Continuous Assessment in Lower Cycle Primary Schools

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Abstract: Continuous assessment has become a critical component of educational reform in lower primary schools. Policy makers and educational administrators often see continuous assessment as a measure of educational quality and accountability for students' performance. This study is undertaken to clarify the concepts and benefits of continuous assessment and to help teachers develop continuous assessment tools for classroom use. More specifically, an effort has been made to review the definition, principles, benefits, reasons, kinds, and tools of continuous assessment. It is believed that the materials included in this paper are highly valuable for teachers and trainers dealing with continuous assessment in primary schools.

Introduction

Continuous assessment as an alternative to traditional testing of pupils' achievement offers methodology for assessing pupils performance and improving the success of pupils (USIAD, 2003; Bolyard, 2003). Accordingly, Greaney and Kellaghan cited in ADE Association for the Development of Education in Africa/ADEA (2002) have pointed out that an ongoing assessment of students' performance is a key to improving educational quality.

The Ethiopian Education and Training Policy (TGE, 1994) states that, "Continuous assessment in academic and practical subjects including aptitude tests will be conducted to ascertain the formation of all rounded profile of students at all levels" (p. 18). As a result of this policy, primary school students are supposed to be assessed using continuous assessment procedures.

The continuous assessment process is much more than administering continuous tests to measure pupils' achievement. It uses various

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assessment activities in order to uncover pupils' achievement of educational objectives. Past studies on continuous assessment in primary schools in Addis Ababa (Desalegn, 2003) and Daniel and Desalegn (2001), for instance, revealed that teachers do not use continuous assessment in their classrooms. This may be due to various reasons. Some of these are:

- Lack of sufficient training in continuous assessment;
- Lack of skills to develop continuous assessment tools;
- Absence of manuals and other supporting materials that assist teachers in the development of continuous assessment tools;
- Large class size;
- Lack of teachers' commitment and motivation;
- Attitude of teachers towards continuous assessment.

This study is undertaken to clarify the concepts and benefits of continuous assessment and to help teachers develop continuous assessment tools for classroom use. Specifically, an effort has been made to review the definition, principles, benefits, reasons, kinds, and tools of continuous assessment. It is believed that the discussions made in this paper are highly valuable for teachers and trainers dealing with continuous assessment in primary schools.

Definition of Continuous Assessment

The following definitions are taken from (Chilora, et al., 2003, and Plessis, Prouty, Schubert, Habib, and George, 2003) in order to make clear the definitions and distinctions among assessment, continuous assessment, examination, testing, evaluation and assessment tasks.

- *Assessment.* Assessment is a way of observing, collecting information and making decisions based on information.

- *Continuous Assessment.* Continuous assessment refers to making observations periodically to find out what a student knows, understands, and can do.
- *Evaluation.* This is an overall judgement of students learning based on continuous assessment (sometimes exams).

Evaluation usually comes at the end of a semester, term or year.

- *Testing.* Testing is one way of assessing learners on a continuous basis. Tests usually come at the end of a topic or unit to find out what a student has learned. Testing can include a wide range of question types but the most common ones are multiple choice, true and false, essay, and matching questions.

- *Examination.* Examination is usually carried out at the end of a year or cycle (for example at the end of primary school). Students do not often get feedback about their performance on an examination apart from knowing what grades they scored.

- *Assessment Tasks.* These are activities given to learners to find out what they know and can do. An assessment task is one in which a teacher uses to check if learners have met the objectives of the syllabus, lesson or curriculum. Examples of assessment tasks are writing a story or paragraph, making a model, solving problems and role-playing.

Activities in continuous assessment are many and varied to fit pupils' different learning styles and level of mastery of concepts. Good continuous assessment, therefore, provides all children with opportunities to perform at their best and to learn at their own pace.

Packages of Continuous Assessment

According to Chilora, et al., (2003), continuous assessment is a package of concepts and tools that contributes to the overall evaluation of a child. The package includes:

- *Uncovering the curriculum* – Continuous assessment focuses on learning about what pupils know, understand and can do. This means that teachers are not simply covering the curriculum to complete a term or year but they are also learning about how pupils are performing. This is so because they are assessing them

periodically and teaching them according to the pupils' needs which, inturn, make the pupils to be able to learn at their own pace.

- *Pupils' and Teachers' Self-Assessment* – Pupils and teachers should develop a habit of self-assessment to improve their performance. It is expected that teachers should reflect on their teaching and learning and pupils should also do the same about what they know, understand and can do. This should be done on an ongoing basis during and after assessments.

- *Emphasis on Enhancing Pupils-Teacher Relationship* – Continuous assessment helps to improve the relationship between pupils and teachers. This is so for both of them would be in an ongoing dialogue with one another.

- *Teaching and Learning Using Locally Available Resources (Talular)* – Teachers learn how to use local resources to implement teaching and assessment activities in their classrooms.

- *Conducting Assessment Activities* – Teachers conduct assessment activities periodically to understand how pupils are performing. Pupils should be informed when they will be assessed. Thus, they would have ample time throughout a term to master the concepts required for that subject.
- *Recording Grades* – A quality assessment activity is not complete without 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 times.

- *Managing the Class During Assessment* – Many continuous assessment activities are conducted on a one-to-one basis with a teacher and pupil. This requires using classroom management strategies that keep the other pupils engaged in learning activities

and help them perform at their best while a pupil is being assessed.

- *Reporting to Pupils on their Performance* – After pupils are assessed, they receive immediate feedback from their teachers so that they know what areas they need to work on for the next time they are assessed.
- *Reporting to parents and Community on Pupils Performance* – Parents and the community should be informed about the pupils' progress.
- *Using Effective Remediation and Enrichment Techniques* – One of the most important reasons for conducting continuous assessment is to inform teachers about their pupils' progress. When teachers understand how their pupils are performing, they will know how to direct their teaching and learning, how to deal with the multiple levels of knowledge, skills and applications in their classrooms so that all pupils are learning.

Remediation: Remediation carried out by teachers is a way of offering additional help to those learners who acquire knowledge and develop skills more slowly than others do in a class. It is carried out by teachers who know that all learners can succeed if they are given the right chances and who know that all learners do not learn in the same way or at the same speed. Some possible reasons for students not to learn at the same pace include::

- having not mastered the required skill to do a task. For example, students may not be able to write paragraphs or stories if they have not mastered writing complete sentences;
- having no adequate instruction to carry out a particular task for a particulate student;
- requiring more time to practice and understand;
- not being motivated;
- not being developmentally ready; and
- having emotional, physical or mental problems.

Remediation, however, provides alternative ways of acquiring knowledge and improving skills to learners who are falling behind (Plessis, Prouty, Schubert, Habib, and George 2003).

Enrichment: According to Plessis, Prouty, Schubert, Habib, and George (2003) enrichment means to "make richer." Enrichment activities in the classroom make learners rich in knowledge and skills. Mkhonta (2003) wrote that enrichment activities are given to those students who are regarded as fast learners who master the set objective(s) before others. This is so because they need to be kept occupied otherwise they feel neglected and start exhibiting undesirable behaviors. Many learners grasp ideas and skills easily and would benefit from further intellectual stimulation. However, what happens in many classrooms is that the fast learners are ignored by their teacher while other learners are helped. Sometimes a teacher teaches the fast learners because they are the ones who are always participating in a class. In this case, the 'slow learners' fall behind.

Principles of Continuous Assessment

According to the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED), Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (1999), Republic of Namibia, the principles of good continuous assessments are to:

- inform teaching and to improve learning while there is still time to do so;
- use graded assessments that are based on several methods of assessment; for different purposes and
- be valid, reliable and fair.

Benefits of Continuous Assessment

The continuous assessment process is much more than an examination of pupils' achievement. It is a powerful diagnostic tool that enables pupils to understand the areas in which they are having difficulties and to concentrate their efforts in those areas. It also

allows teachers to monitor the impact of their lessons on pupils' understanding. Accordingly, teachers can modify their pedagogical strategies to include the construction of remediation activities for pupils who are not working at the expected grade level and to create enrichment activities for pupils who are working at or above the expected grade level.

Frequent interactions between pupils and teachers mean teachers know strengths and weaknesses of their pupils. 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. Moreover, one-to-one communication between a teacher and a pupil can motivate pupils to continue attending school and to work hard which, inturn, can help them achieve higher levels of mastery on a subject.

In continuous assessment, teachers assess a curriculum as implemented in a classroom. It also allows them to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching strategies based on the curriculum, and to change those strategies as dictated by the needs of their pupils

Finally, teachers can share assessment results with important education stakeholders including parents, other teachers, community members, and the learners themselves. Parents especially want to know how their children are doing in school. To this end, regular reports from teachers based on continuous assessments allow parents to know about their children's progress. With this knowledge in hand, parents, can assist and support their children with their studies during the school year before the time to determine grade level achievement has passed.

Reasons for Using Continuous Assessment in a Classroom

There are many reasons for using continuous assessment in a classroom. According to Capper, 1996; Plessis, Prouty, Schubert,

Habib, and George (2003), the reasons for using continuous assessment are to:

- *find out what students know and can do.* Continuous assessment is used by a classroom teacher to find out what a student knows, understands, and can do. It also helps a teacher to get a better understanding of the learning needs of the children.

- *gain confidence in what teachers say their students know and can do.* By assessing learners continuously in different ways that give a teacher a better picture about the knowledge and skills of the learners, a teacher can be confident in his/her knowledge about what the learners know and can do.

- *provide all children with opportunities to show what they know.* Continuous assessment provides all children with opportunities to show what they know. Since, each child has many different qualities, using only one type of assessment with all learners may not give them a chance to demonstrate what they know. Thus, it is suggested to employe different types of assessment activities.

- *promote learning for understanding.* Because continuous assessment is an ongoing process, a teacher can identify learners' mistakes and misunderstandings before it is too late. Consequently, a teacher can find new ways to teach learners who failed to learn. Continuous assessment activities that are designed to ask learners to think, express their thoughts, and demonstrate their skills help them to get a deeper understanding of a certain lesson than if they were simply memorizing information for a test.

- *improve teaching.* Good continuous assessment activities inform teachers whether or not what they taught was effective. If learners are learning what is expected, it will be revealed in the assessment results. If the assessment shows that the

learners are not doing well on a particular topic or skill, then this tells the teacher that she/he must find a new way of re-teaching the lesson or topic.

- *identify which students need assistance.* Continuous assessment can tell a teacher which students are falling behind in their understanding of particular topics. Exploring the assessment activity of a learner can help a teacher to find out where the learners are struggling and what problems they are having. The teacher can then design new learning experiences for these learners. On the other hand, better learners who are able to learn new information more quickly than the other students may need additional lessons or activities to keep them engaged in learning. The teacher, thus, can design new learning tasks that center on the needs of these learners.

- *let the students know how well they are progressing in their own learning.* Learners benefit from receiving an ongoing feedback about their learning from their teachers. These feedbacks can help learners know what to focus on in order to improve their learning efforts.

- *let parents know how their children are progress- progressing.* Parents want to know how well their children are doing in school. Reports on a 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.

- *lead to overall evaluation.* Determining whether or not a student should pass to the next grade is often a difficult task. Relying on an exam to tell what students know and can do may not provide with a well-developed and accurate picture of the learners. With well-designed and an ongoing continuous assessment carried out throughout the year, a teacher can have a strong basis to evaluate learners' overall progress.

Kinds of Assessment Activities

There are many different kinds of assessment activities that can be used to find out what learners know and can do. Assessment activities have different purposes and may ask learners to do different things. Some assessments require learners to recall information while others emphasize on processes such as demonstrating a skill analyzing or constructing . Table 1 shows some of the different types of assessment activities and how they are usually used (Plessis Prouty, Schubert, Habib, and George 2003).

Table 1: Types of Assessment Activities

Activities Commonly Used for Exams and Testing		Activities Commonly Used for Continuous Assessment	
Selected Response Questions	Briefly Constructed Response Activities	Constructed Response Activities	
		Performances	Products
• Multiple choice questions • True and False • Matching	• Fill in the blank • Short answer • Label a drawing	• Oral presentation • Dance/movement • Science activity • Athletic skill • Dramatic reading • Role play • Debate • Song • Practical test • Interviews	• Illustration or drawing • Invented dialogues • Making models • Essay/composition • Report • Project

Writing Selected Response Assessment Activities

The most traditional and standard kind of assessment that most teachers are familiar with is the selected response type. In this assessment activity, a learner chooses a response from several options that are provided. This is a common way of assessing learners on exams and tests when there are large number of learners taking a test. This type of assessment is easy to mark. Examples of selected response assessment are multiple choice, true and false, fill

in the blank, and matching questions. Some guidelines for writing selected response assessment activities are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Some Guidelines for Writing Selected Response Assessment Activities

Multiple Choice	True and False	Matching
• Relate questions to the curriculum objectives. • Write sufficient questions for each objective. • Choices should be brief. • List the choices in alphabetical order. • There should be only one correct choice. • Avoid "none of the above" and "all of the above". • Make incorrect choices plausible or reasonable.	▪ Sate true or false statements positively. ▪ Avoid double negatives. ▪ Write a statement that is completely true or completely false. ▪ Base the statement on a single idea.	• Keep the lists of premises and responses short (5-7 items) and homogenous. • Arrange lists in alphabetical order (or numerical order if they are numbers). • Write clear instructions. • Tell how many times a response may be used. • Present the entire set of matching questions on the same page.

Adopted from: Plessis; Prouty, Schubert, Habib, and George (2003).

Writing Briefly Constructed Response Assessment Activities

In this type of assessment activity, a learner is asked to respond from memory and provide a word or phrase that completes a sentence. Briefly constructed response answers are often used on tests and exams. They include fill-in-the-blank, short answer and labeling a drawing. Guidelines for writing good briefly constructed response items are given below:

Table 3: Some Guidelines for Writing Good and Briefly Constructed Response Assessment Activities

Fill in the blank /short answer	Label a drawing
▪ Relate the statements to the curriculum objectives. ▪ Write clear and definite statement. ▪ There should be one and only one brief answer. ▪ Provide long enough blanks for written answers. ▪ Make blanks equal in length. ▪ Arrange blanks for easy scoring. ▪ State the statements positively.	▪ Use clear drawing. ▪ Make lines to point clearly the intended part being asked to label. ▪ Vary drawing from original ones studied by learners (it should be a new example)

Adopted from: Plessis; Prouty, Schubert, Habib, and George (2003).

Writing Constructed Response Assessment Activities

Constructed response assessments often require learners to spend more time on the assessment activity. There are two types of constructed response assessment activities*: product assessments* and *performance assessments.* In the product assessment tasks learners are asked to use their knowledge from what they have learned to make something. On the other hand, in the performance assessment activities learners are asked to demonstrate or perform what they know from what they have been taught.

Writing Performance Assessment Activities

It is easy to see how performances can best demonstrate a student's ability. In this assessment learners are asked to demonstrate or show in some way what they know and do. For example, this can be done in assessing competence in skills such as athletics and sports, music, drama and dance. Other subjects can also make use of performance assessments. For instance, social studies, languages and sciences, oral reports, role plays, and dramas can be employed to assess students knowledge and skills.

Table 4: Types of performance assessments

Types	Examples
Oral presentation	After a visit to a village shopping area, groups can deliver an oral presentation to the class about what they learned
Dance/movement	After reading a story, learners can be asked to make movements that describe how one of the characters in the story feels.
Science activity	Learners work in pairs to classify a group of objects into two distinct groups and tell why they grouped them the way they did.
Athletic skill	Learners demonstrate the ability to dribble a football 50 meters while weaving around 5 objects placed in their path.
Dramatic reading	Learners dramatize a story or part of a story they read to show their understanding of the story.
Role play	Learners act out as parents explaining and showing children how to keep their bodies clean. Some learners play the role of the parents, and some play the role of the children.
Debate	Teams of learners' debate whether or not there should be a village clean up day.
Song/poem	Groups of learners write and sing a song (or read a poem).
Practical test	Learners work in pairs to measure length, weight and temperature of a set of objects set up around the classroom and record their observations on paper.
Interviews of learners	A teacher interviews individual or small groups of learners about maths object to find out what they understand about angles.

Adopted from: Plessis; Prouty, Schubert, Habib, and George (2003).

Writing Product Assessment Activities

Product assessments can be described as tangible objects (that can be touched) created by a student. It can also be viewed by the teacher. Moreover, performances need to be observed or heard in order to assess them. Product assessments differ from performance assessments because they are physical pieces of student works' that can be touched.

When learners are asked to produce something, it is often a chance for them to use the knowledge they have gained. In the process of product assessment, students gain deeper understanding of a topic or skill. While learners are carrying out the assessment activity, they may require guidance from the teacher. The teacher's role is therefore to offer suggestions and feedbacks to help learners stay on track and on task. Thus, product assessment take time. Some examples of product assessments are listed in Table 5.

Table 5: Examples of Product Assessments

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

Adopted from: Plessis; Prouty, Schubert, Habib, and George (2003).

Assessing Learners When they are Working in Groups

When learners are assigned to group assessment activities, a teacher must make sure that the work to be done in a group is shared among all the learners. Each learner should have responsibilities in the group and be held accountable for those tasks. The group participation assessment guide (Table 6) describes something related to the participation of the learners and it is not about the quality of the work

they may submit. To assess the quality of work learners produce, another rubric may be needed.

Table 6: Group Participation Assessment Guide

Criteria	Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely
1. Group Participation				
A. Participated without prompting				
B. Did his or her fair share of work				
C. Gave helpful ideas and suggestions				
2. Staying on Topic				
A. Paid attention, listened to others				
B. Made comments to get others back on topic				
C. Stayed on topic				
3. Cooperation				
A. Encouraged others to participate				
B. Gave recognition to others for their ideas				
C. Made inconsiderate remarks about others				
D. Requested input from others				
4. Communication				
A. Spoke clearly, was easy to understand				
B. Expressed ideas clearly				

Adopted from: Plessis; Prouty, Schubert, Habib, and George (2003).

Using Portfolio with Learners

A portfolio of 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, drawer, filing cabinet or other suitable container. When students complete 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.

Portfolio has a number of benefits for both the teachers and learners. Among its benefits, one is that students become more engaged in knowing about their own progress since they are able to participate in an on-going assessment process. A portfolio also shows a wide range of students' abilities over time. In contrast, testing shows only an arrow range of ability at a given point in time. Moreover, it also places an emphasis on students' improvement and achievement. However, most tests focus on students' achievement (or failure). Table 7 presents some examples of students work that could be placed in a portfolio in language arts and social studies.

Table 7: Examples of Items that May be Included in a Portfolio

Subject	Some items that may be included in a portfolio
Language Arts	Drawings of a story they heard, descriptive sentences, spelling checks, tape recording of story telling, questions from story telling.
Social Studies	Paragraphs describing climatic zones, temperature charts for a semester with summation and analysis, map of earth showing climate zones, assessment rubrics showing oral presentation and describing seasonal changes, model of earth's revolution around sun showing climatic changes.

Tools for Scoring and Marking

There are four methods of marking assessment activities. These are: rubric, analytical list, rating scale and checklist (Plessis; Prouty, Schubert, Habib, and George 2003).

Rubric: A rubric is used when an activity has many parts to be assessed. For example, you can assign learners to a task and require them to solve a problem in mathematics. This is done when you are interested to know if learners can identify the correct answer. However, you can also use it to see how learners make connections to previous topics, how they understand the concepts they should and, what procedures they used and how they reached to a solution of a problem (see table 8). A learner (or a group of learners) is given a

score on each of these categories. The score for each category is based on the evaluation criteria listed below. In the following rubric, for example, the evaluation criteria are understanding concepts, procedures and problem solving to be assigned scores from 0 to 3 with 3 = thorough and complete grasp; 2 = generally good grsp 9some minor errors); 1 = poor grasp (major errors) and 0 = unrepresentative or inappropriate grasp. There should be also spaces for the teacher to rate and write some comments for the learners.

Table 8: Example of Rubric for Problem Solving in Mathematics*

Criteria	Teacher's rating	Comments
1. Understanding Concepts		
• Identifies necessary information		
• Makes connections		
• Identifies appropriate strategy		
2. Procedure		
• Follows directions		
• Uses of materials		
• Clear, and orderly collection of data		
3. Problem Solving		
• Data interpretation		
• Application of information		
• Clearly communicates answers		
Total Points =		

Some Guidelines for Developing Rubrics that can be used in Scoring Students' Assessment Activities

- Develop as assessment task that is related to the curriculum objectives;
- Identify the main points of the task or activity to be examined;
- Identify the qualities of each point that shows that learning has taken place.;
- Write the criteria of these qualities;

- Assign points scores for each criteria (keep in mind that your system of calculating marks can be understood by your students); and

- Weigh the points appropriately for each criterion.

Analytical list: An analytical list is a list of criteria for a particular assessment activity. The list includes the expected components of learning to undertake a certain task. Points are assigned for each of the criteria. Analytical lists are similar to rubrics but are considered simpler than rubrics. The criteria are stated simply and each criterion represents one idea or component of learning. An example analytical list is in Table 9.

Table 9: An Analytical List

Elements	T (Terrific)	OK	NW (Needs Work)
1. Understanding all the parts.	The diagram shows the correct number of the flower parts.	The diagram has some of the correct parts.	The diagram is missing important parts.
2. Use of scientific words to label the diagram.	The diagram uses many appropriate science words to label the flower parts.	The diagram uses some science words to label the flower parts.	The diagram does not use any appropriate science words to label theflower parts.
3. Diagram explains the functions of the flower parts'.	The diagram explains very clearly what function each flower part has.	The diagram gives some explanations about the functions of what each flower part is.	The diagram gives a very unclear explanation or no explanation about the function each flower part has.
4. Presentation of the diagram.	The diagram is very neat and well organized and labeled with color.	The diagram is somewhat organized and labeled with color.	The diagram is had unorganized and/or not colored.

Adopted from: Plessis;Prouty, Schubert, Habib, and George (2003).

Rating scale: Rating scales can be useful when you expect learners to have a lot of different answers or responses on an assessment activity. Rating scales usually have a number part and a descriptive part. Each scale such as 1= below class standard, 2 = acceptable, 3 = good, 4 = very good, and 5 = outstanding has a description that tells why something is a "1," a "2," or a "3," etc. An important thing to keep in mind when using rating scales is to try to keep the number of divisions on the scale between 4 and 7 and to keep the value of each scale in the same order as the learners are familiar with. For example, a 1-5 scale would have 1 and 5 being the lowest and the highest scores respectively.

Rating scales can be used for tasks that do not have too many parts. Some tasks where a rating scale would be used to assign a mark are:

- reading orally;
- washing hands, kicking a ball, reciting a small poem;
- illustrations and drawings;
- short descriptions or narratives; and
- singing a song.

Checklists: Checklists tell if some knowledge or skill has been mastered or not. A checklist indicates if a learner can do a particular task (or knows the material) or is unable to do a task. A checklist is useful for a range of tasks that students are required to perform regardless of the level of skill demonstrated. Checklists can often be used when there are a large number of elements or tasks to be assessed. For example, a checklist could be constructed to assess if learners have mastered the measuring tasks stated in the syllabus. Table 10 presents an example of a checklist to assess the readiness skills of pupils.

Table 10: A Checklist for Science

Student Name	Counting from 1-10	Recognizing letters of the alphabet	Saying the alphabet	Recognizing basic shapes	Other
Jalata	0	✓	✓		
Bekele	✓	0		✓	
Mohammed	0		0	✓	

0 = Unsuccessful attempt
✓ = Successful attempt

Recording Pupils' Assessment

It is important to keep students grade or record books in a secure place. The assessment book is a record of learners progress. Losing the assessment book can be very problematic. In most cases, continuous assessment marks must be averaged to find the end of semester mark for a learner. Table 11 presents an example of pupils' assessment record book.

Table 11: Example of an Assessment Record Book

Subject: Grade 3 Math **School:** Darartu Tulu Primary School
Semester and Year: Semester I, 2004

Learners	Assessment 1	Assessment 2	Assessment 3	Assessment 4	Assessment 5	Assessment 6	Assessment 7	Assessment 8	Total of all assessments	Average of all assessments	End of term grade Comments	Comments
Jalata												
Bekele												
Mohammed												

These results can be communicated to the students, school directors, parents, education officers and others. Some ways of reporting assessment results are more informative than others. Some methods are very time-consuming, especially if a teacher has large classes. For example, writing a description of how a particular learner is doing requires a lot of time and energy. A more time-saving way of communicating the results of an assessment is indicating marks on the assessment papers. The drawback of this method, however, is that it does not provide much description of what a learner knows and can do. It does not also help to clearly understand how to help the learner improve in his/her knowledge and skills.

Summary and Conclusion

Continuous assessment is not continuous testing. Giving tests every month and accumulating pupils' marks for final grading is an insignificant aspect of the assessment package. Continuous assessment is a demanding task that requires the use of various assessment tools in order to assure the achievement of curricular objectives by each and every student.

The benefits of continuous assessment at a lower primary school level are tremendous. Above all, it minimizes wastage of resources by assuring that all pupils can be promoted to the next grade without compromising the quality of education. It actively involves learners to be the center of learning and learning activities. Moreover, it is an assessment approach that is based on the learners-centered methods.

However, the implementation of continuous assessment in primary schools 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 boosting of the motivation and dedication of teachers largely rests on the government. Unless such

conditions are improved, the application of continuous assessment in lower primary schools is doubtful.

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