

**TEACHERS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT  
OF STUDENTS' LEARNING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF JIJIGA  
CITY ADMINISTRATION**

**M.A. THESIS**

**ZEINU SHIFA BESHIR**

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**Zeinu Shifa Beshir**

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**Haramaya University, Haramaya**

**HARAMAYA UNIVERSITY**  
**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

I hereby certify that I have read and evaluated this thesis entitled "*Teachers' Perception towards Continuous Assessment of Students' Learning in Secondary Schools of Jijiga City Administration*" prepared under my guidance by Zeinu Shifa. I recommend that it be submitted as fulfilling the thesis requirement.

.....	.....	.....
Major Advisor	Signature	Date
.....	.....	.....
Co-advisor	Signature	Date

As members of the Board of Examiners of the M.A, Thesis Open Defense Examination, I certify that I have read and evaluated the Thesis prepared by Zeinu Shifa and examined the candidate. I recommend that the thesis be accepted as fulfilling the Thesis requirements for the *Master of Arts degree in Educational Leadership and Management*.

.....	.....	.....
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Internal Examiner	Signature	Date
.....	.....	.....
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Name: Zeinu Shifa

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School/Department: Educational Planning and Management

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Zeinu Shifa was born in 1970 in Mugo town, SSNPR. He attended at ST. Selase primary school Mugo and Entoto Technical and vocational school in Addis Ababa. Later on, he joined Bahir Dare University and earned Diploma in Mathematics. Then, he graduated on Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics from Addis Ababa University. He also graduated on Higher diploma from Addis Ababa University in 1997. He has a total of 27 years of professional work experience as a teacher in Kebridahar Secondary school, Jijiga Senior Secondary School, and then as school supervisor of secondary schools in Jijiga City. Currently, he serves as Supervision Expert in Somali Regional Education Bureau from 2009 until now.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>AaL</b>	Assessment as Learning
<b>AED</b>	Academy for Educational Development
<b>AfL</b>	Assessment for Learning
<b>AoL</b>	Assessment of Learning
<b>AREB</b>	Amhara Region Education Bureau
<b>CA</b>	Continuous Assessment
<b>ESDP</b>	Education Sector Development Program
<b>ETP</b>	Education and Training Policy
<b>GEQIP</b>	General Education Quality Improvement Package
<b>ICDR</b>	Institute of Curriculum Development and Research
<b>NOE</b>	National Organization for Examinations

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# **TEACHERS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS' LEARNING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF JIG-JIGA CITY ADMINISTRATION.**

**BY: ZEINU SHIFA**

## **ABSTRACT**

*This study was intended to examine teachers' perception towards continuous assessment of students' learning in secondary schools of Jig-jiga City Administration. The available three government secondary schools were taken as a sample from Jig-jiga city administration. Based on this, a total of 268 respondents that were teachers, principals, vice-principals, department heads, students, and supervisors were selected as the samples. The data were gathered through questionnaire and focus group discussion. The findings of the study unearthed that teachers and students had favorable perceptions towards continuous assessment. Even though 87% of teachers expressed that they implemented continuous assessment in their classrooms, the frequency of implementation was found sometimes (62.4%). The major problems that hindered the practices of continuous assessment in the sample schools were large class size by 74%, shortage of time for teachers, lack of school facilities by 70%, inadequate training by 67%, shortage of stationary and instructional materials, lack of teachers' commitment, and inadequate teachers' knowledge on different assessment techniques, lack of guidelines in the schools, poor support from school and administration, and teachers' wrong conceptualization of continuous assessment. Concerning the methods used to mitigate the challenges encountered on the practice of continuous assessment, most of the teachers used recurrent tests and assignments at individual and group levels. Therefore, it could be said that in the sample schools the implementation of continuous assessment using various assessment techniques is not done even though they have positive perception towards continuous assessment. Based on this, the implementation of continuous assessment cannot achieve the intended results if it continues in such manner. Thus, Jig-jiga city administration education office should give a great emphasis on the practicality of continuous assessment at school levels and ensure its continuity by monitoring its implementation through the assigned supervisors on the matter.*

# 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter is going to deal background, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives, significance, delimitation, limitations, and definition of key terms of the study.

## 1.1. Background of the Study

Recently, the traditional ways of teaching-learning process have been replaced by active learning methods of teaching. The use of active learning methods has enabled students to participate in every aspect of the teaching-learning process and to assess their progress continuously while they are learning. To realize this intent, there has been a general overhaul of the teacher education system that is geared to incorporate active learning and continuous assessment (CA) in the training of the would-be teachers to update their skills in active learning and CA in different circumstances (Struyvenk, et al., 2002).

The current education and training policy of Ethiopia (1994) emphasizes the importance of CA as an integral part of the teaching-learning process. It is believed that CA is necessary to improve the quality of education in the country. Consequently, in 2004, the NOE has prepared and distributed a guide line for the implementation of CA (NOE, 2004).

There are various CA techniques that teachers can use to assess the performance of their students. These are oral questions, homework, group work, individual activity, practical work, observation, presentation, and project work and paper-pencil test. The use of such kinds of different CA techniques helps to measure the knowledge, skill and attitude of students. For instance, the paper and pencil tests focus on involving pupils to take test, complete a home work or assignment, produce a written report, draw picture of something, and finish worksheet. On the other hand, the observational technique involves teachers in looking at or watching pupils' behavior and reactions during and after the process of instruction (Airasian, 1994).

Notably, the Ethiopian Education and Training Policy affirmed that CA in academic and practical subjects including aptitude tests will be conducted to ascertain the formation of all-round profile of students at all levels. As a result of this policy, students learning outcomes in both secondary and post-secondary education are supposed to be assessed by using CA

procedures in relation to three primary domains: cognitive, affective and psychomotor (Desalegn, 2004). From this notion, one can easily deduce that CA has become an integral part of learning process ever since the policy has been implemented. It is also evident that CA was stated in Ethiopia as one of the objectives of teacher education (MoE, 2003). In addition, MoE (1999) pointed out that CA is being used increasingly as an alternative to terminal examination, because it provides more reliable information than examination. It builds up a picture of a pupil's performance over a prolonged and representative period. Hence, schools, in these days, are turning to CA so as to build-up a record that is much more complete and reliable.

Continuous assessment of learner's performance should be carried out on an ongoing basis at the classroom level by the teacher using various assessment techniques. Hence, teachers of secondary schools have to use various assessment techniques in order to assess the educational progress of their learners and to improve the method of teaching. Moreover, assessing students using different CA techniques helps in satisfying the needs of different learners with different learning and assessing style preferences.

In Ethiopian Somali Region before 2006 academic year, continuous assessment was the main component of students' evaluation comprising 60% of the total weight which is 100%. By the same year, the Ethiopian Somali Regional Education Bureau sent a circular letter to all schools and college of teacher education about the implementation of CA underlining that even if CA is a very important tool to assess the students' progress and helps teachers modify the method of teaching based on the decision made by the teachers and to attain quality education; its implementation in schools and college of teacher education had not been carried out as expected. Therefore, the regional education bureau suggested that the assessment should carry 40% of the total weight to evaluate students using CA techniques in order to make easy for implementation.

Of course, teachers face challenges while assessing students' work in an educational setting where they have not enough access to the type of assessment information that will enable them to carry out the assessment accurately and fairly. In addition to the above point, the experience of the researcher as a supervisor in these secondary schools created an exposure to observe and collect reports from these schools regarding teachers' inadequate emphasis in

implementing CA program in their day to day activity. Therefore, the researcher aimed at examining teachers' perception towards CA in secondary schools of Jig-jiga City Administration.

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

Teachers' implementation of CA as part of their instruction helps students achieve quality education, develop innovativeness and a sense of competence, and get opportunities for independent as well as life-long learning Abiy (2013). Most teachers use the same type of assessment techniques, especially those techniques that were being used by their teachers while they were at school. Besides, most teachers tend to focus their assessment strategies on what is easy to measure rather than on what is important. Educators such as Airasian (1991) and Kellaghan (2004) also strengthen the above statement that traditional assessment instrument and techniques tend to measure narrowly the defined characteristics, do not facilitate integration of skills or processes and frequently artificial in their nature that do not give the truest possible picture of each student's knowledge, attitude and skill.

Some official documents, including the current Ethiopian education and training policy MoE (1994) and the GEQIP MoE (2008) documents, have given special attention for the necessity of ongoing classroom assessment to enhance academic excellence and answer important questions about the student, the classroom, the school and the education system as a whole. Despite the fact that much has been said about the importance of ongoing classroom assessment in different assessment related documents and on different occasions like workshops, studies indicated that teachers seem to have critical gaps in conception and practical application of it at the classroom level. For example, many teachers have conducted over use of testing, not considering assessment as part and parcel of learning, and inadequate provision of feedback.

According to Ethiopian Academy of Sciences (2012) and MoE (2012), the existing practices and knowledge of teachers regarding the pedagogical advantages of ongoing classroom assessment and their attitude towards implementing it in their actual classroom seem to be minimal. There seems to exist a general misunderstanding among teachers in the use of ongoing classroom assessment techniques. This is professionally proved to be wrong because

these teachers are using only limited variety of assessment tools. The following misunderstandings were found as some of the common ones.

Ignoring the importance of ongoing assessment with appropriate feedback, many teachers carry out over use of testing at the end of a week, month, mid semester or unit/ series of lessons; being confused with the purposes of assessment, many teachers grade students' dispositions and behaviors, like attendance, effort, attitudes etc instead of reporting separately from achievement; being confused about the purposes of assessment (focusing on gathering information about student learning) and grading (an end point judgment about achievement), many teachers considers the two as the same; many teachers are giving the same mark/ grade to each participant in a group assessment. This ignores the importance of validly assessing each student's work within a group process; failing to align teaching objectives with assessment tasks, many teachers use assessment as an auditing exercise about what students do and don't know or can and can't do, by testing student memory, asking trick questions etc.; and failing to address what is important for learning, many teachers focus only on what is easiest to measure. They use mainly simple learning outcomes with paper and pencil tests rather than including high order learning thinking skills and performances.

Various reasons may be attributed for the aforementioned problems and misunderstandings. Here, it would be good to pinpoint some major reasons why many teachers do not use ongoing classroom assessment in their classrooms. According to the study of Desalegn (2004), the causes of the problems are lack of sufficient training in classroom assessment, and lack of skills to develop classroom assessment tools, absence of manuals and other supporting materials that assist teachers in the development of classroom assessment tools and the like.

Although the policy of the country adheres to the implementation of CA at all educational levels, there seem to be problems of implementation related to various factors. Accordingly, few researches have been conducted studies regarding the implementation of CA at different educational levels in Ethiopian context such as Desalegn and Daniel (2003); Birhanu (2004); Hassen (1998); Muluken (2004); Mulu (2005); and Abera (2009). For instance, Abera (2009) revealed that teachers do not use CA in their classrooms, despite the fact that there is an increased pressure up on teachers to provide evidence of educational activities. This may be due to various reasons. Here below, some of the salient points are highlighted. These are

Large class size; Lack of commitment; Tight schedule; Broad course content; Unfavorable attitude of teachers towards CA; Absence of good practice to benchmark; Absence of clear guidelines for CA; Pupil's absenteeism; inadequate teaching and learning resources; Bias of teachers based on sex, race and personality. The above points indicate that the implementation of CA encounters challenges in achieving the desired results.

The researcher of this study has served for 11 years in the Ethiopian Somali Regional Education Bureau as a secondary school supervisor in Jig-jiga City Administration. The researcher while supervising the secondary schools found in the city administration observed that teachers collect results obtained through quiz, attendance, assignments, classroom participation and etc in the name of CA which is against to the intended goal of CA. In addition, no research has been conducted similar to this title so far specifically concerning Jig-jiga, Sheik Abdiselam and Jig-jiga boarding secondary schools. This study, therefore, was aimed at exploring teachers' perception towards CA of students' learning in secondary schools of Jig-jiga city administration in Ethiopian Somali Regional State.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

The following research questions were formulated to address the problems:

1. How do secondary school teachers of Jijiga City Administration perceive the effective impact of CA for students learning?
2. What are the potential problems that impede teachers' implementation of CA of students learning in the secondary schools of Jijiga City Administration?
3. What are the efforts made by the school leaders and other stakeholders to mitigate the challenges of implementing CA of students learning in secondary schools of Jijiga City Administration?

### **1.4. Objectives of the Study**

For this study, there were two types of objectives i. e. general and specific objectives. They are discussed below.

### **1.4.1. General objective**

The main objective of this research was to assess teachers' perception towards CA in secondary schools of Jig-jiga City Administration.

### **1.4.2. Specific objectives**

The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. assess the perceptions of teachers on CA of students learning in secondary schools of Jig-jiga City Administration.
2. identify the potential problems that impede teachers' implementation of CA of students learning in the secondary schools of Jig-jiga City Administration.
3. find out mechanisms used by school leaders and other stakeholders to mitigate the challenges of implementing CA of students learning in secondary schools of Jig-jiga City Administration.

### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

Any educational research is carried out to meet certain values in one way or another. Therefore, the findings of this study are significant for teachers in enhancing their involvement in assessment process. It may also be important to policy makers and practitioners to be aware of the problems teachers are facing in implementing CA at a classroom levels and to gain useful exposure to incorporate suitable classroom assessment strategies and to formulate suitable training strategies for teachers to practice better CA methods. The findings could also be relevant for secondary schools, Jig-jiga City Education Office, and Ethiopia Somali Regional Education Bureau to take corrective measures on the gaps and strengthen the best practices of CA based on the hard and soft copies of this research findings provided to them. Moreover, the findings could be significant as a stepping stone for other interested researchers on the subject to undertake further research.

### **1.6. Delimitation of the Study**

This study was delimited to the practice of classroom's CA in secondary schools of Jig-jiga City Administration. The available three government secondary schools were taken as a

sample from Jig-jiga city administration. Based on this, a total of 268 respondents that were teachers, principals, vice-principals, department heads, students, and supervisors were selected as the samples. The data were gathered through questionnaire and focus group discussion. The study could be very useful if it encompasses primary schools. However, due to financial and time constraints, the study was limited to the secondary schools of Jig-jiga City Administration.

### **1.7. Limitation of the Study**

While conducting this study, the following problems were encountered. Few of the respondents were not voluntary to fill the questionnaire. However, by the help of principals and some teachers and waiting for a bit longer time, the researcher finally collected the relevant information. In addition to this, lack of research finance and shortage of time were also encountered. Finally, the challenges were solved by seeking help from friends in printing and duplicating the questionnaires for financial problem as well as working by devoting for extra time the shortage of time.

### **1.8. Organization of the Study**

This study is organized in to five chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction which includes statement of the study, research questions, significance and definition of terms. The second chapter of the study presents a review of related literature on which the study's theoretical framework is based. The third chapter introduces the research methodology, instruments of data collection employed, and procedure of data analysis. Chapter five is the final section of the research report which presents summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations of some basic points. Reference materials and appendices are attached at the end.

### **1.9. Definitions of Key Terms**

**Continuous Assessment** is an ongoing process of gathering and interpreting information about student learning that is used in making decisions. Arends R., (1994)

**Secondary school:** refers to an institution which delivers secondary education that is grade 9 and 10.

**Stakeholders:** refers to anyone who is invested in the Welfare and success of a school and its students, including administrators, teachers, staff members students, parents, families, community members, local business leaders and elected officials such as parent-teacher associations, city councilors, and state representatives.

**Teachers' perception** refers to the way teachers' judge or evaluate teaching and learning process based on the students' performance or result they can observe or measure in classroom and in continuous assessment

**Student council** refers to a group of students elected by other students to represent them in the school government and to help plan activities for the students.

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this section of the study, the relevant literatures that are related to the topic of the study are treated.

### 2.1. Education and Assessment

Education is a process by which people acquire knowledge, skills and attitude. It is a means to bring behavioral change in the society. Education is not something different from life and society, but it is in fact the process of learning to live as a useful and acceptable member of the community Farrant (1984). This idea strongly indicates that education is important for the development of the community and for producing responsible citizens. Education empowers us to make all-round participation in the development process by producing knowledge, ability, skill and attitude of individuals and society at large MoE (1994). However this can be achieved through effective teaching-learning process.

Collahan et al. (1998) stated that to learn effectively, students must know how they are doing. Similarly, to be an effective teacher, the teacher must get information about what the students know, feel and can do, so that he can build on students' skills, knowledge and attitude. On the other hand, Bloom et al. (1981) suggested that many teachers believe that the decision about what is possible should be based not on the students' characteristics but on teachers' teaching styles, ability, experiences and personality. However, teachers have great responsibilities to bring behavioral changes in the learners. For this, the teacher should know the characteristics of their learners and should identify their needs.

There are numerous day-to-day decisions that teachers must make, that require some knowledge of their pupil's aptitude, achievement, and personal development. Although it is not possible to make an exhaustive list of all such decisions, it is possible to identify some of the more common ones Gronlund (1981). Informal observation and report indicates that teachers judge their students mainly by paper-pencil tests. Brown et al (1994) explain that if essays are used as the only form of assessment, students writing skills may improve, but other skills may remain undeveloped. This idea is highly emphasized on the use of different types of assessment tools to evaluate the overall performance of students.

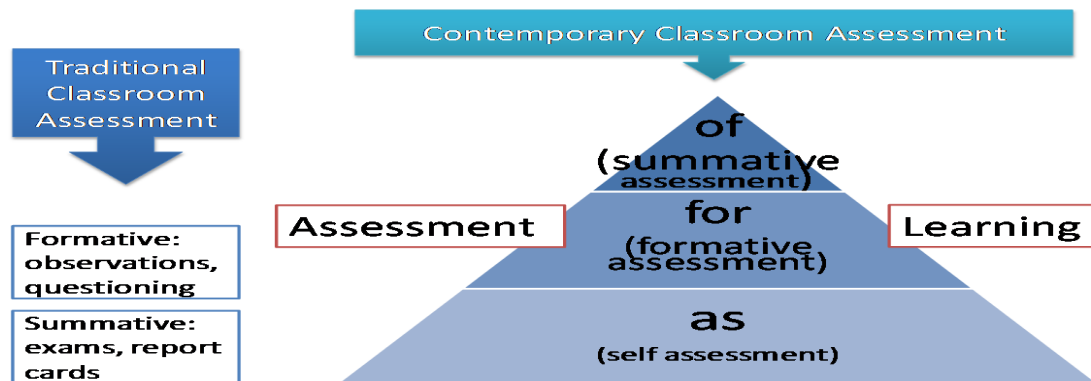
Dembo (1994) states that assessment is a process and procedure which is used to make decision about students' progress in the teaching-learning activities. On the other hand Brown et al (1994) described that assessment is one of the most powerful driving force for learning. It is often the case that students do not get down to serious learning unless some form of assessment is imposed on them. Assessment is any activity used to appraise pupils' performance. The learning outcomes promoted by schools involve helping pupils to develop knowledge, understanding skills and attitude. Assessment thus consists of techniques that can be used to monitor pupils' progress in terms of specific learning outcomes Kyriacou (1998). This idea indicates that assessment is a major tool for effective learning.

## **2.2. Components of Assessment**

There is considerable evidence that assessment is a powerful means for enhancing learning so as to ensure quality in education. Black and Wiliam (1998) synthesized over 250 studies linking assessment and learning, and found that the intentional use of assessment in the classroom is to promote learning and improve student's achievement. Teachers use classroom assessment to become aware of the knowledge, skills, and beliefs that their students bring to a learning task. They use this knowledge as a starting point for new instruction, monitor students' changing perceptions as instruction proceeds and evaluate the students' level of achievement.

The components of classroom assessment are also known as paradigms of assessment and purposes of assessment as well in some literatures. The following figure depicts the category of traditional and contemporary classroom assessments as an introductory part of this section (Stiggins, 2002).

Figure 1: Components of Classroom Assessment



In most cases, teachers use three intertwined but distinct assessment components –assessment for learning; assessment of learning and assessment as learning (Stiggins , 2002). Following are details of each.

### 2.2.1. Assessment for learning

The term 'Assessment for Learning' was coined in 2002 based on research that had begun in 1998 by Black and Wiliam. AfL is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by teachers and learners for the purpose of deciding where learners are in there learning, where they need to go and how best to get there. It acknowledges that individual students learn in idiosyncratic (special) 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, but also to gain insights into how, when, and whether students apply what they know Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth (2006).

### 2.2.2. Assessment as learning

Assessment as learning is based on the assumption that students are capable of becoming adaptable, flexible, and independent in their learning and decision-making. Students should take an increased responsibility to generate quality information about their learning and that

of others. One way of increasing the efficiency of assessment is to allow students play a role in assessing themselves or each other (Earl, 2004).

Assessment as learning generates opportunities for self-assessment and for peer assessment. Students have to construct their own learning from what teachers give them. If they have to construct their own learning, it makes sense to help them to do it better. Students' engagements as active and critical assessors make sense of information, relate it to prior knowledge, and use it for new learning. When teachers focus on assessment as learning, they use classroom assessment as the vehicle for helping students develop, practice, and become comfortable with reflection and with critical analysis of their own learning. Overtime, students move forward in their learning when they can use personal knowledge to construct meaning, have skills of self-monitoring to realize that they don't understand something, and have ways of deciding what to do next (Earl, 2004).

### **2.2.3. Assessment of learning**

Assessment of Learning which is also known as Summative Assessment, is summative in nature and is used to confirm what students know and can do, to demonstrate whether they have achieved the learning outcomes, and occasionally, to show how they are placed in relation to others (Stiggins (2002); Black and Wiliam (1999) ). Assessment of learning occurs periodically to ensure at a particular point in time (at the end of a unit, course, term, semester or year) what students know and can do. It also provides evidence for the purpose of making judgment about student competence or program effectiveness.

Summative assessment at the classroom level is mainly used as part of the grading process and means of evaluating the effectiveness of learning process. Some common examples of summative assessment include school-based (end of unit tests, mid semester and final examinations) and external examinations (primary school leaving and general secondary education certificate examinations and university entrance examination in the Ethiopian context).

Teachers are expected to use summative assessment to provide accurate and sound evidence about their students' proficiency, so that the recipients of the information can use the information to make reasonable and defensible decisions.

### **2.3. Basic Types of Assessment Procedures**

The assessment procedures that are found to be basic and most useful in the teaching-learning process worth classifying. Supporting this idea, Struyvenk et al.(2002); classified the different assessment purposes into one of the following types:

#### **2.3.1. Placement assessment**

This is geared towards investigating learner's entry performance. In other words, the goal of placement assessment is to determine for each student the position in the instructional sequence and the mode of instruction that is most beneficial to the learner.

#### **2.3.2. Formative assessment**

Formative or continuous assessments are based on the on-going observation which teachers make use of regarding a child's progress. Such kind of assessment provides vital feedback on pupil's strength and weaknesses to teachers, parents and students themselves.

#### **2.3.3. Diagnostic assessment**

Diagnostic assessment is a much more comprehensive and detailed assessment. It involves the use of specially prepared diagnostic tests as well as various observational techniques. Serious learning disabilities are likely to require the service of educational, psychological and medical specialists. After the appropriate diagnosis, the development of an individualized educational planning is highly recommended for the student. Therefore, the aim of diagnostic assessment is to determine the causes of persistent learning problems and to formulate plan for medical and remedial actions.

#### **2.3.4. Summative assessment**

Summative assessment comes at the end of a course (or unit) of instruction and at a term or year-end when students are ready to demonstrate achievement of curriculum objectives. As Fisher (1996) defined, summative assessment is a summary of achievements. Summative assessment is used for grading, promoting, and certifying purposes. It is also helpful for providing information based on the assessment of effectiveness of a program of instruction ICDR, (2004)

## **2.4. General Principles of Assessment**

Assessment is an integrated process for determining the nature and extent of student learning and development. This process will be most effective when the following principles are taken into consideration before the process of assessment is undertaken these are: Clearly specifying what is to be assessed, an assessment procedure should be selected because of its relevance to characteristics or performance to be measured , comprehensive assessment requires a variety of procedures, Proper use of assessment procedure requires an awareness of their limitations and having assumptions that assessment is a means to an end, not an end in itself. Having such ideas for assessment and developing proper tools for assessing we can measure what we are intended to measure.

## **2.5. Purposes of Classroom Assessment**

Teachers assess for a variety of purposes because they are required to make a broad range of decisions in their classrooms. Some of these decisions were about the scholastic characteristics of pupils, while others were about their personal and social characteristics. Some decisions were about instructional progress, and others were about institutional adjustment and behavior. A classroom assessment includes the following purposes ICDR, (2004)

### **2.5.1. Diagnosis**

Many of the decisions teachers make have to do with the diagnoses of problems. Teachers are constantly on the lookout for pupils who are having learning, emotional, or social problems in the classroom. Teachers try to identify these problems, document their frequency, understand their basis, and select re-medical activities. Sometimes teachers can refer a pupil for more specialized diagnosis and re-mediation ICDR, (2004)

### **2.5.2. Grading or making judgments**

Teachers' decisions have to do with assessing grades or making judgments about pupils' academic performance. Although the nature of the grading system can vary from school to school, it is true that all schools require teachers to judge and grade the academic performance of their pupils. Hence, much of teacher's time is spent on collecting information that will be

used to grade pupils or provide information about their academic progress to education officials (schools) or parents ICDR, (2004)

### **2.5.3. Feedbacks and incentives:**

Another main reason for collecting assessment information is to provide feedback and incentives to motivate pupils. Information about academic performance is used to provide feedback to pupils about their performance while incentives are used to motivate pupils for better work and improve their performance in the future ICDR, (2004)

### **2.5.4. Planning and Instruction**

Many of the decisions teachers make are concerned with planning and conducting of instruction. The major activity that takes place in classrooms is instruction. Instructional decisions can be divided in to two a) instructional planning decisions and b) instructional process decisions. Planning instructional activities requires the systematic approach and keen knowledge of the teacher with consistent assessment of his/her planning. On the other hand, the process of carrying out instruction requires constant assessment and decision-making regarding how well the lesson is progressing. The teacher needs review the day's content and lesson and how pupils understood ICDR, (2004)

In a classroom situation, a teacher must listen to students answer, watch other students for signs of comprehensions or confusion, formulate the next question, and scan the class for possible misbehavior. At the same time, the teacher must attend to the pace of discussion, the sequence of selecting students to answer, the relevance and quality of the answer, and the logical development of the content. All these make teachers' task challenging and complicated during instruction. Thus, he/she must be reading the classroom society minute by minute, sensing its mood, and making decision about what to do next ICDR, (2004)

### **2.5.5. Placement**

Most classroom decisions made by teachers are about placement of pupils in their class. Whenever a teacher divides pupils in to sub-groups such as reading groups, mathematics groups, or study groups, assessment for placement purpose is being carried out. Note that placement decisions can be made for both academic and social reasons (ICDR, 2004).

### **2.5.6. Establish and maintain social equilibrium**

Often an overlooked class purpose of assessment is to establish and maintain the social equilibrium of the classroom. Often when students are grouped, they work cooperatively and develop the spirit of working together and helping one another ICDR, (2004)

### **2.6. Continuous Assessment and Its application**

The term CA is by now one of the buzzword in educational circle. However, not everyone has the same understanding of the concept. To some, it means testing students at regular intervals. To others, it refers to the records the school keeps of these regular tests. Here is a working definition of CA at classroom teaching.

According to Obanya (1985) CA involves collecting data in a systematic way, on a continuous basis and on every facet of an educational endeavor; as a means of seeking continuous improvement in the learner and the total learning environment.

CA of learners' progress could also be defined as a mechanism whereby the final grading of learners in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of learning systematically takes account of all their performances during a given period of schooling (Falayalo, 1986). Assessment in the cognitive domain is associated with the process like knowing, perceiving, recognizing, thinking, conceiving, judging, and reasoning. The affective domain deals with feelings, emotions, attitudes, appreciations, valuing, and the like. Assessment in the psychomotor domain refers to skilled ways of moving, such as handwriting, type writing, construction, and other skills, which need neuron-muscular coordination.

CA is carried out at the beginning, during and at the end of the teaching-learning process through observation, oral questions, discussions, laboratory work, class work, homework assignments, tests, examinations, and other relevant procedures. When such activity is practiced as an on-going process it is known as CA (Ellington and Earl, 1997).

Another definition by Airasian (1991) describes CA as an assessment approach which should depict the full range of sources and methods teachers use to gather, interpret and synthesize information about learners; information that is used to help teachers understand their learners, plan and monitor instruction and establish a viable classroom culture. According to Baker and

stites (1991), CA should involve a formal assessment of learners' affective characteristics and motivation, in which they will need to demonstrate their commitment to tasks over time, their work-force readiness and their competence in team or group performance contexts. Similarly Livingston (2001) stated that CA is far from testing where the overall aspect of the learner is taken into account.

From these definitions, one could infer that CA is an assessment approach which involves the use of a variety of assessment instruments, assessing various components of learning, not only thinking process but including behaviors, personality traits and neuron-muscular skills. CA also takes place over a period of time. 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 regarding and promotion.

## **2.7. Advantages of Continuous Assessment**

One of the expected advantages of CA lies in its being guidance oriented. Since it involves data gathering over a long period of time, it yields more accurate data reaching the teachers early enough to modify instruction. This could play vital role in diagnosing areas of learners' weakness if properly utilized. CA is an approach that would capture the full range of learners' performance. Teachers and administrators would thus be able to assess learners' progress and would have time to correct the problems.

Another advantage of CA is that it places teachers at the center of all performance-assessment activities. It encourages more teacher participation in the overall assessment or grading of his/her learners. As suggested by Paris et al. (1991), teachers must be given opportunities to select and review assessments so that they become involved and knowledgeable in the process. Through this approach, teachers would be able to integrate assessment and assessment results into instructional practice. Teachers are expected to incorporate assessment into the larger learning framework and possibly to provide evidence regarding how assessment information is used to inform and guide instruction for individual learners. According to Lewis (1997), with CA teachers must embed the assessment in their instruction, score the assessments and discuss standards for good learners, work with colleagues, parents and the learners.

In showing advantage of CA Jacob and Gowe (1996) as cited in Zakhe Frans Nxumalo (2007), argues that promotion of learners is not confined to a couple of tests and one or two examination a year since continuous assessment is an ongoing process, they said also Learners are always aware of how they are progressing in their learning as everything is exposed to them, sickness and other causes of absenteeism do not disadvantage the learners since assessment is continuous while learners does not threaten with CA because it enables learners to realize their strengths and weaknesses as they learn. On the same manner, It provides opportunity for weak learners to improve their weaknesses so the learners improve their capacity in learning through formative and summative assessment of their schools.

Similarly, research has shown that good formative continuous assessment improves students' learning in all school cycles and especially for lower achieving students. There are several reasons for this: they said that formative assessment helps teachers and students identify what students can do with help and what they can do independently. They believe asking students to participate in formative assessment encourages active learning, keeping students on task and focusing on learning goals. Moreover, formative assessment and especially that, which includes peer and self-evaluation, help students with the social construction of knowledge. Finally it indicated that formative assessment allows students to receive feedback on the things they need to do in order to improve. It shows them what to do next to get better (MoE , 2012).

## **2.8. Problems with the Implementation of CA**

The problem of CA could be associated with teachers' skills in the construction and administration, and their attitudes towards the CA approach and record keeping. One of the important aspects of CA is the availability of valid and reliable tests, which could be used in all schools. There is a need to construct these tests following established procedures and practices. To make the results comparable across all the schools, teachers need to be equipped with skills of test construction and administration. This could be done through teacher training institutions so that teachers are equipped with such skills as part of their training and certification. And also workshops could be organized on test construction and administration and other matters of CA as in-service training for serving teachers.

Apart from the skills of test construction measuring cognitive aspects of learning, teachers should also be able to measure the learners' affective attitudes such as attitudes, motives, interests, values and other personality characteristics. Such characteristics could be as important as others associated with intelligence. They could assist the teachers and administrators in understanding the learners better, both in the process of education and in practical affairs of everyday life. They could help in answering questions such as why learners which are perceived to have high academic abilities do not do well at school. They also provide clues about the interest patterns of learners, which could be used in their placement into schools of higher learning, and for employment purposes. According to Obemeata (1988) it is believed that anti-social behaviors such as truancy, lying, cheating, stealing and poor attitude to work could be corrected by providing affective education in schools.

For successful implementation of the CA approach, teachers need to give more tests, which mean more marking. They need to observe the learners more keenly to assess their cognitive, psychomotor and affective outcomes; and there will be more records to be kept on the learners. All these could mean more work to the teacher, more demand on his or her time and more responsibility on him or her. This means they must be professionally and attitudinally prepared for operating the system. If the teacher is not adequately prepared for operating the system, it may lead to a tendency to merely 'cook up' scores in the name of CA. Thus, teachers should be encouraged to form favorable attitudes towards the practice. They should be made aware of the requirements of the system, its importance and how to implement it.

Another problem with CA is the issue of record keeping. Learners' records have to be adequately and meticulously kept over a long period of time. Scores may have to be combined from different sources using various weights. Therefore, mark books or registers should be used so that scores are not misplaced.

### **2.8.1. Limitations of assessment as measurement**

Serafini (2000) in analyzing assessment practices, conceptualized traditional assessment as 'assessment as measurement' this is characterized by use a limited number of assessment strategies and techniques it relies heavily on traditional unseen examinations and essay-type continuous assessments or multiple-choice questions. It has been argue that over reliance on a

single technique can have adverse effects, as many aspects of learning are not measured by any one assessment method. For example, as Elton and Johnson (2002:7) noted, ‘traditional assessment practices, consisting pre-eminently of the assessment of essay and problem type final examination and similarly constructed course work cannot adequately test for imponderables like independent critical thinking, creativity, etc and this is particularly so for time limited examinations. Similarly, traditional methods may not be good at laying the foundations for life time learning or preparation for work.

In the assessment as measurement paradigm, argued Serafini (2000) objectivities standardization and reliability take priority over concerns of teacher and student involvement ‘ valid assessment requires that we measure what we set out to measure, but ,too often, as Race (2000:2) maintained, we measure what we are able to measure ghosts of the manifestation of the achievement of learning outcomes by students reliability of assessment may be tested by multiple or by double blind marking at best. In addition, Race argued that agreements between markers do not give cause for great confidence that our marking is reliable, as multiple marking causes regression to the mean O’Donovan et al, (2000) also reported a growing concern over reliability and standards in UK higher education, noting the increased proportion of ‘good’ degree results (upper 2nd and 1st class) awarded in recent years, at a time of rapid expansion and severe cuts in higher education.

Burke (1996) identified a major problem with one aspect of traditional assessment, in that use of the A-B -C -D -F grading system is often deeply antagonistic to the goals of education Birenbaum (1996 :5) noted that other negative consequences of the assessment as measurement model include inflated test scores and ‘test pollution, teaching to the test or, in extreme cases, teaching the test.

### **2.8.2. Assessment and learning**

According to Grand (2006,p.1) assessment in education primarily must serve the purpose of supporting learning, he also added the expand roles for learners are reflected in the assessment process:’ From many important issues rose about the principles of assessment for learning which although the focus is mainly on what teachers can do, state the roles of teachers should be to help students take on new roles as learners, especially to understand the learning goals they are pursuing and their peers and /or their teacher will use for assessing progress,

understand how they are learning as well as what they are learning reflect on their learning strengths and weakness to develop approaches to learning that build on these, make progress through constructive for motive feedback from peers and their teacher on how to improve up on their works, think about their learning and progress in relation to their own previous performance rather than in comparison with others finally, develop the skill of peer and self-assessment as unimportant way of engaging in self –reflection, identifying the next steps in their learning and encouraging their peers to do the same.

Regarding this USAID (2003); said that in today’s policy environment, testing has become a critical components of education reform policy makers and evaluation administrators often view test scores as a measure of educational quality and use test scores to hold schools accountable for teacher performance. CA an alternative or supplement to high tasks testing or pupil achievement, offers a methodology for measuring pupil performance and using those findings to improve the success of pupils continuous assessment is a class room strategy implemented by teachers to ascertain the knowledge’ understanding, and skills attained by pupils, know, understand, and can do. These assessments are curriculum-based tasks previously taught in class.

Continuous assessment occurs frequently during the school year and is part of regular teacher pupil interactions pupils receive feedback from teachers based on their performance that allows them to focus on topics they have not yet mastered teachers learn which students need review and remediation and which pupils are ready to move on to more complex work. Thus, the results of the assessments help to ensure that all pupils make learning progress throughout the school cycle thereby increasing their academic achievements.

### **2.8.3. Attitudes of Teachers Towards Assessment**

Researchers and educators share the idea that teachers’ low interest or negative attitude towards assessment has contributed to poor assessment practice. In light of this, Brookhart (2002) reviewed that teachers have negative attitudes towards tests used in such a way as to have what they perceive as negative consequences for their students.

Furthermore, Nitko (1996) and Gronlund and Linn (2000) cited in Birhanu (2004) stated that a new assessment program can succeed only if teachers accept it. If teachers do not have clear

understanding of the idea of assessment and if they are not ready to accept the basic philosophy of the program, its implementation will be in question.

Similarly, Teshome (2001) has remarked that teachers must understand the assessment process and accept it as their own for its effective implementation. In spite of this fact, lack of orientation and assistance from the concerned individuals, insufficient training and lack of adequate materials make it difficult for teachers to appreciate and apply CA.

Marso and Pigge (1993) cited in Brookhart (2002) concluded in his review that there were conflicting findings about teacher attitudes towards assessment. Accordingly, some studies they reviewed showed teachers' lack of confidence in testing while some others expressed confidence in their knowledge about testing.

#### **2.8.4. Challenges during assessment practice**

Teachers face a challenge while they assess student's work in an educational setting where they have not enough access to the type of assessment information that will enable them carry out the assessment accurately and fairly (Pierce, 2002). Related to this, Ellington and Earl (1997) outlined that if teachers are not enriched with the basic skills of record keeping as part of CA of students' work, there is a danger that scores are to be misplaced and they might be made difficult to retrieve similarly, Fradd and Lee (2001) in Pierce (2002) stated that most teachers feel unprepared to assess in the way the institution or the department requires to be done. They further stated that most teachers use the same type of assessment techniques especially those that they were being assessed while they were in schools. Successful implementation of CA demands more work, time and responsibility on the part of teachers. If the teacher is not adequately prepared for operating the system, it may lead to a tendency to cook up scores in the name of CA (Ellington and Earl, 1997).

The study carried out by Crooks (1988) in Black and Wiliam (1998) also showed that teachers have not adequate understanding of CA and this leads to the weak practices. Emphasizing on this point, Black and Wiliam (1998) stated that the implementation of CA calls for deep changes both in teachers' perception of their own role in relation to their students and their classroom practice. On top this, Paworth (2005) pointed out that lack of receptiveness by pupils who feel that they are constantly being tested is another problem teachers face. In sum,

the study by Crooks (1998) in Black and Wiliam (1998) mentioned the following reasons that lead teachers'

### **2.8.5. Weakness on CA implementation**

The fact that the emphasis of assessment is on grading function rather than the learning function of the assessment. The assessment practices usually encourage superficial and rote learning that focuses on recall at isolated facts. Teachers do not usually review the assessment questions they use and do not discuss them colleagues that lead to have little or no reflection on what is being assessed. There is a tendency to use normative rather than criterion- based approach that emphasizes competition between students rather than personal progress of each.

The evidence in such type of practices is that the feedback is to teach the weaker students visualize their own weaknesses that demotivate and loose in their own capacity to learn. In line with this, sprint hall, sprint hall and Oja (1994) mentioned the reasons teachers may give for not practicing CA. These include large class size, limited number of rooms lack of teachers and heavy work load given for teachers. By the same token, Hayes (1997) cited the effect of class size on teachers' feeling as a problem. In spite of this fact, Allwright (1989) cited in Hayes (1997) asserted that available research evidence indicated class size might not be the problem for student achievement Locastro (2001) also disregard large class size as a problem particularly in language teaching. According to these view points, large class size is seen relative to contexts and purposes. The emphasis is that teachers are expected to use variety of learning strategies which may help learners to achieve the goal of learning.

Regarding large class size, Sarwar (2001) recommended project- based learning as a solution. Sarwar (2001) also identified the problems that teachers raised in relation to large class size. These include: teachers feel self-conscious, nervous and uncomfortable under the eyes of many students; problems in evaluating oral and written works; shortage of time to help individual students; and discipline and classroom problems.

Similarly, Hayes (1997) listed down the problems that teachers faced in large class size as follows: control- teachers feel that they are unable to manage disciplinary problems; evaluation- teachers feel uneasy to carry out assessment for a number of pupils for it demands

more time and energy; and individual attention- may teachers feel they are neglecting the needs of their students as individual.

Furthermore, a study carried out by Shimles (2001) at Jimma University, reported the following problems: in adequate planning i.e., teachers do not plan the assessment activities clearly; bias of instructors based on sex, race, personality etc.; and absence of timely feedback due to large class size, work load and lack of time.

## **2.9. Basic Requirements for Continuous Assessment**

To make an effective and appropriate assessment, the following pre-conditions are required Daniel (2002) said that teacher must be equipped with an adequate knowledge and capability about assessment techniques, and assessment must be a planned activity. It should be planned how and when the assessment will be made. And said that assessment must planned ahead for how and when it to be taken. Similarly he suggested that Assessment should be based on the actual condition, time, place, and social factors of the class; pupils' level of knowledge and the nature of instruction by considering variety of items and assessment techniques should be selected and applied. Finally he said the reliability, validity, objectivity and the discriminating power of the assessment techniques must be considered and checked where items prepared in a clear, readable and precise language. And assessment should be well administered and its results must be recorded, documented and also reported.

So far, it has been discussed about the main ideas that are relevant in effecting CA in classroom situation. But, creating theoretical awareness alone cannot help teachers to put the technique into practice. In order to enable teachers include the application of CA technique in their day-to-day teaching activities presenting a practical guide, based on the respective subjects they teach, is indispensable. However, in this paper the following list of questions are chosen to illustrate some major cases that teachers are likely to encounter during the course of their teaching. Examples of the types of assessment procedure that might be helpful in answering the questions are also included in parenthesis.

To what extent are students progressing beyond the minimum requirements? (achievement tests, class projects, documents of student work, observation). At what point would a review be most beneficial? (oral questions, observation, periodic quizzes). What types of learning

difficulties are the students encountering? (diagnostic tests, observation, oral questioning, documents of work products). And which students should be referred to counseling or remedial programs? (achievement tests, diagnostic tests, observation). Which students should be referred to counseling or remedial programs? (achievement tests, diagnostic tests, observation), which students should be referred to counseling or remedial programs? (Achievement tests, diagnostic tests, observation), which students should be referred to counseling or remedial programs? (achievement tests, diagnostic tests, observation), What should parents be told about the progress of their child? (review of documents of all assessment data). And lastly how effective was my teaching? (achievement tests, students' ratings, supervisors' ratings) etc. are whole rounded assessment questionnaires that enable teachers to improve student learning results in the school years.

Finally, it is worth mentioning here that the teachers should be insisted to develop the habit of recording what they observed and documenting the necessary information to help them make instructional decision.

## **2.10. Feedback as an Essential Component of Continuous Assessment**

Feedback is regarded as the principal component of formative CA. For Eliss (2003) as cited in Mebea (2008) feedback is "a major goal of formative assessment". Similarly, Shepard (2000) confirms that "providing feed back to the learner about performance will lead to self correction and improvement". This is to say that the teachers' comments on students' oral performance not only indicate the strengths and weaknesses of the students' speaking but they may also assist students in monitoring their own progress and identifying specific sub skills to develop further. They may highlight for teacher priorities in terms of future teaching, or recycling of points already covered. The information is also useful to parents. Furthermore, Hedge (2000) points out that the feedback from class room based CA has an important role to play.

Moreover, she goes on to note that some forms of assessment are explicitly intended to provide feedback to learners. A student knowing that performance has been good in a previous assessment can be a very positive motivator for further study. Specific feedback on strengths and weaknesses can aid study and help direct effort. The most useful (to the learners) forms of feedback comprise descriptive comments arising from diagnostic analysis

of performance. It is just as important for teachers to obtain feedback from assessment as it is for students.

Brown and Yule (1994) as cited Mebea (2008) also believe that feedback has a motivating effect on students' class room performance. They go on to state that "Receiving feedback can be an excellent motivator, especially when valid criticism is supported by appropriate praise and commentary". This is to mean that students will be motivated if they are given fair and constructive feedback. This implies that while giving feedback to students' oral performance, teachers should begin with the positive sides of performance and proceed to the things that they feel the students need to improve.

Moreover, according to AED (2006), the most effective teachers do not routinely correct student's errors directly. It goes on to add: Instead they ignore errors when they are inconsequential to the solution process and forestall errors that students have made previously by offering hints or leading questions. Only when the for stalling tactic fails do expert tutors intervene with a direct question intended to force the student to self-correct or they may engage in debugging, using a series of increasingly direct questions to guide the student through the solution process.

As stated above, this seems to be a balancing act that new teachers will learn to perform well. This is to say that teachers need to directly correct the students' error only when the indirect method of giving correction fails to achieve the desired purpose. The basic features and functions of feedback in CA.

In creating effective assessment feedback it must have time bound that students should receive feedback on their performance based on the principle of providing opportunity for students to make improvement before proceeding to the next performance. On the same base feedback given to the students must be personal and individual level that feedback in CA should indicate each student's strength and weakness where the feedback given to students are simple and easy for the students to understand. Moreover, it suggest that, feedback should help students make progress, it also preferable that teachers need to make the necessary preparation before the delivery of feedback to students so that they can manage it easily and it must be detailed and informative so that both students and teachers can use it as an input for further decisions.

## **2.11. Responsibilities of Teachers in Classroom Assessment**

Teachers play a decisive role in the class room most importantly, they are highly expected to assess students and make sound decisions (Muluken, 2006). In this respect, NOE (2004) listed down what is expected of teachers pertaining to class room assessment. According to him, teachers should use appropriate type and techniques of assessment. Depending on the objectives to be assessed, oral and practical assessment needed to be considered by teachers to assess content mastery of a subject and should follow necessary steps in test construction. To mention, Formulate the objectives of testing, Specify the contents to be covered, report and use results of assessment on the right time, teacher should minimize or avoid biases. And assessment should be free of any biases, be it gender bias or bias in terms of location.

## **2.12. The Basic Criteria of assessment**

According to Tesfom (2011), Assessment procedures should fulfill the following criteria: Suggested that validity of the items should insured because it allows those involved in the assessment process to infer whether participants have fulfilled teacher's learning outcomes, similarly the ratibility of the items should be achieved because it enables to test participants' learning consistently and fairly. He also emphasized that discrimination of learners those participants who have fulfilled teacher's learning outcomes and those who have not is key criteria in assessing better learning outcome. Most importantly he shows that assessments should be suited to their purpose and manageable within time and cost constraints. Finally he indicated openness to all those involved (that is, tutors, participants and the external examiner) should be aware of the arrangements and requirements of the assessment process and the marking criteria.

## **2.13. School-based Supervision and Support System**

In relation to the concepts of school-based supervision and support system, some explanations are made.

### **2.13.1. School based supervision**

Teachers working in the same school have the chance to discuss on educational issues, work together and make classroom observations so as improve the quality of education. Thus, the

teachers as well as the supervisors can identify their problems and find solution in areas of school improvement program particularly on teaching learning process, in creating conducive school environment, school leadership and management, and school community relation. The final target of school based supervision is to improve students result. Such kind of support system created within a school itself or schools under the same cluster is called school based supervision.

The major target of school based supervision is to improve the teaching learning process in the classroom. In general it enables teachers. “Identify their weakness and find solution to improve students result, sharing their experience among themselves, utilizing new method of teaching, conduct continuous assessment properly, increase students’ participation rate and develop their profession (AREB, 2006).

School based supervision attempted to develop a supervisory system which is founded on sound principles of quality education. In order to contribute for quality education school based supervision must have clear-cut structure of supervision system.

The system is designed keeping in view the realities in which the primary schools have to function. The system acknowledges the fact that the school supervisors cannot function in isolation, in order to maintain high quality in the schools which invariably function in difficult locations and contexts. School supervisors have to be supported by appropriate institutional facilities. The supervisory and support services function with close links form the grass-roots level (the teachers) to the top level. However, direct supervision of schools rest with the school supervisors, who is further supported by field supervisor (Woreda, Zone or regional in our context.)

### **2.13.2. Teacher support mechanisms**

The importance of providing continuous professional support to the teacher for quilt performance in education is well recognized at school- based supervision level. To this end, a strategy reaching out to all teachers on a regular basis and providing help to them in a need-based manner need to be designed. Thus, teachers in their schools are provided professional inputs through constant supervision and guidance. In order to meet this requirement, every supervisor has to visit every school following a pre-specified schedule. When supervisors visit a school, they need to observe teaching as well as other aspects of classroom functioning.

They need to sit with the teachers and discuss the problems that they face in carrying out classroom activities systematically.

The teacher support mechanism need to assume three forms;-individualized training of teachers, follow up training and Refresher course.

Individualized training of teachers: - supervisors are responsible for the development of the teachers in the school they supervise. In order to do this, the supervisor needs to prepare a plan initially. Then the supervisor organize classes, individually if necessary, to help them to teach and manage their classes effectively. This process continues until the teacher acquires self-confidence and is capable of conducting classes independently.

Follow up training:-at every cluster center follow up training session need to be organized based on the strategy. In these training sessions, problems faced with respect to teaching of different subjects and topics. Demonstration lessons are presented by the supervisor and other experienced teachers, for participants to obtain a wider scope of teaching methods and techniques.

Refresher course: - in addition to the above, refresher course on new methods, upgrading of subject knowledge etc need to be organized at cluster levels.

#### **2.14. Perception of Teachers towards CA**

Researchers and educators share the idea that teachers' low interest or negative attitude towards CA has contributed to poor assessment practices. Torrance (1995) argued that the perceptions of the different role(s) that assessment could play in educational reform span a continuum from seeing assessment purely in terms of its products, its results, and the use to which results might be put in managing or even driving school systems.

Assessment can then be seen as a process almost wholly integrated with teaching, such that improvement in assessment means improvement in the process of teaching and learning at classroom level. However, if teachers believe that the main role of assessment is to select pupils for the next hurdle of examination, then it will be a total failure to innovate the diagnostic role of assessment to help pupils learn better. Sometimes teachers reject an

innovation on the basis that they are not equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge for the reform, they simply return to the old style which seems safe and secured.

In other cases, as mentioned earlier, the action of teachers (implement the reform) depends on the behavioral intentions. These intentions are derived from attitudes (How they perceived assessment), the subjective norms (different school contexts and culture), and lastly the perceived behavioral control (ownership of the change or innovation). According to Ajzen (1991), these elements can be facilitating as well as obstructing. It is believed that the more an action is regarded as being under volitional control the more likely Individuals are to carry out an action. This opens up the interesting aspects of cultural influence such as Confucian heritage cultures (Ho, 1991), on individuals' perceptions of the extent they believe in the change or innovation.

Brookhart (2002) reviewed that teachers have negative attitudes towards assessments used in such a way as to have what they perceive as negative consequences for their students. Similarly, Teshome (2001) has remarked that teachers must understand the assessment process and accept as their own day to day activity for its effective implementation. In spite of this fact, lack of orientation and assistance from the concerned individuals, insufficient training and lack of adequate materials make it difficult for teachers to appreciate and apply CA.

In summary Kennedy and Kennedy (1996) concluded that a successful implementation of change will strengthen the likelihood of re-occurrence, while disapproval from significant others may impede further development or stop it altogether.

### **3. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This section describes the location of the study, the research design, the sources of data, the sample design, the tools and methods of data collection and the analysis of the responses and ethical considerations.

#### **3.1. Description of Study Area**

Ethiopian Somali Regional State is one of the 9 (nine) regional states in Ethiopia. It has 11 Zones namely, Afder, Jerer, Erer, Dawa, Nogob, Siti, Faafan, Liban, Dolo, Qorahey and Shebele, consisting of 93 Woreda and 6 City Administration. Jig-jiga city is one of the four city Administrations in the region. It is a city in eastern Ethiopia and the capital of the Ethiopian Somali Region. It is located in the Fafen Zone, approximately 102 km east of Harar and 60 km west of the border with Somalia. The city is also located on the main road between Harar and the Somalia city of Hargeisa. This city has an elevation of 1,609 meters above sea level.

Based on figures from the Central Statistical Agency in 2005, Jig-jiga has an estimated total population of 98,076 of whom 50,355 are men and 47,721 are women. The 1997 census reported that this town had a total population of 65,795 of whom 33,266 were men and 32,529 women. The dominant ethnic group living in the town was Somali (99.0%), the next 3 largest groups were the Amhara (0.25%), the Oromo (0.44%), and the Gurage (0.30%); all other ethnic groups made up 0.08% of the population. This city is the largest settlement in Jig-jiga woreda CSA, (2005).

The climate of Jig-jiga city is a subtropical highland climate with the influence of mountain climate, and the seasonal difference is minor. This is attributed to the fact that the city is located on a plain surrounded by mountains and to its distance to the sea and its effects. Among the total of 40 government and 35 private owned schools, three government secondary schools, namely Jig-jiga, shekh Abduselam, and Jig-jiga boarding schools were available in the city. Hence, the study focused on these secondary schools

#### **3.2. Research Design**

The study used a descriptive survey design, because it is appropriate and effective in finding out the current status and facts as well as for collecting the relevant data at a particular point

in time and to describe the nature of the existing conditions and the techniques to be used on the observable fact Daniel, (2004).

Therefore, the researcher used descriptive survey Design to explore teachers' perception and their challenges on the implementation of CA in Jig-jiga City Administration Secondary Schools. The researcher followed explanatory approach to analyze the data obtained through questionnaire and focused group discussion. Because, the finding may show ways to support for school teachers and shares the assessment work among these schools and aligns resources with a shared agenda for improving the practice of continuous assessment across the schools.

### **3.3. Sources of Data**

The existing situations were clarified by using the primary and secondary sources of data.

#### **3.3.1. Primary sources**

The primary sources of the data were gathered from three secondary schools' teachers, principals, deputy principals, supervisors, students, and department heads in Jig-jiga City Administration through using questionnaire and focus group discussion.

#### **3.3.2. Secondary sources**

The secondary sources of the data were collected from all essential documents such as reports, teachers' mark lists, assessment records and minutes regarding CA in the study schools.

### **3.4. Population, Sample Size and Sampling Techniques**

There were three government owned Secondary schools in Jig-jiga City Administration, namely Jig-jiga Senior Secondary, Sheik Abdiselam Secondary, and Jig-jiga boarding Secondary Schools. These schools have a total of 214 teachers, 6 principals and vice-principals, 29 department heads, 3 supervisors and 90 student councils.

For this study, including subjects who have different roles from various categories on the teaching-learning activity could improve the output of the findings. Thus, the sample size was a total of 268 participants who were drawn from the three secondary schools. These were 3

Principals, 3 Vice-principals, 29 Department Heads, 3 Supervisors, 140 Teachers and 90 students from student councils.

The available sampling technique was used to incorporate the three government secondary schools which were found in Jig-jiga City Administration. In a typical simple random sampling, everyone in the population has equal chance of being included in the sample. That makes it the most unbiased form of sampling. Therefore, the sample teachers and department heads were selected by using stratified sampling techniques. On the other hand, available sampling technique was used to select principals, vice- principals, students, and supervisors. The reason behind using this technique was the respondents in these schools were few in number. A brief description of the population and sample size of the study is presented in the table below.

Table 1. Population, Sample Size and Sampling Technique

School's Name		Jig-jiga Sen. Sec. school	Sheik A/selam sec. school	Jig-jiga boarding sec. school	Total
School principals	P	2	2	2	6
	S	2	2	2	6
	%	100	100	100	100
Teachers	P	118	84	12	214
	S	77	55	8	140
	%	50	50	50	50
Department heads	P	14	12	3	29
	S	14	12	3	29
	%	100	100	100	100
Supervisors	P	1	1	1	3
	S	1	1	1	3
	%	100	100	100	100
Student councils	P	30	40	20	90
	S	30	40	20	90
	%	100	100	100	100
Total		124	110	34	268
Sampling technique		available	stratified	stratified	available

P-population, s-sample, %- percent

### 3.5. Data Collection Instruments

The data collection tools were questionnaire and focus group discussion. Documents were also be used to obtain adequate information.

### **3.5.1. Questionnaire**

Questionnaires are very suitable to gather information regarding respondents' perceptions and opinions of a situation in a large amount within short period of time. Questionnaire was constructed based on yes or no questions and rating scales. The scale statements required the subjects to select any one of the options in two ways. The first scale presented 3 choices that are always (three points), sometimes (two points), and rarely (one point). The second scale presented five choices that are strongly agree (five points), agree (four points), undecided (three points), disagree (two points) and strongly disagree (one point). The questionnaire was prepared in English language which contained close and open ended questions for 140 teachers and questionnaire developed for 90 students.

The questionnaire was pilot tested. Piloting of instrument played an important role for correcting ambiguities, unclear, confusing items, and concepts as well as techniques of administration that could hinder the reliable responses. The researcher made discussions with the pilot test respondents to comment on it. After the comments, the correction was made. The pilot test was conducted to secure the validity and reliability of the instruments. Accordingly, the reliability statistics asserted 0.991 that implies the reliability is in a good position.

### **3.5.2. Focus Group Discussion**

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was used for collecting data to get the views and perceptions of principals, vice- principals, department heads, and supervisors towards CA. The 38 respondents of FGD were grouped into two that each group had 19 & 19 persons. It assisted the researcher to get additional information regarding CA and supported the data secured from questionnaire.

### **3.5.3. Documents**

The documents were used to gather data regarding the schools' CA activities. In addition, reports, teachers' mark lists, assessment records and minutes were assessed.

## **3.6. Data Collection Procedure**

Tools development for data collection was the forerunner. The researcher developed the questionnaire and FGD tools of data collection, based on the thematic areas of the research

questions of the study. The tools were developed by critically examining the purpose of the research that specifically capable of attaining or answering the research questions. After the tools were developed, the researcher consulted with the experts for additional comments. Then, the questionnaire was pilot tested on the area. Based on this, the identified errors, ambiguity, etc. were checked and corrections were made on the instrument. The questionnaire was administered after communicating the purpose and confidentiality of the study with the school principals and thereby, explaining the purpose and confidentiality of the study again for the sample respondents and securing their consent. The data collected were organized, coded, tabulated, and fed to computer. Then, the analysis of the data made.

### **3.7. Methods of Data Analysis**

The data found from the study were categorized in quantitative and qualitative data.

After distribution and collection of questionnaires, the raw data were tallied, structured and tabulated under their respective categories so as to make it manageable, readable and understandable. After this classification, each of the issues were analyzed and interpreted. Depending on the rational of the basic questions, the gathered data were analyzed by using different statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation with the aid of computer assisted SPSS program. Percentage and frequency were employed to analyze the characteristics of the respondents. These helped to determine the relative characteristics such as sex, educational background and work experience. Besides, measure of central tendency like mean were computed to find out the average values against each item score by including all the number of observations in the categorized items.

Furthermore, the data drawn from open ended questions, FGD, and documents were first transcribed. Then, the expressions and views were categorized and combined to describe the items expressed by the respondents without alteration.

In general, the quantitative data were analyzed by employing descriptive statistics and qualitative data were triangulated with the quantitative data. Based on the quantitative and qualitative data analysis and triangulation, interpretations were made. Finally, conclusions and possible recommendations were proposed.

### **3.8. Ethical Considerations**

After identifying the research problem and developing the proposal, communicated the objective of the research to the Ethiopian Somali Education Bureau where the researcher worked and the letter of recommendation was requested. After securing the recommendation letter that explains the researcher was a staff member of the organization and asks all those sampled schools to collaborate when and where necessary by thanking them in advance for their collaboration.

The researcher communicated with the schools' principals about the purpose and confidentiality of the study and identified the subjects who would involve in the research. And, then, set a schedule of instrument administration. Following, contacting the category of respondents in person and explaining what was wanted to do, the researcher asked them if they were willing to involve in the process. Being granted of confidentiality of the information they would give, the respondents would foresee the significance of the research outcome had. With the respondents' consent, data were collected.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the responses obtained from teachers and school leaders are presented and analyzed in quantitative and qualitative manners under six sub-sections.

### 4.1. Background Characteristics of the Respondents

The composition of sex, academic status, and service years of all respondents of this study is presented in the table below. However, table 3 contains the results of teachers regarding their number of students in a class and their work load per week.

Table 2. The respondents' composition of sex, academic status, and service year

S/n	Items	F	%	
1	Sex	Male	98	71.2
		Female	42	28.8
		Total	140	100
2	Academic Status	Diploma	22	17.6
		BED/BA/BSC	70	45.6
		MED/MA/MSC	46	35.2
		Any other	2	1.6
		Total	140	100
3	Service Year	1-5 years	19	12.8
		6-10 years	38	25.6
		11-15 years	44	32.8
		16-20 years	22	15.2
		21-25 years	9	7.2
		> 25 years	8	6.4
		Total	140	100

As stated in the above table, the majority of respondents (71.2%) were male. On the other hand, 28.8% were Female. Thus, the responses portray that the number of males in the sample schools is very high. Regarding the academic status of respondents in item 2, most of them (45.6%) were first degree holders. The rest 35.2% and 17.6% were masters' degree and diploma holders, respectively. Based on the finding, the schools have qualified teachers that could easily transform the implementation of CA in a more advanced manner.

According to item 3, 32.8% of the respondents served from 11-15 years, 25.6% of them served from 6-10 years, 15.2% experienced from 16-20 years, and 12.8% provided service

from 1-5 years on the profession. The composition of teachers regarding various service years on the profession might be an opportunity for providing support among each other on the implementation of CA.

Table 3. Teachers' responses on the number of students in a class and their work loads

S/n	Items	Frequency	%
<b>1</b>	<b>Number of students in each class</b>		
	30-39	1	0.90%
	40-59	4	3.70%
	60-79	33	21.50%
	80-99	61	37.40%
	>99	41	36.50%
	Total	140	100.00%
<b>2</b>	<b>Number of periods the teacher teaches per week</b>		
	<15 periods/week	34	22.40%
	15-20 periods/week	98	70.10%
	21-25 periods/week	8	7.50%
	Total	140	100

From item 1 in table 3 above, most of the teachers (37.4%) had from 80-99 students in a class. In addition, 36.5% of teachers had more than 99 students and 21.5% of them had 60-79 students per class. The number of students in a class is one of the factors that challenge teachers to practice CA. Relying on the result; the number of students in the class might be too much that could limit the implementation of CA.

Most of the open-ended question respondents replied that, implementing CA in large class size is more time consuming activity. Regarding this fact, Kapambwe (2010), stated one of the major challenges of CA was the large class size. Workload becomes higher as they were required to mark and keep records of the progress of all learners. The reality here is that, large class size could take much of teachers' time, and challenge teachers not to implement properly students' CA. Therefore, reducing the large class size needs more stress in the target secondary schools.

As item 2 indicates, the majority of teachers (70.1%) taught from 15-20 periods per week. Additionally, almost all open-ended questions in the questionnaire respondent teachers stated that the excessive work load in the school have great impact on their implementation of learners CA by taking more of their time. As Ellington and Earl (1997) cited in Muluken (2006), successful implementation of CA demands more work, time and responsibility on the part of the teacher. If the teacher is not adequately prepared for operating the program, it may lead to a tendency to cook up scores in the name of CA'. Additional activities in the school are too many. However, giving special attention for the learners' assessment by readjusting these many activities can contribute a lot to implement CA properly.

#### 4.2. Responses on the Implementation of CA

Table 4. Responses on the implementation of CA

S/n	Item		Yes	No	mean	S.dev
1	Do you implement CA in your classroom?	F	123	3	1.13	0.34
		%	87	13		

The responses in the above table indicate that the majority of sampled teachers (87%) expressed that they implemented CA in their classroom. This could help students to benefit from the assessment, especially if it includes a variety of methods. As the results depict, most of the teachers practice CA. In conflicting to the result, Abera (2009) revealed that teachers do not use CA in their classrooms, despite the fact that there is an increased pressure up on teachers to provide evidence of educational activities.

On contrary, those who did not implement CA expressed their reasons. Most of them said that large number of students in a class could not allow them to practice it. According to them, if they implemented CA in such situation, the period would be insufficient for the lesson as well as CA. Regarding the controlling mechanism of school leaders on the implementation of CA, most of the subjects mentioned that they mostly focused on the coverage of subject matters rather than CA implementation. According to the respondent teachers, large number of students in a class made leaders to be reluctant towards monitoring teachers on the practice of CA. Besides, the FGD results demonstrated that most of the time teachers did not implement CA fully in a classroom rather they used few of the techniques such as test and assignment that were suitable for their time management.

Table 5. The frequency of CA implementation

Item		Always	Sometimes	Rarely	mean	S.dev
If your response to Q1 above is YES, how often do you use it?	F	46	88	6	1.72	0.54
	%	33	62.4	4.3		

The respondents were questioned about the frequency of using CA in their classrooms. The results indicated that 62.4 % of teachers implemented CA sometimes, 33% of them used it always, and 4.3% used it rarely. This shows that the implementation of CA in the sample schools could be said unsatisfactory.

Table 6. Responses on the importance of CA

Item		Yes	No	Mean	S.dev
Do you think that CA is important?	F	137	3	1.02	0.14
	%	98	2		

The responses in the above table state that almost all sampled teachers thought that CA is important. Based on the finding, the attitude of teachers regarding the relevance of CA could be the necessary step for its effective implementation. To do so, teachers might need some assistance to convert their positive attitude about CA into practicality. According to the results of FGD, all leader respondents expressed that CA was important for the teaching-learning activity. Based on their belief, CA had a significant contribution on students' overall achievement as well as teachers' fair assessment using variety of techniques.

### 4.3. Perceptions about the Benefits of CA for Students

In this sub-section, the perceptions of respondents about the benefit of CA for students learning were presented.

Table 7. Perceptions on the benefits of CA to students

S/no	Item	Respondents	Response	SD	DA	UD	A	SA	mean	S.Dev
1	I believe that frequently using CA improves students learning	teachers	f	5	5	15	57	58	4.1	0.98
			%	4	4	11	40	41		
		students	f	7	8	5	47	23	4	1
			%	8	9	6	52	25		
2	CA is a students' evaluation system that uses a variety of assessment techniques	teachers	f	5	5	7	55	68	4.3	0.97
			%	4	4	5	39	48		
		students	f	7	10	10	58	5	3.5	1
			%	8	11	11	64	6		
3	CA provides regular feedback on students learning	teachers	f	3	4	22	70	41	4	0.87
			%	2	3	16	50	29		
		students	f	11	12	17	40	10	3.3	1.2
			%	12	13	19	44	12		
4	I believe that CA assists students in case they miss classes due to sickness, personal problems, etc	teachers	f	10	14	30	63	23	3.5	1.1
			%	7	10	21	45	17		
		students	f	10	13	16	31	20	3.4	1.3
			%	11	14	18	34	23		
5	CA helps learners to look for remedial measures	teachers	f	7	3	22	86	22	3.8	0.9
			%	5	2	16	61	16		
		students	f	5	6	10	41	28	4	1.1
			%	6	7	11	46	30		
6	It is obvious that CA increases students' performance level.	teachers	f	4	6	11	83	36	4	0.87
			%	3	4	8	59	26		
		students	f	8	12	14	43	13	3.5	1.2
			%	9	13	16	48	14		
7	I believe that CA provides opportunity for slow learners to improve on their weaknesses	teachers	f	3	14	14	69	40	3.92	0.98
			%	2	10	10	49	29		
		students	f	7	10	13	35	25	3.8	1.2
			%	8	11	14	39	28		
8	I believe that CA helps to develop the social skill (interpersonal skill) of students in a class.	teachers	f	4	14	18	62	42	3.8	1.03
			%	3	10	13	44	30		
		students	f	8	10	8	39	25	3.4	1.3
			%	9	11	9	43	28		

In table 7, item 1 depicted that 41.1% of teachers agreed and 41.1% of them strongly agreed whereas 52% of students agreed on the issue that frequently using CA improves students learning. The mean of the teachers and students became 4.1 and 4, respectively. From this one can conclude that teachers and students have positive perception on using CA frequently in improving students learning. In line with this Puhl (1997) asserted that CA contributes a lot to the development of learners' potential if it is properly communicated. While the researcher made the focus group discussion with supervisors, principals and department heads in the sample schools the professionals agreed that frequently using CA improves students learning if it is practiced as intended.

In the same table, item 2, 44.9% and 40.2% of teachers strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, and 64% of students agreed that CA is students' evaluation system that uses a variety of assessment techniques. The mean results indicated 4.2 and 3.5 for teacher and students, respectively. From this one can infer that CA is a student evaluation system that uses variety of assessment techniques. In line with this Daniel (2002) asserted that teachers must be equipped with an adequate knowledge and capability about assessment techniques and use variety of items and assessment techniques should be selected and applied

In item 3, teachers were questioned about whether CA provides regular feedback on students learning. Based on this, 46.7% of teachers agreed and 33.6% of them strongly agreed and the majority (44%) of students agreed on the matter. The mean for the responses of teachers and students were 4.1 and 3.3. From the results, it could be said that CA provides regular feedback on students learning. This is also supported by MoE (2012) that formative assessment allows students to receive regular feedback on the things they need to do in order to improve. It shows them what to do next to get better.

Table 7, item 4 depicted that 44.9% of teachers agreed and 18.7% of them strongly agreed whereas 34% and 23% of students agreed and strongly agreed that CA assists students in case they miss classes due to some circumstances such as sickness, personal problems and etc. The mean of the responses indicated 3.6 for teachers and 3.4 for students. From this one can conclude that CA assists learners who missed classes due to different problems. This is supported by Jacobs and Gawe (1996) as cited in Zakhe Frans Nxumalo (2007) agreed that

sickness and other causes of absenteeism do not disadvantage the learners since the assessment is continuous.

In table 7 item 5, the majority 61% of teachers and 46% of students agreed that CA helps learners to look for remedial measures. In the same way, 30.8% of the teachers strongly agreed on the issue. The mean scores of teachers and students were 3.8 and 4, respectively. This shows that CA strongly helps learners to look for remedial measures. This also supported by Shepard (2000) that “providing feed back to the learner about performance will lead to self-correction and improvement”. This is to say that the teachers’ comments on students’ oral performance not only indicate the strengths and weaknesses of the students’ speaking but they may also assist students in monitoring their own progress and identifying specific sub skills to develop further. Similarly, Puh (1997) pointed out that in schools and colleges CA is a way of collective information about students to find out their strengths and weaknesses and provide important remediation in order to maximize their learning.

The results of item 6 show that the majority 59% of teachers and 48% of students agreed that CA increases student’s performance level. The mean scores showed 4 for teachers and 3.5 for students. This demonstrates that the objective regarding CA might be well conceived by teachers that could ease its implementation by teachers. Regarding the point, Jacobs and Gawe (1996), as cited in Zakhe F. N. (2007), expressed that good formative CA improves students’ learning in all school cycles, especially for lower achieving students. Formative assessment, especially which includes peer and self-evaluation, helps students with the social construction of knowledge.

According to the data in the above table of item 7, 49% and 29% of teachers and 39% and 28% of students responded agreed and strongly agreed that CA provides opportunity for weak learners to improve on their weaknesses. The mean results showed 3.9 for teachers and 3.8 for students. Based on the findings, it can be assumed that teachers have a clear awareness regarding CA in providing opportunity for weak learners to improve their weaknesses.

As shown in table 7 item 8, 44% and 30% of teachers and 43% and 28% of students expressed that CA helps to develop the social skills of students in a class by agreed and strongly agreed, in that order. The mean scores of teachers and students depict 3.8 and 3.4. From the information obtained, the attitude of teachers regarding CA is in conformity with its

purposes like developing the social skills of students in a class. Abiy (2013) mentioned that teachers' implementation of CA as part of their instruction helps students to achieve quality education, develop innovativeness and a sense of competence, and get opportunities for independent as well as life-long learning.

#### 4.4. Perception towards CA Implementation

Under this part, the perceptions of respondents were presented and analyzed on the implementation of CA.

Table 8. Responses on CA implementation

S/n	Item	Respondents	Response	SD	DA	UD	A	SA	Mean	S.D
1	I am sure that CA enables to assess overall performance of learners which could not be done in tests	teachers	f	7	11	34	69	19	3.6	0.98
			%	5	8	24	49	14		
		students	f	5	6	20	34	25	4	1
			%	6	7	21	38	28		
2	I am quite confident that teachers can put CA into practice in classroom because they are well trained	teachers	f	8	21	25	59	27	3.5	1.13
			%	6	15	18	42	19		
		students	f	7	18	18	42	5	3.2	1
			%	7	20	20	47	6		
3	I believe that more experienced teachers are more knowledgeable on CA	teachers	f	7	14	20	48	51	3.8	1.1
			%	5	11	14	34	36		
		students	f	7	17	17	32	17	3.4	1.2
			%	8	19	19	36	18		
4	I think that more experienced teachers implement CA more than beginner teachers.	teachers	f	7	17	25	63	28	3.6	1
			%	5	12	18	45	20		
		students	f	7	17	17	32	17	3.4	1.2
			%	8	19	19	36	18		
5	I believe that teachers plan and use a variety of CA techniques in classroom.	teachers	f	3	21	28	69	19	3.6	0.98
			%	2	15	20	49	14		
		students	f	11	4	14	36	25	3.7	1.3
			%	12	4	16	40	28		

In table 8, item 1, 49% of teachers and 39% of students that were the majority agreed that CA enabled teachers to assess overall performance of the learners. The mean scores of 3.6 and 4 were obtained for teachers and students, in that order. Based on this, one can conclude that

CA enables teachers to assess the overall performance of the learners. It is also suggested by Falayalo (1986) that CA is mechanism whereby the final grading of learners in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of learning systematically takes account of all their performances during a given period of schooling.

As shown in table 8 above, item 2 described that the majority 42% of teachers and also 47% of students agreed that they feel confident about the teachers to put CA in to practice in their class because they were well trained on it. As described in the table, the mean scores 3.5 and 3.2 were indicated for teachers and students results, respectively. Based on the finding, training regarding CA for teachers is critically relevant in boosting their confidence and thereby applying CA efficiently in a classroom. In conformation with the idea, Daniel (2002) put it as to make an effective and appropriate assessment; teachers must be equipped with an adequate knowledge and capability about assessment techniques.

As indicated in table 8 item 3, 36% and 34% of teachers strongly agreed and agreed, respectively whereas the majority 36% of students agreed that more experienced teachers are more knowledgeable on CA. The mean scores of 3.8 for teachers and 3.4 for students were shown. Based on the respondents' opinion, experienced teachers are more knowledgeable than other teachers regarding CA.

According to item 4 in table 8, the majority of teachers (45%) and students (36%) responded agreed that more experienced teachers implement CA more than beginner teachers. The mean results indicated 3.6 and 3.4 for teachers and students, respectively. Relying on the finding, the more teachers are experienced on the profession; they could be a better implementer of CA more than beginner teachers. This might portrayed the relevance of continuous support and trainings for beginner teachers.

The results of item 5 point out that most of the teachers (49%) and students (40%) agreed on the point of teachers planning and using of a variety of CA techniques in their classrooms. The mean of the responses is 3.6 for teachers and 3.7 for students. This shows that the follow-up of school leaders might be weak towards the practice of CA. The finding is opposing with the literature of Airasian (1991) that describes CA as an assessment approach which should depict the full range of sources and methods teachers use to gather, interpret and synthesize information about learners; information that is used to help teachers understand their learners,

plan and monitor instruction and establish a viable classroom culture. Therefore, one could understand that teachers use CA frequently in their classroom.

#### **4.5. Requirements for CA and its Contributions**

This section deals with the responses of respondents on the requirements for CA implementation and the contributions of the requirements.

Item 1 in table 9 below depicts that the majority of teachers that means 45% and 30% and also 49% and 19% of students said agreed and strongly agreed, respectively that CA requires more work. The mean scores regarding the responses of teachers and students show 3.8 and 3.5. Therefore, teachers need to devote themselves in order to apply CA effectively in a class room that means it needs extra preparation and implementation from the previous usually learned practices. ETP (1994) emphasizes the implementation of CA as an integral part of the teaching-learning process. From this one can understand that teachers' perception towards CA might be considered as a burden of extra work.

Item 2 in the same table illustrates that 49.5% and 37.4% of teachers agreed and strongly agreed, respectively, about that CA required more time. The mean of teacher's response is 4.1. From these results, it can say that teachers might be expected to invest more time than the assigned periods per week.

In the same table, item 3, the majority of teachers (41% and 14%) and students (34% and 31%) agreed and strongly agreed that CA is beyond testing. The mean results of teachers and students show 3.5 and 3.6. Based on this, teachers have an understanding and knowledge about the usefulness of CA beyond testing. In line with this Livingston (2001) stated that CA is far from testing where the overall aspects of a learner are taken into account.

According to table 9 item 4, the majority of teachers by 49% and 34% and also students by 42% and 17% agreed and strongly agreed that improvement in CA improves the process of teaching and learning at class room level. The mean scores of the responses are 4 for teachers and 3.3 for students. Thus, teachers believe that improvement in CA is important for the betterment of teaching and learning at class room level. This may be due to the various techniques that are used in CA. According to Obanya (1985), CA involves collecting data in a

systematic way, on a continuous basis and on every facet of an educational endeavor; as a means of seeking continuous improvement in the learner and the total learning environment.

Table 9. Responses on the requirements and contributions of CA

S/n	Item	Respondents	Response	SD	DA	UD	A	SA	mean	S.Dev
1	CA requires more work	teachers	f	8	14	13	63	42	3.8	1.13
			%	6	10	9	45	30		
		students	f	7	12	10	44	17	3.5	1
			%	8	13	11	49	19		
2	CA requires more time	teachers	f	6	6	8	74	46	4	0.97
			%	4	4	6	53	33		
		students	f	7	12	10	44	17	3.5	1
			%	8	13	11	49	19		
3	I feel that CA is beyond testing	teachers	f	6	8	49	57	20	3.5	0.95
			%	4	6	35	41	14		
		students	f	9	10	13	31	27	3.6	1.3
			%	10	11	14	34	31		
4	I believe that improvement in CA improves the process of teaching and learning at class room level.	teachers	f	6	3	15	69	47	4	0.95
			%	4	2	11	49	34		
		students	f	10	19	8	38	15	3.3	1.3
			%	11	21	9	42	17		
5	CA has clear guideline.	teachers	f	4	20	42	64	10	3.4	0.91
			%	3	14	30	46	7		
		students	f	13	8	8	39	22	3.5	1.3
			%	14	9	9	43	25		
6	The guideline on CA is implementable.	teachers	f	8	19	30	57	26	3.5	1.1
			%	6	14	21	40	19		
		students	f	10	10	3	38	29	3.8	1.3
			%	11	11	3	42	33		
7	I believe that CA promotes the quality of education	teachers	f	7	10	28	56	39	3.7	1.08
			%	5	7	20	40	28		
		students	f	11	13	15	31	20	3.3	1.3
			%	12	14	17	34	23		
8	CA is necessary to promote effective learning	teachers	f	6	10	28	66	30	3.7	1.01
			%	4	7	20	48	21		
		students	f	9	18	12	35	16	3.7	1.3
			%							

According to the subjects of FGD, some of the teachers may have the idea that CA is beyond testing. For them, CA is wide in concept including tests, project works, assignments aside from predominant use of written tests though the actual practice is something different. Moreover, regarding CA – whether it should or should not be understood as continuous testing. Accordingly, the result showed that CA should not be perceived as continuous testing for tests are only one dimension though what is practiced is far from the reality on the basis of the respondents' it can be reported that teachers equate CA with administering tests periodically. Yet, this doesn't mean that there are no teachers who perceive CA in its real sense. In line with this, a review of literature from the perspective of different scholars reported that CA is a typical class room based strategy using different techniques to measure pupils' performance.

According to table 9 item 5, 46% of teachers and 43% of students which are the majority indicated agree that CA has clear guideline. The mean scores of the responses are 3.4 and 3.5 for both teachers and students. Based on this, CA has clear guideline which could be significant for referencing the relevant concepts found to be confusing on their practice. It is stated by Daniel (2002) as in order to enable teachers include the application of CA technique in their day-to-day teaching activities presenting a practical guide based on the respective subjects they teach is indispensable.

Most of the schools leaders in FGD expressed that their schools had CA guideline. On the other hand, few of them said that they had it but they did not duplicate and distribute for teachers. They admitted that even if they continuously remind teachers to take and practice the guideline, no teacher was interested to have it. According to open-ended result, lack of adequate instructional materials including CA guideline was a challenge for teachers to implement CA in their school context. To integrate assessment with instruction, the respondents added, instructional materials were indispensable and the scarcity without any doubt affect the practice of CA.

Concerning this, even though there is no system-wide classroom assessment policy framework with implementation guidelines, very few resources are available for teachers to conduct classroom assessment activities. The newly reframed competency based general

education curriculum framework provides limited guidelines on what students are expected to learn and what to be assessed. As stated in the framework, the subject teachers are advised to carry out regular checks on the progress of all students in each subject through CA and formal assessment (MoE, 2010).

In the same table, item 6 depicts that 40% of teachers and 42% of students agreed that the guideline on CA is implementable. The mean scores are 3.5 and 3.8 for teachers and students, respectively. From this one can conclude that the guideline prepared by MoE is implementable.

The results of item 7 indicate that 40% and 28% of teachers and 34% and 23% of students understood that CA promotes the quality of education. With regard to the result of mean scores for the responses depicted 3.7 for teachers and 3.3 for students. Based on the findings, CA could be a powerful weapon in enhancing the quality of education at school level. Abera (2012) mentioned that assessment is an important element of the teaching-learning process whatever the level of the education is. The assessment practice of an educational institution directly affects the quality of education in that institution. Quality assessment is a very essential element in the provision of quality education. This is because assessment provides a foundation for making sound evaluative judgments about students' learning progress in particular and about the effectiveness of the whole education system in general.

In addition to this Abiy (2013) argued that Teachers' implementation of continuous assessment as part of their instruction helps students to achieve quality education, develop innovativeness and a sense of competence, and get opportunities for independent as well as life-long learning.

Moreover, Black and Wiliam (1998) synthesized over 250 studies linking assessment and learning and found that the intentional use of assessment in the classroom is to promote learning and improve student's achievement. However, even if teachers believed the benefit of CA in promoting quality education, there might be a question whether it is practiced in a planned and deliberate manner.

In table 9, item 8, the majority of teachers (48% agreed and 29% strongly agreed) and most of the students (39% agreed and 19% strongly agreed) supported that CA is necessary to

promote effective learning. The mean results of both teachers and students portray 3.7. From the results, one can conclude that CA necessarily promotes effective learning. This idea is supported by Dembo (1994) that assessment is the process and procedure that used to make decisions about students' progress in the teaching-learning process. On the other hand Brown et al. (1996) described that assessment is one of the most powerful driving force for learning. It is often the case that students do not get down to serious learning unless some form of assessment is imposed on them. Assessment is any activity used to appraise pupils' performance. The learning outcomes promoted by schools involve helping pupils to develop knowledge, understanding skills and attitude. Assessment thus consists of techniques that can be used to monitor pupils' progress in terms of specific learning outcomes (Kyriacov, 1998).

#### 4.6. The Problems on the Implementation of CA

This sub-section of the results and discussion intended for the problems of CA implementation in secondary schools.

Table 10. Responses regarding the challenging factors on CA practicality

S/n	Item	Respondents	Response	SD	DA	UD	A	SA	mean	S.Dev			
1	It is difficult to conclude that teachers have the required understanding about CA	teachers	f	7	43	43	39	8	2.99	1			
			%	5	31	31	28	6					
		students	f	7	12	28	25	18	4	1.1			
			%	8	13	31	28	20					
2	It is very difficult to practice CA in large class size.	teachers	f	6	14	17	62	41	3.8	1.08			
			%	4	10	12	44	30					
		students	f	1	19	12	32	26	3.8	1.3			
			%	1	21	13	36	29					
			3	I believe that without suitable school facilities, it is difficult to implement CA	teachers	f	4	11	27	62	36	3.8	0.99
						%	3	8	19	44	26		
3		students	f	4	9	18	34	25	3.8	1.1			
			%	4	10	20	38	28					
		4	It is difficult to implement CA without adequate training about CA	teachers	f	7	18	21	73	21	3.5	1	
					%	5	13	15	52	15			
4		students	f	5	12	10	30	33	3.8	1.2			
			%	6	13	11	33	37					

In table 10 item 1 depicted that the majority of teachers indicated undecided (31%) and disagree (31%) whereas the majority of students undecided (31%) and agree (28%) on the issue of difficulty to conclude that teachers have the required understanding about CA. The mean of the teachers and students showed 2.9 and 4, respectively for the responses. From this one can infer that even if teachers aware on the benefits of CA, they may need trainings on the implementation of CA. the concept is supported by Daniel (2002) that teacher must be equipped with adequate knowledge and capability about assessment techniques.

As shown in table 10 item 2, 44% and 30% of teachers as well as 36% and 29% of students said agree and strongly agreed, respectively on the issue which says it is very difficult to practice CA in large class size. The mean scores of teachers and students demonstrate 3.8 for each one of them. The finding unearth that implementing CA in large class is challenging. Regarding this Abera (2009) revealed that teachers do not use CA in their classrooms, despite the fact that there is an increased pressure up on teachers to provide evidence of educational activities. This may be due to various reasons. Here below, some of the salient points are highlighted: a) large class size; b) Lack of commitment; c) Tight schedule; d) Broad course content; e) Attitude of teachers towards CA; f) Absence of good practice to benchmark; g) Absence of clear guidelines for CA h) pupil's absenteeism i) inadequate teaching and learning resources j) Bias of teachers based on sex, race, personality.

As shown in table 10 item 3, 44% and 226% of teachers and 38% and 28% of students believed that without suitable school facilities, it is difficult to implement CA. The mean results indicated 3.8 for both groups. The absence of suitable school facilities might have restricted teachers from practicing CA in their respective schools.

In table 10, item 4, most of teachers (33% and 30%) and students (37% and 33%) opined that it is difficult to implement CA without adequate training about CA by strongly agree and agree, in that order. The mean result of teachers is 3.5 whereas the result of students is 3.8. From the response of the respondents, one understands that implementing CA without adequate training for teachers makes the implementation of CA difficult. Thus, there may be a training gap regarding its implementation techniques. Daniel (2002) exclaimed that it should be planned how and when the assessment will be made, the assessment should be based on the actual condition, time, place, and social factors of the class; pupils' level of knowledge

and the nature of instruction, variety of items and assessment techniques should be selected and applied, the reliability, validity, objectivity and the discriminating power of the assessment techniques must be considered and checked, the items should be prepared in a clear, readable and precise language, assessment should be well administered and its results must be recorded, documented and also reported. Similarly, Teshome (2001) remarked that teachers must understand the assessment process and accept it as their own for its effective implementation. In spite of the fact, lack of orientation and assistance from the concerned individuals, insufficient training and lack of adequate materials make it difficult for teachers to appreciate and apply CA.

With regard to the open-ended question what problems teachers faced in CA implementation, almost all participants expressed that practicing CA is difficult and unmanageable under their school contexts for a number of reasons. Most of the common reasons suggested were the availability of few or no instructional materials with great emphasis on lack of materials for students to practice on after they finished a duty and shortage of materials to assess with the large number of students in a class was also suggested as a barrier to follow the progress of each and every student which in turn made the teachers to group students to overcome the shortage of materials. The other problems suggested were shortage of time, and lack of knowledge on different assessment techniques, lack of guidelines, poor administration support.

According to the result of FGD, most of the teachers complained that shortage of time and large number of pupils in a class challenged them not to effectively implement CA. However, the subjects expressed that teachers wrongly conceptualized CA by equating it only with continuous testing and this in turn has an impact on the practices. On the other hand, few leaders confessed that teachers had the potential skills in implementing CA if they committed to do so. The only potential problem was the commitment of teachers.

The results obtained from documents depict that the majority of teachers did not have documented files regarding students' CA. It was found out that only homeroom teachers had students' attendance sheets in addition to mark lists. However, other CA formats were not observed in the sample schools except few exceptional teachers who prepared their own

recording exercise books according to their area of interest such as attendance, quiz, tests, assignments, class participation, mid and final exam registration book.

Concerning the methods used to mitigate the challenges encountered on the practice of CA, most of the respondents articulated that they mostly focused on the assessment of students through tests and assignments. According to some of them, they used recurrent and various tests so as to manage the results of students. On the other hand, some teachers stated that in addition to tests, they assessed students through individual and group assignments. They said that these were the practical options at least to assess students in a large class size. In contrary to the findings, Desalegn (2004) briefly stated that continuous assessment focuses not only on the nature of the learner, but also on what is to be learned and the how of learning. Thus, teachers might lack the concept of CA.

In connection to this, one of the FGD respondents stated,

*“I frequently asked the principal and vice-principal to duplicate and provide the format I prepared for the purpose of continues assessment by stating the number of copies in relation to the number of students and sections. Finally, they vice-principal observed the total quantities of copies I requested and replied me that they did not have stationary for such amounts of copies. Therefore, I do not have a choice except using assignments, tests, and class participations”.*

Few teachers reflected that they only relied on mid-term and final examinations because they were not supported with stationary which were relevant to practice CA.

School leaders were also questioned about the methods used to mitigate the challenges of CA in their respective schools. Their responses were as follow.

According to some FGD respondents, even though they continuously advised and monitored teachers on the implementation of CA in classrooms, most of the teachers confronted leaders by exclaiming the difficulty of CA implementation with high number of students in a class. As a result, in one school, different CA formats were prepared by selected teachers and duplicated. On this regard, teachers were notified to use the formats as mandatory.

Leaders also stated that they tried to lower the high number of students in a class. However, the scarcity of classrooms almost in all sample schools did not solve the problem in implementing CA.

In one school, the school leaders evaluated teachers in the mid and end of every semester based on the teachers' implementation of CA. Consequently, the reluctance of teachers to practice CA was diminished and they became better on its implementation.

In general, the majority of leaders expressed that even if they understood the challenges teachers faced in practicing CA, they always reminded and supported teachers so as to use various but practical CA techniques during a lesson and out of lesson time which could be manageable by teachers.

## **5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter presents the summary and conclusions of the study. Finally, it gives recommended solutions based on the findings of the study.

### **5.1. Summary**

The objectives of this study were to assess the perceptions of teachers on CA, to identify the potential problems that impede teachers' implementation of CA of students learning, and to find out the mechanisms used by school leaders and other stakeholders to mitigate the challenges of implementing CA of students learning in secondary schools of Jigjiga city administration. In this study, three government secondary schools were taken as a sample. Based on this, teachers, principals, vice-principals, department heads, students, and supervisors were selected as the respondents. The data were gathered through questionnaire and FGD.

The findings of the study unearthed that teachers as well as students had favorable perceptions towards students' CA. They acknowledged the benefits of CA in enhancing the performance of students, in improving the quality of education as well as in enabling teachers to effectively assess the students' overall performance through various techniques and remedial actions. Even though 87% of teachers expressed their view that they implemented CA in their classrooms, the frequency of implementation was sometimes (62.4%). The results from school leaders showed that teachers had positive perception towards CA but most of them did not practice it. Thus, there were gaps between teachers' perceptions and practices on CA.

Based on the findings, large class size and teachers' shortage of time due to work load were indicated as the major problems that hindered the practice of CA. In relation to this, the responses depict that most of the teachers (37.4%) had from 80-99 students in a class and also the majority of teachers (70.1%) taught from 15-20 periods per week. The other challenges were teachers' low understanding of CA, lack of school facilities, inadequate training on CA, shortage of stationary and instructional materials to assess each and every student, lack of teachers' commitment, and inadequate teachers' knowledge on different assessment techniques, lack of CA guidelines in the schools, poor administration support, and teachers' wrongly conceptualizing CA by equating it only with continuous testing. Furthermore, the

findings from documents indicated that most of teachers did not have documented results of CA.

Concerning the methods used to mitigate the challenges encountered on the practice of CA, most of the teachers used recurrent tests, assignments at individual and group levels, and students' participations in the class. Moreover, different CA formats were prepared and duplicated in order to be used by teachers as mandatory requirement in one sample school, evaluating teachers in the mid and end of every semester regarding the implementation of CA, and assisting teachers so as to use various but practical CA techniques during lessons and out of lesson time which could be manageable by teachers were the methods in moderating the challenges in the sample schools.

## **5.2. Conclusions**

Based on the results, teachers as well as students had positive perception towards the benefits of CA. However, teachers' positive perception alone cannot help in achieving the desired objectives of CA unless it is practically implemented in the classrooms. Therefore, it could be said that in the sample schools the implementation of CA using various assessment techniques is not done even though they have positive perception towards CA. This might be due to lack of an all rounded attention and support among all stakeholders for its practicality even if teachers and school leaders have favorable perception towards it.

There are problems towards the implementation of CA in the schools. This means that some of them can be solved easily and some others need strong effort. Large class size and high teachers' workload challenged the practicality of CA but they could not absolutely halt its implementation. Hence, the sample schools encounter various problems on CA implementation that ranges from the commitment of teachers to the school facilities. However, teachers could use other assessment techniques which are appropriate with the existing school situations but failed to do so.

Based on the findings, the measures taken to mitigate the problems faced in CA implementation were not effective in transforming its application though some methods were used during the carrying out of CA. Therefore, the measures were insufficient in scope and quality that cannot entirely resolve the problems encountered.

### 5.3. Recommendations

Depending on the findings and the conclusions made above, the following recommendations are made.

- Even though CA is a vital instrument for students' achievement, the attention given by the school stakeholders is minimal. Thus, Jig-jiga city administration education office should give a great emphasis on its practicality at school levels and ensure its continuity by monitoring closely through the assigned supervisors on the schools.
- Government and stakeholders of the sectors should make tremendous effort to reduce class size or to reduce students' per class to manageable number
- Intensive trainings on the concepts, the roles, and multidimensional techniques of CA should be organized by the education office of Jig-jiga city administration in collaboration with school principals, especially for teachers in the form of on job trainings, workshops, seminars and in-service program by conducting needs assessment in a periodic manner.
- Teachers' implementation of CA using various techniques should be followed-up by the school leaders through students' results.
- Parental involvement is a key factor in implementing CA. Schools cannot meet the needs of pupils without the help of parents. It is, therefore, strong partnerships should be established between the school and the parents of students to jointly work on the practice and evaluation of CA.
- CA committee should be organized at cluster level to monitor the CA practices of schools in strengthening its implementation across the schools. This could also help schools to exchange the best practices in the mid or semester based gathering.
- The work load of teachers should be reduced for effective implementation of CA at school level. This could be done by assigning extra teachers to reduce the work loads.
- Continuous support and immediate feedbacks should be provided for teachers on their CA implementations at school level.

- CA guidelines and manuals should be provided and made accessible in every school for smooth implementation of Continuous Assessment.

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<15 P/W      15-20 P/W       21-25 P/W      >25 P/W

## Part-II

Dear respondents! The following is five point Likert type scales to measure your perception on continuous assessment. Please put a tick (✓) mark to show your perception on continuous assessment''

1. Do you implement CA in your classroom? (Yes/No)
2. If your response to Q1 above is YES, how often do you use it? And how it accounts for the total mark? (Always, sometimes, rarely)
3. If your response to Q1 is NO, would you please explain why you couldn't use CA in your classroom?

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4. Do you think that CA is important? (Yes/No). If so, how? If not, why?

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**Key. Please use:** i) 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Undecided, 4=Agree, 5= strongly agree ii) CA=Continuous Assessment

No	Items	5	4	3	2	1
5	I believe that frequently using CA improves students learning					
6	CA is a student evaluation system that uses a variety of assessment techniques					
7	I am sure CA enables teachers to assess overall performance of the learners which could not be done in tests					

8	I believe that CA assists students in case they miss classes due to some circumstances such as sickness, personal problems and etc						
9	I feel I am quite confident that teachers put CA into practice in their classroom because they are well trained						
10	CA requires more work						
11	CA requires more time						
12	I feel that CA is beyond testing						
13	I believe that improvement in CA improves the process of teaching and learning at class room level.						
14	CA provides regular feedback on students learning						
15	CA helps learners to look for remedial measures						
16	It is difficult to conclude that teachers have the required understanding about CA						
17	CA has clear guideline.						
18	The guideline on CA is implementable.						
19	It is very difficult to practice CA in large class size.						
20	I believe that more experienced teachers are more knowledgeable on CA						
21	I think that more experienced teachers implement CA more than beginner teachers.						
22	It is obvious that CA increases students' performance level.						
23	I believe that without suitable school facilities, it is difficult to implement CA						
24	It is difficult to implement CA without adequate training about CA						
25	I believe that CA provides opportunity for weak learners to improve on their weaknesses,						
26	Teachers plan and use a variety of CA techniques in their classroom.						
27	CA is necessary to promote effective learning						
28	I believe that CA promotes the quality of education						

29	I believe that CA helps to develop the social skill of students in a class.					
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30. What are the major challenges (if any) in implementing CA in your school?

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31. What methods did you use to mitigate the challenges encountered?

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32. What do you suggest for effective implementation of CA?

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**Appendix 2.****FGD Guideline****Focused Group Discussion (FGD) for Principals, vice principals,  
Supervisors and Department-Heads**

1. What is your belief about CA? Do you think that it is important?
2. How much do you know about teachers using CA in their class-rooms?
3. What type (s) of assessment(s) is/are most frequently used in your school?
4. Is there CA guideline in your school? If so, is it understandable? Practicable? If not, what guides teachers' CA?
5. Do you think that teachers are implementing CA in their classrooms as per the guideline of the CA?
6. Are there encouraging situations/environments such as adequate resources, trainings for teachers, support and guidance, etc for practicing of CA in the class-rooms?
7. What do you think are the major problems/challenges that hinder teachers from practicing CA in their classrooms?
8. What methods did you use to mitigate the challenges encountered?



### Part 1. The perception of students on the benefits of CA

**Key. Please use:** i) 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Undecided, 4=Agree, 5= strongly agree ii) CA=Continuous Assessment

No	Items	5	4	3	2	1
5	I believe that frequently using CA improves students learning					
6	CA is a student evaluation system that uses a variety of assessment techniques					
7	I am sure CA enables teachers to assess overall performance of the learners which could not be done in tests					
8	I believe that CA assists students in case they miss classes due to some circumstances such as sickness, personal problems and etc					
9	I feel I am quite confident that teachers put CA into practice in their classroom because they are well trained					
10	CA requires more work					
11	CA requires more time					
12	Do I feel that CA is beyond testing?					
13	I believe that improvement in CA improves the process of teaching and learning at class room level.					
14	CA provides regular feedback on students learning					
15	CA helps learners to look for remedial measures					
16	It is difficult to conclude that teachers have the required understanding about CA					
17	CA has clear guideline.					
18	The guideline on CA is implementable.					
19	It is very difficult to practice CA in large class size.					
20	I believe that more experienced teachers are more knowledgeable on CA					
21	I think that more experienced teachers implement CA more than beginner teachers.					
22	It is obvious that CA increases students' performance level.					
23	I believe that without suitable school facilities, it is difficult to					

	implement CA						
24	It is difficult to implement CA without adequate training about CA						
25	I believe that CA provides opportunity for weak learners to improve on their weaknesses,						
26	Teachers plan and use a variety of CA techniques in their classroom.						
27	CA is necessary to promote effective learning						
28	I believe that CA promotes the quality of education						
29	I believe that CA helps to develop the social skill of students in a class.						