was the challenges of implementing CA and the last one was about the alternative solution of the problem that hinder the implementation of CA, depending on the scores the researcher identified the implementation, challenge and alternative solution differences of the respondents by sex, qualification and experience.



Table 4: T-Test for the attitude score of teachers between male and female

Sex	N	Mean	St. deviation	t	p
Male	35	2.02	1.06		
Female	35	3.57	1.54	-3.57	.001

The numbers of female participants were 35 and male participants were also 35. Mean of attitude score for male is 2.02 and their standard deviation is 1.06. On the other hand the mean of attitude score for female teachers is 3.57 and their standard deviation is 1.54. It indicate that female teachers attitude score is greater than the male participants.

The value of significant level is equal to 0.001 it shows there is a significant difference between the attitude score for male and the attitude score for female.

Table 5: T-Test for the attitude score based on teachers qualification.

Qualification of the respondents	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
As	58	3.84	1.64	.75	.46
Diploma and below	12	3.57	1.16		
Degree					

The mean of teachers who have diploma and below attitude score is 3.84 and the standard deviation is 1.64. And also the mean of teachers who have degree attitude score is 3.57 and the standard deviation is 1.16. It indicates that there is a little bit deferent attitude score between the teachers who have diploma and below and degree.

The value for significant level is equal to 0.46 at the .05 alpha levels. It shows that there is no significant difference of attitude score for teachers based on their qualification.

Table 6: Attitude of teachers on continuous assessment descriptive statistics by year of service

ANOVA

Service	N	Mean	Std. deviation
1 – 10	44	2.09	1.25
11 – 20	23	3.13	1.02
> - 20	3	2.66	1.37
Total	70	2.63	1.21

The mean of the attitude score for teachers having the experience from 1-10 years is 2.09. And the standard deviation is 1.25, the mean of the attitude score for teachers having the experience from 11-20 years is 3.13 and the standard deviation is 1.02. And also the mean of the attitude score for teachers having the experience above 20 years is 2.66 and the standard deviation is 1.37. This indicate that the attitude score of teachers having experience from 11-20 is more than the others.

Table 7: Summary of ANOVA on the attitude of teachers about the implementation of CA by experience.

As	Sum of squares	d f	Mean square	F	Sig
Between groups	815.78	2	407.89	2.37	.101
with in groups	11524.91	67	172.01		
Total	12340.70	69			

The value of significant level is equal to 0.101. It shows that there is no significant difference among the teachers attitude score based on their experience.

Table 8: T-test for the implementation score of teacher's between male and female

Sex	N	Mean	St. deviation	t	P
Male	35	2.39	.96	-3.71	.100
Female	35	2.34	1.01		

The number of female participants was 35, and male participants were also 35. Female teachers have a mean value of 2.39 and standard deviation of .96 and their male counter parts has a mean value of 2.34 and standard deviation of 1.01. The mean difference between the two groups is .05 which is not powerful to show the significance of difference. The calculated T-test result also

shows that there is no statistical significant difference between male and female respondents (at T-value -3.71;  $p>0.05$ ). Therefore it is possible to deduce that, there might be presence of common ideas and information between male and female teachers in the implementation of CA. Generally, the respondents from the 14 government First Cycle Primary Schools have showed a practice of implementing CA is not that much good. This is assured by the lower value of the total mean compared with that of the expected mean.

Table 9: T-test for the implementation score of teacher's based on their qualification

Qualification of the respondents	N	Mean	St. deviation	t	P
Diploma and below	58	2.90	1.20	.64	.53
Degree	12	2.67	.96		

The mean of teachers who have diploma and below implementation score is 2.90 with 1.20 standard deviation. And the mean of teachers who have degree implementation score is 2.67 and the standard deviation is .96. The mean difference between the two groups is 0.23 which is not powerful to show the significance of difference. When we come to the analysis of implementation of CA based on teacher's qualification, the statistical analysis has showed that there is no significance difference between the two groups. Because at the calculated T-value .64;  $p>0.05$ .

Table: 10 summary of ANOVA on the implementation of teachers about implementing CA by experience

Experience of the respondents	N	Mean	Std Deviation	One way ANVA			
					df	f	Sig.
1-10	44	1.65	1.13	Between groups	2	2.99	.087
11-20	23	1.33	1.18	Within groups	67		
>20	3	1.40	.53				
Total	70	1.46	.94		69		

The mean of the implementation score for teachers having the experience from 1-10 years is 1.65 with 1.13 standard deviation, the mean of the implementation score for teachers having the experience from 11-20 years is 1.33 and standard deviation is 1.18. And also the mean of the implementation score for teachers having the experience above 20 years is 1.40 with the standard deviation of .53. The mean difference between the three groups is not that much strong. This implies that there is no significant difference among teachers implementation of CA based on their experience. In the above summary ANOVA table, the value of significant level is equal to .087( $p>0.05$ ). It showed that there is no statistically significant difference between the three group's teachers about the implementation of CA.

The results from interview, FGD, document analysis and observation have been discussed below.

One of the interviewed supervisors called B said!

“Currently schools are using only tests, assignments and final results as an assessment technique.” Date 10/11/2013

The other interviewed director called H. on her side added the following:

“We directors gave the official mark lists for every teacher. This official mark lists contains project works, home works, class works, class activities, tests and final results. But practically the implementation is differing from teacher to teachers.” Date 11/11/2013

Similarly, many of the interviewed persons like E, D, T and A shared the opinion of H as it is about the system of using varieties of assessment technique.

The researcher of this study also approved this fact by observation Checklist about the uses of varieties of assessment techniques.

During the observation time teachers have only marklists. Home works, group works and assignments were included in the marklists. The other options or techniques were not includes.

Related to this Heaton (1990) in Bogale (1994, P, 121) cited the following:

“CA’S flexibility also attributes to giving credit to various features of learning such as: projects, grades and comments from course work, group work, home work, progress tests and the like, more over this combining method maximize both reliability and validity of continuous assessment.”

On the other hand, as proved by the researcher, all most all the interviewed persons told that fist cycle primary schools were listed varieties of CA techniques in their mark lists. However, there is no proper usage of the assessment techniques due to many reasons such as lack of teacher's commitment, large class size, shortage of time and work load of teachers. Then it needs high effort to solve these problems so as to enable the teachers to use varieties of assessment techniques.

From the interviewed supervisor participants, who called T, responded the following about using feedback;

“In our school there is no continuous feedback both for students and parents. We give the learners achievement feed back for the learners and parents’ only two wise a year. Then if the achieved result is very high, they continue as it is, and if the achieved result is very low, the opportunity to see their methodology is weak and it need more attention to improve this situation.” Date 25/11/2013

The other interviewed teacher participants who is called A, replied the following.

“I believe that every teacher should give the achieved result for the learners and parents. But our trained is not this. We send the achieved results at the end of the semesters. Even this feed back does not include the strength and weakness of the learners. It simply shows the results in number.” Date 29/11/2013

All the other respondents said that:

“We know that when ever there is immediate feed back for the learners based on their assessments, it narrow the communication gap between the teacher and students as well as

parents and this makes the teaching and learning more effective. But in our schools giving feedback for the learners after every assessment is not that much strong. We gave feedback of continuous assessment both for the learners and parents only at the end of each semester.’’

Regarding the implementation of feedback for learners NitKo (2004) in Fisseha (2010) cited that:

‘‘It is a good practice in assessment procedures provide feedbacks and comments to students about their learning by feedback, learners must be given chance to review both correct and incorrect performances. Feedback should always contain ways for improving learning in the future.’’

Shamim et al (2007: 54) also cited that:

Feedback helps both learners and teachers monitor the development of understanding and identify areas where further work is needed to dispel misconceptions or consolidate learning.

Related to the importance of feedback for the students, Desalegn (2004P.7) cited the following:

‘‘Frequent interaction between pupils and teachers means teachers know strengths and weakness of their pupil. These interactions foster good pupil-teacher relationship. Consequently, pupils learn that their teacher values their achievements and that their assessment outcomes have an impact on the instruction that they received.’’



Based on the results of interview and analyzed documents as teachers do not use students' achievements as a feedback for their teaching and learning process and assessment techniques. Therefore, attention has to be given to the achieved results of the students to use it as feedback for teachers.

Unless teachers get feedback on their teaching and learning strategy, I can say that they are walking blindly. To avoid such problems, teachers must use their students' achievement as a feedback to revise their method of teaching and evaluation. If they do so, they easily identify their problems related to the teaching process and assessment techniques. And if there is no good feedback system for the students and parents after every assessment, students may not get a chance to learn more from their mistakes and parents may not understand the mistake of their children. Therefore, so as to enable parents to play their own role on their children learning and to show every strength and weakness of the learners in every step giving feedback is very important.

From the interviewed school director A, responded the following with regard to reporting student's achievement regularly to parents;

“Reporting students' achievements to their parents with appropriate details for further improvement is very important. From this detailed achievement report of their children parents can get opportunity to know how far their children show progress or not. Finally, the parents, the teachers and the learners together can reach an agreement how to facilitate students learning and increase the learners' efficiency in all aspects in the teaching learning process. The reality in my school does not consider what I said earlier.” Date 10/11/2013

One of the supervisors E, during her interview on the regular reporting of student's assessment to parents replied that;

“There is no experience of reporting the learner's achievement to their parents regularly. However, we sent the learners. Semester report card for parents to see and sign on it at every first semester. Finally, during schools' parents' day; high ranked students get awards and the other schools ceremonies continue. In this situation, I can't say that the schools provided adequate information on their children's achievements to the parents regularly with appropriate details.” Date 26/11/2013

One of the interviewed supervisors B, on her side added the following;

“The current experiences in our school do not give more attention to report the learners' achievements to their parents regularly with appropriate details. Most of the time, we call parents to discuss and solve school problems like increasing income and fulfilling school infrastructures. During this discussion, students' learning and their achievement may be raised as one minor agenda. Based on the above facts it is too difficult to say we have regular program to report the learners' achievements to their parents.” Date 10/11/2013

Linn and Miller (2005, P.373) express about the importance of discussion between school and parents regarding to students' achievement as follows:

That the parent teacher conference is a flexible procedure that provides for two way communication between home and school. Besides receiving report from the teacher, parents have an opportunity to present information concerning the students' out of school life. The conference permits teachers and parents to ask questions, discuss their common concern in

helping the student, and cooperatively plan a program for improving the students' learning and development.

The practice in the targeted sub-city relates to reporting students' achievements for their parents regularly is very weak. This is proved from the interview, questionnaires and document analysis. The schools have no schedule to discuss about students achievement and related issues. So all the concerned bodies should give special attention.

From the interviewed supervisors and directors participants who are called B, T and E responded the following ideas similarly.

“Handling documents and keeping records of continuous assessment is only on the mark lists. It is not registered on the student's portfolio.” Date 11/11/2013

The other interviewed director D said the following:

“Of continuous assessment is not only students' mark registered in a marklist. It also includes all information about the learners. This information contains' characteristics back ground information of the learner, problem encountered the learners' in the teaching and learning classroom and students' day-to-day progress related to their assessment and all other aspects of those learners have to recorded and documented. The reality here does not related with fact above, event is difficult to find questions and frame works for assessment.” Date 11/11/2013

The other interviewed persons called A and H, added the following idea in the same expression

“We distribute official portfolio format for all teachers. But teachers are not volunteer to record and document all the students' continuous assessment on it.” Date 29/11/2013.

The how to use and manager portfolio of students was discussed by many scalars, from these, Dessalegn (2004, P.15) documented the following:

A portfolio of a students work is a systematic collection of students' work over a year, a term or a topic. The work can be collected in a carton box. Folder, filling cabinet or other suitable container. When a student completes an assessment activity or task, it is placed in their portfolio. All the different pieces of work in the portfolio contribute to an overall evaluation of students work. The portfolio can show students' progress over time.

Generally, the interview, FGD and document analysis showed that, learner's portfolios were empty, except semester marks of the learners.

As can be seen in different schools of the targeted sub-city, all the necessary documents related to students continuous assessment were not well organized and kept in the learners portfolio. Then keeping records of the learners in their portfolio needs more attention.

One of the FGD participants from teachers called O explained the following;

“I can say that, no one from the sub city and woreda concerned body has come to support jocosely on continuous assessment. Simply they asked us whether the learner's continuous assessment is implemented or not even they didn't see our mark list.” Date 17/12/2013

One of the FGD participants K from school directors added the following:

“We have a plane to support schools. At this time every concerned body must included continuous assessment in their plan as one part. But the way of our following and support doesn't bring a change.” Date 17/12/2013

Similarly: The FGD participant M responded the following about current practice of giving feedback on the implementation of CA:

“The current practice giving of feed back on the implementation of learners’ assessment is too weak. The reason to say this is that no one can give me feedback about continuous assessment through out the year. If any body gives me feedback about learners’ continuous assessment, I can improve and I can give big attention for student’s continuous assessment.” Date 17/12/2013

All the other participants of FGD said similar things like K and O,

Regarding this; Desalegn (2004, p21) cited that

“The implementation of continuous assessment in primary school needs knowledge, skills, motivation and dedication on the part of primary school teachers. The necessary knowledge and skills can be improved through training in the preparation and use of continuous assessment activities”.

The researcher during his observation tried to search for manuals, check lists and different guidelines in the observed schools. However, all the responsible bodies responded that they have only checklists of class room observations, but they don’t have enough time to observe the teachers and to give feed back for the teachers.

Supervisors exercise various roles with in each of tree domains instructional, curricular and staff development. That is the supervisor acts as coordinator, consultants, group leader and evaluator to assist and to give trainings for teachers in the implementation of continuous assessment. And they must follow up the way that every teachers practice to implements continuous assessment,

at the same time supervisors are expected to give immediate feed back for teachers on the implementation of continuous assessment.

Thus, all concerned bodies have to work together so as to give constructive feedback about continuous assessment implementation for the teachers.

Table 11: T-test for the challenge score of teachers between male and female.

Sex	N	Mean	St. deviation	T	P
Male	35	3.68	.87	-3.71	.102
Female	35	3.75	1.07		

Female teachers have a mean value of 3.75 and standard deviation of 1.07 and the mean of male teachers is 3.68 with standard deviation of .87. The mean difference between the two groups is 0.20 which is not powerful to show the significance of difference . The calculated T-test result also shows that there is no statistical significance difference between male and female respondents (at T-value -3.73;  $p>0.05$ ). Therefore it is possible to deduce that, there might be presence of common ideas and information between male and female teachers about the challenge of CA. Generally, the respondents from the selected government First Cycle Primary Schools have showed as the challenges of implementing CA are very high. This is assured by the high value of the total mean compared with that of the expected mean.

Table 12: T-test for the challenge score of teachers based on their qualification

Qualification of the respondents	N	Mean	St. deviation	T	P
Diploma and below	58	2.91	1.06	.79	.43
Degree	12	2.85	1.04		

The mean of teachers who have diploma and below challenge score is 2.91 and standard deviation is 1.06. And the mean of teachers who have degree challenge score is 2.85 with standard deviation of 1.04. The mean difference between the two groups is 0.14 which is not powerful to show the significance of difference. The calculated T-value indicated that there is no statistically significance difference between the respondents based on their qualification (at T-value .79;  $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore it is possible to deduce that, there might be presence of common ideas and opinion between the two groups about the challenges of CA.

Table 13: Summary of ANOVA on the challenges of teachers about the implementation of CA by experience

Experience of the respondents	N	Mean	Std Deviation	One way ANVA			
					df	f	Sig.
1-10	44	3.88	.92	Between groups	2	2.58	.083
11-20	23	3.56	1.23	Within groups	67		
>20	3	3.78	.50				
Total	70	3.67	.88		69		

The mean of the challenge score for teachers having the experience from 1-10 years is 3.88 and standard deviation is 0.92, the mean of the challenge score for teachers having the experience from 11-20 years is 3.56 and standard deviation is 1.23. And also the mean of the challenge score for teachers having the experience above 20 years is 3.78 and standard deviation is 0.88. The mean difference between the three groups is not that much strong. This implies that there is no significant difference on teachers challenge of CA based on their experience. But it indicates that all the three groups were highly affected by different challenges of implementing CA with the total mean of 3.67. In the above summary of ANOVA table, the value of significant level is equal to .083 ( $p > 0.05$ ), it showed that there is no statistically significant difference between the three groups of teachers about the challenges of implementing CA.



All the data that were gathered from interview, FGD and observation checklists have been discussed as follows;

One of the FGD participants K from school directors explained the following while he replayed about the major problems that hinder the implementation of continuous assessment:

“Even if the teachers have basic skills on the recording and documenting student’s continuous assessment achievements, they are not volunteer to do so. I think they consider that recording the learners continues assessment achievement is exhaustive.” Date 17/12/2013

Almost all of the participants replied as they have basic skills of recording and documenting student’s continuous assessment achievements. But the researcher disproved this during his observation. When the researcher has observed the schools, teachers did not recorded even the learners’ monthly test. This indicates that teachers are very careless to register the learner’s continuous assessment achievement.

Related to this fact Chilora, et al (2003) cited in Desalegn (2004, p.5) as follows:

Recording grades – a quality assessment activity is not complete with out accurate recording of grades. To this end, in continuous assessment, the recording of grades should be timely and consistent, so that teachers would be able to have an accurate picture of their pupils’ performance at all time.

Based on the findings there was poor document management of student’s assessment. This is one of the problems of implementation of continuous assessment. There fore, documentation and recording system of continuous assessment need more emphasis in the targeted sub city.

As the researcher observed, most of the teachers listed varieties of continuous assessment techniques in their mark lists. However there is no proper usage of the assessment techniques due to many reasons like lack of commitment, large class size, time constraints and work loads. According to Grams (2006, p.1) assessment in education primarily must serve the purpose of supporting learning. There for, if teachers don't use varieties of assessment techniques, they do not get chances to evaluate their teaching methodology. So, even if most of the respondents believe that continuous assessment is serving as attaching strategy, they can't use it in practice. Then, using varieties of assessment techniques has to be given more emphasis.

All the interview respondents raised that as there have no training opportunities regarding the implementation of students continuous assessment it may be one of the problems of implementing continuous assessment.

Regarding this, Desalegn (2004, p 21) cited that:

The implementation of continuous assessment in primary school needs knowledge, skills, motivation and dedication on the part of primary school teachers. The necessary knowledge and skills can be improved through training in the preparation and use of continuous assessment activities.

The training opportunity for teachers enables teachers to update their previous knowledge. There for, not getting enough training about the implementation of continuous assessment is a problem, so every concerned body must give special attention for this problem. Related to this fact Linn and Miller (2005, p.p. 521-523) stressed on the following important points as standards for teacher competence in educational assessment of students.

“Teachers should be skilled in choosing assessment methods appropriate for instructional decision. Teachers should be skilled in administrating, scoring, and interpreting the results of both externally produces and teacher produced assessment methods.”

While the interviewed participants asked about the major problem that hinders the implementation of continuous assessment in first cycle primary schools all of them raised that large class size has an impact on students discipline during assessment time.

The FGD participants also shared this idea. In addition to this the researcher also proved this during his observation time. When the researcher observed the schools, all of them have large number of students in a class and few students listen while the teachers teach them. The other students did their own work with out instruction.

Assessing learning and providing feedback is one of the challenges of teaching in large class (Shamim, et al 2007).

Arends (1997, p, 92) discussed regarding the disciplinary problem of large classes during the implementation of continuous assessment as follows:

“Suggested direct instruction lesson are thought mainly to whole groups of students. In any large group situation, there is opportunity for some students to be involved while others are not only uninvolved but perhaps miss behaving. Rather than attempting to uncover and deal with the cause of student misbehavior, a most difficult and time consuming task that does not necessary lead to better management, we recommend that teachers focus on the misbehavior itself and find way to change it, at least while the mis behavior student is in the classroom.”

Based on the achieved responses and researchers observation, large class size has disciplinary problem to implement the learners' continuous assessment. Then, the need to reduce these large classes size to manageable and standardized label should be prioritized.

One of the FGD participants from supervisors replied the following while he was asked about the major problems that hinders the implementation of CA in first cycle primary schools:

“In our schools there are lack of infrastructures like students text book, classrooms, laboratory materials and the likes. With the absence of these school infrastructures, it is difficult to imply the learners' continuous assessment properly.” Date 17/12/2013

E, one of the interviewed supervisors said the following when she asked about the major challenges of implementing CA;

“infrastructures like text books, chairs, black boards, instructional materials and adequate class School rooms have big roles for the implementation of learners' CA.” Date 25/11/2013

The researcher also proved that, as there was lack of chairs, desks, textbooks and class rooms in all the three observed first cycle primary school. It is too difficult to think that teaching and learning process including learner's continuous assessment could takes place properly. So it needs very great emphasis to solve school infrastructure problems.

One of the FGD participants from teachers called H, explained the following while she was asked about the problems that hinders the implementation of continuous assessment in first cycle primary schools;

“In our school for example there are about 76 students in one class. Imagine you; if a teacher wants to assess his/her students and want to give feed back, it takes time to finish.” Date 17/12/2013

The other FGD participants like D, S and K agreed that implementing learner’s continuous assessment in large class size is more time consuming activities.

Regarding this fact Quansah (2005, p.p 2-3) cited as follows:

“High level stress in test taking and test marking the first problem is the large number of assessments pupils have to go through, and the larger number of mark recordings teachers have to make reduction in teacher /pupil contact hours.”

Assessment by itself needs more time. If the numbers of students are over the standard, teachers can’t implement continuous assessment of the learners. There for, as the researcher provide this from the observation and as the interviewed participants replied the class size must be considered to implement learner’s continuous assessment properly.

Table 14: T-test for the alternative solutions score of teachers between male and female

Sex	N	Mean	St. deviation	t	P
Male	35	4.00	1.71	-1.69	.095
Female	35	4.12	1.90		

Male teachers have a mean value of 4.00 and standard deviation of 1.71 and the mean of female teachers is 4.12 with standard deviation of 1.90. The mean difference between the two groups is

0.12 which is not that much strong to show the significance of gender difference. As revealed in the above table there is no statistically significance difference among male and female teachers in the alternative solutions of implementing CA. Because  $p > 0.05$ . In general, the respondents from the 14 government First Cycle Primary Schools have seen more alternative solutions for the implementation of CA. This is assured by higher value of the total mean compared with that of the expected mean.

Table 15: T-test for the alternative solutions score of teachers based on their qualification

Qualification of the respondents	N	Mean	St. deviation	t	P
Diploma and below	58	4.66	1.80	.67	.50
Degree	12	4.25	2.34		

The mean of teachers who have diploma and below solution score is 4.66 and standard deviation is 1.80 and the mean of teachers who have degree is 4.25 and standard deviation is 2.34. The mean difference between the two groups is 0.41 which is not that much strong to show the significance of differences. The calculated T-value indicated that there is no statistically significant difference between the respondents based on their qualification (at T-value .67;  $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, there were idea and opinion similarity between the two groups about giving alternative solutions for the improvement of implementing CA.

Table 16: Summary of ANOVA on the alternative solutions of teachers about the implementation of CA by experience

Experience of the respondents	N	Mean	Std Deviation	One way ANVA			
					df	f	Sig.
1-10	44	3.89	.66	Between groups	2	.84	.44
11-20	23	3.71	1.16	Within groups	67		
>20	3	3.52	.58				
Total	70	3.72	.80		69		

The mean of alternative solution score for teachers having the experience from 1-10 years is 3.89 and standard deviation is 0.66, the mean of alternative solution score for teachers having the experience from 11-20 years is 3.71 and standard deviation 1.16, and also the mean of alternative solution score for teachers having the experience above 20 years is 3.52 and standard deviation 0.58. The mean difference between the three groups is not that much strong to show the significance of difference on the alternative solutions of CA. In the above summary ANOVA table, the value of significant level is equal to .44 ( $p > 0.05$ ). It showed that there is no statistically significant different between the three groups of teachers on the alternative solutions of CA.

Many of the open ended questionnaire respondents, the interviewed respondents and the FGD participants gave more emphasis for teachers training as the solution for implementing learner's continuous assessment properly. One of the interviewed supervisors called B said that;

“Training is used to update teacher's skill, knowledge and attitude to wards implementation of learner's continuous assessment. Then facilitating training opportunities for teachers on the implementation of learners continuous assessment could be taken as one and best alternative solution for the problems. Other wise, the problem will remain poor.” Date 10/11/2013

One of the interviewed supervisors E on her side added the following as the solution of challenges on the implementation of continuous assessment.

“The principals must follow up the system and should prepare short term trainings at school level. At that time teachers may have the opportunity to share their experience about the implementation of learner's continuous assessment.” Date 25/11/2013

One of the FGD participants O explained the following:

“Implementing student's continuous assessment properly demands planning trainings for teachers and strict follow up of principals. Other wise the problem will continuous.” Date 17/12/2013

Most of the open-end questionnaire respondents wrote training should be the first alternative for the solution of the problems.

Regarding this A, olaniyan, Lucas and ojo (2008) explain the following:

The main objectives of staff training and development are to improve the quality of the trainee, formulation of objectives for different needs and ways of achieving it. The training objective is



very important because it determines the designed and content of the training program. Contents of the training remain the same no matter the type of training involved. It is to increase personal efficiency, professional growth, and smooth and more effective organization's operations.

Based on the facts the training opportunities for teachers related to the implementation of continuous assessment of students' is too weak. The principals and all the concerned bodies should give great emphasis for teachers training on the implementation of learner's continuous assessment.

One of the interviewed directors A said the following about involvement of the learners in the assessment;

“The learner's continuous assessment should describe the performance, skill, knowledge and attitude of the learners. There fore to check or evaluate the performance of the learners, they must involve in their evaluation. Unless and other wise it shows simply the number of marks. There fore, to be reliable and valid, the learners should involve in their own continuous assessment.” Date 10/11/2013

K, the participant of FGD from directors added the following;

“Students direct involvement in their own continuous assessment increase the reliability and validity of the assessment. That means, assessing students with out their involvement leads to the fail arty of quality education.” Date 17/12/2013

Regarding this fact Wintle and Harrison (200:28) explained;

Educational gain should be accelerated the closer children are to the assessment of their won work.

The involvement of learner's in their own assessment makes the assessment was real and valid. The researcher concluded here, if there is active involvement at learners in their own assessment there will be exact description of learner's performance. There fore, teachers have to give great attention to the involvement of learners in their won assessment.

Many of the open-ended questionnaire respondents gave more emphasis for reporting students' achievement to their parents.

One of the interviewed school director D replied that;

“If teachers report student's continuous assessment to their parents, they will give a chance to evaluate their assessment system for them selves.” Date 11/11/2013

Regarding this fact Dr. Desalegn (2004.p.9) stated the following;

“Parents want to know own well their children are doing in school. Reports on regular basis not just at the end of year but based on continuous assessment by teachers help parents to know about their children's progress.”

Linn and miller (2005, p.373) mentioned as follows;

“That the parent teacher conference is a flexible procedure that provides for two way communication between home and school. Besides receiving a report from the teacher, parents have an opportunity to present information concerning the student's out of school life. The conference permits, teachers and parents to ask questions, discuss their common concerns in helping the students, and cooperatively place a program for improving the student's learning and development.”

Informing parents of their children's school progress is a basic function of a grading and reporting system. These reports should help parents understand the objective of the school and how well their children are achieving the intended learning outcomes of their particular program. This information is important from several points of views. First by knowing what the school is attempting, parents are better able to cooperate with the school in promoting their children's learning and development. Second, information concerning their children's success, failures, and special problems enables parents to give them the emotional support and encouragement needed. Third, knowing their children's strengths and weakness in learning provides a basis for helping them make more sound educational plan. Fourth, teachers get chances to evaluate and check their teaching methodology from the feedbacks of parents. To serve these purposes adequately the reports and portfolios of the reports of students work should contain as much information and detail as parents can comprehend.

There fore, in the targeted sub-city to improve the learner's continuous assessment reporting student's achievement to their parents should be given special attention.

The other FGD participants believe with the fulfillment of infrastructures as a solution for the proper implement of student's continuous assessment.

As we have seen, all these alternative solutions are accepted by different scholars. As a researcher I recommend that the targeted sub-city should be taken these alternative solutions so as to bring a big change on the implementation of continuous assessment in first cycle primary schools.

## **Chapter Five: summary, conclusion and recommendation**

### **5.1 summary**

The final objective of this study were to examine the existing practices of implementing students' CA to identify the major problems related to the implementation of learners' CA to recommend alternative solution for identified problems in implementing students' CA at first cycle primary schools.

This study was targeted to address the following basic research questions.

- 1) What is the status of practices of implementing continuous assessment in the government first cycle school of Yeka sub-city?
- 2) What are the major challenges that affect the proper implementation of continuous assessment in the government first cycle primary schools of Yeka sub-city?
- 3) Is there a significant difference between teachers' attitude, implementation, challenge and alternative solution score based on their sex, qualification and experience in the government first cycle primary schools of Yeka Sub-city?
- 4) What are the potentials solutions to over come implementation gaps and the challenges related to implementing CA in the government first cycle primary schools of Yeka sub-city?

In order to answer the above basic questions, the descriptive survey research method was employed. To gather important data for this study; questionnaire, interview, FGD and document analysis techniques were applied. These data were analyzed by using mixed approach.

## **Major findings**

The implementations of different assessment techniques were used only for formality. The system of using learners' achievement as a feedback and reporting learners' achievement for parents was less recognized. There is no similarity among teachers in the same school in the implementation of CA, and poor handling documents, keeping records and managing learner's portfolios. There is a significant difference between the attitude score for male and female. But, no significant difference of attitude score for teachers based on their qualification and experience. Lack of infrastructures, inadequacy of learning materials and large number of students in a class are the most major problems for the implementation of CA in first cycle primary schools. Lack of professional support and shortage of immediate feedbacks are also the challenges for the implementation of CA in the targeted sub-city.

Therefore, getting adequate and updated manuals and guidelines, fulfilling schools infrastructures, regular follow up, support and feedback and giving trainings for teachers are alternative solutions to overcome challenges of implementing learners' CA.

## **5.2 Conclusion.**

The implementation of learners' CA in the targeted sub-city is poor. It is also difficult to get well-handled documents and properly kept assessment records or portfolios of the students, and the system of reporting learners' achievement for their parents' regularly with appropriate detail is completely weak. The findings include that most teachers handling find time to revise previous tests in class so that the learners' can learn from the revision exercise. When such revisions are not carried out, then a most essential component of the continuous assessment has been neglected. Generally fulfilling the necessary school infrastructures, continuous follow up,

support, immediate feedback for the teachers and training opportunities are demands more emphasis in the targeted sub-city.

### **5.3 Recommendation**

Based on what this study has revealed the following recommendations have been provided for any attempts designed to bring about improvement and effective implementation of continuous assessment at first cycle primary school in Yeka sub-city.

- 1) It would seem from the findings on teacher concerns in the study that sufficient attention is not being directed to teacher training in school level. For this to be realized, however it is recommended that continuous and ongoing staff and administrative development. So that CA can be institutionalized and sustained. Indeed the Ministry of Education (MoE) must support the professional development change requires.
- 2) The findings of the study revealed that lack of monitoring and evaluating by the principal as well by ministry officials was lacking
- 3) From the study, it can be concluded that parental involvement is a key factor in implementing CA. Schools can not being to meet the needs of pupils without help from parents. The literature reminds us that students learning increases when parents participate in decision making that affects their children. It is therefore submitted that strong partnerships must be constructed between the school and the home by allowing parents to be part of the schools management team.
- 4) Resources have been defined in terms of human material financial and time. Ongoing resources are an important part of making change work. The understanding, therefore, must be if CA is to be successfully implemented in schools, the schools should operate as

resource center of facilitate the professional needs of principals and teachers also the Ministry of Education must provide the resources to support the educational change.

#### **5.4 suggestions for further research**

The continuous assessment approach has many advantages over the short method of assessment. It will make assessment more meaningful and more representative of the learners' overall abilities. However, problems will occur from time to time in the course of its application in schools. Many of these problems will only be known when follow-up occurs. I will suggest that researcher should be conducted in to the following areas;

- Teachers' perception and understanding of continuous assessment.
- Teachers' knowledge of skills of test construction and administration.
- Teachers' attitude toward the program
- The relationship between continuous assessment scores and the final score in first cycle primary schools.

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## **Appendix A**

**Addis Ababa University**

**College of education**

**Department of institute of educational research**

### **Questionnaire for teachers**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain information about the current practice and challenges of implementing continuous assessment in the government first cycle primary schools to suggest alternative solutions. So your genuine response contributes much to the success of this study. Hence you are kindly requested to fill the questionnaire.

Thank you so much!

I. City \_\_\_\_\_ II. Sub-city \_\_\_\_\_ III. Wereda \_\_\_\_\_

IV. Name of the school \_\_\_\_\_ V. Sex \_\_\_\_\_

VI. Qualification \_\_\_\_\_ VII. Work experience \_\_\_\_\_

VIII. The following questions are expected to address the issues related to the current practice and challenges of implementation of continuous assessment in your school. Please, use (x) to

show your level of agreement under one of the five scales of measurement for each question. The values for the scales of measurements are:

Strongly Agree=5

Agree=4

Undecided=3

Disagree=2

Strongly Disagree=1

No	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I feel that getting training about continuous assessment will improve its implementation					
2	I have the basic skills of recording and documenting students' continuous assessment achievements					
3	For me, continuous assessment is serving as a teaching strategy using a variety of assessment					

	techniques.					
4	I have different training opportunities on the implementation of continuous assessment at my school					
5	I used different assessment techniques like projects, class work, home works, group works, etc regularly to assess my students					
6	After assessing my students, I used the achieved result as a feedback to evaluate instructions.					
7	The students' achievement is regularly reported to parents with appropriate details.					
8	All tasks used to assess the learners and information gathered about them to give decisions about their					

	achievements I well recorded and documented.					
9	There are discipline problems while assessing students due to the larger number of students.					
10	Lack of school infrastructure like chairs, chalkboards, etc has impact on my continuous assessment					
11	The large class room size affects my continuous assessment techniques by taking more my time.					
12	I can get immediate and continuous feedback on my continuous assessment implementation from my director and supervisor.					
13	Students' involvement in their own assessment is very important.					



14	Continuous report about students' help to improve assessment and students' performance.					
15	Continuous assessment increases the academic performance of learners.					
16	For me, continuous assessment is serving as a teaching strategy using a variety of assessment technique.					
17	Giving immediate feedback for the learners about their achievement is used to evaluate my instructions.					

## Appendix B

### Open-ended questions for teachers

Write out what you feel about the following questions.

1. How do you assess the performance of your pupils? Is it using continuous assessment? If so, how?

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2. What are the major problems that can hinder the implementation of continuous assessment in your school?

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3. What do you think are the alternative solutions for the above problems of implementing continuous assessment in your school?

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## Appendix C

### Questions related to teachers attitude toward the implementation of CA.

No	Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Continuous assessment increases the academic performance of learners.					
2	For me, continuous assessment is serving as a teaching strategy using a variety of assessment technique.					
3	Giving immediate feedback for the learners about their achievement is used to evaluate my instructions.					

## Appendix D

### Questions related to the practice of implementing CA.

No	Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	I used different assessment techniques like projects, class work, home works, group works, etc regularly to assess my students					
2	After assessing my students, I used the achieved result as a feedback to evaluate instructions.					
3	The students' achievement is regularly reported to parents with appropriate details.					
4	All tasks used to assess the learners and information gathered about them to give decisions about their achievements I well recorded and documented.					
5	I can get immediate and continuous feedback on my continuous assessment implementation from my director and supervisor.					

## Appendix E

### Questions related to the challenges of implementing CA.

No	Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	I have the basic skills of recording and documenting students' continuous assessment achievements					
2	For me, continuous assessment is serving as a teaching strategy using a variety of assessment techniques.					
3	I have different training opportunities on the implementation of continuous assessment at my school					
4	There are discipline problems while assessing students due t the larger number of students.					
5	Lack of school infrastructure like chairs, chalkboards, etc has impact on my continuous assessment					
6	The large class room size affects my continuous assessment techniques by taking more my time.					

## Appendix F

### Questions related to alternative solutions for implementing CA.

No	Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	I feel that getting training about continuous assessment will improve its implementation					
2	Student's involvement in their own assessment is very important					
3	Continuous report about students' achievement to their parents will help to improve assessment.					

## **Appendix G**

### **Interview Questions for First Cycle Primary**

#### **School Supervisors and Directors.**

1. what do you think about the current practice of implementing continuous assessment, regarding:
  - The way of recording and its documentation.
  - The system of using varieties of assessment technique.
  - Involvement of the learners in the assessment.
  - The system of giving feedback to the learners.
  - The system of reporting students' achievements to parents in your school
2. Do you think continuous assessment properly practiced in first cycle schools? How?
3. What are the major challenges of implementing continuous assessment and related alternative solutions of these challenges?

## **Appendix H**

### **Questions for the focus group discussion**

1. Some people say continuous assessment enable learners simply to pass from grade to grade as they are no properly assessed. How do you react to this?
2. What do you think about the current practice of implementing continuous assessment in your school?
3. Do you think continuous assessment is properly practiced in first cycle schools? How?
4. Do you think is the follow up, support and feedback system on how to implement continuous assessment in first cycle primary schools by all concerned bodies?
5. What are the major problems that hinder the implementation of continually assessment in first cycle primary schools?
6. What do you suggest as alternative solutions for the problems?



## Appendix I

### Part-One-General information

1.1 Name of the Wereda\_\_\_\_\_

1.2 Name of the school\_\_\_\_\_

1.3 Observed grade level\_\_\_\_\_

1.4 Class size M\_\_\_\_\_ F\_\_\_\_\_ T\_\_\_\_\_

1.5 Date of observation\_\_\_\_\_

### Part-Two teacher's information

2.1 teacher's name\_\_\_\_\_ 2.2 Sex\_\_\_\_\_ 2.3 Age\_\_\_\_\_

2.4 Qualificaion\_\_\_\_\_ 2.5 Experience\_\_\_\_\_

Use (X) to show your level of agreement.

I. observation checklist about classroom facilities in grade 1-4

No	Observed items or issues	Level of rating			Remarks
		Adequate	Medium	low	
1	The size of the classroom				
2	Number of chairs for the learners				
3	Condition of the chalk board				
4	Enough light to see in the class				
5	Desks to write on				

II. observation checklist for the instructional materials in grade 1-4

No	Observed items or issues	Level of rating			Remarks
		1:1	1:2	>1:2	
1	Amharic text book				
2	Environmental Science text book				
3	Mathematics text book				
4	Esthetics text book				
5	English text book				

III. Observation checklist about the use of varieties of assessment techniques.

No	Assessment items to be used	Level of inclusion		Relevant questions of frames for assessment		
		Included	Not included	Prepared	Not prepared	More of oral practiced
1	Writing					
2	Reading					
3	Class works					
4	Home works					
5	Group works					
6	Assignments					
7	Field trip reports					
8	Project works					
9	Singing					
10	practicing					
11	Physical exercise					
12	Story telling					

IV. Observation checklist about the learners' portfolios

No	Items included in learners portfolio	Level of inclusion		Remarks
		Included	Not included	
1	Parent's agreement			
2	Background history of the learners			
3	Accumulated marks			
4	Information about behavior and interests of the learners			
5	Information about academic day-to-day progress of the learners			
6	Detailed information about the learners rounded personalities			