

# 1 The State of Continuous Assessment Practices in Junior 2 Secondary Schools in Kenema City

3 Juanah, Josephine Elizabeth

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## 6 **Abstract**

7 The study investigated Continuous Assessment Practices in Junior Secondary Schools in  
8 Kenema City. Three research objectives guided the study: Responsibilities of teachers in  
9 continuous assessment practices; Aspects of Child?s Development (Educational Objectives)  
10 assessed/rated; and School Resources/Facilities available and used. The population comprised  
11 of all Junior Secondary Schools in Kenema city and a sample size of ten Junior Secondary  
12 schools was randomly selected. Questionnaire, Observation and interview were the main  
13 instruments used to collect data. Data were analyzed using simple percentages, tables, bar  
14 charts and pie charts. Results indicated that teachers had responsibilities such as subject  
15 teacher, class teacher, Continuous Assessment Record (CAR) teacher and guidance counsellor.  
16 The Cognitive aspect is assessed/rated by all the teachers while the Affective and  
17 Psychomotor aspects are assessed by class teachers only. School resources/facilities were  
18 available were not adequate and also not used by teachers and pupils during teaching and  
19 learning activities. Recommendations include: The Ministry of Education, Science and  
20 Technology should provide appropriate and adequate school facilities, and finance schools to  
21 undertake workshops, seminars and in-service courses on Continuous Assessment Practices.  
22 The principals should ensure that all teachers are involved in assessing/rating of the  
23 Cognitive, Affective and Psychomotor aspects of child?s development.

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25 **Index terms**— assessment practices, cognitive, continuous assessment, school facilities.

## 26 **1 Introduction**

27 he assessment of students' learning achievement has become the object of a great deal of attention on activities  
28 all over the world, industrialized countries and developing countries alike (Kellaghan, 2001). The Dakar Frame  
29 work for Action 2000 stresses the importance of having a clear definition and accurate assessment of learning  
30 outcomes. Additionally, the World Conference on Education for all in Jothiem, Thailand ??1999) states that the  
31 focus of basic education should be 'actual learning acquisition and outcome'. According to Rayment (2006) for  
32 assessment to work effectively it must be a continuous process and there is little point awarding grades, scores  
33 and praise if they don't mean anything to the learner. He further cites that assessment is an effective monitoring  
34 tool which helps learners to feel valued and that learning and achievement has a purpose. In addition, it may be  
35 used as a process of improving the teaching, the curriculum, as well as the learning condition of learners. It is  
36 evident that Continuous Assessment is not only of benefit to the learners, but it provides both the teacher and  
37 learner with ongoing feedback about teachinglearning process.

38 One of the most important hall marks of the New Policy on Education (1995) in Sierra Leone is the provision  
39 of the Continuous Assessment as an effective tool for wholly a partly assessment and evaluating the students  
40 learning outcomes in the various levels of the educational system.

41 The New Policy on Education provides a six year primary education, three years junior education, three years  
42 senior secondary, and four years university education, each of which level would be allowed to implement the  
43 Continuous Assessment as laid down by the Ministry of Education. Continuous Assessment has been introduced

## 1 INTRODUCTION

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44 in Sierra Leonean schools as part and parcel of the new education system in 1995. This means that Continuous  
45 Assessment is in use for twenty years in Sierra Leonean Schools. It is presently been run in Junior Secondary  
46 Schools as it is so introduced. It is made by intention to make students specialized early enough in the future  
47 careers. Most importantly, it has provisions for making drop outs employees.

48 The repeated emphasis being placed on Continuous Assessment is a clear evidence of its importance.  
49 Continuous Assessment is a method of ascertaining what a child gains from schooling in terms of knowledge,  
50 industry and character development taking into account all his/her performances in tests, assignments, projects  
51 and other educational activities during a given period of term, year, or during the entire period of an educational  
52 level (Ipaye, 1995). It is also a method of using the recorded performances of each pupil to help him or her improve  
53 on his or her achievement through guidance. -Give the teacher greater involvement in the overall assessment of  
54 his or her pupils; -Provide a more valid assessment of the child's overall ability and performance; -Enable teachers  
55 to be more flexible and innovative in their instruction. -Provide a basis for more effective guidance of the child;  
56 -Provide a basis for the teacher to improve his or her instructional methods; -Reduce examination malpractices.

57 According to Mwebaza (2010), Continuous Assessment is not simply continuous testing. Continuous  
58 Assessment does not solely depend on formal tests. Continuous Assessment is more than giving a test; it  
59 involves every decision made by the teacher in class to improve students' achievement. Continuous Assessment  
60 is an ongoing diagnostic and school -based process that uses a variety of assessment tools to measure learners'  
61 performance (Zambia Ministry of Education, 2007). Continuous Assessment could also be defined as a learners'  
62 progress in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of learning systematically takes account of all their  
63 performances during a given period of schooling (Falayajo, 1986). The main objective of Continuous Assessment  
64 is to obtain a reliable picture of the progress of the learner in terms of achieving the basic competencies as set  
65 out in the objectives of the syllabus as early as possible and to embark upon corrective measures if needed.

66 According to the Department of Education of South Africa ??2000), teachers are expected to be assessors  
67 and learning area specialists. This justified a paradigm shift among teachers regarding their roles as teachers in  
68 assessment and teaching methods, classroom management and learning content. Lemmer (1999) contends that  
69 teaching should among others provide ongoing assessment of learners' skills in critical thinking, reasoning and  
70 action.

71 This creates the impression that there are some challenges with implementation of Continuous Assessment.

72 The primary purpose of teaching and learning process is to bring a significant change in behavior through  
73 active participation and critical thinking of the learner. This cannot take place without the availability and  
74 proper use of school facilities and other needed resources. Ogunsaju (1980) emphasized that quality of education  
75 that students receive depends on the availability of school facilities in which teaching and learning takes place.  
76 Quality, relevance and access to education can be attained if and only if educational materials are properly  
77 available and utilized in an educational institution. According to Durbin, et al. (1989), resources are the only  
78 means through which organizational activities, service and satisfactory ends are attainable. For the achievement  
79 of organizational objectives, resources play the crucial roles. School facilities, which consist of all types of buildings  
80 that are used for academic and non-academic purpose, equipment, classroom facilities, furniture, instructional  
81 materials, audiovisual aids, toilet, ICT, library and laboratory materials and others play a pivotal role to smoothly  
82 run teaching and learning process.

83 As Buckley, Schneider and Shang (2004), school facilities enable the teacher to accomplish his/her task as  
84 well and help the learner to learn and achieve effectively. Additionally, they emphasized that the availability  
85 and proper use of school facilities can affect the interest of the teacher to teach effectively in turn that positively  
86 affects student's academic achievement. Therefore, the school facilities in the school need a proper attention as  
87 they have a great value in the support of teachers and students morale, motivation and play a significant role to  
88 improve the quality of education.

89 Hedges and Theoreson (2000) also argue that, the adequacies of school facilities do not give a guarantee for  
90 student's academic performance but the proper utilization of the facilities has a great value. As Khan and Iqbal  
91 (2012) state that adequate and quality school facilities are basic ingredients for quality education and to achieve  
92 the intended goal of the school program. They also strengthen the idea by emphasizing that learning is a complex  
93 activity that requires students and teachers' motivation, adequate school facilities such as standardized buildings  
94 and classrooms with their facilities, instructional materials and equipment for child's development.

95 According to Nitko (1995) any plan for Continuous Assessment is only as strong as the teacher's ability to use  
96 it appropriately. This illustrates that teachers are the key players as implementers of Continuous Assessment in  
97 the classrooms. The nature of Continuous Assessment put greater demands on the role of the teachers. They  
98 are entrusted with delicate and indeed challenging task to ensure effective and efficient Continuous Assessment.  
99 Almost in all training and learning institutions, some kind of assessment is done. This brings out the importance  
100 and inevitability of assessment in the training and learning process. As teachers, trainers and educators, we are  
101 all involved in assessment at one or the other stage during the learning, teaching and training process. But are  
102 we all clear on how we assess, why we assess, when we assess, and familiar with the various techniques we use?  
103 In response to some of these questions, Baula et al ??1996) cite that successful assessment should be undertaken  
104 with the knowledge that this process will be constantly updated and adapted to meet the changing needs of the  
105 institution, learners, teachers and the public at large. A key question for assessment is not how to measure a  
106 learner's achievement, but what mechanism are used to evaluate their learning. It is against this background

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107 that warrants an investigation into the State of Continuous Assessment Practices in Junior Secondary Schools in  
108 Kenema City.

## 109 **2 Research Objectives**

110 The following research objectives guided the study:

111 1. Identify the responsibilities of teachers in Continuous Assessment Practices; 2. Find out the aspects of  
112 child's development/ educational objectives assessed/rated by teachers; 3. Identify school facilities/equipments  
113 that are available and used by teachers in Continuous Assessment Practices.

114 II.

## 115 **3 Methodology**

116 The study was carried out in Kenema City. A descriptive research design of a survey type was used in the study.

117 The population of the study comprised all the thirty-nine (39) Junior Secondary Schools and all junior  
118 secondary school teachers in Kenema City. Out of the total number of 39 junior secondary Schools in Kenema  
119 City, ten (10) JSS were selected using a random sampling technique as a sample with a total of one hundred  
120 (100) Junior Secondary School teachers. Out of the ten (10) selected JSS, the researcher selected two (2) boys  
121 Junior Secondary Schools, a girl's Junior Secondary School and seven co-educational Junior Secondary Schools.  
122 Questionnaire, and observation were the main instruments used in the study. Data were collected and carefully  
123 examined. Observation data gathering technique was employed to study the physical feature of schools including:  
124 school buildings, classrooms, office and classroom facilities, libraries, laboratories, workshops, play grounds, toilet,  
125 and other educational inputs. Data were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages. The results of the  
126 analysis were presented in tables, pie-charts and bar charts for easier interpretation.

## 127 **4 III.**

## 128 **5 Results and Discussion**

129 Figure 1 shows multiple major responsibilities of teachers in Continuous Assessment Practices. Eightythree (83)  
130 teachers 100% had the responsibility of being subject teachers. Among the eighty-three (83) subject teachers  
131 100% thirty (30) teachers 36.1% had the responsibility of being class teachers. Ten (10) teachers 12.0% had  
132 the responsibilities of been Continuous Assessment Record (CAR) teachers and guidance counsellors. This  
133 implies that teachers have responsibilities that will enhance good relationship with pupils and ensure effective  
134 and efficient Continuous Assessment practices. This agrees with Nitko (1995) who states that any plan for  
135 Continuous Assessment is only as strong as the teacher's ability to use it appropriately. This illustrates that  
136 teachers are the key players as implementers of Continuous Assessment in the classrooms. They are entrusted with  
137 delicate and indeed challenging task to ensure effective and efficient Continuous Assessment. aspects. Also few  
138 teachers (CAR teachers) had the responsibility of recording pupils' grade. This implies that adequate attention  
139 is not paid to the Affective and Psychomotor aspects, and those teachers are not taking full account of learners'  
140 performances. This may be due to either teachers have low knowledge, not given the responsibility or are not  
141 committed in Continuous Assessment Practices as Falayajo (1986) states that teachers must take account of all  
142 performance of learners in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects.

## 143 **6 Source: Field Data (2016)**

## 144 **7 Source: Field Data (2016)**

## 145 **8 Recommendations**

146 The findings came out with the following recommendations that could be used to enhance outstanding  
147 performance in Continuous Assessment Practices. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology should  
148 provide appropriate and adequate school facilities, and finance schools to undertake workshops, seminars and in-  
149 service courses on Continuous Assessment Practices. The principals should ensure that all teachers are involved  
150 in assessing/rating of the Cognitive, Affective and Psychomotor aspects of child's development.

151 V.

## 152 **9 Conclusion**

153 The following are deduced from the findings: that teachers had responsibilities such as subject teacher, class  
154 teacher, continuous assessment record teacher and guidance counsellor that mandate them to be seriously  
155 involved in Continuous Assessment practices; all teachers are involved in assessing/rating the cognitive abilities  
156 while the affective and psychomotor abilities are assessed/rated by class teachers only; and that some school  
157 resources/facilities are available in some schools but not utilized by both the teachers and the pupils during  
158 teaching and learning processes.

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provides information on the availability and usage of resources/ facilities in the selected schools. The table shows that seven (7) schools 70% had science laboratory/ equipments and soccer/sport fields but are not used during teaching and learning

activities in the selected schools. Three (3) schools 30% had library and agricultural sites/tools but not used. Two (2) school 20% had Home Science laboratories and computer laboratory but are not used. One (1) school 10% had wood workshop and Creative Practical/

Figure 1: Table 1

**1**

Resource/Facility	Available		Used	
	No. of School	Percentage %	No. of School	Percentage %
Science Laboratory/Equipment	7	70	0	0
Wood Workshop/Tools	1	10	0	0
Computer Laboratory	2	20	0	0
Library	3	30	0	0
Agricultural Site/Tools	3	30	0	0
Soccer/Sport field	7	70	0	0
Home Science Laboratory	2	20	0	0
Creative Practical/Performing Arts Room/Materials	1	10	1	100
Computer	10	100	0	0
Guidance Counsellor's Office	1	10	1	10

Source: Field Data (2016)

**IV.**

Figure 2: Table 1 :

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