

*EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN POLICY AND PRACTICE :
A STUDY OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT*

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NOVEMBER 1997

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Research Report Submitted In Partial Filfilment of the Requirements for the
Master of Education Degree (Science Education)

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November 1997

ABSTRACT

Research reveals that policy intentions seldom define classroom practice. This research study uses continuous assessment as the 'case' to explore the policy-practice relationship. The research approach adopted involved a critical review of policy documents on continuous assessment; interviews with Department officials; a survey questionnaire on continuous assessment distributed to teachers in ten secondary schools; and a detailed exploration of continuous assessment practice in three institutional settings. The findings show that continuous assessment is rarely implemented as policy intended; teachers at the classroom level have transformed the aims of policy-makers to the extent that implementation proceeds at some distance from the original policy intentions; and teachers are experiencing numerous problems in attempting to implement continuous assessment.

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DECLARATION

I, Anitha Ramsuran, declare that this dissertation is my own work, and has not been submitted previously for any degree at any university.

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RESEARCHER

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SUPERVISOR

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CHAPTER ONE

THE RESEARCH AREA

1. INTRODUCTION

Education change in South Africa during the 1990's has been characterized by recurring waves of reform. Singh (1992) observed that,

South Africa has become an arena of contestation for the restructuring of policy agendas amongst contending groups seeking to establish a new hegemonic order. The current phase of negotiation politics and the prospects of a different political order have triggered off several initiatives directed towards investigation and formulation of new policy options to replace the exhausted and de-legitimized policies associated with apartheid. (p 67)

In the context of a number of broad stakeholder forums in the run up to the new government, the National Education and Training Forum (NETF) was formed in late 1992 under considerable pressure to address the crisis in education. The field and phase processes set up by the Minister of Education was mainly in response to the History teaching community to make urgent, short term changes to the syllabus for 1995/1996. A curriculum sub-committee of the NETF decided to consider short-term syllabus revisions as one means of intervening in the education crisis as the long term curriculum framework that was needed, would have taken 2-3 years to establish. A three-member national coordinating committee was formed to establish eleven field committees. These field committees were to address:

1. The factual incorrectness of subject matter resulting from socio-political changes and new developments in the field of study.
2. Content which did not reflect sensitivity to the perspectives of the different groups in South Africa, and
3. the possible consolidation of syllabuses, given that nineteen different ex-Departments of Education inherited different syllabuses for the same school subjects.

The committees interpreted this brief to mean the removal of outdated, inaccurate and insensitive content from school syllabus; and to consolidate

fragmented syllabuses (Jansen, 1997). Some of the recommendations to emerge from the syllabus revision process was that (a) all syllabuses were found to be outmoded, content driven and decontextualised. This led to content based examinations and rote learning being practiced in the classroom; (b) many topics in the syllabus required equipment which is lacking in the majority of schools; (c) time allocations were not standardised across schools for the various subjects; and (d) continuous assessment was not uniformly practised across the different departments (Rollnick, 1994). The need for learners to be exposed to new forms of assessment consonant with the broad policy commitment to create a more equal educational environment for all learners, led to continuous assessment being proposed by the NETF to the Minister of Education who then issued a brief (Policy Document A) to all nine provinces that they should implement continuous assessment.

2. THE ASSESSMENT CONTEXT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Assessment in South Africa has been based on high stakes, sit-down examinations consisting mainly of the pen-and-paper type. With schooling operating in the service of the state, subject to tight control, the examinations and certification procedures reflect and consolidate the politics of discrimination and oppression in powerful ways. Schooling in South Africa has always been provided unequally for the different statutory population groups in segregated schools and with racially segregated education system, where allocation of resources is known to be politically biased, examinations can certainly be seen as merely part of a total system designed to perpetuate and legitimise inequality (King and van den Berg, 1992). Also, it has long been chanted that a combination of a shallow and reductive curriculum with oversimplified testing will destroy the spirit of intellectual inquiry that underpins good teaching and effective learning.

The introduction of continuous assessment was an attempt to move away from this narrow notion of assessment. The policy on continuous assessment is encapsulated in official policy documents on the interim amended core syllabi and school phase curricula. These policies have been formulated by the NETF, submitted for approval by the National Department of Education and adapted by the various provincial Departments of Education. Two policy

documents were distributed to schools in the province of Kwa Zulu-Natal : circular 10/95 (Policy document A) from the National Department of Education, and KZN circular 3/95(Policy document B) from the Kwa Zulu - Natal provincial Department of Education. It is the relationship between these policy documents(what was intended) and the practice(what actually happened) of continuous assessment that forms the focus of my research study.

Although there are significant international trends towards continuous assessment, it is not without its problems. Pennycuik (1990) warns that countries considering the introduction of continuous assessment would be well advised to weigh up the pros and cons. Whatever the intentions of the NETF in introducing continuous assessment, Jansen (1997) argues that,

the process set in place, and consolidated, a pattern of curriculum change which is context blind, i.e., delinked from the dynamics and complexities of school and classroom contexts, teacher development and support, systematic assessment reform, genuine grassroots participation and textbook development. The way in which most provinces introduced continuous assessment is a case in point. (p8)

3. PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between the formal policy and the actual practice of continuous assessment in selected secondary schools in Kwa Zulu-Natal.

4 CRITICAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the intentions of continuous assessment as set out in formal policy documents(policy)?
2. How do teachers understand and implement continuous assessment in high school classrooms(practice)?
3. What is the relationship between continuous assessment policy and

continuous assessment practice in secondary schools?

5. RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Continuous assessment is a new form of assessment introduced in most South African schools since 1995. Since its inception in schools, there has been little guidance as to how continuous assessment is to be implemented. Consequently many teachers, including myself, have independently interpreted and implemented continuous assessment policy as deemed most appropriate. The manner in which I have implemented this form of assessment may not reflect policy intentions. Against this background, I decide to investigate the possible relationship between what policy intends and what teachers at selected schools are implementing (practice) using continuous assessment as the “case” for exploring this policy-practice relationship.

6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of this research could be useful to : (a) teachers with an interest in improving their assessment practices; (b) subject advisors, subject committees, tertiary institutions in designing appropriate inservice training to support continuous assessment; (c) national and provincial policymakers who design assessment policies and guidelines for schools, by sensitizing them to the current status of continuous assessment implementation; (d) curriculum development specialists and textbook writers who prepare curriculum packages for curriculum 2005 in a continuous assessment framework; and (e) enriching the knowledge base on continuous assessment in South Africa and the growing literature which explores the policy-practice relationship in schools of developing countries.

7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

I made use of three data sources to ascertain the intentions of continuous assessment policy : a critical review of two continuous assessment policy documents (Policy document A and Policy document B); semi-structured interviews with four Department officials; and a survey questionnaire

completed by 289 secondary school teachers. In exploring continuous assessment practice, I used two main data sources : firstly, I used the survey questionnaire to determine the manner in which the goals of continuous assessment was communicated to teachers: teachers understanding, perceptions and experience of continuous assessment; and problems experienced by teachers in implementing continuous assessment; and secondly, I compiled three detailed case studies on three standard nine Biology teachers chosen conveniently from the sample of 289 teachers that responded to the questionnaire in order to understand continuous assessment practice in a school setting.

8. LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

This study is limited to secondary schools only and will therefore not lend itself to generalizations with regards to primary schools or tertiary institutions. The data is limited in two ways. Firstly, teachers and schools were chosen conveniently depending on their willingness to participate in the study and whether they were implementing continuous assessment, and secondly, the teachers chosen for the case study were from participating schools with different levels of resources across the cluster.

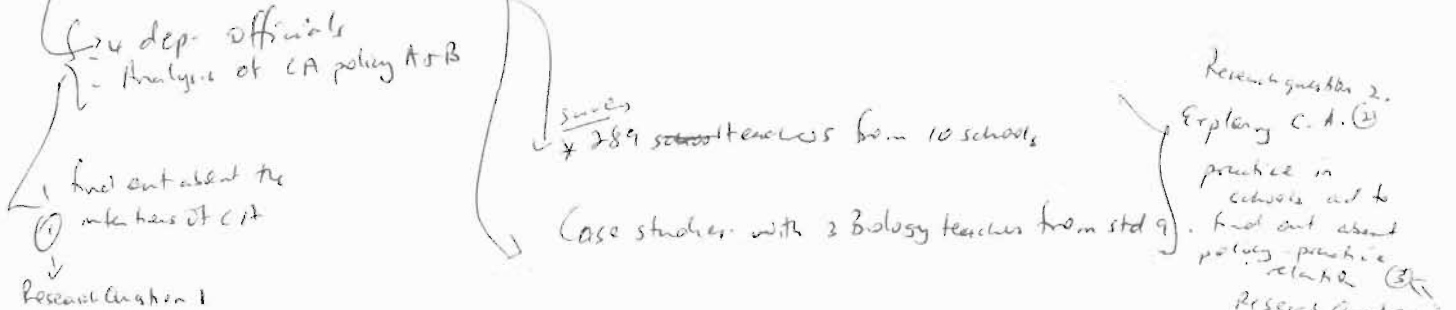
9. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is limited to ten South African high schools in the province of KwaZulu- Natal. The broad survey of continuous assessment implementation was conducted with all teachers from the ten schools. The schools chosen were predominantly from the ex-House of Delegates (schools which under apartheid served mainly Indian students) as they systematically implemented continuous assessment as a consequence of the new policy. They therefore provided the ideal institutional setting to pursue this research study. The ex-House of Assembly (serving mainly White pupils) and the ex-House of Representative (serving mainly Coloured pupils) schools were already practicing continuous assessment prior to the issue of the new policy on continuous assessment. The ex-Department of Education and Training (serving mainly Black pupils) schools were not uniformly practising continuous assessment despite policy directives from the Kwa Zulu-Natal provincial Department (Policy Document B). Schools that were not

implementing continuous assessment were excluded from this study as it was not feasible to explore the policy-practice relationship in these cases. Case studies were conducted with three standard nine Biology teachers and not across standards on the assumption that standard nine Biology teachers' assessment styles would form a common basis for comparison. The study is also limited to the articulation of policy goals in Policy documents A and B and not to other documents available, e.g., minutes of NETF meetings. Interviews with four Department officials were conducted to form a complementary data set to the policy documents with the goal of elaborating official intentions or goals for continuous assessment policy.

10. PREVIEW OF CHAPTERS TO FOLLOW

Chapter Two presents a critical synthesis of the literature available on continuous assessment, followed by Chapter Three where I will present the research methodology and procedures to be adopted in this study: In Chapter Four the policy on continuous assessment is analyzed, Chapter Five examines the broad survey of the implementation of continuous assessment, Chapter Six focuses on three detailed case studies on continuous assessment practice, and I will conclude this research study by exploring the policy-practice relationship with respect to continuous assessment.



CHAPTER TWO

SETTING THE SCENE

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT?

2.1 INTRODUCTION

A number of writers have cited the limitations of conventional testing and examinations in terms of (a) their incapacity to address the breadth of learning (Nitko, 1994; Erinosh, 1993; Edgeworth, 1980; Starr, 1970); (b) in reinforcing a limited range of educational objectives (Broadfoot, 1980); (c) in targeting students, seldom teachers or curriculum (Jansen, 1994) and; (d) in creating a negative backwash effect on instruction (Dixon and Rawlings, 1987).

Indeed, many countries with a variety of political ideologies have responded to the limitations of examinations with a range of alternative assessment strategies which recognises a range of potential educational goals. These include authentic assessment (Perrone, 1994); performance assessment (Linn et al, 1991; Shepard, 1991; Messick, 1989); portfolio assessment (King, 1994); criterion-referenced assessment (Black and Dockrell, 1984) and continuous assessment (Nitko, 1994; Tan, 1990). As the smoke clears in the controversy over traditional versus alternative forms of assessment, proponents of the new assessment are holding the high ground. It is the claims of continuous assessment as a response to examinations that represents the focus of this research and the literature review that follows in this chapter.

2.2 OBJECTIVES OF THIS CHAPTER

In this chapter I intend to present a critical analysis of the literature obtained on continuous assessment. In this review I will :

(1) establish the self-declared policy intention of continuous assessment in a number of different countries. This will enable me to compare the South African rationale for introducing continuous assessment with those of other countries.

- (2) outline various **conceptual frameworks** articulated for continuous assessment and establish a **continuous assessment framework** that will govern this research study. By “**conceptual framework**” I mean ways of organising and understanding the range of concepts used to explain continuous assessment or which are generally associated with continuous assessment.
- (3) specify knowledge claims about the potential and positive effects of **continuous assessment**. This will **alert the** research design to the potential of continuous assessment in the **South African context**.
- (4) determine characteristics of policy formulation and implementation and in particular those that impact on continuous assessment policy in selected international studies. This will enable me to **draw** parallels with the formulation of continuous assessment policy by policy developers in **South Africa**.
- (5) identify the limitations of this form of assessment in a number of different countries practicing continuous assessment.
- (6) explore the limitations of this **literature review** for this particular research study on the impact of the new **continuous** assessment policy in selected South African schools.

2.3 ORGANISATION OF THIS CHAPTER

The remainder of this chapter is organised as follows : firstly, I will discuss the different data sources from which this **literature** review was selected and how both the data source and the available literature is limited to my research study; I will then discuss the **international rationale** for introducing continuous assessment and the concepts used to explain continuous assessment; next the knowledge claims about the potential and effects of continuous assessment will be outlined together with **problems** that hinder the successful implementation of continuous assessment; I will then proceed to describe successful characteristics of policy formulation and implementation and I will conclude this chapter by discussing the implications of this literature review for my research study.

2.4 DATA SOURCES

The literature selected for this review has been generated from comprehensive searches of National databases (e.g., the NEXUS- database on current and completed research in South Africa), international data sources (e.g., ERIC- Educational Resources Information Centre), manual searches of existing educational journals in South African libraries (e.g., Education Review), papers presented at conferences (e.g., SAARMSE- South African Association for Research in Maths and Science Education and IEB- Independent Examinations Board) and which do not ordinarily appear in academic journals. The literature sampled is drawn from a range of developing countries with a reasonable literature base from West African countries e.g., Ghana and Nigeria. Recent South African as reflected in assessment policies for Outcomes Based Education, are also included in this critical review.

2.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE AVAILABLE RESEARCH

Despite the wide ranging data search there are important limitations in this synthesis in that (a) many African journals referred to in other journals as containing assessment articles have become difficult to locate (e.g., Journal of Science Assessment of Nigeria); (b) many references referred to in assessment publications are unpublished or working papers; (c) some literature discussed the practice of continuous assessment in the fields of medicine, Business study etc. and not particularly education. Parallels could only be drawn to a limited extent to the field of education; (d) the literature is biased in favor of West African studies; (e) the available literature does not reveal problems experienced by South African teachers in attempting to implement continuous assessment in the context of a legacy of apartheid education as schooling has been provided unequally for the different statutory population groups in segregated schools; (f) there is little available literature on the impact of continuous assessment in South African schools and more especially the implementation of continuous assessment in high school Biology classrooms. Awomolo (1992) has reported the relationship between continuous assessment and terminal assessment in the disciplines of Mathematics and English language in selected Nigerian secondary schools; the study of Akwesi and Murphy (1994) in the same field but in the lower forms of the secondary school; the research study by Hall (1993) presents a

curriculum based continuous assessment approach for the pre-school education programme; and Nair-Venugopal (1991) in oral communication; (g) many of the literature sources sampled discuss the practice of continuous assessment at universities in the field of Business Studies at Newcastle Polytechnic (Dixon and Rawlings, 1987); in the field of Physics at Russian University (Sazhin, 1994); in Teacher Education at Western University (Carter et al, 1992) and Ogun State University, Nigeria (Erinosho, 1993) etc., rather than schools which form the focus area for this research study; (h) there is little evidence on how continuous assessment is implemented in schools of different racial histories and compositions. Consideration as to its impact on pupils of different cultural backgrounds have not been documented nor the multiple bias faced by many South African pupils. Efforts in America were in response to poor achievement of African minority students (Simmons, 1993); (i) there has been no published study on the impact of continuous assessment in the context of a dramatic political transition. Most studies sampled have been based outside South Africa and no local study was found. The literature selected indicates that alternative assessment has been introduced in response to the constraints of the formal examination (Broadfoot, 1980) rather than any political or societal changes. It has become an issue of providing relevant education and assessment methods in many other education systems around the world (Broadfoot, 1994; Pennycook, 1990; Noah and Ekstein, 1990).

Nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence in the literature reviewed to enable me to draw comparisons with the South African situation as well as to alert the research design to possible focus areas for this study. I will proceed with these comparisons by outlining various conceptual frameworks articulated for continuous assessment.

2.6 CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT : ESTABLISHING A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

I intend in this part of the chapter to present a conceptual framework that organises the many concepts associated with continuous assessment. The conceptual framework will serve as an analytical tool to organise the multiple concepts in the continuous assessment literature in such a way that clarity and coherence is developed with respect to the claims about continuous assessment in different contexts. The literature suggests that the concept of

continuous assessment, let alone the modalities of implementation, remains unclear to many educators (Bajah, 1984). Erinoshko (1993) claims that teachers do not have a clear understanding of the mode of operation of continuous assessment and are not adequately provided with the wherewithal to carry out effective assessment. It therefore becomes imperative that any forward-looking system of assessment needs to ensure that teacher's judgements are informed, trained, supported and carefully understood in relation to common standards (Barrs, 1996).

The IEB draft document on assessment (prepared by Meg Pahad, Deputy Director of Assessment at IEB - September 1996) defines continuous assessment as providing,

for a variety of ways of demonstrating competence across a range of contexts, these should be structured so that they can lead to the award of marks or grades which can be recorded and included in summative assessment; they should be based on interesting and demanding tasks which motivate and support learning and should be accompanied by helpful feedback to the learner as well as formal recording of results; some part of this must be based on observation of the learner working in normal learning conditions, rather than specific assessment task. (p56)

Reddy and Le Grange (1996), on the other hand, define continuous assessment as an evaluation of the whole child over a period of time, which assess a variety of skills and attitudes, wider than what is possible with conventional testing. They add that the process is cumulative in nature and is often used in conjunction with external examinations at secondary levels, whereas Ali and Akubue (1988) claim that in theory, besides paper and pencil tests, a student's grade in each course is derived from such variables as his skills in handling tools, materials and equipment, and his affective behavior such as attendance, participation in classwork, assignments, etc.

For the purpose of this research study continuous assessment will be conceived as,

representing continuing awareness, by the teacher of the development of knowledge of learners over a period of time. It is a gradual build up of a cumulative judgment about performance. A teacher using continuous assessment is looking for signs that show the growth of thinking processes, development of skills and acquisition of knowledge and understanding. (Policy document B, p2)

This definition has been chosen because it represents official policy in South Africa on continuous assessment and is therefore a useful measure against which to assess how teachers actually understand continuous assessment. In the next part of this chapter I will develop a rationale for continuous assessment in order to understand why it has been introduced in many countries.

2.7 WHY CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT?

In his article "Innocence in Education", Bloom (1972) observed that,

in our innocence we have permitted testing to dominate education and to serve as the primary and often the only basis for our most important decisions about students, about teachers, and more recently about curricula and programs. (p69)

Writers, educators, parents and pupils have questioned whether tests and examinations are accurate measures of academic performance. There are efforts in many countries to make assessment more authentic and to develop indicators of authentic learning. Work which could not be formally assessed has been neglected. Cambourne and Turnbull's (1990) research revealed that instructional conformity excluded, by its nature, a large number of students whose abilities remained undiscovered due to inadequate assessment methods. Examinations have been found to rarely achieve their objectives (Chansarkar and Rautroy, 1981).

Educators have come to realize that the traditional tests used to assess students capabilities and learning potential were sadly inadequate to deal with culturally and linguistically different students (Samuda,1990). Assessment that emphasises the acquisition and recall of facts induce a surface approach to rote learning (Marton and Saljo, 1976) and thereby establish a hidden curriculum (Crooks,1988; Bergenhengowan, 1987). Chacko (1997) suggests that internal examinations and tests contain mostly lower order questions compiled from previous question papers. Further, he suggests that these forms of assessment merely assesses the pupil's ability to reproduce knowledge and therefore the higher levels of cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains are neglected. In British Universities students have a right, during the examinations, to answer questions of their choice which potentially allows them to have higher grades without proper understanding of substantial parts of the course (Sazhin,1994), thus allowing students to have gaps in their knowledge.

The literature has also revealed that current assessment practices undermines deep approaches to learning on the part of students (Orenstein,1993). Orenstein (1993) also criticizes the examination system for exerting a disproportionate influence on the curriculum and in particular on those many pupils whose interests and aspirations were not academic. Awomolo (1992) claims that the system of examinations rewards only one kind of achievement and consequently vital areas of personal growth has been under-emphasised. Continuous assessment has been seen as affording the testing of some learning outcomes which may not be easily or adequately tested by written examinations (Awomolo,1992).

Many countries have thus introduced continuous assessment for a variety of reasons. The introduction of continuous assessment in Tanzania can be traced back to the Musoma resolution in 1974 which stated the necessity of getting rid of the ambush type of examination (Tanu,1974 quoted in Pennyquick,1990). The main purpose of having a continuous assessment scheme as an integral component of assessment procedures is to,

eliminate/minimise the element of risk associated with a single examination and give a valid indication of student

achievement, because it is felt that no student who works conscientiously should fail. (Njabili,1987, p108)

Continuous assessment is not only seen as a process of grading students at various stages of the school programme, but also as

possible device for the nation to have objective data about the level of achievement of students at different levels of the education system and a systemic accumulation of evidence on the standard attained within the system.
(Nigeria,1985 quoted in Pennycuick,1990 p110)

Pennycuick (1990) claims that the validity of students results is increased by gathering assessment data over a substantial period of time and by maximising the range of educational objectives which are assessed. In Nigeria, the objectives of continuous assessment as contained in the National Policy on Education was the replacement of one final examination and one type of examination with a system of evaluation that is comprehensive and a collection of more valid and reliable assessment data for guidance and counseling purposes (Ali and Akubue,1988). Pennycuick (1990) and Awomolo (1992) claim that continuous assessment serves a broader range of assessment functions and emphasises in particular formative functions. Awomolo (1992) adds that a combination of continuous assessment and terminal assessment makes it possible to gain a more representative view of a student's capabilities and achievements.

Erinosho (1993) contends that continuous assessment was to direct as well as facilitate organisation of instruction and learning, while the final examination would provide standard conditions for comparing students. Research by Ali and Akubue (1988) reveal that teachers prefer continuous assessment as it allows teachers more opportunities of knowing the nature and scope of progress any pupil is making at any point in time. Others claim that there is a high preference for a hybrid approach to assessment by teachers (Erinosho, 1993; Dixon and Rawlings,1987; Chansarkar and Rautroy,1981; King,1976; Starr,1976; Willis,1974; Cox,1973; Starr,1970).

Consequently, many countries have introduced continuous assessment to operate in parallel with external examinations at secondary levels. Few countries have gone as far as the Australian State of Queensland in replacing external examinations by continuous assessment (Pennycuick,1990). In South Africa, The National Department of Education recommends that

continuous evaluation must be a compulsory component of promotion marks. From 1995, the continuous evaluation must be at least 25% with the maximum of 50% of the marks on the report card or of the promotion mark.

(Policy document A,p7)

The potential of continuous assessment has been recognised in many countries. In the next part of the chapter literature claims about the potential and effects of continuous assessment will be further explored.

2.8 KNOWLEDGE CLAIMS ABOUT THE POTENTIAL AND EFFECTS OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

A number of literature sources reviewed claim that continuous assessment impacts positively on teaching and learning (Awomolo,1992); resulting in an improvement in student performance (Dixon and Rawlings,1987); providing the basis for more effective guidance of the child (Pennycuick,1990) and reducing the negative backwash effect of examinations (Dixon and Rawlings,1987).

Layman (1994) claims that continuous assessment can ensure sustained teaching and learning and can contribute to the overall improvement in student performance. Thus it can be seen as having a formative role as the teacher evaluates to improve teaching and learning. Continuous assessment as suggested by Awomolo (1992) motivates students towards consistent learning efforts throughout the course of learning since assessment accompanies learning. Ali and Akubue (1988) claim that feedback from evaluation provides useful information for modifying and adapting the teaching curriculum so that both are relevant to the needs, interests and abilities of the learners. Simmons (1994) extends this argument by suggesting that assessment is not something we tack onto learning; it is an essential

ongoing component of instruction that guides the process of learning. To be of value Harrington (1991) and Wilde (1991) add that assessment must occur at the time of instruction. Continuous assessment procedures have great potential for improving teaching and learning because they focus attention on students acquiring specific learning targets and requires teachers to show students how their performance differs from desired performance (Nitko,1994).

Barclay and Breheny (1994) claim that continuous assessment serves to inform and shape the curriculum experienced by children. Perrone (1994) suggests that assessment activities that do not inform teaching practice day in and day out are misdirected and wasteful; doubly so if they do not help students to regularly make judgments about their own progress as learners. In Papua New Guinea, since assessment and examination are the responsibility of the Department and since teachers are responsible for preparation of test items for examination banks, it is possible to maintain close links between curriculum and assessment (Pennycuick,1990). In Sri Lanka, continuous assessment was developed to achieve the objectives of teaching and learning (Sri Lanka,1987 quoted in Pennycuick,1990).

However much the above citations espouse the claim that continuous assessment improves teaching and learning, in some studies it is not achieving this educational benefit. In the research study by Akwesi and Murphy (1994), it was found that a high proportion of assessment was still summative rather than formative and there was little evidence of continuous assessment going hand- in- hand with teaching and learning. Torrance and Pryor (1995) suggest that teachers cannot teach and assess at the same time. Infant teachers remain uncomfortable with the very idea of assessment, seeing it as separate from and alien to the process of teaching and social relationships they wish to foster in the classroom (Pollard et al,1994; Harlen and Qualter,1991).

In Ghana continuous assessment was still performing a selective function and teaching and assessment was therefore geared towards passing the final examinations (Akwesi and Murphy,1994). Furthermore, in schools in Britian case study evidence by Torrance and Pryor (1995) indicates that there is a

separation of teaching and assessment and new assessment methods begs questions about teachers theoretical understanding of how assessment might be integrated with the process of teaching and learning. Tan (1990) suggests that teachers teach for good examination results, so that continuous assessment constrains them in their approach to teaching; it limits innovation and inhibits their willingness to consider new teaching strategies, all efforts being directed at preventing students from failing rather than improving the quality of learning. In the research study by Chansarkar and Rautroy (1981) it was found that students were more concerned about their grades than using continuous assessment as a learning experience.

Some studies also claim that continuous assessment results in an improvement in student performances and there exists a significant positive correlation between continuous assessment and examination marks (Pennycuick,1990; Dixon and Rawlings,1987; Chansarkar and Rautroy,1981). Awomolo (1992) claims that because of its cumulative nature, continuous assessment encourages a fairer judgment of the achievements by students than a single shot and single domain examination. Assessing students in short sessions over many days and in different situations **should increase both the reliability and validity** of the developed instrument (Hall,1993; Dixon and Rawlings,1987). It has also been cited that continuous assessment enables teachers to be more flexible and innovative in their instruction (Nigeria,1985 quoted in Pennycuick,1990); and stimulates a more professional attitude on the part of teachers (Awomolo,1992).

Whilst the intentions of introducing continuous assessment are noble in many countries, this form of assessment is not without its attendant problems. in the next part of this chapter some of the problems that are cited in the literature sampled will be explored.

2.9 PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED WITH CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION

The literature reviewed reveals a range of problems that are experienced by teachers in implementing continuous assessment. Some studies indicate that teachers lack expertise in and experience of continuous assessment (Akvesi

and Murphy, 1994; Awomolo, 1992; Lockwood, 1991; Pennycuick, 1990; Ali and Akubue, 1988). In addition, low quality tests are set which may negate the gains in validity of continuous assessment. This has resulted in dilution of educational standards (Awomolo, 1992). Akwesi and Murphy's (1994) research found that there were fears amongst the 'traditionalists' that the assessment that was conducted by teachers would not receive recognition abroad. This concern, they contend, was closely related to the perceived threat to academic standards (Akwesi and Murphy, 1994). Teachers were also not formally implementing the feedback aspect of continuous assessment because of pressure to cover the syllabus within a stipulated period (Erinosho, 1993). This could also be the consequence of teachers not being provided with the wherewithal to carry out effective assessment. Ali and Akubue's (1988) study has revealed that with the exception of the cognitive domain most teachers are unfamiliar with other domains to measure.

Added to the problem of teacher lack of expertise and experience to carry out continuous assessment, teachers are faced with inadequate structural and administrative support, heavy workloads, large classes, low conditions of service, and inadequate resources (Akwesi and Murphy, 1994; Nwakoby, 1987). Nwakoby (1987) and Havelock and Huberman (1977) points to the need for clarity and for an adequate infrastructure in the introduction of any educational innovation. Awomolo's (1992) study reveals that teachers were under pressure to show good, there was therefore a boosting of continuous assessment scores. Teachers were also reported by parents because of poor results (Akwesi and Murphy, 1994; Awomolo, 1992). Teachers were also found to be suspicious behind the motives of continuous assessment schemes as it interfered with their professional autonomy (Akwesi and Murphy, 1994). Studies by Akwesi and Murphy (1994); Erinosho (1993); and Pennycuick (1990) have recorded a substantial increase in teacher workload. This could be the result of frequent testing and grading as such work includes the development, administration, marking and recording of tests. Consequently, continuous assessment has been perceived by teachers as being tedious, boring and time consuming (Ali and Akubue, 1988).

Pupil-related problems that were cited centred around continuous assessment discouraging pupils from experimenting with their own ideas and encouraging conformity with textbook opinion (Chansarkar and Rautroy, 1981); work

which was not to be formally assessed has been neglected (Dixon and Rawlings,1987); in cases where continuous assessment included project work there was pressure and overload on pupils taking several subjects (Pennycuick,1990). Pennycuick (1990) also adds that pupils coming from relatively wealthy backgrounds may be at an advantage as they have greater access to resources needed for such work. This raises the question about the comparability of continuous assessment scores between classes within and across schools (Erinosho,1993; Awomolo,1992; Pennycuick,1990; Ali and Akubue,1988). This could be the consequence of the absence of standardisation and moderation procedures.

Several studies reviewed recorded sources of unreliability within school based assessment (Pennycuick,1990). These include administrative mistakes, teacher or assessor bias- unscrupulous and dishonest behavior of teachers in awarding grades (Erinosho,1993), doubtful originality of work- collusion or cheating (Awomolo,1992), administration of continuous assessment within the school may not be straight forward e.g., what is to be done when pupils absent themselves or when pupils transfer to other schools (Pennycuick,1990)?

In the next part of the chapter problems of continuous assessment policy formulation and policy implementation will be explored.

2.10 POLICY FORMULATION AND POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

2.10.1 POLICY FORMULATION

I intend in this part of the chapter to present characteristics of policy formulation. This will enable me to draw parallels with the formulation of continuous assessment policy in South Africa and assist me in understanding the policy-practice relationship. In addition, successful patterns of policy making cannot be ignored if policy makers intend for policy to have the desired impact.

In democratic societies, the formulation of **any policy** relating to assessment requires participation of all major stakeholders in the arena of education. When standard solutions are developed a **great distance** from the problem they have been found to be notoriously **unreliable**. The top down process of policy formulation are alien to the realities of the classroom. The lack of teacher involvement and consultation in the process interferes with the professional autonomy of teachers (Akvesi and Murphy,1994). It has also been evident from the literature that the heavy overload of demands and expectations resulting from new policies means that street level bureaucrats are essentially free to develop their own coping devices for simplifying and often distorting the aim of policy makers (McLaughlin,1987).

Therefore appropriate policy on assessment, and continuous assessment in particular, needs to take cognisance of : the purpose of assessment (Grayson,1994; King,1994); teacher involvement in the design of assessment (Nitko,1994); linguistic appropriateness of the assessment method (Baker,1994); research into assessment practice (Jansen,1994) and funding (Baker,1994; Okoye,1982).

2.10.2 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The success of policy implementation depends on local capacity and will (McLaughlin,1987). The central problem of implementation is not whether implementors conform to prescribed policy, but whether the policy implementation process results in consensus of goals, individual autonomy, a commitment to policy on the **part of those who must** carry it out (Majone and Wildavsky,1977). Bardach (1977) suggests that the most important participants in the implementation process

act within a context of expectations that something will happen that bears at least a passing resemblance to whatever was mandated by the initial policy decision. (p61)

The literature that focused on continuous assessment policy in particular has revealed that : (a) the bulk of the work regarding the implementation of continuous assessment falls on the teacher - such work includes the

development, administration, marking and recording of tests at fixed intervals, work that calls for patience, thoroughness, fairness and accuracy (Ali and Akubue,1988); (b) the Papua New Guinea Department of Education issued detailed instruction to schools for the conduct of continuous assessment and schools have be supplied with resource materials from which teachers can generate their own classroom tests (Pennycuick,1990); and (c) in Ghana teachers felt threatened by the introduction of continuous assessment policy, others did not see their way clear of what exactly was expected of them (Akwesi and Murphy,1994). They contend that for the successful implementation of any educational innovation there must be total commitment from teachers. They go on further to suggest that

unlike the past, where in Ghana, teachers accepted policy decisions without any reflections and discussions with regards to what policy entails, in reality things have changed. It is no longer possible to present new curriculum innovations as initiative packs, just like Christmas boxes and then expect the teachers to open these initiative packs and begin to implement them. They need time to analyse the merits and de-merits of the change before making their own decisions as regards implementation. (Akwesi and Murphy,1994 p6)

I will conclude this chapter by discussing the implications of the literature review for this research study on the relationship between continuous assessment policy and practice.

2.11 IMPLICATIONS OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The implications of this literature review on the impact of the new continuous assessment policy on high school teachers will be explored. This synthesis has been relevant to my study in that : (a) the literature review alerted me to the scope and range of problems experienced with continuous assessment in other contexts, and I will determine to what extent these problems converge or diverge with the South African experience; (b) it revealed that the actual policy claims about the potential and positive aspects of continuous assessment are rarely being achieved - this alerted the research design to problem areas that would focus the study; (c) it showed how the different

sources explained the gap between continuous assessment policy and continuous assessment practice, providing me with different kinds of explanatory frameworks which I would explore in examining South African policy/practice with respects to continuous assessment; (d) it explained why continuous assessment has been introduced in other countries and forms the basis for comparing the South African rationale for introducing continuous assessment.

As a result of this review, I will explore the relationship between continuous assessment policy and continuous assessment practice.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will outline the methodological approach and procedural strategies used to investigate the policy-practice relationship in the context of continuous assessment in South African classrooms. Recall that the methodology addresses three overarching research questions :

- 1 What are the intentions of continuous assessment as set out in the formal policy documents(policy)?
- 2 How do teachers understand and implement continuous assessment in high school classrooms(practice)?
- 3 What is the relationship between continuous assessment policy and continuous assessment practice in high school classroom?

2. METHODOLOGY

I combined the use of a survey questionnaire(largely quantitative) with the development of case studies(qualitative) to address the research questions identified earlier. Merriam (1988) argues that combining qualitative and quantitative methods,

this is in fact a form of triangulation that enhances the validity of ones study. (p2)

The quantitative strategy generated statistical data on continuous assessment. This enabled me to obtain information on a large group of teachers on their understanding, perceptions and experience of continuous assessment. This assisted me in describing the characteristic of the population on the issue. The qualitative cases on the other hand, examines phenomena in their natural setting, therefore research in this type of study is viewed as a process that informs about how things occur in reality. Qualitative researchers are interested in meaning, that is, how people make sense of their lives, what they experience, how they interpret these experiences and how they structure their

social world (Merriam,1988). The case study method concerns itself with the natural context in which research is conducted. It also enables the researcher to undertake an intensive holistic description and analysis of phenomena. I made use of case studies to obtain a holistic description of continuous assessment implementation.

However, in choosing case studies, I make no claim of generalizations, for although generalizations can be statistically meaningful, they have no applicability to individual cases. Cases often provide texture and detail to common problems experienced, in this study by teachers engaging in policy.

I also made use of various methods for data collection. Merriam (1988) explains that

the rationale for this strategy is that the flaws of one method are often the strength of another, and by combining methods, observers can achieve the best of each, while overcoming their unique deficiencies. (p69)

Merriam(1988) also suggests that qualitative data rely heavily upon qualitative data obtained from interviews, observations and documents and by using different methods of data collection, a major strength of case study research is revealed.

3. INSTRUMENTATION, SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION

I made use of various instruments to collect data viz.; survey overview using questionnaires; document analysis; and case study details using semi-structured interviews, mark schedules and transcript analysis.

3.1 QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaires were chosen as the primary source of data as it enabled me to obtain quick, quantitative data of a large sample of teachers on their understanding, insights and practice of continuous assessment. I used both

structured and open-ended questions in the questionnaire (Appendix 1). The questions were developed by myself and reviewed by my supervisor. All questionnaires had a covering letter that pointed out the purpose of the study; emphasizing the importance and relevance of the research topic; and indicating my willingness to share the results of this study with the respondents. Anonymity which the questionnaires gave the respondents was decided on, as I felt that this was the best way of obtaining responses that would be honest. Because a self-reporting instrument was used in this study, the validity of the data is limited to the accuracy, sincerity and honesty of the respondents.

The questionnaire had seven parts to it, with each part containing categories of questions that are related to the first two research questions. Part A of the questionnaire sought to establish demographic data of the respondents, in terms of their designation, their main teaching subject, their teaching experience in years, gender, type of school and their completed qualifications. Part B was designed to determine how the continuous assessment policy was introduced in schools. Part C was used to find out selected features of the Department's Policy Document B on continuous assessment. Parts D and F sought to establish the respondents' perceptions, understanding, experiences and drawbacks of continuous assessment. Parts E and G were open-ended questions that sought to determine reasons why continuous assessment had been introduced in schools and problems experienced by the respondents in attempting to implement continuous assessment. The validity of this instrument was enhanced by piloting the questionnaire with ten teachers from two schools. The piloting served to point out weaknesses of the draft questionnaire in terms of layout, clarity, language and structuring of questions. It also served to establish whether differences existed in responses of teachers from the various subjects; and the value of the individual questions in terms of the overall research objectives.

Piloting

I distributed the questionnaire to ten schools in the Durban and South Coast regions of KwaZulu-Natal. The number and location of the schools were influenced by the time available to collect data, ease of access to schools, and my familiarity with the sampled schools. Eight of the ten schools chosen were from the ex-House of Delegates schools, one from the ex-House of Assembly and one from the ex-Department of Education and Training. The

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 Note: The majority of schools are already implementing CA. The 8 schools from the ex-House of Delegates were largely the 8 schools from the ex-House of Delegates which implemented CA.
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uneven choice of schools from the three different ex-Departments of Education was due to preliminary inquiries with the ex-Department of Education and Training schools, revealing that many were not implementing continuous assessment. The ex-House of Assembly schools on the other hand had been implementing continuous assessment since 1993. Although neither schools nor teachers were selected randomly, there was no reason to believe that they were atypical of secondary schools in the study. The selection of ex-House of Delegates schools therefore provided a policy setting in which continuous assessment was seriously pursued in the context of the provincial policy directive.

I personally contacted colleagues at each of the schools, after obtaining permission from the principal to administer the questionnaire to all teachers at that school. I chose this method above posting the questionnaires to obtain a high response rate. Respondents were also given sufficient time to give thoughtful answers to the questions posed. I distributed 480 questionnaires and the response rate as a whole was 60,2%. Table 3.1 reflects the response rate of the various schools :

obtain high response rate.

One of the limitations of questionnaires is the low response rate. ^{the reason} To counteract this disadvantage/limitation, the researcher chose to personally contact the respondents and give them by hand, the questionnaire which improved the response rate to 60,2%.

NAME OF SCHOOL	NO. GIVEN	NO. RETURNED	RESPONSE RATE
1. Sacred Hall	30	8	27%
2. Townhill Secondary	39	39	100%
3. Kadville High	50	34	68%
4. Oceanvale Secondary	30	23	77%
5. Scottsdale High	50	27	54%
6. Highland Secondary	70	42	60%
7. Deepvale High	60	27	45%
8. St Patricks High	60	39	65%
9. Pelican High	50	27	54%
10. Siyasiswe	41	23	56%
	480	289	60,2%

Table 3.1. Questionnaire Response Rates of Different Schools

The biodata for the selected schools revealed that 244(84,4%) were Level One teachers(ordinary classroom teachers), 36(12,5%) were Heads of Department, 6(2,1%) were Deputy Principals, and 3(1,0%) were Principals. I used a computer based analysis system (SPSS- Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to obtain descriptive statistics in the form of charts, tables and percentages. The items of the questionnaire were categorized in an attempt to identify response patterns which demonstrated the unique and common ways in which continuous assessment was being implemented by this sample of teachers.

3.2 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

In mid-1995 the Department of Education distributed two policy documents on continuous assessment to schools. Circular 10/95 (Policy Document A) was issued from the National Department of Education and KZN circular 3/95 (Policy Document B) was issued from the KwaZulu-Natal provincial Department of Education. I generated a series of analytical questions which were used to interrogate each of the two policy documents on continuous assessment with the goal of identifying the political and bureaucratic origins of each document and clarifying the explicit and implied policy goals articulated for continuous assessment in South African schools. Data extracted from the document analysis also formed the basis for more in-depth questioning of Department officials through a semi-structured interview to obtain their understanding of continuous assessment goals.

advantages &
disadvantages

The semi-structured interviews were conducted with four Department officials involved in formulating the policy on continuous assessment. The Department officials that were interviewed were a representative from the National Department of Education; one from the National Department of Education involved in formulating policies for assessment in an Outcomes Based framework; a representative from a teacher union; and a curriculum development specialist from the KwaZulu-Natal provincial Department of Education. The spread of Department officials interviewed served to reduce bias as well as to allow the different officials an opportunity of presenting their unique perspectives from their various portfolios. The questions used in the interview were determined by the first research question : What are the intentions of continuous assessment as set out in the formal policy documents(policy)? The questions focused on the rationale and objectives of continuous assessment and appear on the interview schedule (Appendix 3) Each interviewee was faxed a copy of some of the questions to be asked as to ensure well thought out responses were given and established a comfortable and transparent interview. Some of the interviews were conducted telephonically as the interviews were difficult to arrange due to the busy schedule of Department officials.

During the interviews clarifying questions were used when necessary to gain the most complete understanding possible of the participant's answer.

Although the interviewees responded to standard questions, these were standard questions in the sense that their essence was the same, though in some instances the wording differed. All interviews were audiotaped and transcripts analyzed for similar pattern of responses. The responses of the different interviewees were documented in a brief narrative. Responses of the different interviewees were compared with the policy goals expressed in Policy Documents A and B to determine divergence and convergence in articulation of policy goals.

3.4 THE CASE STUDY DOCUMENTATION

I conducted three descriptive case study protocols of three standard nine Biology teachers chosen conveniently from the 289 teachers who responded to the questionnaire. The three standard nine teachers were chosen from three different ex-Departments of Education, i.e., a teacher each from the ex-House of Delegates; the ex-House of Assembly; and the ex-Department of Education and Training. I wanted to explore the current practices of continuous assessment by teachers in each of these separate ex-Departments of Education given their separate education histories. I chose case studies as the means of exploring continuous assessment practice as it is a most suitable method of understanding meanings and purposes attached to human actions as well as providing a holistic picture of continuous assessment practice. I used five methods of data collection to comprise each case, viz., semi-structured interviews; profiling; analysis of teacher mark schedules; analysis of teacher transcripts; and questionnaire.

I conducted two sets of semi-structured interviews with each of the three teachers. The first set of interviews served to determine the nature of continuous assessment practice and how it relates to assessment intentions and had three broad foci : perceptions of continuous assessment policy; impact of continuous assessment on the teaching and learning process; and management of the continuous assessment process. Questions from the interview schedule(Appendix 4) were posed to these teachers. Each teacher was faxed a copy(Appendix 5) of the questions to be asked. This helped to establish a comfortable atmosphere that was transparent and had no hidden agendas. The validity of this instrument was tested by faxing copies of the interview transcripts to the interviewee to determine whether their views were

correctly recorded. The second set of semi-structured interviews **that** were conducted were in relation to continuous assessment tasks that were set by the three teachers. The questions were designed in the main to elicit responses on the successes pupils achieved when tasks were completed; strategies used for incomplete tasks; and the type of feedback given to pupils (Appendix 6). The interviews were audiotaped and the transcripts analyzed.

and:

I then recorded a profile of each teacher (Appendix 7) to contextualise these teachers and their schools. Each teacher's mark schedules was analyzed for frequency of assessment; types of assessment tasks offered; and weightings of these assessment tasks. This served as a basis for more in-depth questioning about continuous assessment tasks in the second set of interviews conducted. Transcripts of one of each type of assessment task offered by each teacher was chosen and subjected to the rating scale (Appendix 8) to determine the quality of tasks offered by teachers. The rating scale focused on five characteristics of continuous assessment tasks :

1. Range and diversity of skills:

I identified the following science process skills : recall, analysis, synthesis, data-response, inferring, comprehension, drawing, application, observation, manipulation, communication, measurement, formulating hypothesis, predicting, and data presentation.

2. Complexity/challenge/creativity :

This category sought to establish whether different levels of questioning were being asked, whether the tasks challenged value judgements, whether the tasks required authentic orientation.

3. Form :

This category sought to determine whether the tasks were of the pen-and-paper type, oral, debate, fieldwork.

4. Language Usage :

The purpose of this category was to establish whether the instruments used for assessment were heavily reliant on the English language.

5. Application/Focus

Here the focus was on whether the tasks were applicable to real life, to previous work done, and whether the tasks were culturally biased.

Data from the survey questionnaire(Appendix 1) was used to complete the case study protocol for each of these teachers. Responses of the three teachers were compared in a cross case analysis in an attempt to identify convergence and divergence in continuous assessment practice.

CHAPTER 4

WHY CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT ?

UNDERSTANDING POLICY INTENTIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will present the intentions of continuous assessment and the ways in which these policy intentions were conveyed to teachers in response to critical question one :

What are the intentions of continuous assessment as set out in formal policy documents ?

Understanding official claims for continuous assessment is important in that they provide a basis against which to assess their relationship to what teachers actually do (practice). The policy intentions of continuous assessment will be explored in (a) as expressed in documents; (b) as explained by Department of Education Officials and (c) as understood by teachers. I will firstly, analyze the two circulated, publicly available continuous assessment policy documents : one from the National Department of Education (Policy Document A) and one from the Provincial Department of Education (Policy Document B) that were sent to schools towards the middle of 1995. I will analyze these documents based on the questions posed on the document analysis schedule (Appendix 2). The focus of the analysis will be on the intentions of continuous assessment. Secondly, I will document brief narratives of semi structured interviews conducted with four policymakers involved in formulating the policy on continuous assessment. The policymakers were chosen as a representative from the National Department of Education, a teacher union, the KZN Provincial Department of Education and an official involved in formulating policy for outcomes based education from the National Department of Education. The spread of policymakers interviewed served to reduce bias as well as allowing these officials an opportunity of providing their perspectives from their various portfolios. I will summarize this part of the chapter by comparing the responses of the different interviewees.

Thirdly, I will present a statistical analysis on the information available to 289 secondary school teachers, on reasons why these teachers think

continuous assessment has been introduced in our schools. Data for this part of this chapter will be obtained from part E of the questionnaire (Appendix 1) and finally, I will summarize this chapter by comparing patterns and trends that develop with the intentions of continuous assessment as expressed in Policy Documents A and B, as explained by department officials and as understood by secondary school teachers, all in the light of the critical question posed above.

A. THE POLICY INTENTIONS OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT: EVIDENCE FROM DOCUMENTS.

1. ANALYSIS OF POLICY DOCUMENT A FROM THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Policy Document A is analyzed in the light of the questions posed in the document analysis schedule (Appendix 2). Policy Document A is dated 13 February 1995 and is intended to provide details of the amended core syllabi and school phase curricula and to express the status of the interim core syllabus. The policy document A presents guidelines from the secondary phase committee of the NETF. These guidelines have been declared as general policy by the Minister of Education. A number of guidelines are offered by policy document A for the various activities of the school programme. Continuous assessment forms a small part of this policy document A with minimal guidelines on continuous assessment to the Provincial Department of Education.

Policy document A offers the following guidelines for evaluation in secondary schools : (a) continuous evaluation must be a compulsory component of the promotion marks ranging from a minimum of 25% to a maximum of 50% of the promotion mark, (b) formal tests should only form part of the continuous evaluation and should be supplemented by orals, short assignments, portfolios, shorter tests, projects etc., (c) in the management of continuous assessment the policy document A suggests that continuous evaluation must be a transparent exercise and (d) in the design of continuous assessment instruments the policy document A recommends that in the evaluation of pupils whose home language is not the language of instruction, the questions

should be clear and direct and language should be penalized only to a certain extent.

The document does not offer a rationale for introducing continuous assessment, nor does it provide a conception of what continuous assessment is, or makes explicit what the intentions of continuous assessment are. It does however suggest only one goal for continuous assessment, that is, different kinds of tasks should be assessed. In addition, Policy Document A makes the assumptions that all teachers have a common understanding of continuous assessment; that all schools are well resourced and will therefore implement the different kinds of assessment tasks as Policy Document A suggests; that teachers have the expertise and experience of assessing different kinds of tasks, especially those tasks of a qualitative nature where judgements have to be made; and that provincial structures exist to interface between the National Department of Education and classroom practitioners.

2. ANALYSIS OF POLICY DOCUMENT B

This policy document B has been issued by the KZN Provincial Department of Education and was dated 26 May 1995. The purpose of the policy document B was to provide clarification and guidance on the implementation of the interim phase curricula requirements that were referred to in policy document A. Clarification and guidance are offered for the implementation of the interim phase curricula, promotion requirements, assessment procedures and language requirements. Policy document B states that further support materials and orientation courses **will** be provided for continuous assessment.

Policy document B does not offer a rationale for introducing continuous assessment, nor does it state why the shift from the formal examinations became necessary. Policy document B has defined continuous assessment as

representing continuing awareness, by the teacher of the development of knowledge of learners over a period of time. It is a gradual build up of a cumulative judgment about performance. (p.2)

The Policy Document B has also stated certain implicit and explicit goals of continuous assessment. I have categorized these goals as pedagogical goals, implementation proposals and the way in which the continuous assessment process should be managed.

The pedagogical goals suggested by Policy Document B are : (a) that continuous assessment should involve the evaluation of a variety of assessment tasks and learner activities such as exercises, assignments, class tests, practical and oral work etc.; (b) assessment should occur more frequently and on a continuous basis throughout the year; (c) continuous assessment enhances the teaching and learning process and provides ample scope for the teacher to explore the curriculum more fully and; (d) continuous assessment allows for the growth of thinking processes, the development of skills and the acquisition of knowledge and understanding.

The implementation proposals that are suggested by policy document B are that of (a) the teacher adopting a systematic and structural approach to continuous assessment without clarification of the concepts “systematic” and “structural” or ways in which the teacher will be able to achieve this; (b) that assessment should be based on all significant aspects of the work without explaining what counts as “significant”; and (c) that evaluation should occur on a continuous basis. The number of times a teacher should evaluate pupils work is however not made explicit.

In managing the continuous assessment process policy document B suggests that : (a) schools should decide when and how frequently assessment should be made; (b) care should be taken not to overload the school programme with too many tests or test situations; (c) schools need to discuss fully the aspects and procedures for continuous assessment in the various subjects before these are implemented; (d) the recommended weighting for continuous assessment is 50%, without an explanation as to why “50%” is the most appropriate; and (e) learners and parents need to be made fully aware of assessment procedures and requirements.

Policy Document B assumes that the climate existing within the school is receptive to this innovation; that the mere stating of goals e.g., exploring the curriculum more fully, will be readily attained; that all schools will receive this circular and thereby implement continuous assessment as suggested by Policy Document B; and that the state of resources both physical and human, at schools, will support this innovation.

3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

3.1. The document from the National Department of Education provides only one goal for continuous assessment, that is, assessment of different kinds of tasks whereas the KZN Provincial Department of Education has elaborated on this goal as well as provided others in terms of improving pedagogy, implementation proposals as well as the efficient management of the process of continuous assessment.

3.2. Neither documents provide a rationale for introducing continuous assessment.

3.3. Both documents suggests types of tasks that can be assessed as well as the recommended weighting of continuous assessment compared to examinations.

3.4. Both documents suggest that learners and parents need to be made fully aware of assessment procedures and requirements, particularly in terms of making continuous assessment a transparent exercise.

3.5. The provincial document makes no reference to the language of instruction and home language. This is particularly disturbing considering the cross linguistic nature of the KZN classrooms.

3.6. Although the provincial department clarifies the concept of continuous assessment, this is not made explicit in the document from the National Department of Education.

3.7. Both documents assume that schools are well resourced and teachers have the expertise to implement continuous assessment as suggested.

3.8. Neither documents speak of the moderation and recording of continuous assessment marks.

In other words, a minimalist description of the policy on continuous assessment is provided with little specification of how implementation could proceed, or what support would be provided, given the vastly unequal school settings existing in South Africa.

B. POLICY INTENTIONS OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT : EVIDENCE FROM DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS

In this part of the chapter I will present four narratives of interviews conducted with four policymakers. The focus of the narratives will be on the intentions of continuous assessment from the perspective of Department officials. The interview data formed a supplementary set of information to the evidence from documents in building a comprehensive portrait of why continuous assessment was introduced, i.e. policy intentions. On the other hand, I will check for degrees of convergence between documentary and interview claims on the official policy goals for continuous assessment.

1. DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL A

Department official A is a curriculum development specialist in the KZN Provincial Department of Education. He was chosen for this research study on the basis of his expertise on the field of curriculum development and his role as a member of the NETF concerned with formulating policy on continuous assessment. His department has introduced continuous assessment in schools because it is policy by the National Department of Education. He is aware that some departments are not implementing continuous assessment; they are

actually violating policy, for reasons not that they do not want continuous assessment, more in terms of whether I think they have the capacity because we ourselves have the problem of trying to orientate our principals and teachers. (Appendix 9)

Department official A offers reasons of de-emphasizing examinations and moving away from a curriculum dictated by examinations, enabling teacher and pupils to explore the curriculum more fully as paper and pencil tests do not sample the entire curriculum; and continuous assessment allows for the assessment of pupils more frequently for the introduction of continuous assessment in schools. He suggests that the stimulus for introducing continuous assessment has been the formation of the NETF, “without creating problems in terms of new textbooks.” The NETF was formed in the post election period to “clean up the existing curriculum and combine to have one syllabus for all.” He sees continuous assessment being introduced because of the paradigm shift in terms of assessment, from norm referenced to criterion referenced. He believes that this paradigm shift aligns itself with similar trends throughout the world.

In response to how teachers in the classroom level have become aware of the policy of continuous assessment, A stated that principals and teachers were orientated to continuous assessment through workshops and circulars and *continuous assessment as a component was done in collaboration with teacher bodies, it was a teacher body initiative.* (Appendix 9)

It remains questionable whether training in occasional workshops will bring about the necessary change. He did however express that the Department had not the opportunity of finding out how continuous assessment is operative in schools. With policy overload and no follow up, it would appear as if continuous assessment is one more policy for the shelves. The non implementation of continuous assessment does not pose much of a problem as yet as

the important issue, the curriculum, we are also aware that in 1998 we have a new curriculum coming out and next year (1997) is going to be a target year for capacity building projects. (Appendix 9)

Other factors that hinder the successful implementation of continuous assessment, as explained by Department official A, are limited resources; lack of provincial structures; inadequate conceptualization of continuous assessment; teachers do not understand the rationale behind it; and the period

of transition has required adjustments by the different Departments of Education. Department official A contends that in some cases continuous assessment has become ineffective as it is reduced to a series of tests and pupils become overburdened with too many assessment tasks. He also asserts that the provincial Departments have adapted the National Department's guidelines regarding continuous assessment in terms of the weightings for continuous assessment and examinations. The,

National guidelines suggest minimum 25% maximum 50%, we are using 50% because of studies carried out throughout the world we feel that it should be 50/50 because one should not outweigh the other. (Appendix 9)

Department official A claims that continuous assessment has the following positive effects : (a) continuous assessment is developmental as it allows the teacher to diagnose weaknesses and by talking to the pupil can show him how he can improve; (b) it enables the teacher to develop an overall picture of the child including the affective domain; (c) continuous assessment allows for a collaboration between teacher and learner and because the focus of assessment shifts from teacher to learner, the assessment becomes learner centered; (d) pupils are able to progress in terms of their own potential rather than comparing their performance with other pupils; (e) continuous assessment enables the learner to make choices and to have a sense of belonging in the assessment tasks that he chooses; and (f) other assessment techniques like group and peer assessment can be incorporated into continuous assessment.

According to Department official A continuous assessment has not been evaluated in KZN , the KZN provincial Department has not received feedback on the implementation of continuous nor has continuous assessment been trialed or piloted in South African schools.

B. DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL B

Department official B is the National Education Officer of a teacher union presently based at the union headquarters in Pretoria. He has been chosen for this study because of his role as a member of the NETF and for the insight he could provide from a teacher union perspective. His most salient argument for continuous assessment is from an effective school perspective, by stating that

the exams was a way of showing the public that schools are functioning, but that had not been the case in our disadvantaged schools. Now that is part and parcel of the problem. (Appendix 10)

He sees the union as not being behind the introduction of continuous assessment as such but was part to the transformation process. The implication drawn here is that the union's role in the process was to make up the representative numbers. He also believes that continuous assessment was

a concept, it was not policy. It was a concept to move towards transformation and the changes that come with the new curriculum. (Appendix 10)

Department official B stresses the limitations of examinations in not equipping pupils with the skills necessary to enter the workforce; its inadequacy to cope with the demands of the economy; in assessing what pupils really know and; in its disproportionate influence on the curriculum and what is taught in the classroom. He asserts that the limitations of examinations have been compounded by South Africa's peculiar case where whites have controlled the process of examinations of all citizens. He forwards the following reasons why continuous assessment will address the limitations of formal examinations : pupils are assessed on a continuous basis; pupils are credited for their academic achievement as well as their ability to demonstrate processes and; the curriculum will advise the assessment and not become test-driven as in the past.

Department official B is of the view that the policy documents that have been sent to schools with regards to continuous assessment was just to highlight the concept of continuous assessment. It would appear as if continuous assessment was a preview of something bigger to come. He is not aware of the impact of these documents as he has not received feedback on the way in which continuous assessment is being implemented in schools. He believes that the successful implementation of continuous assessment is presently being hindered as

continuous assessment is introduced according to the existing curriculum, therefore it has not addressed the problem. (Appendix 10)

He claims that teachers are teaching the same content and continuous assessment has become reduced to periodic testing. He stresses that continuous assessment should

ensure that a good mechanism is put forward that recognizes the abilities of a child and not merely give tests. (Appendix 10)

3. DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL C

Department official C is a curriculum development specialist at the National Department of Education. Although she has not been involved in formulating the policy on continuous assessment, she has been invited to fill in the post of research, evaluation and assessment for broader reform in Education and Training, i.e., for the implementation of the new curriculum in 1998, and subsequently to work on national policy on assessment in an Outcomes Based framework. She has also provided valuable insights on the present implementation of continuous assessment in schools. She believes that continuous assessment is

*not part of the new government's policy reform.
(Appendix 11)*

She adds that continuous assessment is still part of the old system where pupils are assessed according to grades and is therefore embedded in

an old practice , an old philosophy having promotion requirements,grades which is what we are moving away from and completely. (Appendix 11)

Further, she suggests that she wants to

categorically underline that it (continuous assessment) is old news now, it will be old news when the new curriculum is out in 1998. (Appendix 11)

Department official C is of the view that there is

chaos with regards to the implementation of continuous assessment policy. People are interpreting continuous assessment as it is in that document and they have different ways and they test continuously and they'll tell you that they are using continuous assessment, and that document doesn't even spell out what continuous assessment actually is, just that continuous evaluation, no guidance, no definition of evaluation is and all that. (Appendix 11)

She appears to advocate the top down approach to policy formulation in suggesting that

the Minister at National Department is concerned with policy and the monitoring and evaluation of that policy. The provincial Departments in the interim constitution is implied the delivery and execution of that policy from the National Department, in a provincial context. So for an examinations are a provincial function but the policy on examinations obviously comes from a the National Department. (Appendix 11)

Department official C believes that continuous assessment will not form part of the new assessment procedures in the new curriculum

not in the sense as its been done. It will come with more

guidelines but also I think with Outcomes Based Education approach we are not implementing it within the old paradigm like we have at the moment. (Appendix 11)

She suggests that to effectively implement continuous assessment you can,

introduce it within the traditional form of teaching, with rote learning and examinations and all those things or you can introduce it within a model of enablement that doesn't use assessment for grading, promotions etc. but for diagnostic purposes. (Appendix 11)

4. DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL D

Department official D is an official at the National Department of Education. He has been involved in the resume for instructional programmes of which continuous assessment was an integral part of. He has been chosen for this interview because of his role as a facilitator from the National Department of Education. He offers the following reason for the National Department introducing continuous assessment

it has come about with Outcomes Based education, and outcomes must be evaluated on a continuous basis, that is one of the main criteria put forward for Outcomes Based education, it must be assessed on a continuous basis. (Appendix 12)

Department official D sees the policy on continuous assessment as being introduced in the

interim period that was the first stage of continuous assessment, the period of preparing teachers for the new curriculum that will be implemented in 1998, that continuous assessment in 1995 was interim, it was the start you know, to make them familiar with it. (Appendix 12)

He believes that the stimulus for continuous assessment was

the first actual revision of the curriculum of that nature, we tried to consolidate it(syllabi) into one and to remove the outdated content, it was revision, it was not new syllabi. (Appendix 12)

He claims that the goals of continuous assessment has been generated and formulated by the NETF and are consistent throughout the different subjects. He also stated that the provincial department has become aware of the policy through workshops and circulars. Further, he asserts that the National Department of Education was the

facilitator, so we supplied the input, back up systems, but it was done solely by the committee. (Appendix 12)

and,

we assisted the provincial Departments upon request to interpret the new policy. But not all of them made use of us, it was not compulsory but we made our services available. (Appendix 12)

In response to how the provincial Departments responded to the policy, he stated that most of the

state Departments were members of the NETF so they were working earlier with it. They can actually elaborate on it, they can act on parts, but once policy is decided every Department has to follow. (Appendix 12)

He has stated that the National Department does not work with schools directly and do not receive feedback on the way continuous assessment is being implemented. It is clear that there is no evaluation of this policy and Department official D's role has ended upon formulation of this policy.

He suggests that if schools want to comment they can go via their provincial structures

they actually go to the province or subject advisors in the province and maybe when there is seriously a change in policy then they will come to us. We have no schools that we go to. (Appendix 12)

Department official D claims that continuous assessment will enable teachers to explore the curriculum more fully by suggesting that

they can examine sections that were previously not examinable. If you take Physical Science they can take lab work, or field work in Geography, things that you cannot evaluate in the formal exams, but practical work can be assessed if a task is given. (Appendix 12)

5 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

5.1 The four Department officials interviewed have apparently different views on the rationale for the introduction of the continuous assessment policy. Two of the Department officials(A and B) believe that continuous assessment has been introduced to address the limitations of the formal examinations. The goals of continuous assessment offered are that of assessing more frequently; assessing a greater range of skills; and enabling the teacher and pupils to explore the curriculum more fully. Department officials have not offered any ways in which these intentions could be implemented, nor have they explained how the process of continuous assessment will unfold in terms of it's broader context of the new government's education policy reform.

5.2 It appears as if members of the NETF did the fieldwork on continuous assessment and submitted it to the National Department of Education for approval and to be gazetted as policy. Department officials from the National Department believe that their role ends at policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation. But the policy on continuous assessment has

neither been monitored nor evaluated. They have also indicated that the delivery and execution of policy is a provincial function, but whether these provincial structures exist and are functional has not been established by the National Department of Education.

5.3 Most of the Department officials are aware of the chaos regarding the implementation of continuous assessment and that in some schools continuous assessment is not being implemented. Whereas some have forwarded reasons for the non-implementation of continuous assessment others believe that it is embedded in an old paradigm and will therefore not achieve its goals. It is clear that none of these officials wants to take responsibility for the chaos that prevails with the implementation of continuous assessment in the classroom.

C. POLICY INTENTIONS OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT : PERSPECTIVES OF TEACHERS.

In this part of the chapter I solicited teacher perspectives on why continuous assessment has been introduced in our schools. The responses of 289 secondary school teachers were categorized. Five major themes emerged as to reasons why continuous assessment has been introduced. They are : to reduce the emphasis on examinations; to enhance the learning experiences of pupils; political ploy by the government; increasing the validity of the assessment method and; enhancing the teaching process.

Ninety-one (91) of the 289 (31,4%) of teachers sampled have recorded the limitations of formal examinations as to the reason why continuous assessment has been introduced. Forty-four(44,0)% have stated that continuous assessment reduces the stress that pupils encounter during formal examinations and 41,8% have indicated that continuous assessment reduces the emphasis of examinations. What is equally significant is that a large proportion of teachers have not cited this reason. This could be an indication that a fairly substantial percentage of teachers believe the formal examinations to be the most suitable method of judging pupil's performances, or that they are so steeped in old methodology that they do not recognize these limitations.

However, a relatively large number of respondents (51,2%) have indicated that continuous assessment enhances the learning experiences of pupils. A significantly high percentage (36,5%) of the respondents stated that pupils are advantaged by obtaining higher marks as assessment is ongoing and cumulative, whilst 20,9% believe that continuous assessment develops positive attitudes in pupils - encouraging critical thinking and creativity. Other reasons that were offered by the respondents were that of pupils becoming independent workers; continuous assessment increases pupils understanding of work set; there is a reduction of rote learning; the assessment becomes more relevant to the pupils and; continuous assessment provides opportunities for the development of pupil's cognitive skills. An important point that emerges from this analysis is that the practitioners at the classroom level have clearly recognized the inherent benefits of continuous assessment in moving towards a learner-centered, process-oriented approach.

On the other hand, a large number of respondents (51,8%) view the introduction of continuous assessment with political suspicion. This is perhaps understandable given the legacy of apartheid and the differing educational realities that exist in the South African classrooms. Featuring more frequently, as illustrated in Chart 4.1 below are reasons of passing every pupil and reducing state expenditure on education and; uplifting the disadvantaged pupils.

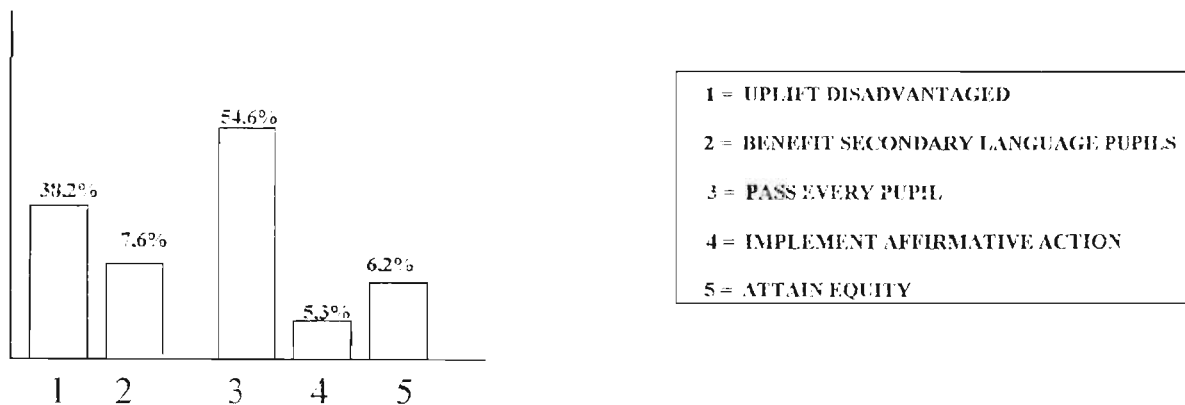


Chart 4.1. Political Reasons for Introducing Continuous Assessment

Other political reasons offered by teachers were that of : continuous assessment benefiting the English second language speakers; to align the South African system of education with those of developing countries; to

address the imbalances in education and; to create more problems for the overburdened teacher. Whereas some teachers have viewed continuous assessment as a positive step towards achieving social justice and equity, others have responded negatively and view the introduction of continuous assessment as a political ploy by the government.

This is further illustrated when only 27,3% and 10,7% of the respondents have offered reasons of continuous assessment being a more reliable method of assessment and continuous assessment enhancing the teaching process respectively. Teachers have indicated that the formal examinations have been limited in that it does not form a clear picture of pupils capabilities whereas with continuous assessment the teacher assesses a variety of skills, especially those of the affective domain, some of which cannot be assessed during the formal examination situation. They claim that continuous assessment also emphasizes different aspects of pupil development and as assessment occurs more frequently, a cumulative picture of pupil capabilities develop. Considering the relatively small percentage of the respondents (10,7%) that have stated that continuous assessment enhances the teaching process, it is clear that teaching and assessment are regarded as two separate and unrelated processes. They have offered reasons of continuous assessment resulting in an improved curriculum: the teacher becomes empowered as the focus of assessment has shifted to the teacher and ; that continuous assessment has a diagnostic function as the teacher is able to diagnose weaknesses and problems.

D. SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

I will summarize this chapter by discussing the degree of divergence and convergence in understanding and expression of continuous assessment policy goals on the part of these three principle “actors” reviewed, that is, policy documents; Department officials; and teachers.

1. The goals of continuous assessment is most clearly articulated by teachers. Whereas policy documents A and B have expressed certain goals, the teacher component of this analysis went as far as explaining how these goals could be attained, for an example, the goal of continuous assessment increasing the

validity of assessment has been explained by teachers as being achieved by assessing more frequently; developing a cumulative picture of pupil performance and; assessing on a continuous basis. This raises implications for practice if the primary source of policy intentions are policy documents.

2. The goal of continuous assessment enabling the teacher to explore the curriculum more fully has been echoed by both Department officials and policy documents with minimum clarity on how this could be achieved. A small percentage of teachers concur with this goal. The implication for continuous assessment enhancing the teaching process is raised.

3. Of particular significance is the large number of teachers who view the introduction of continuous assessment with political suspicion. These reasons have not been cited in policy documents or by Department officials. If classroom practitioners, who are the teachers responsible for implementing continuous assessment, view continuous assessment this negatively, then its successful implementation will be severely hindered.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT PRACTICE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Having examined continuous assessment policy in Chapter Four, in this chapter I will present the findings on continuous assessment practice using data selected from a questionnaire (Appendix 1) completed by 289 secondary school teachers relating to the following research question : How is continuous assessment understood and implemented in secondary schools?

In order to facilitate understanding of the policy-practice relationship I will first discuss how the policy on continuous assessment and its goals were communicated to teachers. I will then report teachers' perceptions, understanding and implementation of continuous assessment in their classrooms. Next, I will present problems that are experienced by teachers in attempting to implement continuous assessment. I will conclude this chapter by examining the extent to which the implementation process mirrors policy intentions of continuous assessment.

5.2 HOW WERE THE POLICY ON CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT AND IT'S GOALS COMMUNICATED TO TEACHERS?

The primary source of the policy on continuous assessment and its goals for the teachers sampled has been Policy Document B. Data in Table 1 represents the findings of how teachers were aware of the Policy Document B.

	YES	NO
1. Are you aware of the Policy Document on CA?	86,8	13,2
2. Was the Document made available to all teachers in your school?	77,4	22,6
3. Do you have a personal copy of the Policy Document on CA?	28,3	71,3

Table 5.1. How were the teachers made aware of the Policy Document B on Continuous Assessment

Eighty-six (86) percent of the respondents are aware of the Policy Document B but only 28,3% have a copy of this document. This limits the extent to which policy intentions could be realized if so few teachers have a copy of this document.

Most of the respondents(75,6%) indicated that the document was made available through a circular. This implies that the document has been left open to a variety of interpretations and distortions when disseminated largely in the form of circulars. Also, communication of policy goals through workshops and meetings where there would be a higher degree of interaction, debate and clarification of intentions by teachers carry relatively small percentages (14,2% and 9,3% respectively). Most teachers have indicated that the policy was discussed at a staff meeting. Teachers have also listed a variety of sources via which they became aware of the policy on continuous assessment e.g., being told by the management of the school, discussion with colleagues, teacher union, university etc. It is clear that the information on continuous assessment were not uniformly distributed to all schools. In fact it remains doubtful whether a vast majority of schools have even received Policy Document B.

	YES	NO	NOT SURE
1. It is easy to understand	66,5	16,3	17,2
2. It provides clear guidelines for implementation	42,9	41,2	15,9
3. It allows for flexible implementation	71,7	10,7	17,6

Table 5.2. Teachers Interpretation of Policy Document B on Continuous Assessment

Information in Table 5.2 indicates, by and large, that most teachers that are aware of Policy Document B find it easy to understand and believe it allows for flexible implementation, with an approximately equal percentage tied over whether it provides clear guidelines for implementation. This could indicate that whereas some teachers have developed ways of managing the process of continuous assessment implementation, others are grappling with what they believe to be, as scant and unclear policy guidelines. This has led to a wide degree of divergence in interpretation of the policy on continuous assessment.

5.3 TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS, PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT.

Data in Tables 5.3, Table 5.4 and Table 5.5 reflect an analysis of teachers' understanding, perceptions and experience of continuous assessment. A significant number of teachers sampled disagree that continuous assessment in their schools is the same as a series of tests (Table 5.3).

ITEM		STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NOT SURE	DIS-AGREE	STRONG. DIS-AGREE.
A	CA in my school is the same as a series of tests	13,2%	16,7%	15,3%	36,9%	17,8%
B	CA is a subjective form of assessment	28,2%	35,2%	13,9%	19,5%	03,1%
C	CA does not assess what students really know	18,5%	27,5%	13,2%	29,3%	11,5%

Table 5.3. Item Analysis of Questionnaire Responses. Teacher Understanding and Perceptions of Continuous Assessment

Consistency in response to this item has been established in Table 5.4 where an overwhelming majority of teachers have indicated that continuous assessment allows them to assess different kinds of tasks.

This is also congruent with the item : continuous assessment gives me more options for assessment as a teacher, as 60,1% claim that this is "true" (Table 5.5). What remains questionable however is how many of these teachers have maximized their options for assessment in providing pupils with tasks that assesses a range of meaningful skills and would accommodate those pupils who do not have the capacity to cope in a rigidly structured examination situation.

ITEM		TRUE	SOMETIMES TRUE	NOT TRUE
A	Continuous assessment allows me to assess diff. kinds of tasks	72,3%	20,4%	7,4%
B	I am better able to understand my students since CA allows me to develop a cumulative judgment about their performance	53,1%	23,8%	23,0%
C	Continuous assessment has improved my teaching	27,3%	17,1%	55,6%
D	Continuous assessment is what I have been doing all along	47,9%	20,3%	31,8%
E	Continuous assessment gives me more options for assessment as a teacher	60,1%	20,6%	19,2%
F	I am better able to recognize the cognitive development of my students	33,5%	25,5%	40,9%
G	Continuous assessment has allowed my students to better develop their skills, knowledge, & understanding	35,3%	24,5%	40,2%
H	I am now able to explore the curriculum in a much deeper and meaningful way	29,8%	18,6%	51,6%
I	I now assess my students more frequently since continuous assessment was introduced	55,2%	15,1%	29,6%
J	I now assess only the important, significant aspects of the syllabus	33,5%	14,4%	52,2%
K	I now follow a more systematic approach to assessment	42,9%	15,5%	41,6%
L	In my school opportunities have been created to provide feedback to the major stakeholders	37,4%	17,6%	45,1%

Table 5. 4. Item Analysis of Questionnaire Responses : Teachers Experience of Continuous Assessment

Footnote to table 5.4

1. The order of the categories as appeared in the questionnaire (Appendix 1) was in error and not as intended. The categories “only sometimes true” and “not true” were switched over.
2. The order was corrected on entry of data.
3. The pilot study did not reveal any particular pattern of responses with regards to this part of the questionnaire.
4. In checking the analysis for this part of the questionnaire with corresponding parts (E and G); together with interviews from the case studies, there were no anomalous inconsistencies.
5. It was therefore assumed that the vast majority of the respondents to the questionnaire entered their responses according to the headings.
6. As a result of this error the analysis based on this table should be viewed as not being completely valid.
7. In consultation with my supervisor it was decided that the categories “always true” and “often true” be collapsed and presented as “true”, and the categories “not true” and “definitely not true” as “not true”. The distinction between these categories were not sufficiently great to be analysed separately.

ITEM		STRONG - LY AGREE	AGREE	NOT SURE	DIS- AGREE	STRONG LY DIS- AGREE
A	CA increases the workload of teachers	49,1%	30,7%	3,8%	15,0%	1,4%
B	CA is an administrative burden	30,0%	33,4%	11,1%	20,9%	4,5%
C	CA benefits the wealthy students	19,5%	27,2%	11,5%	27,5%	14,3%
D	Teachers lack expertise of and experience in CA	16,7%	33,1%	17,8%	25,8%	6,6%

Table 5.5. Item Analysis of Questionnaire Responses : Problems Experienced by Teachers in Implementing Continuous Assessment

What is disturbing is that 29,9% of the sample (Table 5.3) agree that continuous assessment in their school is the same as a series of tests, indicating that what could count as an effective system of assessment very very well be reduced to its minimal and weakest form of operation. Analysis of schools revealed that within each school there are variations in perceptions and practice of continuous assessment, highlighting the absence of an internal school policy on continuous assessment.

An excessively high percentage of teachers also “agree” that continuous assessment is a subjective form of assessment (Table 5.3). This could be the result of teachers varying significantly in what they consider to be proper standards, teacher bias - favoritism and prejudice, dishonesty amongst teachers in evaluating etc., as is evident in,

T1 : some of the categories used in certain schools, certain subjects and by certain teachers are vague and highly subjective e.g., assessing attitude to subject.

A high percentage of teachers (46,0%) also believe that continuous assessment does not assess what pupils really know. This is clearly reflected in Table 5.4 where 40,9% of the respondents believe that it is “not true” that they are better able to recognize the cognitive development of their students since the continuous assessment policy was introduced. This could indicate that in the cognitive domain the level of development of pupils could be no different from those measurable during the formal examinations.

Data from Table 5.4 clearly reveals that teachers do not believe that continuous assessment has any impact on their teaching. A vast majority(55.6%) of respondents have indicated that continuous assessment has not improved their teaching with approximately half of this (19,2%) responding strongly by indicating this is “definitely not true”. This could be attributed to teachers not having the basic understanding of the principles that underpin continuous assessment and how teaching and assessment could be linked. One needs to understand this in the context of our long history of using poorly developed **assessment tools**, particularly tests and examinations.

Of interest as well is that the majority of teachers(51,6%) believe that it is “not true” that continuous assessment enables them to explore the curriculum in a much deeper and meaningful way. Even though the curriculum may be narrowly construed as the syllabus this would account for more than half of the sample claiming that continuous assessment does not enable them to explore the curriculum more fully. The general pattern that also emerged from the data in Table 5.4 is that most teachers (52,2%) have claimed that it is “not true” that they now assess only the important significant aspects of the syllabus since the introduction of continuous assessment. A goal as such

could be viewed by teachers as not all aspects of the syllabus are significant and would lead many teachers to teach to the test. With the overwhelming majority disagreeing with this item could be an indication that teachers consider all aspects of the syllabus equally important and assessable.

A significant percentage of teachers (47,9%) have also indicated that continuous assessment is what they have been doing all along as explained in,

T2 : Since I am a language specialist, there aren't any problems since pupils write tests for their continuous assessment marks. No projects are given since this is not possible with languages. So it is no different than before continuous assessment was introduced in terms of languages.

Teachers also believe that continuous assessment has minimal benefits for pupils as only 9,1% (from the 35,3% reflected in Table 5.4) have indicated that it is “always true” that continuous assessment allowed students to better develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. However, 53,1% claim that they are better able to understand their students since continuous assessment allows them to develop a cumulative judgment about pupils performance. A cumulative judgment about pupils performance is achieved by assessing more frequently. as 55,2% have indicated that this is “true” of their implementation of continuous assessment. There is however, a decisive absence of teachers evaluating their teaching methodologies consistently , as pointed out earlier, even though the opportunity presents itself as assessment occurs more frequently.

In the management of continuous assessment, Table 5.4 shows that most teachers do not follow a systematic approach to assessment. This raises questions about recording keeping and accountability of continuous assessment marks. Even though most teachers believe that the policy on continuous assessment allows for flexible implementation few schools have developed their own internal school policy on continuous assessment to cater for their peculiar needs. Schools have also made little attempt towards making continuous assessment a transparent exercise as most teachers(45,1%) have indicated. This could also have serious implications for

pupils who will not be aware of how they have progressed as there is no feedback on the quality of their performance. As criteria for assessment is not outlined, do all pupils have a comparable understanding of what is expected of them? This also raises questions about fairness: To what extent are pupils performances true representations of their competency and have they been judged and reported in an unbiased way? Parent, who are major stakeholders in education, would not be aware of procedures and regulations and will not be in a position to provide appropriate supervision to their children.

4. PROBLEMS OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION

A key item in the questionnaire posed the question : “ What are three main problems you are experiencing in attempting to implement continuous assessment? ” The responses were categorized into three main themes, that is, teacher-related problems, pupil-related problems, and problems of the instrument of assessment itself. Other problems that teachers have encountered is also depicted in Table 5.5.

Apartheid education has created schools in which teachers and pupils experience vastly different teaching and learning situations. One of the major difference lies in the extent to which schools are resourced, both in terms of trained human and material resources. Problems of inadequate structural support (also cited in Akwesi and Murphy,1994; Nwakoby,1987) feature largely in this analysis (40,3%). Teachers have recounted problems of inadequate resources, large classes, inadequate textbooks, etc. To elaborate briefly, one teacher laments

T3 : the other problem is the lack of resources in school. For History of my continuous assessment involves making worksheets on the subject matter under study and when I came to Siyasiswe High I saw there was no electricity, no library and many others. I ended up losing hope and being frustrated. I find that my teaching becomes boring and dull and as a result I can only implement continuous assessment via tests and assignments.

Nwakoby (1987) and Havelock and Huberman (1977) points to the need for clarity and for an adequate infrastructure in the **introduction of any educational innovation**.

Also featuring largely, as reflected in Table 5.5 is that most teachers “strongly agree” that continuous assessment increases their workloads (also cited in Erinosh, 1993 and Pennycuick, 1990). This is the result of frequent testing. The increased workload, as explained by teachers, included computation and recording of marks; and construction of assessment tasks for large groups of pupils. It is important to locate this problem in the broader context of what the teacher faces in terms of the heavy workloads that teachers now carry; low conditions of service; the low morale that prevails amongst teachers; and the erosion of the culture of teaching and learning that is characteristic of most South African schools. The frustration that is evident amongst teachers is echoed by

T4 : the statistical adjustments required by authorities (ranging of scores in accordance with norms) make a farce of meticulous standards and record keeping on the part of the teacher.

Another pressing problem that is cited by most teachers is that they lack expertise in and experience of continuous assessment. Thirty-three percent “agree” and 16,7% “strongly agree” (Table 5.5) that they are not equipped with adequate skills to carry out effective assessment. Teachers have indicated that they are not equipped to measure learning outcomes in domains other than the cognitive e.g. the affective and psychomotor domains. Teachers have been found lacking in assessing work that could not be formally assessed; in construction of demanding and interesting tasks that challenges pupils; in record keeping and reporting; grading of assignments etc. One of the results of teacher incompetence in implementing continuous assessment has been the setting of low quality tests as one teacher remarks,

T5 : most of the assessment is written in the form of tests as I don't know how to measure other tasks and those pupils that become stressed during examinations are still disadvantaged. Hence continuous assessment is not helpful

to them because of time factor. Numbers also do not permit verbal assessment of pupils.

A vast majority of teachers (33,4%) “agree” and 30,0% “strongly agree” that continuous assessment is an administrative burden (Erinosho,1993). This is further evident in,

T6 : the weighting of scores is unrealistic, i.e., some domains are overweighted although insignificant.

and,

T7 : Teachers are expected to give advance notice when pupils will be given a continuous assessment test. The result is that pupils absent themselves on these days.

Teachers are at odds as to what's to be **done** when pupils absent themselves for continuous assessment tasks. Do they give a substitute test? Do pupils write the same test? How reliable then, does the continuous assessment instrument becomes? If implementation from school to school varies, how then does the teacher handle transfer of pupils during the school year (Pennycuick,1990). Problems of inadequate administrative support from the management of the school as well as Department officials were also cited by teachers. Some complained that there was pressure to cover the syllabus and consequently little time for assessment as suggested by one teacher,

T8: continuous assessment interrupts the progress of the syllabus and leads to the teacher completing a section not as thoroughly as he would have liked.

Continuous assessment is clearly perceived as alien to the occurrences of the classroom.

Sixty-five(65) percent of the respondents have cited pupil - related problems. Occurring more frequently are problems of pupil absenteeism, work not being handed in timeously, apathy and laziness amongst pupils. These are evident in

T9: To my mind, the very pupils whom this document (this form of assessment) was intended to help, are now not in a position projects/assignments on time and in most cases not at all. This can be attributed to apathy on the part of pupils.

In the absence of a school internal assessment policy teachers of different subjects are making increasing demands on pupils, as is reflected in,

T10: They are not able to cope with the work given because the demands are high. In some cases they have to satisfy the demands of nine teachers e.g. std 7. They are not able to submit their assignments timeously as teachers don't consult each other as to the submission dates for assignments.

Also pupils from relatively wealthy backgrounds may be advantaged. This has been cited by the majority of respondents (Table 5.5), as is evident in,

T11: those who have a better support system or are affluent invariably spend more time to 'dress up' their projects.

Wealthy pupils, teachers claim, have greater access to resources and professional assistance in presenting projects of high quality.

Featuring prominently amongst the problem with the continuous assessment method itself, are that of unreliability of continuous assessment marks as pupils copy on a large scale and is doubtful whether the work they present is original as suggested in

T12: tasks and exercises completed at home are often copied from friends. Assessments are therefore not reliable- they do not indicate what pupils really know.

and,

T13: It is difficult to get all pupils in a particular standard to write tests at a common given time. With staggered testing during different periods in different classes much collusion takes place. This nullifies the objectives of testing.

Comparability of scores within schools and across schools is a problem that 25,4% of the sample of teachers identify with. The absence of common standards and moderation procedures has been recorded as the result of such problems. A large percentage of teachers have also indicated that continuous assessment has resulted in the lowering of educational standards caused by the setting of low quality tests and tasks, especially by poorly qualified teachers; subjectivity associated with teacher assessment; and the absence of a standards committee for assessment. Others claim that the policy on continuous assessment is unclear as is evident in,

T14: There is no policy on continuous assessment, e.g., should monthly tests be different from continuous assessment?

and,

T15: Some teachers have not yet implemented continuous assessment. This creates confusion in the minds of pupils as they feel that continuous assessment is not important in the sense that they doubt whether it is really government policy.

The message that emerges from this analysis is clear : teachers are grappling with the implementation of continuous assessment to the extent that in most cases implementation is proceeding at its weakest level. Given these problems that teachers are facing, the extent to which policy intentions could be realized is highly questionable.

5.5 SUMMARY OF THIS CHAPTER

The exploration of continuous assessment practice as revealed in this analysis has shown that,

1. There are various ways in which the policy on continuous assessment was communicated to teachers. The goals of continuous assessment has therefore lent itself to a variety of interpretations and implementation styles by teachers.

2. Policy Document B on continuous assessment has in the main not provided clear guidelines for implementation. The lack of orientation of teachers to this new assessment strategy has generated distorted perceptions, misunderstandings and minimal implementation of continuous assessment.

3. Teachers, in their experience of continuous assessment, have at large, not attained the goals of continuous assessment policy e.g., few teachers believe that continuous assessment improves their teaching or enable them to explore the curriculum more fully. The inherent benefits of continuous assessment for pupils (e.g., development of skills, knowledge and understanding) has also not been realised.

4. Teachers are faced with numerous problems in attempting to implement continuous assessment. There has also been little attempt from Department officials and management of schools to minimise these problems.

Having looked at continuous assessment implementation broadly, in the next chapter I will discuss the nature of continuous assessment practice in three institutional settings by presenting three detailed case study protocols of continuous assessment practice.

CHAPTER 6

CASE STUDIES ON CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT PRACTICE

1. INTRODUCTION

Having looked broadly at continuous assessment practice in Chapter 5, in this chapter I will present three detailed case studies of continuous assessment practice in three institutional settings in response to the critical research question : How is continuous assessment understood and implemented in high schools? These case studies enabled me to obtain a holistic and meaningful description of continuous assessment practice. The three teachers have been chosen from each of the ex-Departments of Education i.e., ex-House of Assembly, ex-Department of Education and Training and ex-House of Delegates, in selected schools in KwaZulu- Natal. Teachers were chosen from each of the ex-Departments of Education to explore their current practices of continuous assessment in their individual contexts. I do not wish to draw the assumption that all teachers belonging to a particular ex-Department of Education practice continuous assessment in the same way, but I wish to compare cases, given the different education realities that existed in these schools in the apartheid legacy of these various ex-Departments of Education . Standard NINE Biology teachers were chosen as I am familiar with the subject and the types of assessment tasks offered.

Firstly, I will present a general profile of each of the teachers; secondly, I will record each teachers experiences of continuous assessment by documenting their perceptions of continuous assessment policy, the impact of continuous assessment on the teaching and learning process, how each teacher manages the continuous assessment process and factors that hinder the implementation of continuous assessment. Data for this part of the report will be obtained from transcripts of interviews conducted with the teacher as well as the questionnaire that was filled out by each teacher; thirdly, I will illustrate on a frequency and weighting schedule the types of assessment tasks given, the frequency of assessment and the weighting for continuous assessment tasks, obtained from the teachers mark schedule; and fourthly, I will analyze a sample of continuous assessment tasks used by the teacher according to a rating scale (Appendix 8) and then report features of these tasks obtained

from transcripts of a semi-structured interview conducted with each of the teachers in relation to the continuous assessment tasks analyzed.

Analysis of data for each of the aspects above will be integrated with interpretations. Finally, I will summarize **this** chapter by comparing the three cases to establish similarities and differences in **continuous** assessment practices.

CASE STUDY ONE

For the purposes of anonymity the teacher in case one will be referred to as Zanele and the school she teaches at, SIYASISWE. Siyasiswe is a deep rural school situated to the South of Durban, Kwa Zulu-Natal. This school serves only black students. It is an ex-Department of Education and training school and is accessible by five kilometers of corrugated road. Siyasiswe has classrooms with minimal furniture. It does not have electricity, a telephone nor a Biology laboratory. Textbooks are adequate but the school has no Biology laboratory equipment.

1. GENERAL PROFILE OF ZANELE

Zanele is a female of thirty one years of age. She teaches at a rural school where the language of instruction is English. She is a level one teacher who holds a formal qualification of a BA (HONS) and UHDE. She has received no post matric training in the teaching of Biology. She has been teaching for eight completed years and during this time she has been teaching Biology. At present she teaches standard nines and tens. Her average class size is sixty and she has both Zulu and English language groups in her classroom.

2. ZANELE'S EXPERIENCE OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

2.1. ZANELE'S PERCEPTION OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT POLICY

From her response in the questionnaire (Appendix 13), Zanele is not aware of the Department's Policy Document B on continuous assessment, but she is aware of the policy on continuous assessment through a colleague from another school. Later during an interview she did indicate that

subject committees have met once this year to discuss this issue of continuous assessment. (Appendix 14)

This raises serious implications of the impact of continuous assessment desired by policy makers. Can one fully conceptualize and fathom out the

workings of continuous assessment through one committee meeting and where teachers of the school have not seen the policy document on continuous assessment. She provides fairly strong arguments for teacher involvement in policy formulation, arguing that

if you are not going to be involved in it, you will not show initiative. (Appendix 14)

She believes that compounded to the problem of teacher non involvement in policy formulation, is a management structure that is non functional resulting in, as she expresses

teachers do(ing) what he or she feels like, sometimes not to the interest of the child. And most often whatever we do is coming from within ourselves. So that now, if we knew about continuous assessment, maybe at a staff meeting or something we can go further with it and try to implement it. (Appendix 14)

The questions for concern here are : If each teacher does what he or she feels like, how many are actually implementing continuous assessment? Is the mark the pupil obtains for continuous assessment authentic? Zanele has also expressed concerns that continuous assessment has not been trailed in schools and argues that

as a system from bureaucrats who are not familiar with the situation, for them continuous assessment must be something easy to adopt, but at the initial stages they should assess whether it is successful or not. (Appendix 14)

Zanele has lamented the fact that she has received no support from subject advisors or the management of her school, in trying to implement continuous assessment. It appears that teachers at the classroom level are concerned about a policy that has not been well informed and resourced nor considered the differing contexts of our South African classrooms.

2.2. IMPACT OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT ON THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

The histogram below depicts Zanele's response to her experience of continuous assessment, obtained from part F of the questionnaire (Appendix 13).

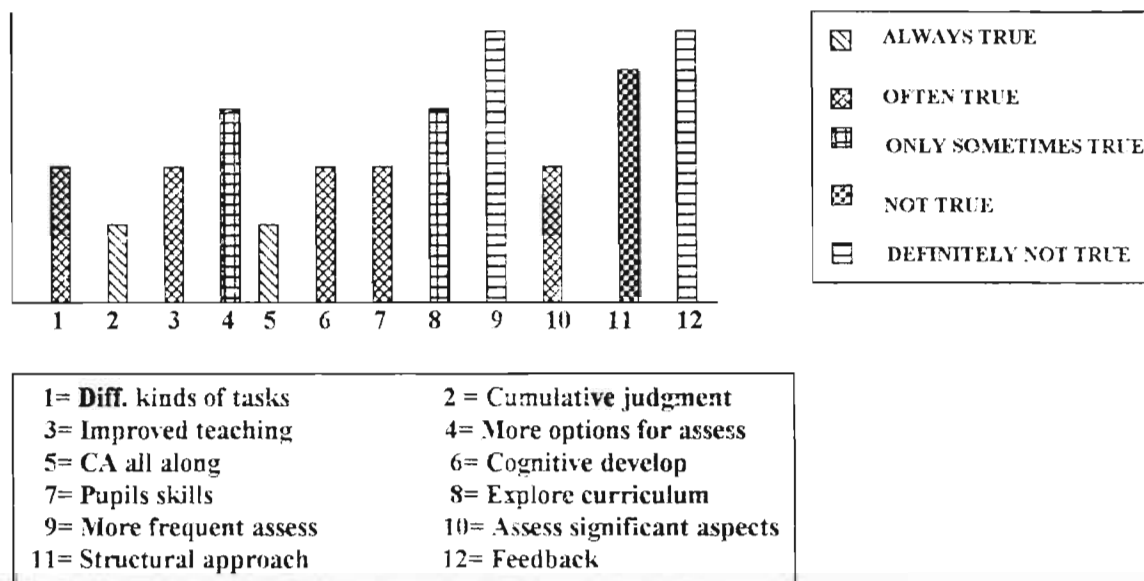


Chart 6.1. Zanele's Experience of Continuous Assessment

Although Zanele has responded favorably to the items on the questionnaire in response to the impact of continuous assessment on her teaching (items 2,3, and 6) in the interview she has indicated that continuous assessment has no impact on her teaching. It is also clear from the histogram above that it is only sometimes true that continuous assessment gives her more options for assessment and enables her to explore the curriculum in a much deeper and more meaningful way.

It would appear as if continuous assessment does in fact have little impact on her teaching as she shows strong support for item five : Continuous assessment is what I have been doing all along. This view is also expressed in part D of the questionnaire (Appendix 13) where she strongly agrees that continuous assessment in her school is the same as a series of tests. This is definitely a weak form of continuous assessment. It is also interesting to note

that it is often true that continuous assessment allows her to assess different kinds of tasks yet analysis of her mark schedule reveals that she employs a limited range of assessment strategies, i.e. only tests and assignments.

Data from the interview reveals that she has reflected on the process of continuous assessment and is optimistic about

devising certain ways of doing things next year so that it can help pupils to see the relevance of why we are doing such things and it is not just coming to school and taking down things and going home. (Appendix 14)

She is clearly seeking ways to involve **pupils** in the process of learning but this could well be an offshoot of a **teaching** methodology rather than assessment per se.

From the histogram she believes that it is often true that continuous assessment has allowed her **students to better** develop their skills, knowledge and understanding than before this policy was introduced, but acknowledges that this may not always be the case. Sometimes **continuous** assessment impacts negatively on the pupils learning. She states explicitly that

if a child knows his marks, he works out what he needs to get and it can bring down his performance in the final exams, and that is what I have experienced this year. You cannot assume that by using the year mark that the child will do well (Appendix 14)

An interesting point that emerges from this is that Zanele sees continuous assessment as the 'year mark', a system of assessment in operation in the past where tests and assignments marks for the year were added together. She has been able to identify pupils developmental skills but to a limited extent, yet in part E of the questionnaire (Appendix 13), she believes that continuous assessment has been intended to bring out all inherent skills of pupils and provide pupils with the opportunity of assessing themselves. These apparently contradictory views may well signal that sometimes educators have noble intentions, but in a resource poor context the implementation of

their ideas are scaled down. She has also found that intervention, although well intentioned, could become something of a stumbling block where

those that excel, and I would like to call pupils and give them credit, can also be a problem because it can create division, why does the teacher concentrate more on one child. (Appendix 14)

2.3. MANAGEMENT OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Data from the interview as well as the questionnaire indicates that Zanele has not developed a system of deciding on the number of tests and assignments to be given, and a system of recording performance. She does however,

have an idea how many tests, e.g., sometimes I give them after every section, sometimes after every two sections, if the sections are short. Like I said, I don't preplan. (Appendix 14)

Her school has not developed an internal policy of continuous assessment and at present she is of the view that confusion is running high as she was not able to gain much about continuous assessment from one short meeting. She supports this statement by stating that they did have

committees met once this year, where we discussed this issue of continuous assessment and we did talk about how many tests and how many assignments and those teachers who wanted to give projects could possibly give it, if they wanted to, but that was just one short meeting. (Appendix 14)

The school has also made no attempt to make continuous assessment a transparent exercise. The parents are not informed about procedures and

pupils themselves don't question it. They are not aware of and they only know of the role continuous assessment plays is when they are given their year mark. (Appendix 14)

In present educational times, when parents and pupils are as major role-players of the education process, becoming increasingly involved in both the administration as well as the academic side of education, one needs to question trends such as these where aspects of a pupils promotion are not transparent. Criteria for assessment is also not put out upfront. How then are pupils to take responsibility for their own learning?

2.4. FACTORS THAT HINDER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

The histogram below, obtained from part D of the questionnaire (Appendix 13) illustrates Zanele's perceptions of the potential and drawbacks of continuous assessment.

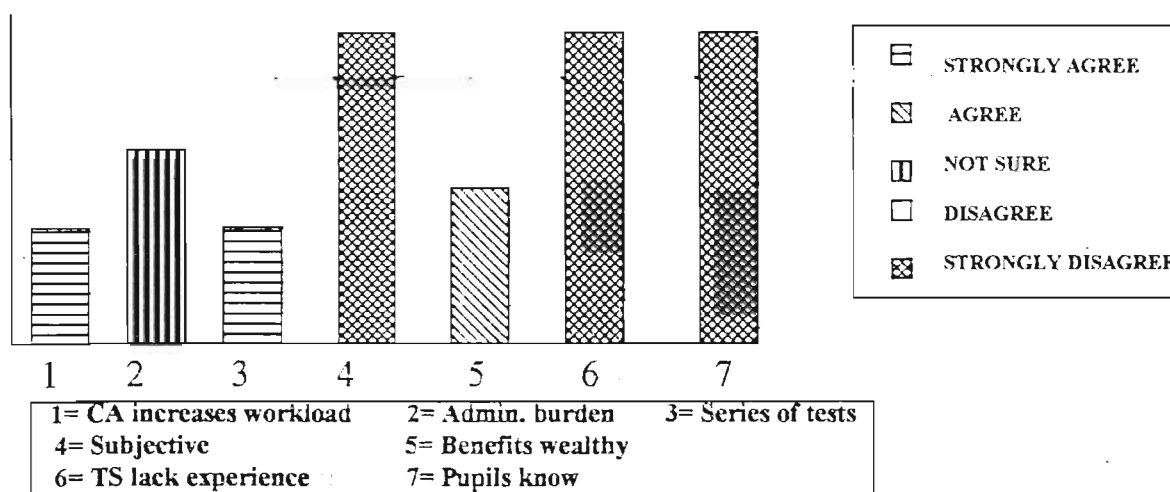


Chart 6.2. Zanele's Perception of Continuous Assessment

She shows strong support for continuous assessment increasing the workload of teachers. This is particularly noteworthy, considering that continuous assessment at her school is the same as a series of tests and assignments. In its limited form of implementation, it would seem appropriate for her to disagree with item four : continuous assessment is a subjective form of assessment and item six : teachers lack expertise of and experience in continuous assessment as the form of assessment used by her (tests and

assignments only) only assesses those aspects **that could be tested during the formal examination system.**

She does agree that continuous assessment **benefits the wealthy students** but she is wary of imposing on pupils **that come from disadvantaged backgrounds**, providing a strong case to support this by suggesting

I am teaching in a situation where you got to be very careful how you approach teachers and students. You cannot impose on a child for one because of their socio-economic backgrounds.
(Appendix 14)

Zanele also offers the following problems she is experiencing in attempting to implement continuous assessment : (a) she feels that there has been no consultation with policy documents, no support from the administration of her school or subject advisors, (b) the lack of resources and facilities at her school has limited the choice of assessment strategies she offers to tests and assignments only and (c) she is wary of the **undercurrents** that develop in the school environment, where she professes that as she is the senior Biology teacher, she

ought to take the initiative, but we have the situation where too much initiative can create a problem. That is the problem I am concerned with. (Appendix 14)

(d) English as a second language creates a barrier for most of her pupils as she expressed in

the important thing you have got to understand, I have got to teach English before I teach Biology. (Appendix 14)

(e) She also claims that her pupils are overburdened with too many tests, her school has

no system as such, and sometimes you may find that I give a test and I don't inquire whether they are getting a test in another subject, it is a terrible mess, there are no guidelines and teachers are doing their own thing. (Appendix 14)

Increasing teacher autonomy, in particular their involvement in assessment may be professionally sound, but what of those teachers that don't know what to do with the autonomy that is granted to them? Do they resort to the "old ways?" Is "doing their own thing" in the best interests of the child?

3. ANALYSIS OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT TASKS

Zanele's mark schedule was analyzed to establish the type, frequency and weighting of continuous assessment tasks for the year.

TYPE OF TASK	NUMBER FREQUENCY	% OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT WEIGHTING
Tests	7	50%
Assignments	8	50%

Table 6.1. Analysis of Continuous Assessment Tasks

Zanele has chosen only tests and assignments to be used for continuous assessment purposes. In part F of the questionnaire (Appendix 13), she has indicated that continuous assessment gives her more options for assessment, yet her mark schedules reveals that she has not utilized these options. She claims that the background of her pupils has restricted her choice of assessment options in that she tries to

encourage that as well as things you can construct using polystyrene or whatever, but like I say now, because our kids are disadvantaged, they are underprivileged, they don't know what is polystyrene, you got to bring this in and show them and get them doing so, that there are many more factors.
(Appendix 14)

Continuous assessment is clearly a series of tests and assignments as revealed also when their subject committees met

and we did talk about how many tests and how many assignments and those teachers who wanted to give projects could possibly give it if they wanted to. (Appendix 14)

A sample of each type of assessment task was then chosen for further analysis. As time was a constraint and the teacher did not have on record, transcripts of all assessment tasks given, only one of each of the assessment tasks was chosen. The researcher does acknowledge the limitation of using only one of each type of task to draw conclusions. One test and one assignment are analyzed against the rating scale (Appendix 8). Zanele's assessment task assesses a limited range of skills. Both tests and assignments assessed the skills of recall and comprehension only. The tests and assignments were heavily content laden assessing simple recall of facts, without higher levels of questioning. Both types of tasks were of the pen and paper type with no relevance to the life of the pupil. The tasks were English language dependent with the use of concepts like "exact", "replicas", "briefly", "process", "fragmentation", "models of nutrition" etc., without any clarification of meaning.

Innovative assessment techniques like debating, reporting and field observation were not being employed here, even though the type of setting at the school could warrant these. The analysis of tasks indicates that the tests are no different from the assignment in the skills to be developed, the level of complexity and in application. Why then are they categorized differently? These tasks also indicate that they assess qualities no different from the traditional formal examinations. Is it called continuous assessment because assessment is continuous?

A semi-structured interview was conducted with Zanele to establish features of these continuous assessment tasks. Zanele records that her pupils had achieved success when completing these tasks in terms of understanding and selecting appropriate materials for these tasks. This raises the question about the range of material needed that is needed to be selected when the questions that appear in the tests and assignment require answers from the prescribed textbook. She provides feedback to pupils in the form of a percentage and occasional comments about their language or level of

understanding. She does intervene and provide assistance to pupils but to a limited extent as she has found that the high flyers do not take kindly to criticism. She claims that the tasks have helped herein identifying weaknesses and problems that her pupils have. She has set tasks on significant aspects of the work and she had repeatedly echoed that an improvement of resources at her school would help. She feels that,

if I had a Biology laboratory, it would help me very much in the subject that I am teaching because as a teacher I can put things up on the wall where pupils can come in and learn it. (Appendix 14)

It would appear as if the necessity of a home based class is more urgent than a Biology laboratory. Even without a Biology laboratory, the absence of the assessment of practical is a matter of concern. Surely some practical work can be done and assessed even then. Zanele does not employ any alternative strategies for assessment like group or peer assessment. She believes that in a group, some pupils tend to dominate and this could create a problem.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. Continuous assessment has been introduced in this school through one committee meeting. Zanele is not aware of the policy document on continuous assessment. She has received no support from her school management or subject advisors in trying to implement continuous assessment.
2. Continuous assessment has no impact on her teaching. It is in fact what she has been doing all along except for assessing more frequently now that continuous assessment has been introduced.
3. Although she claims that continuous assessment is well intended, in respect of bringing out all inherent skills of pupils, in her classroom practice continuous assessment is not achieving this educational benefit.

4. Her approach to the management of continuous assessment is not systematic. In addition, her school has not developed a policy on continuous assessment, neither have pupils or parents been informed about continuous assessment procedures.

5. She claims that continuous assessment increases the workload of teachers, teachers are not sufficiently guided due to a lack of administrative support, the weak infrastructure that exists at the school (poor resources, large classes, English as a second language) has crippled this innovation. For the pupils she identifies the problem of continuous assessment benefiting the wealthy students as well as pupils being overburdened with too many assessment tasks in the different subjects.

6. Zanele uses only tests and assignments for continuous assessment purposes. These tasks are content laden and assess a limited range of skills. She claims that a lack of resources has limited her choice of assessment tasks.

CASE STUDY TWO

For the sake of anonymity the teacher in **case two** will be referred to as Andrew and the school that he teaches at, Sacred Hall. Sacred Hall is a model C, ex-House of Assembly school situated to the South of Durban (serving predominantly White students). It lies in an urban, upper economic suburb. It houses a pupil population of approximately 400 and boasts its own sporting fields. It has a well equipped Biology laboratory and adequate resources in terms of textbooks, laboratory equipment and audiovisual aids.

1. GENERAL PROFILE OF ANDREW

Andrew is a 36 year old male, level one teacher with a formal qualification, a qualification in Biology and a Masters in Science degree. He has been teaching for 15 years, but his experience in the teaching of Biology has been three years. The language medium of Sacred Hall is English. However there are English, Afrikaans and Zulu speaking pupils in his class. At present Andrew teaches standards six to ten and his average class size is 35.

2. ANDREW'S EXPERIENCE OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

2.1. ANDREW'S PERCEPTION OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT POLICY

Andrew has responded positively to part B of the questionnaire (Appendix 15) on the department's policy document on continuous assessment. He is aware of and has a copy of the Policy Document B on continuous assessment. This document was made available to all teachers at his school through a workshop. He was also invited to a workshop on continuous assessment. He finds the Policy Document B on continuous assessment easy to understand, it allows for flexible implementation and it provides clear guidelines for implementation. Continuous assessment is not a new concept to Andrew and the teachers at his school. They have in fact been implementing continuous assessment for the last three years. Andrew has not been involved in drawing up the policy on continuous assessment. He feels that the formulation of policy is best left to experts. His school has a well established

internal policy on continuous assessment with each department having its own assessment policy, adapted from the school's policy. Andrew claims that

it was the teachers here who actually drew up the policy, the HOD and the headmaster got together and they as well as guidelines from the national department. They used this, and as for Biology that was by supervisors, all teachers got together and helped formulate that one.
(Appendix 16)

The point that emerges from this is that although these teachers have not been involved in policy formulation at National and provincial levels, they have been involved at school level in adapting the national guidelines to suit their particular needs. The policy on continuous assessment appears to be well debated at this school. Andrew has received support from his Head of Department in implementing continuous assessment.

2.2. IMPACT OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT ON ANDREW'S TEACHING AND THE LEARNING PROCESS

The graph below depicts Andrew's response on his experience of continuous assessment obtained from part F of the questionnaire (Appendix 15).

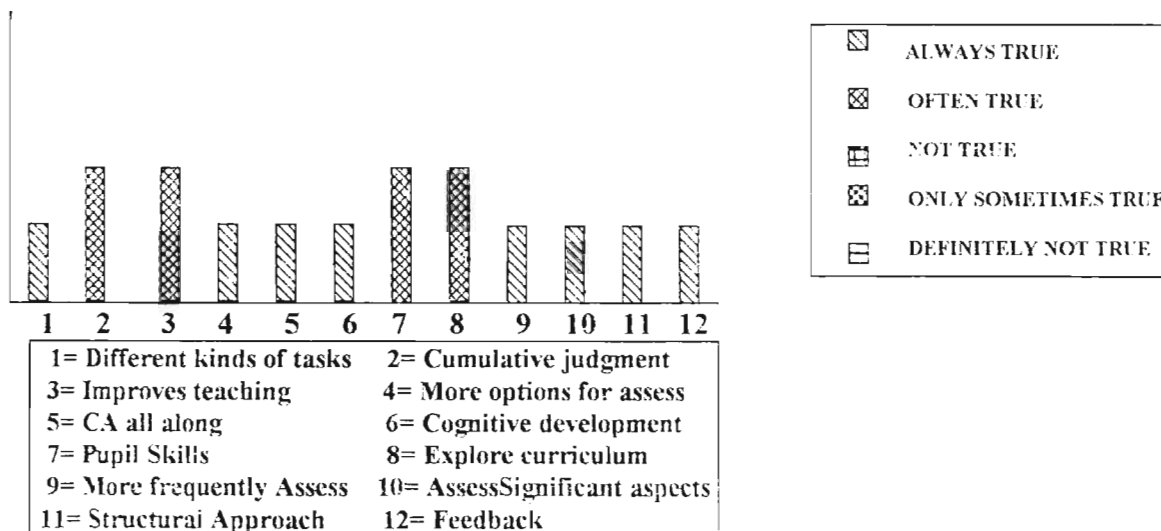


Chart 6.3. Andrew's Experience of Continuous Assessment

Andrew has clearly experienced the potential benefits of continuous assessment, both on his impact on his teaching (items 2, 3, and 6) and on pupil learning (item 7). He provides compelling arguments for continuous assessment enhancing pupil learning by suggesting that,

because you are assessing throughout the year, quite often children who have exam nerves and can't cope in the exam situation, it helps them when you assess right through the year, so you have progress on a continual basis. (Appendix 16)

and,

I think you must get the children excited about the work they do. (Appendix 16).

He also provides a strong argument for pupils becoming independent workers in suggesting that they should

stand on their own two feet. They must not be bottle-fed, excuse the pun, the baby project, but like the standard six's, they come in and they can't even read a question, because up there at the primary school they have been spoon fed, they must start learning themselves, so if they have a problem they must try and sort it out first. (Appendix 16)

He considers preparing pupils for life a significant skill for his pupils to be armed with. He also advocates the skills based approach to practicals, where he believes

the skills based test, it was these things we should be looking for. Ideally we should go around with a form and just tick off all things they will be doing for the section. (Appendix 16)

He asserts that it is always true that he is better able to recognize the cognitive development (e.g., the development of thinking skills) of his students since continuous assessment was introduced. He acknowledges that

he does intervene at points where pupils have not developed certain skills. He has also found that his pupils have difficulty in applying the skills gained from teaching to the assessment tasks.

His response to item 5 : Continuous assessment is what I have been doing all along, can be explained by the fact that his school have been implementing continuous assessment for the past three years. Data from his mark schedule and the questionnaire (Appendix 15), does reveal that he assesses his students more frequently than before the continuous policy was introduced. He asserts that it is often true that continuous assessment enables him to explore the curriculum more fully. He supports this statement by saying that

what I have done basically, or up to now, gone through tests, so I have gone through the standard nine syllabus that is going to be used in matric, so I have gone more into depth with that, but apart from the basic concepts, learning concepts, rather than factual content. So, I try and get the concepts, why should we do all these four animals together, why do we do it, doing the moss and the fungi, what use is it, they are actually all linked. (Appendix 16)

It appears that his idea of exploring the curriculum more fully is to teach to the test, in particular, the matric examinations. He does provide a strong case for concept development and concept linkage and a move away from content overload. Much of this, however, should have been part of his training to teach the subject rather than a new assessment strategy. He also projects a simplistic view of the curriculum, that is, the syllabus. **He has indicated** that it is always true that he now assesses the important or significant aspects of the syllabus since continuous assessment was introduced. This is true in the light of the above statement, but for a completely different reason, which is those sections that will be tested in the matric exams. He claims that his assessment tasks are all worked into the syllabus, so pupils are not exposed to the broader curriculum than the syllabus.

2.3. MANAGEMENT OF THE CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Andrew has responded positively to item 11 of the questionnaire (Appendix 15) indicating that he follows a more systematic approach to assessment because of the department's continuous assessment policy. This is also reflected when he states that

every subject has a different one (system). Physical Science has a different one, so it comes down basically from the supervisors. So every subject does have a slightly different system, but all tests, but these are slightly different per subject. (Appendix 16)

He states that the policy on continuous assessment from subject advisors are also modified if

there are problems, then we discuss this with supervisors and then we work from there. (Appendix 16)

Andrew has provided a researcher with a copy of the school's assessment policy and that of the Biology Department. The school's assessment policy reveals the percentage of the year assessment for the four cycles of the year and for the October/November examination. The examinations carries 50% of the year assessment, with the remaining 50% being distributed in the four cycles to make up the continuous assessment weighting. The Biology Department's assessment policy outlines the types of tasks to be assessed, the minimum number of these tasks, the mark allocation for these tasks, and in some types of tasks, the skills to be developed. These tasks will be further analyzed later in this report. When asked whether he complies with these minimum requirements, Andrew responds by saying

it depends how we go. I normally give at least one or two tests per term, but that depends. I like to give a test after we complete a section, or if we are doing a section in total, I like to give a test during that time, and how we work and how we understand, if they understand a section very well then we give it and go back and revise it. (Appendix 16)

It appears as if Andrew, although bound by an assessment policy, is given the autonomy to decide when a test would be appropriate. What appears to be lacking in this school is that there is no communication between departments. Pupil overload with continuous assessment tasks from the various departments could become a major problem. Andrew has indicated that it is always true that in his school ample opportunity has been created to provide feedback to the major stakeholders on continuous assessment. This is also echoed in transcripts of the interview held. Parents have also been informed about continuous assessment procedures adopted by the school.

2.4. FACTORS THAT HINDER THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

The histogram below illustrates Andrew's response to the drawbacks of continuous assessment.

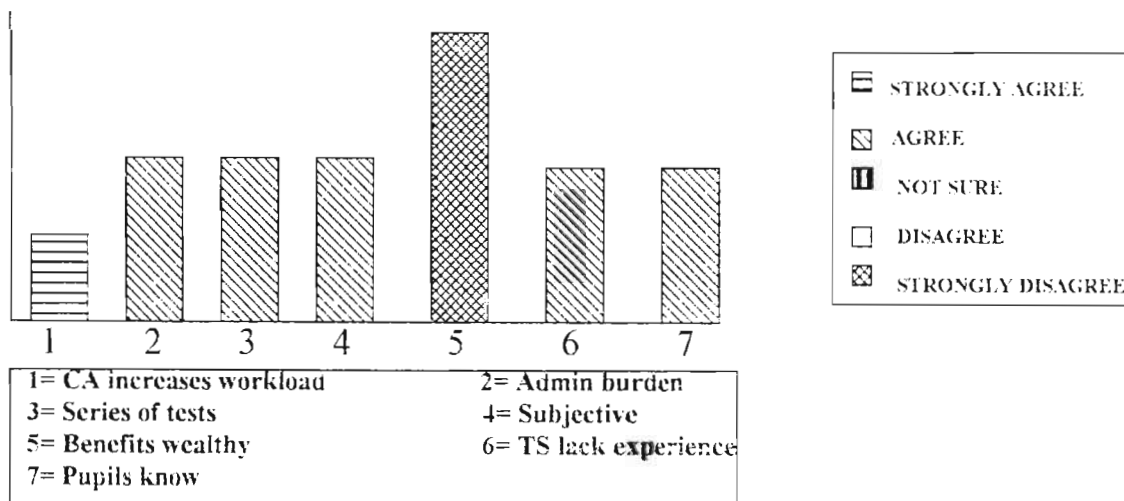


Chart 6.4. Andrew's Perception of Continuous Assessment

Despite Andrew having been implementing continuous assessment for the past three years, he identifies strongly with its drawbacks: that of increasing the workload of teachers, being an administrative burden, it being a subjective form of assessment and teachers lacking expertise of and experience in continuous assessment. He is inconsistent in his response to item three (Appendix 15) where he agrees that continuous assessment in his school is

the same as a series of tests, when an analysis of his mark schedule reveals that other assessment tasks are also set for e.g., practicals, projects, worksheets, homework. His response to item 7 : Continuous assessment does not assess what pupils really know is also reflected in transcripts of the interview where he found that although continuous assessment has its potential benefit in enhancing learning, pupils have difficulty in applying their knowledge gained from his teaching to assessment tasks. Andrew strongly disagrees with the item : Continuous assessment benefits the wealthy students. Analysis of a sample of his project given reveals that much of the materials needed for the project could be improvised upon. He adds further that

we have made amends for those who don't have, like the previous year, we had to do a model of the eye, some of the pupils did not have all the this and that, but we made allowance for that. (Appendix 16)

and,

no, he is not penalized, because the content of how much time spent doing it, or if they just throw things together, you can actually see it, and marks will be taken off accordingly. (Appendix 16)

Andrew acknowledges that large classes is a problem to continuous assessment implementation. He makes particular reference to practicals, saying that

when you start going over forty practicals, theory is still all right, but the practice... (Appendix 16)

2.5. AN ANALYSIS OF ANDREW'S CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT TASK

Continuous assessment at Sacred Hall comprises 38% of the promotion marks. This is in keeping with the National guidelines of a minimum of 25% and a maximum of 50%. However, the emphasis in this school is still in this school is still heavily on the formal examination system.

Andrew's mark schedule was analyzed to establish the different types of assessment tasks given, the frequency of assessment and the weighting for these tasks. These features are reflected in the table below.

TYPE OF TASK	NO.	% OF CA WEIGHTING
Class tests	10	35%
Worksheets	6	10%
Homework	6	5%
Project	1	15%
Practicals	12	35%

Table 6.2. Analysis of Continuous Assessment Tasks

Andrew has clearly chosen a wide range of assessment tasks to be used for continuous assessment purposes. It is obvious that he maximized his options for assessment by providing pupils with a variety of experiences that will form a cumulative judgment about their performances. In addition, with the exception of project, the tasks are given more frequently, increasing the validity of continuous assessment as an alternative method of assessment. Projects are given only once as they are a major undertaking, both in terms of teacher and pupil workload. It is also interesting to note that in assessing practicals, Andrew does not only restrict the practicals to practical tests but also uses class experimental work, practical work and fieldwork. Practical and class tests are ranked higher than the other assessment tasks, probably because of their past emphasis. Andrew has adapted the schools Biology assessment policy by not restricting himself to a minimum number of assessment tasks to be given. He has however used the same types of tasks suggested and the percent of continuous assessment weighting as the Biology assessment policy document. This would be a useful position to adopt by teachers as it could allow for continuous assessment results in the same standard to be compared.

One of each of the five different tasks was chosen by the researcher for further analysis. The researcher wishes to alert the reader to the limitation of choosing only one each of the different kinds of tasks. All tasks chosen were of the higher grade only. The tasks were analyzed against the rating scale (Appendix 8).

On the whole an analysis of the five different tasks reveals a range of science process skills being developed, amongst others, recall, comprehension, drawing, graphing, application, formulating hypothesis, communication, inferring, synthesis, analysis, observation, data collection etc. Whilst it may be that not all skills will be developed in one particular task, cumulatively they allow a vast range of skills that are developed with all five tasks. The most striking feature of this analysis is that class tests, which carry 35% of the continuous assessment weighting is heavily reliant on assessing the skills recall, comprehension, drawing and application. It is apparent that, even after three years of implementation, the move away from formal testing is slow. What has been particularly encouraging, is that worksheets and projects show a high degree of complexity in terms of the nature of questions asked and the critical approach that would be required to answer these questions. The tasks also required additional references, something outside the normal textbook regurgitation. The task set for the project was especially taxing in terms of the value judgements that needed to be made and the issues that had to be debated.

All the tasks, with the exception of the project, were of the paper and pen type. The project involved fieldwork and oral as well. The tasks showed application to real life as well as the application of knowledge to new situations. Most of the tasks showed application to the life of the white cultural group, yet the profile of Andrew's school reveals both English and Zulu speaking pupils in his class. The tasks were also heavily reliant on the English language, with the use of concepts like "structure", "depicts", "more or less", "permits", "function similarity" etc. The implication for second language English speakers are raised. What appears to be an efficient and effective system for continuous assessment, is in the main, context blind.

A semi-structured interview was conducted with Andrew to establish features of the continuous assessment tasks. Andrew records pupils successes in these tasks in terms of the score they achieve. It would appear as if English language dependence of the assessment tasks has caused pupils to experience failure when attempting these tasks. Andrew, however, sees this as a deficiency in his pupils and not the instrument by saying

they can't read the question, or they could not read the question properly. When you say coming from a question, they want to do what they want and not what the question asks. (Appendix 16)

For pupils who do not hand in a long term task timeously, Andrew usually resorts to minus five for the first day, minus ten for the second day and zero for the third day. Andrew provides feedback in the form of a percentage and a comment, usually in relation to their previous marks. Although Andrew has not employed any alternative strategies for assessment, like group assessment and peer assessment, he strongly supports these.

2.6. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. The continuous assessment policy document was made available to Andrew through a workshop. He has a copy of the policy document which he finds easy to understand, allows for flexible implementation and provides clear guidelines. His school has been implementing continuous assessment since 1993.
2. Continuous assessment has improved Andrew's teaching and enhanced the learning experience for his pupils. He states that he is able to explore the curriculum more fully.
3. The school that Andrew teaches at has a clearly defined assessment policy. Each department in the school has its own policy on assessment. The teacher is given the autonomy to decide when these assessment tasks are to be offered to the pupils.

4. Andrew has identified the following problems that hinder the successful implementation of continuous assessment : (a) continuous assessment increases the workload of teachers; (b) it is an administrative burden; (c) it is a subjective form of assessment; (d) teachers lack expertise of and experience in continuous assessment; (e) teachers are burdened with large classes; and (e) pupils do not hand in work timeously.

5. Andrew has provided his pupils with a range of assessment tasks, more frequently and tasks that assess a variety of skills. These tasks are relevant to the lives of the pupils to a limited extent, but in the main, are context blind, heavily reliant on the English language and are mostly of the pen and paper type.

CASE STUDY 3

For the sake of anonymity, the teacher in case three will be called Navesh and the school he teaches at, Scottsdale High. Scottsdale High is an ex-House of Delegates school situated to the south of Durban, serving predominantly Indian students. It is an urban school, with a well equipped Biology laboratory, audiovisual resources and adequate textbooks.

2.1. GENERAL PROFILE OF NAVESH

Navesh is a 44 year old, male, Head of Department for Sciences. He has a formal qualification of B.A. JSED and a qualification in Biology of JSED. He has been teaching for 24 years, but has been teaching Biology for only ten of these years. At present he teaches standards 6, 9 and 10. The language medium of his school is English, but there are English and Zulu speaking pupils in his class. His average class size is 35.

2.2. NAVESH'S PERCEPTION OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT POLICY

From his response in parts B and C of the questionnaire (Appendix 17), Navesh is aware of the Policy Document B on continuous assessment. The document was made available to teachers at his school through a circular and the policy on continuous assessment was discussed at a staff meeting. Navesh has a copy of the policy document, which he finds easy to understand, but does not provide clear guidelines for implementation and he is unsure whether the policy document allows for flexible implementation. He has not been involved in formulating the policy on continuous assessment and feels that

*they should have actually played around with the idea,
they should have come to us. (Appendix 18)*

He feels that continuous assessment should form a major part of the promotion mark by arguing that

we were told when the document came to school, we were

shown the document and told that look this is what you follow, 50% for continuous assessment. Actually the document says a minimum of 25% but we follow 50%. I would have hoped that continuous assessment forms a major part of it. (Appendix 18)

He has not received support from subject advisors or department officials on attempting to implement continuous assessment. Would the distributing of a policy document to schools, without any support or practitioner involvement in its formulation, bring about the change that is desired by policymakers? An approach like this serves only to increase policy cynicism amongst teachers.

3.2. IMPACT OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT ON THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

The histogram below shows Navesh's response to his experience of continuous assessment, obtained from part F of the questionnaire (Annexure 17).

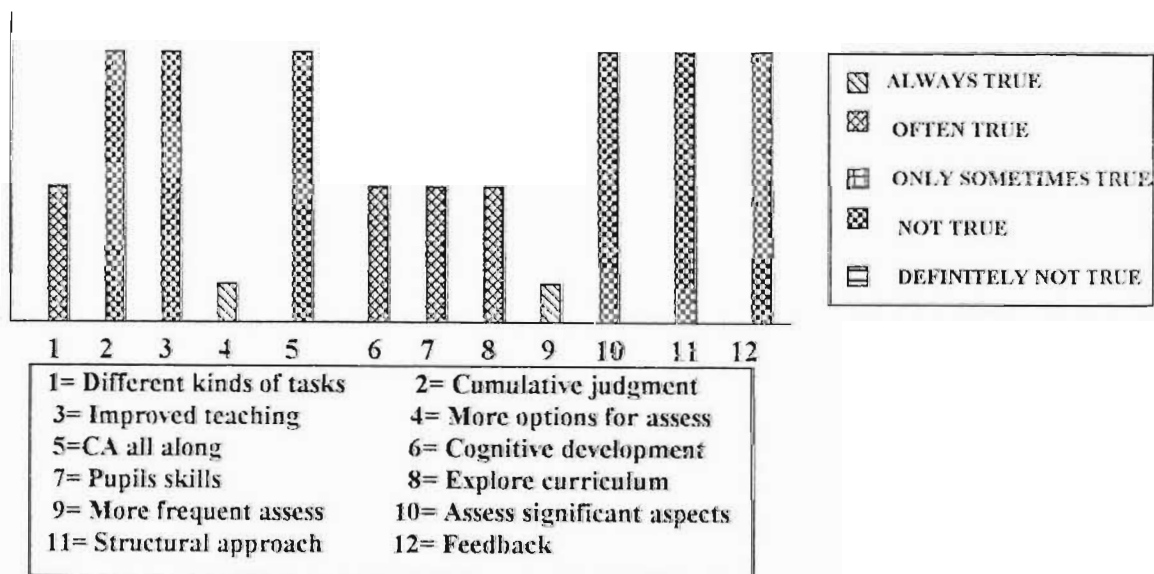


Chart 6.5. Navesh's Experience of Continuous Assessment

Navesh claims that continuous assessment has improved his teaching. This is further reflected in his negative responses to item 2 : I am now better able to

understand my students since continuous assessment allows me to develop a cumulative judgment about their performances, and item 3 : Continuous assessment has improved my teaching. In addition, he reinforces this point in the semi-structured interview held by saying

my teaching has basically remained the same. It has gone on the same way. (Appendix 18)

Navesh seems to hold contradictory views with regards to continuous assessment policy enabling him to explore the curriculum more fully, by suggesting that

basically the syllabuses haven't changed, so it hasn't made any difference to my teaching as such. (Appendix 18)

and responding as shown in the histogram to item 8 : that it is often true that continuous assessment enables him to explore the curriculum more fully. The curriculum is narrowly construed as the syllabus and one can question whether continuous assessment will bring about the curricular benefits with which it has been associated.

An analysis of Navesh's mark schedule validates his response to item 1 : as the analysis reveals that he offers his pupils a range of assessment tasks. Further assessment occurs more frequently (item 9). It is clear that he has recognised the potential of continuous assessment to provide him with more options for assessment (item 4) and he has implemented this in his continuous assessment practice. His response to item 10 (Appendix 17), where he claims that it is not true that he assesses only the important, significant aspects of the syllabus since continuous assessment was introduced, could indicate that he considers all aspects of the syllabus significant. His response is however inconsistent with that of the interview in relation to continuous assessment tasks where he suggests that the topic given for the project

forms a fairly large chunk of the syllabus. So I thought it should be set on it. (Appendix 18)

He sees continuous assessment as an alternative assessment and not what he has been doing all along. On the impact of continuous assessment on pupil learning, he feels that it is often true that continuous assessment allowed his students to better develop their skills, knowledge and understanding before the policy was introduced but he has remained non-committal in the interview about this benefit to pupils by suggesting that

it's a bit too early to say. (Appendix 18)

3.3. MANAGEMENT OF THE CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Data from part F of the questionnaire (Appendix 17) reveals that Navesh does not follow a systematic and structural approach to assessment. He has indicated that his school does not have its own continuous assessment policy and it is left to individual teachers to determine that. His school has also not created opportunities for continuous assessment to be transparent. He has indicated that pupils are informed about

which aspects, you know, which aspects will be taken into account for assessment, but I don't think it is transparent. We don't actually tell the pupil look, for the project you got so many marks, for the assignment you got so many marks, and things like that. It's definitely not transparent. (Appendix 18)

It is apparent that pupils are neither provided with criteria for assessment, nor are they informed of how they have performed. Parents have not been informed about the detailed aspects of continuous assessment but the schools have sent out a circular informing parents of continuous assessment forming part of the promotion marks for pupils. In the absence of a school policy on continuous assessment as well as a systematic approach to assessment, the concern here is : Are pupils developing strategies to manage the demands made by different teachers? Are they completing work in one subject and not the other as a coping device?

3.4. FACTORS THAT HINDER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

The histogram below, obtained from part D of the questionnaire (Annexure 17) depicts Navesh's perception of the drawbacks of continuous assessment.

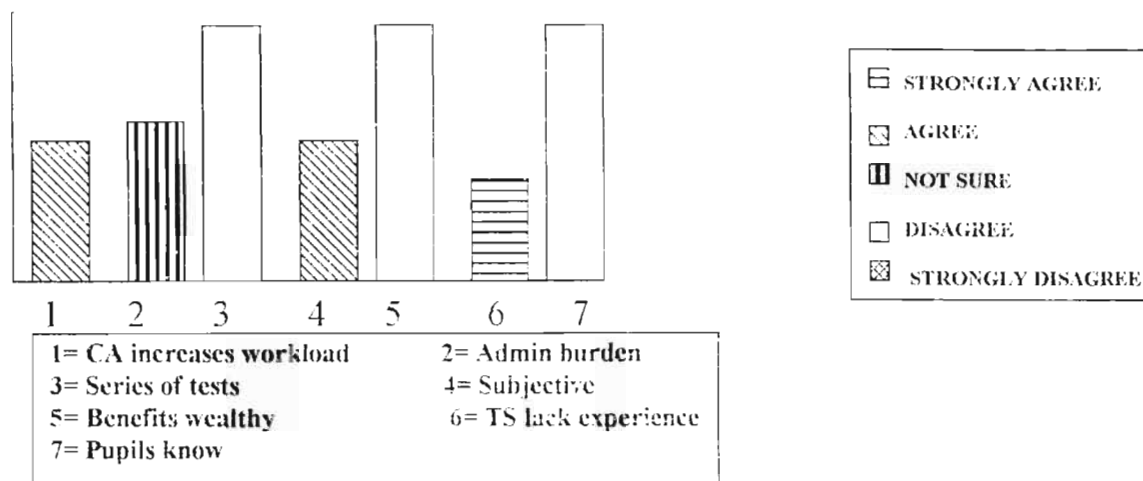


Chart 6.6. Navesh's Perception of Continuous Assessment

He shows strong support for teachers lacking expertise in and experience of continuous assessment. He also agrees that continuous assessment increases the workload of teachers. He believes that this problem is compounded by the large teacher pupil ratio a teacher is faced with, arguing that the

large numbers we have in our classrooms is a serious problem and I don't know whether we can actually do justice with continuous assessment and bearing in mind and looking at the numbers of students we have in our classrooms. In fact in some cases it probably takes weeks and months to actually know each pupil and seeing them only for a few periods, each time you look at certain pupils it's like seeing them for the first time. So the numbers definitely are a problem. (Appendix 18).

He also claims that continuous assessment is a subjective form of assessment but disagrees with the item that continuous assessment benefits the wealthy students. He also disagrees with the statement that continuous assessment

does not assess what the students really know. **This** manifests itself later when he suggests that

when the project was completed, you see they were asked to come to the front and tell me briefly how they made the project. Now this was just to check whether they themselves have done it or not. Of course there were instances where they were different from other people, which was good as long as they understood what they were doing and how the project was working. (Appendix 18)

In addition to the drawbacks of continuous assessment listed above, Navesh offers the following problems he is experiencing in implementing continuous assessment : (a) no support from subject advisors; (b) apathy amongst students. He suggests that

it is evident that those who are interested will go out of their way and do work and then there are those, a fair number who will not tackle the project. I think another reason for this is probably they feel that look everybody's passing, and if they don't do it they will lose a certain amount of marks but still pass. This is a great problem amongst our pupils at the moment. (Appendix 18)

It may well be that the pass requirements for pupils are so low that this situation manifests itself. Navesh clearly believes that continuous assessment has been politically motivated by further suggesting in part E of the questionnaire (Appendix 17) that continuous assessment has been introduced to enable pupils who perform poorly in examinations to pass.

3.4. ANALYSIS OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT TASKS

Navesh's mark schedule was analyzed to establish the types of assessment tasks offered, the frequency of assessment and the weighting for the continuous assessment tasks. This is reflected in the table overleaf:

TYPE OF TASK	NO	% OF CA WEIGHTING
Practical	9	40%
Tests	10	32%
Project	1	14%
Assignment	4	10%
Workbook	2	4%

Table 6.3. Analysis of Continuous Assessment Tasks

Navesh has offered a range of assessment tasks with practicals and tests carrying the greater percentage of the continuous assessment weighting. These tasks occur more frequently, increasing the validity of the mark obtained by the pupil. In offering practicals, Navesh does not restrict himself to practical tests, but uses other strategies for practical assessment, like practical work, reporting, field observations. Tests, although given more frequently, carry a lower percentage of continuous assessment weighting than practicals. It is understandable that only one project is given for the year as they are a major undertaking and involves increased workload, both for the teacher and the pupil.

From the interview, Navesh suggests that

there were certain students that did not tackle the projects at all. Those that did not do the physical project itself wrote accounts on how certain things could be done. (Appendix 18)

It appears that Navesh has developed a strategy to address the problem of pupils not handing in their work, but the implication emerging here is the comparability of scores in light of the alternative task assessing skills that are different from the original task. Navesh recognizes this drawback by suggesting

well, look it was very difficult, actually I allocated a small percentage to the project itself, now that places me in a predicament because it could have been somewhat unfair not to assess the other pupils at all, so in my own way I assessed them for another piece of work done in class. (Appendix 18)

In the absence of a school policy on assessment, Navesh has nevertheless formulated his own policy for assessment and is systematic about the types of tasks, the number and the percent of continuous assessment weighting of these tasks. However he does not acknowledge this as being systematic as he does not have a formalized plan when these tasks are to be given.

I then proceeded to analyze one of each type of assessment task against the rating scale. The researcher once again wishes to alert the reader to the limitation of using only one type of assessment task and tasks of a higher grade to draw conclusions. These limitations need to be considered in the light of the time constraints facing the researcher as well as the teacher not having all these transcripts available. Cumulatively, the assessment tasks that Navesh's pupils are provided with, assess a range of skills like recall, comprehension, prediction, recording, observations, drawing, inferring, construction, writing, selecting appropriate materials, neatness etc. Skills like construction and observation cannot be assessed during exam conditions and shows up as an advantage of having continuous assessment.

Careful analysis of tests and assignments reveal that they are no different from each other or from the types of questions that could be asked under examination conditions. Further, taken together, they account for 36% of the continuous assessment weighting. The concern here is why differentiate tests from assignments when they are no different from each other or from the exams. Is this a type of window dressing where it appears as if a range of tasks are given? The tasks analyzed were content laden, assess simple recall of facts, offers limited challenge and lack creativity. With the exception of projects, all other tasks are of the pen and paper type. The tasks are also fairly dependent on the English language with the use of concepts like "identify", "complex", "correlation", "functional suitability" etc. These tasks showed little relevance to the life of pupils, was context blind i.e., showed

little consideration for the language and cultural groups present in his class, and showed no link with previous work done. Notebooks were assessed for neatness and occasional note making. In the main, notes were taken down from the board. This raises the question of allocating 4% for accuracy of taking down notes from the board? Navesh has also revealed that feedback to pupils is provided in the form of a mark and a comment. Feedback, however, is not provided for all tasks. He does not employ any other alternative strategies for assessment like group and peer assessment.

Probably the most important point to emerge from this analysis, is that although a range of tasks are offered and more frequently it says little about the quality of tasks.

3.5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. Navesh is aware of the Policy Document B on continuous assessment. He has a copy of this document which was discussed at a staff meeting. He has found the document easy to understand, but claims that it does not provide clear guidelines for implementation. He has not been involved in formulating the policy on continuous assessment.
2. Continuous assessment has not improved his teaching but he is of the view that it has enabled him to explore the curriculum more fully. He is non-committal about the benefits of continuous assessment for pupils.
3. Navesh does not follow a systematic approach to assessment, neither has his school developed a policy on continuous assessment or created opportunities for continuous assessment to be transparent to pupils and parents.
4. Navesh has identified the following problems he has experienced in implementing continuous assessment : (a) teachers lack experience of and expertise in continuous assessment; (b) continuous assessment increases the workload of teachers; (c) it is a subjective form of assessment; and (d) he does not believe that continuous assessment benefits the wealthy students but he claims that pupils are apathetic because they believe that they will all pass.

5. Navesh has utilized his options for assessment and offers a range of assessment tasks to his pupils. The tasks assess a range of science process skills. On careful analysis of tests and assignments reveal that they are no different from each other in terms of skills assessed and question types. The tasks are content laden, assess simple recall of facts, and are limited in terms of challenge and creativity. They are fairly dependent on the English language and are pen and paper type with little relevance to pupils life. Navesh does not employ any other alternative strategies for assessment, except teacher assessment.

CROSS CASE ANALYSIS

This cross case analysis will address the singular research question : How is continuous assessment being understood and implemented in secondary schools? The three cases that were discussed fully at the beginning of this chapter will now be compared to trace divergent and convergent responses of the three teachers that participated in this study. This part of the chapter will take the following outline : firstly, I will present a profile of these teachers to establish who these teachers are; secondly, I will compare each teachers' responses to their perceptions and experiences of continuous assessment; and finally, I will tabulate the types of tasks offered, the frequency of assessment and the weighting of these tasks for these three teachers. I will then compare data across the cases for features of the continuous assessment tasks.

1. WHO ARE THESE TEACHERS?

To facilitate understanding of how these teachers perceived and experienced continuous assessment, it was important to profile the participating teachers and their schools (Appendix 19). All these teachers have more eight years of teaching experience, and all have a qualification in Biology. Navesh, however, holds the post of the Head of Department, whilst the other two participants are level 1 educators. Two of the teachers are from an urban school and one from a rural school. The common denominator for all these teachers is that they teach standard nine Biology and all have English and Zulu speaking pupils in their classes. Sacred Hall and Scottsdale High has a well equipped Biology laboratory but Siyasiswe has no electricity, no telephone or a Biology laboratory. All three schools have adequate textbooks for their pupils. Andrew and Navesh have an average class size of 35, whereas Zanele's class size averages 60.

2. WHAT ARE THESE TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT POLICY?

Neither of the three teachers have been involved in formulating the policy on continuous assessment. Both Navesh and Zanele make a strong case for teacher involvement in policy formulation. Andrew, on the other hand, believes that the formulation of policy is best left to experts. Zanele is not

aware of the policy document on continuous assessment, but she first became aware of the policy on continuous assessment through a colleague from another school. Navesh and Andrew have a copy of the policy document that was available via a circular.

Both Andrew and Navesh find the policy document easy to understand. Navesh, however, feels that the document does not provide clear guidelines for implementation, whilst Andrew believes that it does provide clear guidelines and allows for flexible implementation. Andrew's response could be explained in the light of two factors : Andrew's school has been implementing continuous assessment since 1993 and his school has adapted the provincial policy and formulated a school policy on continuous assessment. Zanele did not respond to this part of the questionnaire as she has not seen the policy document. Navesh and Zanele have received no support in trying to implement continuous assessment and feel that the continuous assessment policy should have been trialled before been implemented in schools. What has emerged from this analysis is that each of the ex-Departments of education have varying views of the continuous assessment policy document and the manner in which it has been introduced in schools.

3. DOES CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT IMPACT ON THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

The chart below shows a composite picture of the three teachers responses to their experience of continuous assessment obtained from part F of the questionnaire (Appendix 1).

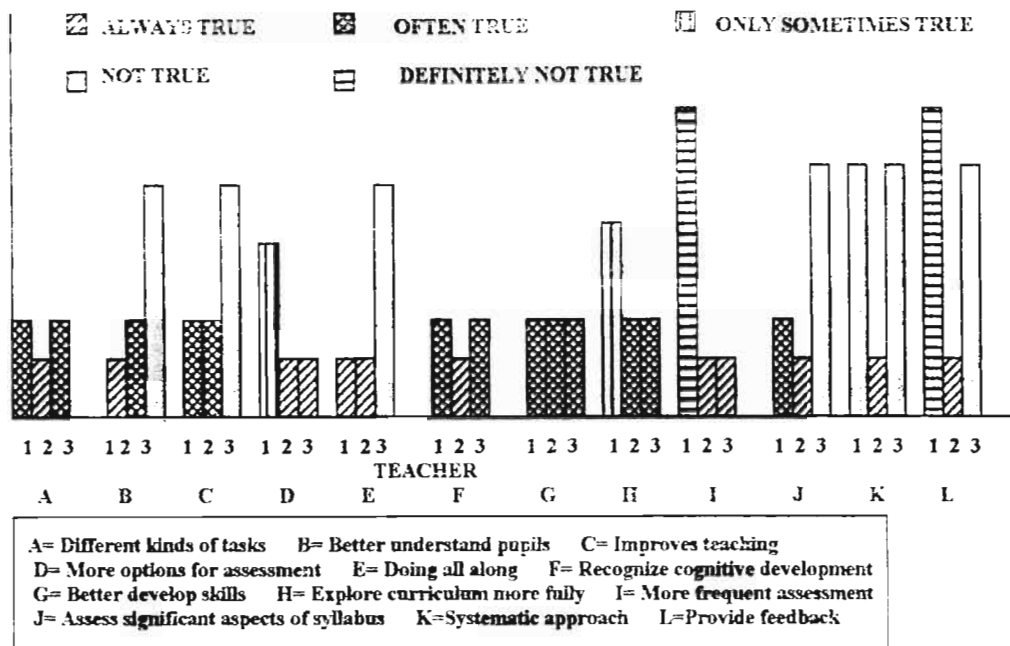


Chart 6.7. Teachers Experiences of Continuous Assessment

Clearly there are both divergent and convergent responses to their experiences of continuous assessment. The responses of the three participants do converge for the items on assessing different kinds of tasks, where continuous assessment allowed their students to better develop their skills, knowledge and understanding and being able to recognize the cognitive development of their students. What is interesting is that although Navesh claims these benefits for pupils, he does not believe that he is better able to understand his students since continuous assessment allows him to develop a cumulative judgment about their performance.

None of these teachers have come out in strong support for continuous assessment improving their teaching. Both Andrew and Zanele have claimed that continuous assessment is what they have been doing all along. In Zanele's case, the question is raised of whether continuous assessment is conceived as assessing continuously. Andrew, however, is from the ex-House of Assembly school where continuous assessment has been operational since 1993. All three teachers have indicated that continuous assessment gives them more options for assessment and enable them to explore the curriculum in a more meaningful and deeper way than before the continuous assessment policy was introduced, but at varying degrees. However, none of

these teachers have indicated that it is always true that continuous assessment enables them to explore the curriculum in a more deep and meaningful way. Zanele has indicated that it is often true that she assess different kinds of tasks, but she does not assess these tasks more frequently. Both Andrew and Zanele have indicated that they assess important and significant aspects of the syllabus, but Navesh does not believe **this** is true.

What this analysis has shown is that these three teachers from the three different ex-departments are in the main, experiencing continuous assessment differently. The ex-House of Assembly, with its brief history of continuous assessment, seem better able to manage the process of continuous assessment, whereas the other two departments are grappling with the fundamentals of continuous assessment.

4. HOW IS CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT PROCESS MANAGED?

Both Zanele and Navesh do not follow a systematic approach to assessment, nor does their schools create opportunities to provide feedback to the major stakeholders. Neither Siyasiswe or Scottsdale High have developed an internal school policy on continuous assessment. In Sacred Hall, on the other hand, Andrew has indicated that it is always true that he follows a structural and systematic approach to assessment and his school has provided ample opportunities to make continuous assessment a transparent exercise. His school has clearly defined what's expected of teachers in its assessment policy. The school has its own assessment policy, and at the classroom level the teacher transforms this policy to the classroom needs. What appears to be lacking in all three schools is that no attempt has been made to discuss the procedures for continuous assessment and design a school programme, so that a pupil does not become overburdened with too many tasks.

5. WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS THESE TEACHERS ARE EXPERIENCING IN IMPLEMENTING CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT?



The chart below summarizes the three teachers responses to the drawbacks of continuous assessment, obtained from part D of the questionnaire (Appendix 1).

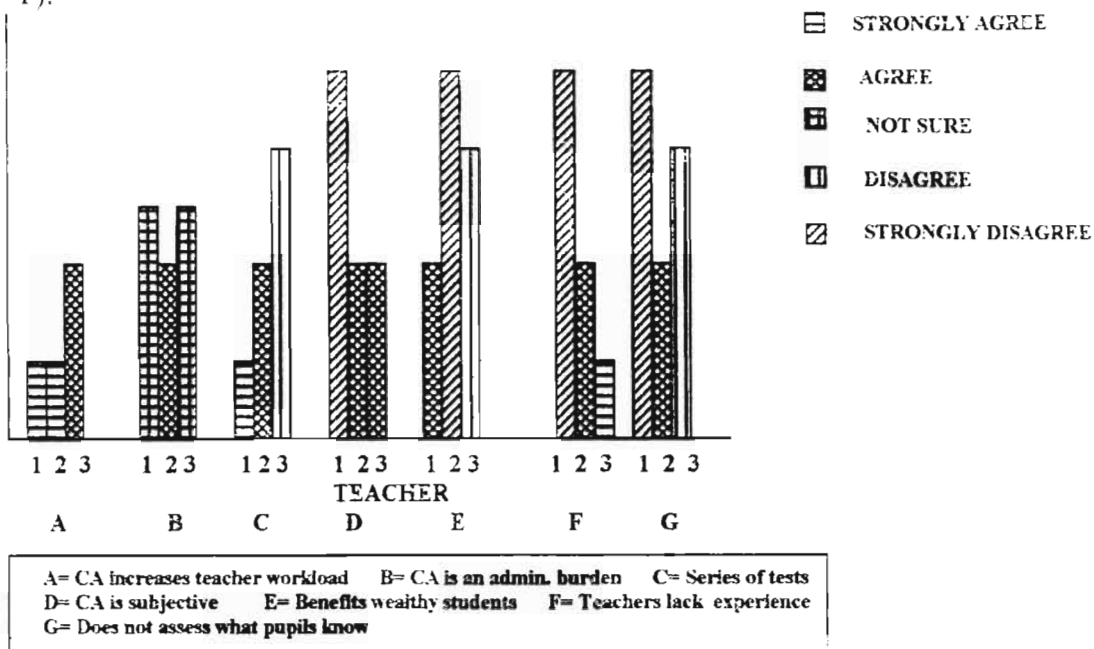


Chart 6.8. Teachers Perception of Continuous Assessment

All three teachers agree that continuous assessment increases teacher workload. Zanele and Navesh are not sure whether continuous assessment is an administrative burden. Zanele **strongly** agrees that continuous assessment in her school is the same as a series of tests. This has been reflected in the types of assessment tasks she offers. Andrew also agrees with this item, probably because in his school the emphasis is strongly on tests. Zanele **strongly** disagrees that continuous assessment is **subjective** whilst Andrew and Navesh agree. Navesh and Andrew also disagree that continuous assessment benefits the **wealthy students** whilst Zanele agrees. Zanele has also responded differently from the other two by **strongly** disagreeing that teachers lack experience of and expertise in, continuous assessment. Both Zanele and Navesh disagree that continuous assessment does not assess what pupils really know.

On the whole, Andrew has identified with most of the drawbacks presented on the histogram. Navesh and Zanele have presented varied responses. In

addition to the problems reflected on the histogram, the participants have also offered other problems they are experiencing. Navesh and Zanele have cited the problem of no consultation with documents, no support from subject advisors and a week management structure. All three have indicated a problem of a week infrastructure i.e., limited resources, large classes, English second language barrier. Zanele has claimed that pupils are overburdened with too many tests, whilst Navesh feels that pupils are apathetic and lazy, and Andrew has indicated that he has experienced the problem of pupils not handing in tasks timeously.

6. ANALYSIS OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT TASKS

Table 6.4 reveals the different kinds of tasks offered by these three teachers : T1 being Zanele, T2 Andrew and T3 Navesh. The number and percent of continuous assessment weighting of these tasks are also reflected.

TYPE OF TASK	NO			% OF CA WEIGHTING		
	T1	T2	T3	T1	T2	T3
Tests	7	10	10	50%	35%	32%
Assignments	8	-	4	50%	-	10%
Worksheet	-	6	-	-	10%	-
Project	-	1	1	-	15%	14%
Practical	-	12	9	-	35%	40%
Workbook	-	-	2	-	-	4%

Table 6.4. Analysis of Continuous Assessment Tasks

Zanele has only chosen tests and assignments to be used for continuous assessment purposes, whilst Navesh and Andrew have maximized their options for assessment and offered a range of assessment tasks. They are also similar in types of tasks offered and its weighting, except that Andrew has chosen worksheets over Navesh's assignment and homework over Navesh's assessment of pupils workbook. Navesh and Andrew also assess the tasks more frequently than Zanele does.

7. ANALYSIS OF THE QUALITY OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT TASKS

Table 6.5 reflects the **quality of continuous assessment tasks offered by these three teachers**. Both **Navesh and Andrew** have offered tasks that assess a range of **science process skills**. **The skills that are assessed in Zanele's tasks are no different from those assessed in the examinations**. None of the teachers made use of **alternative assessment techniques, like group or peer assessment, the assessment is solely teacher assessment**. In the main, the tasks are **content laden and provide little challenge to pupils**. In each case feedback was provided in **the form of a mark and comment**. The tasks were heavily reliant on the English language, some questions were not clear and direct and **the tasks offered little application to the life of pupils**.

	ZANELE	ANDREW	NAVESH
Range of skills	recall comprehension	recall comprehension drawing application form hypothesis communication inferring observation analysis synthesis data collect graphing presentation manipulation extrapolation problem solve	recall comprehension drawing writing prediction construction recording observation inferring selecting
complexity challenge creativity	content laden low levels of questions	high levels of questions critical analysis thought provoking	content laden limited challenge lack creativity some questions of high level
form	pen and paper	pen and paper fieldwork oral	pen and paper construction
language usage	english language dependent	english language dependent	english language dependent
application	context blind	context blind	context blind
feedback	mark, comment	mark, comment	mark comment

Table 6.5. Analysis of the Quality of Continuous Assessment Tasks

Having presented details of continuous assessment practice in the next chapter (Chapter 7), I will conclude this research study by exploring the policy-practice relationship.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE POLICY-PRACTICE RELATIONSHIP : REVIEW, REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I will conclude this report by seeking an answer to the third and broader research question governing this investigation: What is the relationship between the policy and the practice of continuous assessment? What this research study has shown is that the relationship between continuous assessment policy and practice is tenuous. I will illustrate this by a point-by-point attack on policy goals as expressed in policy documents and articulated by Department officials and teachers, and the degree to which these goals are attained in high school classrooms.

1. HOW HAS THE POLICY ON CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT PLAYED OUT IN PRACTICE?

Firstly, the policy document suggests the assessment of *different kinds of tasks* and most of the sample of teachers agreed that this was true of their practice, *but* the quality of these tasks is highly questionable. Case study evidence indicates that *cumulatively a range of skills* are assessed, but on closer analysis tasks that assess recall and comprehension carry a relatively higher weighting. So what purpose does it serve to differentiate between these tasks when they assess the same skills as the formal examinations? The tasks analyzed also lacked challenge and creativity and were in the main context-blind. In offering different kinds of tasks case study evidence indicates that whereas some teachers have *offered* five *different* kinds of tasks, other have offered only two. *These* variations in implementation causes administrative problems when pupils transfer (Pennycuick, 1990). The *majority* of teachers have indicated that continuous assessment gives them more options for assessment, yet few have maximized these options. Teachers have also indicated that continuous assessment has been introduced to reduce rote learning yet an analysis of tasks reveal that they were content laden and in the main, assess simple recall of facts. Clearly teachers lack the skills in constructing tests and other continuous assessment tasks of a high quality and current assessment practice *undermines* higher, deeper and more meaningful approach to learning on the part of *students*.

Secondly, the document recommends that **evaluation occurs on a continuous basis** and a significantly large percentage of teachers have indicated that this is “often true”. Teachers have indicated that ongoing learning promotes positive attitudes in pupils. Pennycook(1990) suggests that gathering assessment over a substantial period of time increases the validity of the results. There are two points that emanate from the latter comment : (a) there are variations in how frequent ‘frequently’ should be. Case study evidence indicates that the frequency of assessment ranges from assessing tasks 15 times to 35 times! The reliability of this form of assessment is questionable when added to this are problems of the marks obtained by pupils of doubtful validity as pupils copy on a large scale (also cited in Awomolo,1992). There has also been no attempt by school managers or Department officials to assess the validity and reliability of continuous assessment scores. Procedures for moderation have been decisively absent from Policy documents A and B; (b) the effect of continuous assessment seems to have been to re-distribute stress throughout the year rather than the debilitating stress that frequently accompanies examinations. Teachers have claimed that pupil workload has increased due to varying demands made by different subject teachers.

Third, the document suggests that the recommended **weighting for continuous assessment should be between 25-50%** , and this is evident from the case studies. Other studies indicate a high preference for a hybrid approach to continuous assessment and examinations (Erinosho,1993; Dixon and Rawlings,1987; Chansarkar and Rautroy,1981; King,1976; Starr,1976; Willis,1974; Cox,1973; Starr,1970). The preference of the sample of teachers in this study has however been outside the scope of this research study.

Fourth, the document suggests **continuous assessment is purported to enhance teaching** and more than half of the sample of teachers have indicated that this is ‘not true’, their teaching has gone on in the same way as before. This is contrary to the findings of Ali and Akubue(1988) where feedback from evaluation provides useful information for modifying and adapting the teaching curriculum. In addition, the document suggests that continuous assessment will enable teachers to **explore the curriculum more fully** and most of the teachers have indicated that this is ‘not true’.

Department officials suggest that continuous assessment allows for the development of skills that cannot be assessed during the examination situation. Case study evidence indicates that the curriculum is narrowly construed as the syllabus and is dictated by examinations. Innovative assessment techniques like group or peer assessment, debating, field observations, are seldom used. In fact, although some teachers have claimed that continuous assessment results in an improved curriculum, a significant percentage have also indicated that they are pressured to cover the syllabus and have little time for assessment. Tan(1990) has found that teachers teach for good examination results and continuous assessment constrains them in their teaching. More than half of the teachers have also indicated that they do not assess only the important, significant aspects of the syllabus now that continuous assessment has been introduced. These findings are consistent with those of Akwesi and Murphy (1994) where there was little evidence of continuous assessment going hand-in-hand with teaching and learning. When continuous assessment is perceived as divorced from any curricular element, it is not likely to be accomplished particularly well. Explicit learning experiences which encourage and support peer and self assessment have not been incorporated into the curriculum. Case study evidence indicates that assessment is summative rather than formative.

Fifth, the document suggests that continuous assessment allows for the growth of thinking processes, development of skills and acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and a large percentage of respondents have indicated that continuous assessment does not result in cognitive growth, very few believe that pupils better develop their skills and acquire knowledge and understanding and half of the sample claim that continuous assessment does not assess what pupils really know. All three cases documented have offered assignments as one type of assessment task. These clearly do not reflect the true ability of the pupil as there is access to materials and scope for consulting with other pupils. Chansarkar and Rautroy(1981) have found that students were more concerned about their grades than using continuous assessment as a learning experience.

Sixth, the document suggests that continuous assessment aspects and procedures should be discussed fully with learners and parents before implementation and more than half of the sample and two out of the three

case study participants have indicated that this is 'not true'. Further, case study evidence indicates that where feedback was provided, it was in its limited form of a mark and comment, the fulfilling of continuous assessment's diagnostic role is questionable. Does the teacher intervene and provide guidance when weaknesses are diagnosed? This finding is inconsistent with the findings of Pennycuick(1990) and Ali and Akubue(1988) where it is suggested that continuous assessment provides the basis for more effective guidance and Awomolo(1992) claiming that this is true because of its formative orientation.

Seventh, the document suggests that the teacher using continuous assessment should adopt a ***structural and systematic approach to assessment*** and half of the respondents have indicated that this is 'not true'. This individualistic and fragmented operation of continuous assessment raises implications for record keeping and accountability. The document is notably silent on the issue of recording of continuous assessment marks. This has been the cause of teachers experiencing problems of increased workload from recording of continuous assessment marks for large groups of pupils. There is evidence from England (Pennycuick and Murphy,1988) that teachers were prepared to make the necessary effort , despite the increased workload if they perceive the benefits to themselves and their pupils of an innovative assessment system. The manner in which policy goals were communicated to teachers failed to instil in teachers the curricular benefits of continuous assessment.

Eighth, the document suggests schools should decide ***when and how frequently assessment should be made and care should be taken not to overload the school programme with too many tests situations*** and two of the three case studies revealed that their schools have not developed an internal policy on continuous assessment. This has been the cause of teachers claiming problems of pupils not handing in tasks timeously, pupils handing in incomplete tasks and pupils being overburdened with too many tasks. What was evident in all three cases is that there was no communication between departments in the school, even with the school that had an internal school policy for continuous assessment. How then are pupils expected to manage this process?

Ninth, the document advocates that the language of assessment must be clear and direct and care should be taken to penalize language only to a certain extent and case study evidence indicates that tasks were heavily reliant on the English language. The language used in assessment tasks were complex and abstract. The assumption made in all three cases is that scientific concepts will mediate themselves irrespective of language usage and that language is somewhat neutral or transparent in relation to subject matter. This begs for the training of teachers in constructing tasks that ensure its linguistic structures and usage do not hinder the performance of English-as-a-second language pupils whose first language may have structures that confuse them.

2. ADDITIONAL CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT POLICY GOALS

Department officials have expressed intentions other than those outlined in Policy documents A and B. They have specific curricular and pedagogic aspirations such as claiming that continuous assessment is formative. Case study evidence indicates that this is not true, in cases where the teacher intervened she had to proceed cautiously. Department officials claim that continuous assessment helps to develop an overall picture of the child. All three cases showed a lack of development of skills in the affective and psychomotor domains; thirdly, they claim that there is collaboration between teacher and pupil so that learning becomes learner-centered and the pupil is able to progress in terms of his own potential rather than comparing him with others. Findings from the questionnaire reveals that the culture of learning has been eroded in schools. Teachers cite problems of pupil apathy and laziness, low motivation and a general disinterest in schooling.

3. WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

This research study has been an attempt to evaluate continuous assessment practice. What this study has shown is that the policy goals of continuous assessment remain largely unattained. The failure to effectively use continuous assessment to an advantage is a pointer to some of the difficulties that confront laudable programs at the implementation stage.

Firstly, the absence of front-line educators (district officials, circuit managers, principals and teachers) in policy formulation has distorted the aim of policy makers. Unless stakeholders participate in and engage in the planning process will they understand the basis of policy choices. McLaughlin (1987) suggest that willingness, attitudes, motivation and beliefs underlie an implementator's response to policy goals or strategies. Continuous assessment is reliant upon teachers for its acceptability and credibility. This can be achieved in part if teachers contribute in the policy debate process. Top-down initiatives often do not get the support of street level bureaucrats and educators who are the key implementing agents. Also the National Department of Education has absolved itself from the implementation process, indicating that it is a provincial function. This neat separation of policy formulation and implementation is not as clear cut when faced with the realities of the classroom. The National Department of Education views the role of the provincial Department as limited to providing it with advice rather than being integrally involved in the development and determination of policy.

Secondly, the pedagogy inherent in continuous assessment required a significant shift in the teaching styles on the part of teachers. The Department of Education failed to institute proper training programmes to empower the teacher to effectively implement continuous assessment in the classroom. The need for providing teachers with skills to effectively implement continuous assessment both at the inservice and pre-service levels is paramount. At the inservice level this can occur at regular workshops. Also Department officials and subject advisors need to expand their present scope of supervision and determine the degree to which teachers are effectively implementing continuous assessment and assist those that fall short. The manner in which policy goals were communicated to teachers added to the disempowering process.

Thirdly, there is an urgent need to institute moderation procedures in schools and districts. This body of preferably district officials could be responsible for the random monitoring of continuous assessment techniques and procedures used in schools as well as ensuring comparable results between schools. Schools will then be informed of over-rating or under-rating or inconsistencies in continuous assessment scores. This body could also facilitate the development of standardized tests and continuous assessment tasks for curriculum modules in all of cognitive, affective and psychomotor

domains which teachers can administer and model after in the development of their own teacher-made instruments. They could also assist in the structuring of a continuous assessment committee in each school.

Fourth, this analysis calls for further research on : (a) pupils' perceptions and understanding of continuous assessment as pupil related problems have been largely identified; (b) if teachers understand and perceive continuous assessment as a "series of tests" then reasons for this perception needs to be explored; (c) differences in practice of continuous assessment across the nine provincial Departments of Education could be explored as provincial Departments may have reacted differently to the policy directive on continuous assessment from the National Department of Education.

Fifth, the findings of this study could also inform the wider debate of how to effect the sustained implementation of pedagogical innovations within the context of a transforming South Africa. The poor grasp of educational dynamics on the ground as well as the most appropriate way to change them has eluded policy developers. Policy sociologists such as Bowe et al (1992), Dale (1989) and McPherson and Raab (1988) argue that policy is above all about contexts, processes and conflicts of actors as they relate and mediate their actions within their institutional structures and state organisations. Extending this argument McLaughlin (1987) suggests that implementing bureaucrats will always put their own interpretations and meanings to intended policy and in the process will use their power and discretion to subvert or transform the original goals of policy makers. Recognising the power of implementators, a new generation of policy implementation analysts argue that effective policy making should reckon with and anticipate implementation problems in order to strategize accordingly and influence or constrain the agents of the implementation process (Gunn and Hogwood, 1982; Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1979). There is a need for exploring research possibilities towards the shift to evolutionary policy planning which aims to improve the fit between intention of the policy change and the conditions on the ground.

Finally, the challenge on the horizon for classroom teachers, within the limits of the available infrastructure, is to develop assessment that validly portrays the quality of student's accomplishments. It would require the efforts and commitment of all stakeholders.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 : Questionnaire to teachers

APPENDIX 2 : Document Analysis Protocol

APPENDIX 3 : Interview Protocol - Department Officials

APPENDIX 4 : Interview Protocol - Teachers

APPENDIX 5 : Copy of fax to Teachers

APPENDIX 6 : Interview Schedule - CA tasks

APPENDIX 7 : Teacher Profile

APPENDIX 8 : Rating Scale for CA Tasks

APPENDIX 9 : Interview Transcript - Department Official A

APPENDIX 10 : Interview Transcript - Department Official B

APPENDIX 11 : Interview Transcript - Department Official C

APPENDIX 12 : Interview Transcript - Department Official D

APPENDIX 13 : Questionnaire : Zanele

APPENDIX 14 : Interview Transcript - Zanele

APPENDIX 15 : Questionnaire : Andrew

APPENDIX 16 : Interview Transcript - Andrew

APPENDIX 17 : Questionnaire - Navesh

APPENDIX 18 : Interview Transcript - Navesh

APPENDIX 19 : Profile of three participating teachers of the case study

PART A

TEACHER INFORMATION

PLEASE PLACE A CROSS (X) IN THE APPROPRIATE BLOCK

1 DESIGNATION OF EDUCATOR

Teacher Level 1		HOD		Deputy Principal	
Principal		Other		Specify , _____	

2 MAIN TEACHING SUBJECT AREA

Maths/Science		Languages		Commerce		Humanities	
Technical/Skills		Other		specify _____			

3 TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN YEARS

0 to 5		6 to 10		11 to 15		more than 15	
--------	--	---------	--	----------	--	--------------	--

4 SEX

Male		Female	
------	--	--------	--

5 TYPE OF SCHOOL

Rural		Urban		Not Sure	
-------	--	-------	--	----------	--

6 FORMAL QUALIFICATIONS (Completed)

2 year diploma only		3 year diploma only		degree only	
degree and diploma		more than one degree			
other		specify , _____			

CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT WAS INTRODUCED INTO SCHOOLS SINCE 1995. MANY TEACHERS BECAME AWARE OF THIS NEW ASSESSMENT PLAN THROUGH DEPARTMENTAL POLICY DOCUMENTS.

The questions below inquire about the information available to you about the continuous assessment policy.

PLEASE PLACE A CROSS (X) IN THE APPROPRIATE BLOCK.

1 Are you aware of the departmental policy document (KZN 3/95) on continuous assessment?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

2 Was the document made available to all teachers in your school?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

If YES please state how?

circular		workshop		other		specify, _____
----------	--	----------	--	-------	--	----------------

3 Do you have a personal copy of the policy document on continuous assessment?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

4 How did you first become aware of the policy on continuous assessment?

I read the policy document		I was told by the principal	
I was told by the HOD		I was invited to a workshop	
It was discussed at a staff meeting			
Other (please specify)			

PART C

PART C RELATES TO THE DEPARTMENT POLICY DOCUMENT ON CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT (KZN 3/95)

Part C may only be answered if your response to item B1 is YES

	Yes	No	Not Sure
1 It is easy to understand			
2 It provides clear guide-line for implementation			
3 It allows for flexible implementation			

SOME PEOPLE ARGUE THAT AS AN ALTERNATIVE FORM OF ASSESSMENT, CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT HAS SERIOUS DRAWBACKS OTHERS SEE IT AS AN IMPORTANT TOOL FOR IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING.

How strongly do you feel about each of the following statements which lists reasons sometimes offered to explain the limitations.

PLACE A CROSS IN THE APPROPRIATE BLOCK based on the key below.

- 1 = strongly agree
- 2 = agree
- 3 = not sure
- 4 = disagree
- 5 = strongly disagree

RATING

	1	2	3	4	5
1 Continuous assessment increases the workload of teachers					
2 Continuous assessment is an administrative burden					
3 Continuous assessment in my school is the same as a series of tests					
4 Continuous assessment is subjective form of assessment					
5 Continuous assessment benefits the wealthy students (eg those that can afford to buy special equipmnt for projects)					
6 Teachers lack expertise of and experience in continuous assessment					
7 Continuous assessment does not assess what students really know					

PART F

IN YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE WITH CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT , HOW WOULD YOU RATE EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS :

A = ALWAYS TRUE

D = ONLY SOMETIME TRUE

B = OFTEN TRUE

E = DEFINITELY NOT TRUE

C = NOT TRUE

RATINGS

	A	B	C	D	E
1 Continuous assessment allows me to assess different kinds of tasks					
2 I am now better able to understand my students since continuous assessment allows me to develop a cumulative judgement about their performance					
3 Continuous assessment has improved my teaching					
4 Continuous assessment gives me more options for assessment as a teacher					
5 Continuous assessment is what I have been doing all along					
6 I feel that I am better able to recognize the cognitive development (eg development of thinking skills) of my students since continuous assessment was introduced.					
7 I feel that continuous assessment allowed my students to better develop thier skills , knowledge and understanding than before this policy was introduced .					
8 I am now able to explore the curriculum in a much deeper and more meaningful way than before the continuous assessment policy was introduced .					
9 I now assess my students more frequently than I did before continuous was introduced					
10 I now assess only the important or significant aspects of the syllabus since continuous assessment was introduced					
11 I now follow a more systematic approach to assessment because of the department's continuous assessment policy .					
12 In my school, ample opportunity has been created to provide feedback to the major stakeholders (parents , pupils etc) on continuous assessment .					

APPENDIX 2

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

CRITICAL QUESTION 1 : What are the intentions of continuous assessment as set out in the formal policy documents(policy)?

QUESTIONS :

What are the sources of the policy document?

1. Is the document to be analysed from the National Department of Education?
2. Does the document from the KZN provincial Department of Education on CA exists?
3. What are the historical origins of the document?

What are the intentions of CA in the documents?

4. What is the rationale for CA in the document from :
 - 4.1 National Department?
 - 4.2 Provincial Department?
5. What is the conception of CA **in** the policy documents?
6. What are the explicit and implied goals for CA in the document from the National Department and the document from the provincial Department?
7. Are there differences in the goals for CA in the documents from the National Department and the Provincial Department?
8. What are the underlying assumptions of the documents regarding these goals of CA?

APPENDIX 3

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS

CRITICAL RESEARCH QUESTION 1 : What are the intentions of CA as set out in the formal policy documents(policy)?

Preface to the Interview

I am doing research on CA and would like to gain more background information on the rationale and objectives of CA from the Department's point of view.

Questions

1. Why did your Department introduce CA in schools?
2. Why has CA been introduced at this time?
3. Where did the goals for CA come from?
 - .. National Department?
 - .. provincial Department?
 - .. international trends?
4. In what ways did the policy on CA filter down to each of the ex-Departments or provinces?
 - .. circulars? .. workshops? .. conferences?
5. How did each of the provincial Departments respond to the National Department's directive on CA?
 - .. adapted ithow?
 - .. adopted everythingwhy?
 - .. elaborated on ithow?
6. How would you prioritise the goals of CA?
7. Are the goals of CA consistent throughout the different subjects?

8. What has been your role in formulating the policy document on CA?
9. In what ways do you think CA will enable teachers to explore the curriculum more fully?
 - .. more emphasis on skills and processes?
 - .. alternative teaching and assessment strategies?
 - .. reduced emphasis on content?
10. What type of feedback have you received from schools or subject advisors on the way in which CA is being implemented?
 - .. have schools received the policy documents?
 - .. are schools implementing CA?
 - .. are schools implementing CA the way the policy intends?

APPENDIX 4

SEMI - STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH THREE STANDARD NINE BIOLOGY TEACHERS.

CRITICAL RESEARCH QUESTION 2 : How is CA understood and implemented in secondary schools(practice)?

Preface

CA has been introduced in our schools since 1995. Since its inception there has been unease amongst some teachers on the way it should be implemented whilst others see it as an important tool to improving their teaching and assessment practice. This interview is intended to gather information on how you as a standard nine Biology teacher is implementing CA?

Questions

A Teacher's perceptions of CA Policy

1. Have you been involved in formulating the policy on CA?
 - .. have you been consulted at grass root level?
 - .. how do you feel about your non involvement?
2. In what ways have you received support in trying to implement the CA policy?
 - .. in terms of choosing modes of assessment?
 - .. in developing assessment skills?
3. Do you feel that the CA policy has improved your practice?
 - .. in what ways?
 - .. why not?
 - .. did it reorientate your thinking about practice?
4. What factors have hindered your implementation of the CA policy?
 - .. class size?
 - .. lack of material and physical resources e.g., equipment for practicals, underqualified teachers, textbooks?

B Impact of CA on the Teaching Process

5. Has CA helped you to better recognise the cognitive development of your pupils?

- .. do you have a better knowledge of the pupils?
- 6. Are you better able to recognise the learners strength, weaknesses and problems since you have been implementing CA?
 - .. do you implement timely interventions and support?
 - .. what factors hinder diagnosis of problems?
 - .. what follows diagnosis?
- 7. In what ways has your experience of CA assisted you in panning future assessment programmes?
 - .. did it bring about a change in the number of tasks given?
 - .. is there a change in the difficulty of subsequent tasks?
 - .. did it bring about an awareness of factors that interfere with learning?
- 8. Has CA enabled you to explore the curriculum more fully?
 - .. do you assess more practical work than before?
 - .. do you place more emphasis on skills and processes?
 - .. do you conduct more fieldwork studies?

C Impact of CA on the Learning Process.

- 9. To what extent has CA enhanced the learning experience for pupils ?
 - .. do pupils enjoy the tasks?
 - .. are pupils actively engaged in the tasks?
 - .. do learners build on their individual strengths throughout the CA process?
 - .. do learners apply knowledge, skills and habits gained in CA thoughtfully in a variety of contexts?

D Management of the CA Process

- 10. Do you follow a more systematic approach to assessment?
 - .. do you plan - when assessment should be made?
 - type of assessment to offer?
 - time allocated for task?
 - due date for collection of task?
- 11. To what extent has your school developed a more systematic policy on CA?
 - .. to determine when assessment should be made?
 - .. to determine when marks should be submitted?

APPENDIX 5

INTRODUCTORY LETTER TO TEACHERS

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study on the impact of the continuous assessment policy on your practice. As you are probably aware continuous assessment has been introduced in most schools since 1995. Since its inception there has been unease amongst some teachers on the way in which it should be implemented, whilst others see it as an important tool for improving their teaching and assessment practice. This interview is intended to gather information on how you as a standard nine Biology teacher is implementing continuous assessment(CA).

QUESTIONS

1. Have you been involved in formulating the policy on CA?
2. In what ways have you received support in trying to implement CA policy?
3. Do you feel that CA has improved your practice?
4. What factors have hindered your implementation of the CA policy?
5. Has CA helped you to recognise the development of your pupils in terms of skills, acquisition of knowledge and growth of their thinking processes?
6. Are you better able to recognise the pupil's strength, weaknesses and problems since you have been implementing CA?
7. In what ways has your experience with CA thus far assisted you in planning future assessment tasks?
8. Has CA thus far enabled you to explore the curriculum more fully?
9. To what extent has CA enhanced the learning experience for your pupils?
10. Do you follow a more systematic approach to assessment since the CA policy has been introduced?
11. To what extent has your school developed a more systematic policy on CA?
12. Has your school created opportunities for the CA exercise to be transparent?

- .. to control and co-ordinate the CA process?
 - .. to determine the weighting of CA tasks?
12. Has your school created opportunities for CA to be transparent?
- .. pupils clear on assessment criteria
 - .. parents informed on procedures, provided with feedback.

APPENDIX 6

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS IN RELATION TO CA TASKS

QUESTIONS

1. What successes did pupils enjoy when completing the tasks?
 - .. in terms of understanding
 - .. selection of appropriate material
2. What failures did pupils experience when completing the tasks?
 - .. pressure
 - .. inadequate concept development?
3. Was the time that you allocated adequate for pupils to complete the task?
 - .. did pupils require more time?
 - .. where there particular aspects of the task that was left incomplete?
4. Were the tasks handed in timeously?
5. What strategies were used for assessing pupils that handed tasks after the due date?
6. What strategies were used for assessing pupils that were absent for the task?
 - .. were they given a substitute task?
 - .. were they expected to complete the same task?
 - .. were they given a ranked mark?
7. What type of feedback was given to pupils?
 - .. single mark? .. mark and written comment?
 - .. mark and discussion with pupil?
8. In what ways have the tasks you have set assisted you in identifying problems and weaknesses of your pupils?
 - .. how did you address this?
 - .. what factors have hindered your identification of problems?
9. Have you set tasks on all significant aspects of the work?
10. Are resources(e.g., libraries, archives etc) adequate for pupils to proceed with and complete the tasks?
11. What types of assessment strategies do you employ in your classroom?
 - .. group assessment? .. teacher assessment only?
 - .. peer assessment?

APPENDIX 7

TEACHER PROFILE

1 NAME OF TEACHER	
2 NAME OF SCHOOL	
3 TYPE OF SCHOOL	
4 LANGUAGE MEDIUM OF SCHOOL	
5 GENDER	
6 PROFESSIONAL STATUS	
7 FORMAL QUALIFICATION	
8 QUALIFICATION IN BIOLOGY	
9 TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN YEARS	
10 TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN BIOLOGY	
11 PRESENT STANDARDS BEING TAUGHT	
12 LANGUAGE GROUPS IN CLASSROOM	
13 AVERAGE CLASS SIZE	
14 STATE OF RESOURCES AT SCHOOL	
	textbooks
	laboratory equipment
	audiovisual

APPENDIX 8

RATING SCALE FOR CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT TASKS

1. Range/Diversity of skills	recall, analysis, synthesis, data-response, inferring, comprehension, drawing, application, observation, manipulation, communication measurement, formulating hypothesis, predicting and data presentation.
2. Complexity/Challenge Creativity	Levels of questioning Did the task challenge value judgments? Did the task require authentic orientation?
3. Form	pen-and-paper oral debate fieldwork
4. Language Usage	Where questions clear and direct? Where there concepts that relied heavily on the English language?
5. Application/Focus	Were the tasks applicable to real life. life of pupil. work previously done? Were the tasks culturally biased?

APPENDIX 9

TRANSCRIPT OF AUDIOTAPED INTERVIEW WITH DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL A

R = researcher

A = Department official A

R : I am doing research on continuous assessment and I would like to focus on the rationale and objectives of CA. Why did your Department introduce CA in schools?

A : It is a national requirement, policy. Policy is that CA be used - its national policy. Those documents say this.

R : So, at the National level it was decided that CA be introduced in schools?

A : Yes, I don't know whether you recall after the elections we had this committee that was established. the NETF....

R : Yes. the National Education Training Forum.

A : Yes, that forum established sub-committees of all the role players in terms of the eh, to sort of clean up the existing up the existing curriculum and combine and have one common syllabus for all the eh.....

R : all the different ex-Departments?

A : Yes, there were two syllabi that were being used, one was the 1992 and the other was the 1984. The 1992 syllabus was used by the House of Assembly schools and the 1984 syllabus by the non-white Departments, because there was an impasse in the 80's and the early 90's, the non-white Department refused to implement the syllabus because we did not have whites on the committee that dealt with it so we did not have a voice in the committee. So the task of the NETF was to see how best they could combine the two syllabis without creating any problems in terms of new textbooks, also to clean up the curriculum. I am not too sure whether we have achieved that because the process was hijacked by established people because now 90% of the established position was the HOA. Anyway that is all History now. But I think that is where the idea of CA came about. But I think it is a step in the right direction and it is policy that has to be implemented. When I say policy.....having said that there are some provinces, I know Gauteng for an example, is not implementing CA, they are actually violating policy, for reasons not they are not, do not want CA, more in terms of whether I think they have the capacity, because we ourselves have had the problem in trying to orientate our principal and teachers and I am also saying that it is possible that some of our rural areas that CA is not being implemented.

R : Yes, that could be true.

A : We are aware of that because in our rural areas we have teachers who are underqualified, resources are limited, the capacity is limited and it is difficult to implement CA if you do not understand the rationale behind it in terms of what you do. I mean that is....

R : So, what is the rationale of CA from your point of view?

A : One of the things is that there have to be a de-emphasis on exams, I mean the crux of it, previously our curriculum was dictated by exams when it should be the other way about, the exams dictate the curriculum... the backwash effect of this is I think the teacher and pupil cannot explore the curriculum more fully, so with this shift, firstly it gives the teacher and pupils an opportunity of exploring the curriculum more fully....

R : Yes, with regards to exploring the curriculum more fully, what exactly is meant? What are the teachers expected to do to explore the curriculum more fully?

A : Ya, I think if you take a paper and pencil test on one hand you got to focus on certain things to teach, a limited fashion, whereas when you are assessing different forms, a variety of forms, you are not bound by paper and pencil tests, you have got other ways of assessing, so you can give the child a project which a child can do in group fashion, or in co-operation with others, but there are lots of things that can happen when a child does a project, for e.g., whether he is able to state a hypothesis, whether he is able to use information in a particular way, whether he understands what he has done, whether he has actually he has actually done it, where you have an affective domain tested, whereas in the exams you can't do that. So one of the fundamental components of CA is the affective domain, for whilst you don't give marks for whether the child's attitude is right or perhaps did his homework regularly, or not, but those are considerations which give the overall picture of the child. So the affective factor, the affective domain is important. Also I think in this CA the focus is not on the teacher, it is on the child, learner-centered, whereas in the paper and pencil test the teacher is the supreme person, he has got together a list of questions and perhaps he knows the answer, now takes this in front of the child, whereas CA we are focusing on the learner, where in fact it has to be a collaboration between teacher and learner. The learner now decides for example, makes choices on whether he wants to do the project or not and gives them a sense of belong... or that he has a responsibility to determine whether he or she can achieve, so the focus is shifting from the teacher to the learner. Also, you must remember that there is a whole paradigm shift in terms of assessing for eh the whole question of comparing results or assessing where you allow pupils to develop. Now this CA eh requires that you look at how the individual can progress in terms of his own potential, rather than comparing him with another individual, whereas tests which are more norm-referenced, now our exams seem to be norm-referenced, now CA tends to be criterion-referenced and measure pupils performance against their own potential rather than against previous norms which is a major shift and also our new curriculum which is going to come out in 1998 with OBE.

particularly emphasises the use of criterion-referencing. We look at pupils and his potential and not the other way around, therefore we talk of group work and collaboration, working with peers, and in that context we are clear, not so much for comparison, but more in terms of how the child's development unfolds within that context, so that's a major shift, which is a good shift but I think also one must remember when you take a paper and pencil test, you only look at a sample of things, you do not sample the entire curriculum whereas in a CA situation particularly at other things and then also CA is something which is continuous, not only continuous although they might just give assignments or a test, whatever, there is a mark involved. I think teachers actually should be assessing continuously what the child does when you pose a question, how the child reacts, even when a child is doing a project how he reacts. And you are assessing all the time which is different from assessing pupils in a given point in time, tests is sort of a terminal thing whereas CA is in a way developmental and eh....

R : I suppose the idea behind it is to diagnose weaknesses and.....

A : and also, yes I think that's an important component of this..... when it did arise, I mean look, if a child did a unit of work, no matter what orals etc. , the idea is to talk to the student, how can he improve. So it has this role built in it.

R : So where did these goals come from?, e.g., exploring the curriculum more fully? Where did they come from? This whole idea about CA.

A : Look, there has been a shift from norm-referenced to criterion-referenced throughout the world, you assess IQ tests, the standardised tests are not satisfactory. You test an individual. There is this whole.....

R : Has there been any pilot studies done in South Africa to see how CA is going to go?

A : I think while we have end exams within the confines of school right up to std 9, there has been in a way CA, test continuously in essence criterion- referenced as well, so it is actually not new. Some of the ex-Departments also have year mark, 50%. In fact we did our experiment in the early 80's we had actually had authority to have 50% of our year mark to be, management level at that stage, early 80's..... the schools involved in CA performed better in the senior certificate exams, statistically we were able to prove that but I think generally it is the right way to go and children are able to do better and I think the important thing also is that we need to worry about, the concerns of the Department, what has been done, the CA part of it and I don't know if it is sufficient that the teachers if they have misunderstood this whole thing whereas it becomes a series of tests or if they pressure the students too much whereas pressure is important for the child to learn undue pressure can have eh.....

R : You mean the child becomes overburdened with too many.....

A : Yes, that's one issue... too many situations to assess **and secondly** people feel that a number of tests mean CA, those are the **problems** that we **have been having**, even in our circulars, we have drawn up documents for a **handbook**, we supposed to have **given this** out actually at the end of last year but we held back because other components of the handbook are not ready where it gives more details what's its called **the**

R : the implementation. So coming back to schools **and** implementation, firstly how did the policy filter down to teachers? **We** did receive **circulars** **and** you mentioned you **had** these meetings.....

A : CA as a component was done in collaboration with teacher bodies, it was a teacher body initiative, all teachers were invited. Also the Department had workshops, the junior primary and secondary schools throughout the province to which teachers were invited, we had this session in terms of how the curriculum is to be structured and a session on **CA**. So the curriculum has filtered to schools and how it is operative we have not had the opportunity to find out.

R : In my school it has come through these policy documents and through the principal who attended a principals meeting where you had a **workshop** on that, but there are other schools in the area that are not implementing CA.

A : Well actually they are violating policy if they are not doing this, but I think because of the transition ..

R : So do you get any feedback from maybe subject advisors/inspectors on what's being done at grass root level?

A : Yes, I do. That is why I know that, but we are not merely concerned about. The important issue, the curriculum, we are also aware that in 1998 we have a new curriculum coming out and next year is going to be a target year for capacity building projects which will look at new OBE and one of the components of OBE is assessing because this is an outcome, criterion-referencing plays an important part in OBE, so also as far as this province is concerned we don't have a capacity as it is, structures have not yet been properly structured and personnel have not been appointed. These are problems that we have.

R : From what I recall in a subject committee meeting I attended is that CA will form a component of the 1998 matric exam , is that what's planned for...

A : Ya, I think what has happened now is the reverse has taken place. Schools are not doing practical work because of a lack of facilities in our rural, eh African schools and therefore the NED and HOD which has earmarked has had to undergo changes to accommodate the common exams. But hopefully with the idea of CA by 1997 CA will form part of the senior certificate exam even if it is of year mark, but some percentage of the senior certificate internal mark, but I don't think we are ready for that and I think also

perhaps why we are holding on is that we also have the curriculum coming up so I think what's going to happen is this thing is going to be phased out into the new kind of exam. the first matriculant with the new curriculum will be 2001.

R : Yes, I suppose it will be trialled out. Coming back to CA, are the intentions the same for the different subjects?

A : Ya, look basically the idea in terms of what one should do but it will vary from subject to subject on what one should do for e.g., we can also talk about differing weightings for CA in the different subjects. In this point in time we are saying that although the National guidelines suggest minimum 25% maximum 50% we are using 50%. From studies carried out throughout the world we feel that it should be 50/50 because one should not outweigh the other, but it can change in the different subjects in terms of 30/70 for exam but we have advised our schools to go for 50/50.

R : I suppose the difference will be in terms of the mode of assessment they choose. maybe more orals in some subjects.

A : Yes

.....end of transcript.....

APPENDIX 10

TRANSCRIPT OF AUDIOTAPED INTERVIEW WITH DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL B.

R = RESEARCHER

B= DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL B

R : As I have mentioned in my fax I am doing research on CA and I would like to gain more information on the objectives of CA from the union's point of view. The first question I would like to ask you is : Why did your Department introduce CA in schools?

B : We were not behind the introduction of CA as such. We were party to the transformation process. The system of examination that we have had in the past did not equip pupils with the skills necessary to enter the workforce. Unfortunately pupils looked at exam papers in the past, some of them without consulting textbooks, and were able to pass the exams. They worked out from the exam papers and spotted questions that might appear. And unfortunately, the assessment, the exam did not show what pupils really knew. What pupils were being tested on was the national curriculum, this did not prepare them for the outside. They received a certificate which showed they were able to pass the exam. CA in a way helps, where pupils are assessed continually. Now the assessment in a way helps because you are assessing different skills. Now basically the union becomes part of the actual process where teachers become involved in the process. Even now it appears that CA will help to overcome the shortcomings of the exam system. Now basically the exams provides us with certain amount of information are very, very narrow, even the assessment and the exam was such. Now the learners will learn how to do things, they will become better prepared, the learner will learn how, what I am saying is that the curriculum will become learner centered.....

R : Do you think that the goals of CA are consistent throughout the different subjects?

B : Probably they might be..... but what CA does might be the same for the different subjects. first you have the different fields, each of them with focuses, we end up with the same outcome or programme nationally for the learning area. so whether it is Mathematics or Science or English. They must cover the main principle of life. I will give you an e.g., with the Catholic church or the Evangelist, when they deliver their sermons they tell you what you should do and what you shouldn't do, and the one will speak of the wrongs of others but basically it comes from the same Bible, that is why nationally we have to have agreed standards, that is why Muslim Fundamentalists, I think you may have come across them, throughout the world are having that effect, many people have not looked at that, the matter of spiritualism in the curriculum, you've got to and we haven't dealt with that area as yet. Like the safety factor, whether it is in the carberator of the car in the garage that heats up and the water shoots up when I pick up the bonnet or with electrical appliances. Probably we will take that. But thats by the way as I said. At the present

moment the curriculum is the same, the CA should ensure that a good mechanism is put forward that recognises the abilities of a child and not merely giving tests...

R : Like a series of tests for CA?

B : The point I am making is that the curriculum must change if we want CA to be put into place and the outcomes are national, it should include advocacy for progression. Now that will give pupils a chance for mobility, to move across levels and if you take a pupil that receives her training on catering and management in a ship, that pupil will be able to progress to a **Holiday Inn** and do hotel management. She would have gained the outcomes and training in line with. Now the different institutions like colleges and industries can offer the learning and training that will be in line with national agreed standards. Now this is in line with the economy. In Nigeria from my experience, after you finish school you are ready to earn money depending on local needs. Now that is why...

R : I presume you were part of the NETF?

B : Yes I was part of it.

R : Do you have any idea how the ex-Departments are responding to the National Department's directive on CA?

B : I believe in the provinces where the LAC's are formed to decide on the different areas of learning, the learning programmes, the different themes, the outcomes that are to be assessed will be decided upon.

R : Okay, but you see these documents have been sent in 1995 and the LAC has been formed in April 1996, do you have any idea how the Department has responded in the period from 95 to 96?

B : Actually the time that it was discussed, probably that document was just to highlight the concept of CA and that aspect of assessment. At the present moment the outcomes are being written by which a learner will be assessed. The formation of the NQF will be a vehicle by which the new curriculum will be driven. In the NQF at the various levels, the early childhood, the school level and the higher levels of learning at tertiary institutions outcomes and unit standards will be registered with SAQA. Now SAQA has been formed nationally and it will ensure both vertical and horizontal mobility. If you take a learner from Kwa-Zulu Natal who has attained an assessment mark through CA, now if that pupil has to move to Gauteng, these marks must apply, it must be agreed upon, it must provide for horizontal mobility and even movement vertically in the different phases. In terms of SAQA the outcomes and the unit standards must be nationally recognised. Now when we talk of national recognition then we have context free outcomes and objectives. Pupils will experience the curriculum differently and so with teachers. How the curriculum becomes transformed depends upon the people that were brought into it, like safety for an e.g., the safety within the house, safety in the classroom, safety when working with

electrical equipment. Now safety is an important consideration and it should form part of that....

R : You mean provide the learner with life orientation skills?

B : Now actually what we had in the past the learner will be able to perform to a limited extent, the objectives, now therefore probably we will apply the other procedures to gain more information on what pupils really know. What is welcomed is that pupils can apply the knowledge that will be gained in the system.

R : Why has it been introduced at this particular time, because I am from an ex-HOD school and CA has been introduced since 1995? Why 1995?

B : Could you repeat your question?

R : Why has CA been introduced now at this particular time?

B : Maybe why I ask that particular question when do you think we should introduce it?

R : Well maybe in the past decade or so, or sometimes in the last few years.

B : But now when you count the system of education we had in the past the problem was the government of the past, the system of education, the content, the exam was political. The committee, the NETF was formed to cleanse the system. We formed certain principles. That is one of the points, the government. For the past that was the system. But when the economy demands certain things we end up with a situation where pupils are not equipped. That you cannot....It does not provide us with enough information, it will provide us with information but how it can come about through the different processes. Now that's what the process was all about. Now some of the things we have to look at is the content, the assessment and the way the teacher approaches the curriculum, the methodology. That's how we come up with a system to link all these. And if you take content of the past, we must bear in mind that it was..... by the so called whites, who had the opportunities for an example something like traditional healing was not written about. Like religion was missing from the curriculum of the past. Maybe the study of spiritualism will be included, now the whites controlled what was in the content of textbooks, so that was one thing we were concerned about and this was reported by the tasks teams of the phase committees of the NETF, it was to cleanse the existing content. Now the principles that form that like CA was just, it was a concept, it was not policy. It was concept to move towards transformation and the changes that come with the new curriculum. Now the principles we have come up with affect not only the content, but the teachers as well, how they teach, probably that's the problem, teachers are teaching the same content. But we don't know how the pupils pass, has the assessment worked? Are they ready for the workforce? When I talk about assessment I talk about the objectives and the outcomes we want to achieve. The exams was a way of showing the public that schools are functioning but that has not been the case in our disadvantaged schools. Now that is

part and parcel of the problem. But now the fact of the matter is the amount of money the government has allocated to education to the different Departments was also not quite the same and that has created differences and we can't expect them to be equal and write the same exam like the 1996 one. When it comes to the curriculum part, the content or subject matter must be assessed against the outcomes or objectives, everybody will be assessed against the same outcomes, the outcomes will be nationally agreed. The content may be different but the outcomes will be agreed upon altogether, but in a case some people may do well in the written part, some in the case may do well in doing, for an e.g., a motor mechanic who does well in fixing cars may not have fitted well within the school system. Now with the new system he would be getting credits for his experience through the NQF by attaining certain outcomes. And now the curriculum advises the assessment and it does not become test driven as it has been done. Very often you give a problem and if they can work out the problem by doing then they have achieved something..... doing something worthwhile. Now with the assessment part of it this is where the Department of Education comes into it, by setting the exam because the practice in the past is that whites have controlled the process, this is where the problem is. They have set papers andIf you have 20% of the pupils that pass matric go to university, what about the other 80%? Are they being trained for anything out there? Now certain things need to be addressed. Now with CA we will focus on the outcomes that need to be obtained and these outcomes will be linked with those of industry and those of the labour force. So, after 12 years when the student leaves the school system he will have more than a certificate, he will have obtained entry in the workforce or sometimes experience failure.....

R : Do you have any idea how the policy on CA has filtered down to each of the ex-Departments/provinces from the National Department?

B : No, I am not aware of the particular documents, I am not aware of it. But I am aware of the LAC that was formed...

R : Did you receive any feedback from schools in the way in which CA is being implemented?

B : Unfortunately I didn't get any. But the fact of the matter is that CA is being implemented in schools not by national outcomes, you understand. CA is introduced but according to the existing curriculum. Therefore it has not addressed the problem. What are teachers doing? Giving them tests? CA has another purpose, the criterion-referenced assessment, whereby each learner is assessed from set criteria within OBE. Now that is why at present it's very difficult for many teachers to implement this and until we can get enough information to teachers, on OBE, the new curriculum and assessment, it will still be a problem.

-----end of transcript-----

APPENDIX 11

TRANSCRIPT OF AUDIOTAPED INTERVIEW WITH DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL C.

R = RESEARCHER

C = DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL C

R : As I have mentioned in my fax I am doing research on CA and I would like to find out the intentions of CA from a National point of view. The first question I would like to ask of you is : Why did the National Department introduce CA in schools?

C : Okay, let me put things into perspective. CA as it stands in schools has been from a resume on instructional programme. It's not from the Department, this new government. It's not part of the new government's policy reform. In a sense what I am saying is I know that CA was from that document. I was appointed to fill in the post for research, evaluation and assessment. That is what I am responsible for. Then subsequently to work on National policy for assessment. That document is not finished. It will be released on the 24 March as part of the policy relating to assessment in schools, it's part of the curriculum. So, in a sense what I am saying is that questions like did the National Department introduce CA in schools, then we are talking about the policy document that deals with instructional practices, I cannot answer that. The other problem is that it is still part of the old system where pupils are assessed according to grades so that that document, that CA is embedded in an old practice, an old philosophy, having promotion requirements, grades which we are moving away from completely, and things like where did the goals of CA come from, within that context I cannot answer but maybe I can tell you about the new system and the question about in which ways did the policy filter down to the ex-Departments, I am not sure, but I can say there is chaos. People are interpreting CA as it's in that document and they have different ways and they test continuously and they'll tell you that they are using CA and that document doesn't even spell out what CA actually is, just that continuous evaluation, no guidance, no definition of what evaluation is and all that and when you say the goals of CA consistent throughout the different subjects, you see some of the questions depends on provincial competencies, if I can explain this to you. The Minister at National Department is concerned with policy and the monitoring and evaluation of that policy. The provincial Departments in the interim constitution is implied the delivery and execution of that policy from the National Department, in a provincial context. So, for an e.g., exams are a provincial function but policy on exams obviously comes from the National Department, and in short I think what I am saying is that whatever research you are doing it boils down to three things : One, if you are doing research on CA are you doing research on the current practice and if that is the case..... I want to categorically underline that it is old news now, it will be old news when the new curriculum is out in 1998. I can tell you because I am working with the new document and I can tell you what the situation is at the moment.

R : Actually I am interested in the policy that has come down from the National Department in

C : Ya, I remember that one, you're talking about the one on promotions. I wasn't part of the compilation of that body.

R : But I presume CA will form part of the new assessment procedures in the new curriculum?

C : Not in the sense as its been done. It will come with more guidelines but also I think with OBE approach we are not implementing it within the old paradigm like we have at the moment. To effectively implement CA you can introduce it within the traditional form of teaching, with rote learning, exams and all those things or you can introduce it within a model of enablement that doesn't use assessment for grading or promotion requirements, but for functions like diagnostic. But CA as its outlined is using assessment to promote.

.....end of transcript.....

APPENDIX 12

TRANSCRIPT OF AUDIOTAPED INTERVIEW WITH DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL D

R = RESEARCHER

D = DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL D

R : As I have said in my fax I am doing research on CA and I wanted to gain more information from the Department's point of view. Why did the National Department introduce CA in schools?

D : CA?

R : Yes.

D : Well this has come about with OBE and outcomes must be evaluated on a continuous basis, that is one of the main criteria put forward for outcomes based education, i.e., it must be assessed on a continuous basis.

R : But this document that has been released from the Department, has it been on outcomes?

D : Yes, it should be.

R : You see, I am concentrating on the document that has been released from the Department in respect of CA.

D : Yes, that was the interim period, that was the first stage of CA, the period of preparing teachers for the new curriculum that will be implemented in 1998. That CA in 1995 was interim, it was just the start you know, to make them familiar with it.

R : But why was it introduced at that particular time?

D : That was the first actual revision of the curriculum of that nature.

R : Was it to combine the syllabuses of the different ex-Departments?

D : That's it. That was when we tried to consolidate it into one and to remove the outdated content, it was revision, it was not new syllabus.

R : The goals of CA, for an e.g., more frequent assessment, where did these goals come from?

D : That has come in 1995. That has been formulated by the NETF, the National Education and Training Forum committees. They started this. They actually generated these goals.

R : Have you been involved in the policy document of 1995?

D : The Department was the facilitator, so we supplied the input, back up systems, but it was done solely by the committee.

R : And do you have any idea how the policy has filtered down to the ex-Departments?

D : Well, yes the Department was involved in the document that was released in 1995, that was History, that was the last one, but the recent one, it was approved in November to be implemented at the beginning of 1995, except in Gauteng, it was only implemented in 1996.

R : And did the policy come down in circulars, workshops.....

D : Well, yes. You see when the Minister approved it as policy, then it was published in the Government Gazette of November 1995, then another Government Gazette to include History in 1996, then it was tabled in parliament and we assisted the provincial Departments upon request to interpret the new policy. But not all of them made use of us. It was not compulsory, but we made our services available.

R : Do you have any idea how they responded? You did say that some of them had taken up the offer.

D : Yes, those committees that did. Western Cape, no not Western Cape. Gauteng was one. Most of the provinces were aware of it. Most of the state Departments were members of the NETF, so they were working earlier with it.

R : Do you have any idea how the provincial Departments responded to the circular? Did they adopt everything?

D : Yes, they had to adopt it because it was policy, they cannot exclude it. They can actually elaborate on it, they can act on parts, but once policy is decided every Department has to follow.

R : Are the goals of CA consistent throughout the different subjects?

D : What you have with CA is that from grade 1 for a three year period, for the first year it must be about 25%, the total mark, then gradually up to a maximum of 50%.

R : With regards to the goals of CA, will it be consistent throughout the different subjects like History, Geography, Science?

D : What I can say is I think it will be the same.

R : And the.....

D : Except the text, because the policy says that CA is only applicable to Grade 11. In Grade 12 it is only exams.

R : In what ways do you think CA will enable teachers to explore the curriculum more fully?

D : Well, you see now they can examine sections that were previously not examinable. If you take Physical Science they can take lab work, or field work in Geography, things that you cannot evaluate in the formal exams, but practical work can be assessed if a task is given.

R : And what type of feedback have you received from schools and....

D : No, you see, we don't work with schools directly. If the school wants to comment on it they usually go to the province or the subject advisor in the province and maybe when there seriously is a change in policy then they will come to us. We have no schools that we go to.

R : Okay, and has there been an evaluation of this policy?

D : Yes, provinces must have done this, because at the end of the year with promotions, the subject advisors, principal will decide. But you see the new curriculum, CA is now part of OBE, that isn't only CA actually, you know, that is a different story. This is only interim, so grade 1 and grade 7 it will start over a period of six years it will be fully enforced and the interim syllabus will disappear.

.....end of transcript.....

Questionnaire

This questionnaire collects information about the impact of the **NEW CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT POLICY** on high school teachers. Please hand this questionnaire to all teachers in your school. Your school will receive a full report on the findings of this study. Information from individual schools and teachers will be kept in strict confidence.

PART A

TEACHER INFORMATION

PLEASE PLACE A CROSS (X) IN THE APPROPRIATE BLOCK

1 DESIGNATION OF EDUCATOR

Teacher Level 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	HOD	<input type="checkbox"/>	Deputy Principal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Principal	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Specify , _____	

2 MAIN TEACHING SUBJECT AREA

Maths/Science	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Languages	<input type="checkbox"/>	Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/>	Humanities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technical/Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	specify _____			

3 TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN YEARS

0 to 5	<input type="checkbox"/>	6 to 10	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	11 to 15	<input type="checkbox"/>	more than 15	<input type="checkbox"/>
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4 SEX

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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5 TYPE OF SCHOOL

Rural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Urban	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
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6 FORMAL QUALIFICATIONS (Completed)

2 year diploma only	<input type="checkbox"/>	3 year diploma only	<input type="checkbox"/>	degree only	<input type="checkbox"/>
degree and diploma	<input type="checkbox"/>	more than one degree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
other	<input type="checkbox"/>	specify , BA Hons (UHDE)			

CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT WAS INTRODUCED INTO SCHOOLS SINCE 1995. MANY TEACHERS BECAME AWARE OF THIS NEW ASSESSMENT PLAN THROUGH DEPARTMENTAL POLICY DOCUMENTS.

The questions below inquire about the information available to you about the continuous assessment policy.

PLEASE PLACE A CROSS (X) IN THE APPROPRIATE BLOCK.

1 Are you aware of the departmental policy document (KZN 3/95) on continuous assessment ?

Yes		No	X
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2 Was the document made available to all teachers in your school ?

Yes		No	X
-----	--	----	---

If YES please state how ?

circular		workshop		other		specify , _____
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3 Do you have a personal copy of the policy document on continuous assessment ?

Yes		No	X
-----	--	----	---

4 How did you first become aware of the policy on continuous assessment ?

I read the policy document		I was told by the principal	
I was told by the HOD		I was invited to a workshop	
It was discussed at a staff meeting			
Other (please specify)		<i>Colleague at another school</i>	

PART C

PART C RELATES TO THE DEPARTMENT POLICY DOCUMENT ON CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT (KZN 3/95)

Part C may only be answered if your response to item B1 is YES

	Yes	No	Not Sure
1 It is easy to understand			
2 It provides clear guide-line for implementation			
3 It allows for flexible implementation			

PART D

SOME PEOPLE ARGUE THAT AS AN ALTERNATIVE FORM OF ASSESSMENT, CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT HAS SERIOUS DRAWBACKS OTHERS SEE IT AS AN IMPORTANT TOOL FOR IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING.

How strongly do you feel about each of the following statements which lists reasons sometimes offered to explain the limitations.

PLACE A CROSS IN THE APPROPRIATE BLOCK based on the key below .

- 1 = strongly agree
- 2 = agree
- 3 = not sure
- 4 = disagree
- 5 = strongly disagree

RATING

	1	2	3	4	5
1 Continuous assessment increases the workload of teachers	X				
2 Continuous assessment is an administrative burden			X		
3 Continuous assessment in my school is the same as a series of tests	X				
4 Continuous assessment is subjective form of assessment					X
5 Continuous assessment benefits the wealthy students (eg those that can afford to buy special equipmnt for projects)		X			
6 Teachers lack expertise of and experience in continuous assessment					X
7 Continuous assessment does not assess what students really know					X

PART E

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE MAIN REASONS WHY CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT HAS BEEN INTRODUCED IN OUR SCHOOLS?

PLEASE WRITE CLEARLY

1. It is a form of assessment which helps to bring out all inherent skills a pupil has which of course will work to the advantage of that "so called" pupil.
2. The frequency of assessing becomes more apparent.
3. With C.A pupils can be also given the opportunity to assess themselves at certain tasks given.
4. For pupils to develop and better their skills.

PART F

IN YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE WITH CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT , HOW WOULD YOU RATE EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS :

A = ALWAYS TRUE
B = OFTEN TRUE
C = NOT TRUE

D = ONLY SOMETIME TRUE
E = DEFINITELY NOT TRUE

RATINGS

	A	B	C	D	E
1 Continuous assessment allows me to assess different kinds of tasks		X			
2 I am now better able to understand my students since continuous assessment allows me to develop a cumulative judgement about their performance	X				
3 Continuous assessment has improved my teaching		X			
4 Continuous assessment gives me more options for assessment as a teacher				X	
5 Continuous assessment is what I have been doing all along	X				
6 I feel that I am better able to recognize the cognitive development (eg development of thinking skills) of my students since continuous assessment was introduced.		X			
7 I feel that continuous assessment allowed my students to better develop thier skills , knowledge and understanding than before this policy was introduced .		X			
8 I am now able to explore the curriculum in a much deeper and more meaningful way than before the continuous assessment policy was introduced .				X	
9 I now assess my students more frequently than I did before continuous was introduced					X
10 I now assess only the important or significant aspects of the syllabus since continuous assessment was introduced		X			
11 I now follow a more systematic approach to assessment because of the department's continuous assessment policy .			X		
12 In my school, ample opportunity has been created to provide feedback to the major stakeholders (parents , pupils etc) on continuous assessment .					X

PART G

WHAT ARE THREE MAIN PROBLEMS YOU ARE EXPERIENCING IN ATTEMPTING TO IMPLEMENT CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT IN YOUR CLASSROOM .

PLEASE WRITE CLEARLY .

1. Lack of information from the administration.
2. Too large classrooms.
3. Language barrier
4. Lack of facilities and resources
5. The school environment as such.

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO - OPERATION

APPENDIX 14

TRANSCRIPT OF AUDIOTAPED INTERVIEW WITH ZANELE.

R = RESEARCHER

Z = ZANELE

R : I have mentioned in my fax that I am doing research on CA and I want to know how you as a standard nine Biology teacher is implementing it in your classroom. The first question I would like to ask you is have you been involved in any way in formulating the policy on continuous assessment?

Z : I will say no and if you are not going to be involved in it you will not show initiative.

R : Okay, so you feel strongly about not being involved in it?

Z : You know I am for CA. I'm all for it but like I said now things are difficult to implement because with large classes with formulating policy as such.

R : In implementing CA, in what ways have you gained support?

Z : I must tell you very negatively, the reason teachers do what he/she feels like, sometimes not in the interest of the child is due to the fact that our management does not work. And most often whatever we do is coming from within ourselves. So that now if we know about CA, maybe at a staff meeting or something we can go further with it and seek ways of using it and trying to implement it.

R : What about support from HOD's?

Z : No, we just have one HOD in our school, we have one Deputy and one Principal and that gives an HOD for all subjects.

R : So you received no support at all from that quarter?

Z : No support at all.

R : Do you feel that CA has improved your teaching compared to before?

Z : For me CA as I said hasn't been as it should especially as we have no consultation with documents as such and the way of teaching and the way I do it is by tests and assignments and they form the assessment.

R : You did say there were a number of factors that are hindering your implementation of CA, one of them being large classes, the.....

Z : Resources that are available. I personally feel that if I had a Biology Laboratory it will help me very much in the subject I am teaching because as a teacher I can put certain things up on the wall where pupils can come in and learn about it.

R : Have you had time to reflect on CA?

Z : In fact I was enquiring about it and basically what other schools do when it comes to CA, because I'm given to understand is that if a child can communicate orally to you, we will have to assess the child. Like a child can also be given projects that are linked to certain skills. It has been done in other schools and I would say I would introduce this in one point in time like say you are teaching a section on cell division I can give the students the opportunity to actually create models of the different phases. I try to encourage that as well as things you can construct using polystyrene or whatever, but like I say now because our kids are disadvantaged, they are underprivileged, they don't know what is polystyrene, you got to bring this in and show them and get them doing so that there are many factors.

R : It would seem that.....

Z : And sometimes you are teaching in a situation where you got to be careful how you approach teachers or students. You cannot impose on the child for one because of their socio-economic background. That plays a very important role in our school.

R : Is there any way you could have improvised in making models?

Z : The thing is much is left upon me, seeing that I am the senior Biology teacher I ought to take the initiative, but we have situations where too much initiative can create a problem. That is the problem I am concerned with.

R : Okay. Has CA helped you to recognise the development of your pupils thinking skills?

Z : In some cases it is very easy to identify these skills because by looking at numbers we are supposed to identify problems, but it is difficult to identify problems, those that perform badly. But there are those that excel and I would like to call these pupils and give them credit can also be a problem because it can create division, why does the teacher concentrate more on the one child? To identify a problem and to deal with it can be a problem even though the child is intelligent, more in fact if this is a poor child and we are trying to help this child.

R : So intervention becomes something of a stumbling block?

Z : So we just have to accept certain things and you give the child credit by making remarks in the book. for e.g., congratulations - you have done well.

R : In what ways has CA helped you to develop future tasks. for an e.g., you give pupils a project and you wanted them to make a model out of polystyrene and pupils did not know what that is, has that made you give another task?

Z : You see another thing I would like to emphasise with this system of CA as it stands. I don't know if it's a system from bureaucrats or what. but if one is not familiar and don't know the situation for them CA must be something easy to adopt, but at the initial stages they should assess whether it is successful or not, but like in our schools, it is very difficult because to improvise having failed the one time it becomes a problem really because here I am not only teaching Biology. I mean that is an important thing you have got to understand because I have got to teach English before I teach Biology and the language barrier is a big barrier.

R : Has CA enabled you to explore the curriculum more fully than before?

Z : You see to my personal self it has, but to implement it as such I haven't put it into practice as such. I have reflected on it and perhaps I am devising certain ways of doing things next year so that it can help pupils to see the relevance of why we are doing such things and it is not just coming to class and taking down notes and going home.

R : Now that you are implementing CA do you follow a more systematic approach to assessment?

Z : In fact I have a system to record performance and I found that with CA, quite a few of them have actually passed the exams because part of the marks have been taken from CA. So this is to the advantage of the child. Another thing about CA, I don't know how it is in other schools but about the year mark, do you give it to the child or do you tell them about their performance but what I have found out is that if a child knows his marks, he works out what he needs to get and it can bring down his performance in the final exams and that is what I have experienced this year. You cannot assume by using the year mark that the child will do well, in taking the exams I was very disappointed. It has an impact on the learning.

R : Have you been involved in deciding how many tests and assignments you will be giving them? Have you planned this?

Z : I do have an idea of how many tests e.g., sometimes I give them after every section, sometimes after every two sections if sections are short. Like I said, I don't preplan.

R : Do you allocate time for these tasks?

Z : I give them a one hour test. If I give them a 35 minute test some of them are very slow in writing and they experience a problem so sometimes I give my tests for a double period of 40 to 50 minutes.

R : Has your school developed a policy on CA?

Z : No, not at all.

R : Has there been any way for the school to decide on

Z : No, in fact we did have our committees meet once this year where we discussed this issue of CA and we did talk about how many tests and how many assignments and those teachers who wanted to give projects could possibly give it if they wanted to but that was just one short meeting which did not even end so I think that was just the admin informing teachers about CA .

R : So there isn't a system in your school to avoid overburdening pupils with too many tests?

Z : No, it is left to the teacher. There is no system as such and sometimes you may find I give a test and I don't enquire whether they are getting a test in another subject. it is a terrible mess. There are no guidelines and teachers are doing their own thing.

R : Has your school created opportunities where CA could be transparent to pupils, parent?

Z : No.

R : Where pupils are clear of what's expected of them?

Z : No, the pupils themselves don't question it. They are not aware of and they only know about the role CA plays is when they are given their year mark, how they have performed for the year.

R : What about parents, have they been informed?

Z : No, I don't think at all. Unless some teachers have done that to show parents what they have done.

.....end of transcript.....

APPENDIX 15

Questionnaire

This questionnaire collects information about the impact of the **NEW CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT POLICY** on high school teachers. Please hand this questionnaire to all teachers in your school. Your school will receive a full report on the findings of this study. Information from individual schools and teachers will be kept in strict confidence.

PART A

TEACHER INFORMATION

PLEASE PLACE A CROSS (X) IN THE APPROPRIATE BLOCK

DESIGNATION OF EDUCATOR

Teacher Level 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	HOD		Deputy Principal	
Principal		Other		Specify , _____	

MAIN TEACHING SUBJECT AREA

Maths/Science	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Languages		Commerce		Humanities	
Technical/Skills		Other		specify _____			

TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN YEARS

0 to 5		6 to 10		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		more than 15	
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SEX

Male	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Female	
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TYPE OF SCHOOL

Rural		Urban	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not Sure	
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FORMAL QUALIFICATIONS (Completed)

2 year diploma only		3 year diploma only		degree only	
degree and diploma		more than one degree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
other		specify , <u>B.Sc Hon Masters. MSc.</u>			

CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT WAS INTRODUCED INTO SCHOOLS SINCE 1995. MANY TEACHERS BECAME AWARE OF THIS NEW ASSESSMENT PLAN THROUGH DEPARTMENTAL POLICY DOCUMENTS.

The questions below inquire about the information available to you about the continuous assessment policy.

PLEASE PLACE A CROSS (X) IN THE APPROPRIATE BLOCK.

Are you aware of the departmental policy document (KZN 3/95) on continuous assessment?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Was the document made available to all teachers in your school?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	-------------------------------------	----	--------------------------

If YES please state how?

circular	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	workshop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	other	<input type="checkbox"/>	specify, _____
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Do you have a personal copy of the policy document on continuous assessment?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	-------------------------------------	----	--------------------------

How did you first become aware of the policy on continuous assessment?

I read the policy document	<input type="checkbox"/>	I was told by the principal	<input type="checkbox"/>
I was told by the HOD	<input type="checkbox"/>	I was invited to a workshop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
It was discussed at a staff meeting	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>		

PART C

PART C RELATES TO THE DEPARTMENT POLICY DOCUMENT ON CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT (KZN 3/95)

Part C may only be answered if your response to item B1 is YES

	Yes	No	Not Sure
1 It is easy to understand	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 It provides clear guide-line for implementation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 It allows for flexible implementation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PART D

SOME PEOPLE ARGUE THAT AS AN ALTERNATIVE FORM OF ASSESSMENT, CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT HAS SERIOUS DRAWBACKS OTHERS SEE IT AS AN IMPORTANT TOOL FOR IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING.

How strongly do you feel about each of the following statements which lists reasons sometimes offered to explain the limitations.

PLACE A CROSS IN THE APPROPRIATE BLOCK based on the key below.

- 1 = strongly agree
- 2 = agree
- 3 = not sure
- 4 = disagree
- 5 = strongly disagree

RATING

	1	2	3	4	5
1 Continuous assessment increases the workload of teachers	X				
2 Continuous assessment is an administrative burden		X			
3 Continuous assessment in my school is the same as a series of tests		X			
4 Continuous assessment is subjective form of assessment		X			
5 Continuous assessment benefits the wealthy students (eg those that can afford to buy special equipmnt for projects)					X
6 Teachers lack expertise of and experience in continuous assessment		X			
7 Continuous assessment does not assess what students really know		X			

PART F

IN YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE WITH CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT , HOW WOULD YOU RATE EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS :

A = ALWAYS TRUE

D = ONLY SOMETIME TRUE

B = OFTEN TRUE

E = DEFINITELY NOT TRUE

C = NOT TRUE

RATINGS

	A	B	C	D	E
1 Continuous assessment allows me to assess different kinds of tasks	X				
2 I am now better able to understand my students since continuous assessment allows me to develop a cumulative judgement about their performance		X			
3 Continuous assessment has improved my teaching		X			
4 Continuous assessment gives me more options for assessment as a teacher	X				
5 Continuous assessment is what I have been doing all along	X				
6 I feel that I am better able to recognize the cognitive development (eg development of thinking skills) of my students since continuous assessment was introduced.	X				
7 I feel that continuous assessment allowed my students to better develop thier skills , knowledge and understanding than before this policy was introduced .		X			
8 I am now able to explore the curriculum in a much deeper and more meaningful way than before the continuous assessment policy was introduced .		X			
9 I now assess my students more frequently than I did before continuous was introduced	X				
10 I now assess only the important or significant aspects of the syllabus since continuous assessment was introduced	X				
11 I now follow a more systematic approach to assessment because of the department's continuous assessment policy .	X				
12 In my school, ample opportunity has been created to provide feedback to the major stakeholders (parents , pupils etc) on continuous assessment . <i>ALWAYS HAS BEEN DONE</i>	X				

APPENDIX 16

TRANSCRIPT OF AUDIOTAPED INTERVIEW WITH ANDREW.

R = RESEARCHER

A = ANDREW

R : You did say that you have been implementing CA for a number of years. I just want to know firstly, if you have been involved in drawing up the CA policy from the Department?

A : No, it was already done.

R : How do you feel about this?

A : I think its very good.

R : About teachers not being involved in drawing up the policy?

A : As far as I know it was teachers here who actually drew up the policy, the HOD and the headmaster got together and they as well as guidelines from the National Department. They used this and as for Biology that was that by supervisors, all teachers got together and helped formulate that one.

R : So, the policy that you have received, have you received any guidelines on the way you should go about implementing it?

A : It has been implemented for a number of years already.

R : But at that time?

A : I was not here.

R : And presently, are you given guidelines on the way it should be implemented?

A : From our supervisors. We actually had the workshop. Your questionnaire has that done, workshops.

R : Do you feel that since CA has come about that your teaching has improved in any way?

A : Yes it has.

R : In what ways?

A : You can because you are actually assessing throughout the year. Quite often children who have exam nerves and can't cope in the exam situation, it helps them to assess right through the year, so you have progress on a continual basis.

R : So the experience is mainly for the pupil, but has your teaching changed in any way?

A : That's right.

R : Since you have been implementing CA has there been any problems with regards to implementation?

A : The larger classrooms are becoming a bit of a problem, I must say. When you start going over 40 practicals, theory is still alright, but practice...

R : Are the facilities in this area adequate for pupils to complete their projects for an example?

A : We have made amends for those that don't have. Like the previous year we had to do a model on the eye, some of the pupils do not have all the this and that, but we made allowance for that.

R : So the pupil is not penalised?

A : No, he is not penalised, because the **content and** how much time spent doing it, or if they just throw things together you can actually see it, and marks will be taken off accordingly.

R : Since CA are you better able to understand your pupils?

A : I don't know. I have been doing CA all the time.

R : Are you able to recognise any problems pupils are having.....?

A : You actually got a new document that is going to come out, the skills based test. IT is these things we should be looking for. Ideally we should go around with a form and just tick off all things that they will be doing for the section.

R : So, at the point you notice, for an e.g., that they did not develop certain skills, do you try and intervene at that point and provide assistance?

A : Yes, you have to.

R : And in your experience of CA, has it helped you in planning future tasks? Do you make changes to future tasks where pupils experienced problems?

A : What changes?

R : Maybe if the instructions are not clear....

A : Yes, they can't read the question, or **they** could not read the question properly. When you say coming from a question, they want to do what they want and not what the question asks.

R : Maybe pupils are pressurised by testing of a number of aspects?

A : I don't think so, because it is all worked into the syllabus.

R : You did mention that CA has not changed your teaching in any way, but has it made you explore the curriculum more fully?

A : Well what I have done basically, or up until now, gone through the tests, so I have gone through the standard 9 syllabus that is going to be used in matric so I have gone more in depth into that. but apart from the basic concepts, learning concepts, why we should do all these four animal types together, and all the plant types together, why we do it, doing the moss and fungi, what use is it, they are actually all linked.

R : Now is this because of teaching or assessment?

A : No. I think you must get children excited about the work they do. I don't think it's got anything to do with assessment at all..... they just enjoy it.

R : To what extent has the tasks you have given pupils enhanced their learning experiences?

A : I think it has enhanced them a lot, you'll see it was the baby project, and I don't know whether you know of the baby project, they have to carry this baby around...

R : Did pupils enjoy the task?

A : There were favorable comments afterwards.

R : Do they apply the knowledge gained from your teaching to tasks that you have set for assessment?

A : With difficulty.

R : I do notice that your school has produced a system for CA. Do all teachers at your school follow this system?

A : Every subject has a different one. Physical Science has a different one. So it comes

basically from the supervisors. So every subject does have a slightly different system but all tests, but those are slightly different per subject

R : Now when it comes down from the subject advisors does this school or the Biology Department adapt this in any way?

A : They do, and if there are problems then we discuss this with the supervisors and then we work from there.

R : I have noticed on this form that class tests are allocated minimum four? Do you follow this minimum?

A : It depends on how we go. I normally give at least one or two tests per term, but that depends. I like to give a test after we complete a section or if we are doing a section in total, I will like to give a test during that time, and how we work and how we understand it.

R : How often are projects given?

A : Once a year. What happens with the project is that they are normally used in the third term, cycle 3, they normally help to bolster the cycle 3 mark.

R : **Has the school created opportunities for CA to be transparent? Are pupils clear on what's expected of them?**

A : They've all been given that, they all know what's happening. They should be told before hand.

R : Have parents been informed of procedures?

A : Yes, they had to sign for projects.

.....end of transcript.....

Questionnaire

This questionnaire collects information about the impact of the **NEW CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT POLICY** on high school teachers. Please hand this questionnaire to all teachers in your school. Your school will receive a full report on the findings of this study. Information from individual schools and teachers will be kept in strict confidence.

PART A

TEACHER INFORMATION

PLEASE PLACE A CROSS (X) IN THE APPROPRIATE BLOCK

DESIGNATION OF EDUCATOR

Teacher Level 1		HOD	X	Deputy Principal
Principal		Other		Specify , _____

2 MAIN TEACHING SUBJECT AREA

Maths/Science	X	Languages		Commerce		Humanities	
Technical/Skills		Other		specify _____			

3 TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN YEARS

0 to 5		6 to 10		11 to 15		more than 15	X
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4 SEX

Male	X	Female	
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5 TYPE OF SCHOOL

Rural		Urban	X	Not Sure
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6 FORMAL QUALIFICATIONS (Completed)

2 year diploma only		3 year diploma only		degree only
degree and diploma	X	more than one degree		
other		specify , _____		

CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT WAS INTRODUCED INTO SCHOOLS SINCE 1995. MANY TEACHERS BECAME AWARE OF THIS NEW ASSESSMENT PLAN THROUGH DEPARTMENTAL POLICY DOCUMENTS.

The questions below inquire about the information available to you about the continuous assessment policy.

PLEASE PLACE A CROSS (X) IN THE APPROPRIATE BLOCK.

1 Are you aware of the departmental policy document (KZN 3/95) on continuous assessment ?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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2 Was the document made available to all teachers in your school ?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	-------------------------------------	----	--------------------------

If YES please state how ?

circular	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	workshop	<input type="checkbox"/>	other	<input type="checkbox"/>	specify , _____
----------	-------------------------------------	----------	--------------------------	-------	--------------------------	-----------------

3 Do you have a personal copy of the policy document on continuous assessment ?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	-------------------------------------	----	--------------------------

4 How did you first become aware of the policy on continuous assessment ?

I read the policy document	<input type="checkbox"/>	I was told by the principal	<input type="checkbox"/>
I was told by the HOD	<input type="checkbox"/>	I was invited to a workshop	<input type="checkbox"/>
It was discussed at a staff meeting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>		

PART C

PART C RELATES TO THE DEPARTMENT POLICY DOCUMENT ON CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT (KZN 3/95)

Part C may only be answered if your response to item B1 is YES

	Yes	No	Not Sure
1 It is easy to understand	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 It provides clear guide-line for implementation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 It allows for flexible implementation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

PART D

SOME PEOPLE ARGUE THAT AS AN ALTERNATIVE FORM OF ASSESSMENT, CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT HAS SERIOUS DRAWBACKS OTHERS SEE IT AS AN IMPORTANT TOOL FOR IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING.

How strongly do you feel about each of the following statements which lists reasons sometimes offered to explain the limitations.

PLACE A CROSS IN THE APPROPRIATE BLOCK based on the key below.

- 1 = strongly agree
- 2 = agree
- 3 = not sure
- 4 = disagree
- 5 = strongly disagree

RATING

	1	2	3	4	5
1 Continuous assessment increases the workload of teachers		X			
2 Continuous assessment is an administrative burden			X		
3 Continuous assessment in my school is the same as a series of tests				X	
4 Continuous assessment is subjective form of assessment		X			
5 Continuous assessment benefits the wealthy students (eg those that can afford to buy special equipmnt for projects)				X	
6 Teachers lack expertise of and experience in continuous assessment	X				
7 Continuous assessment does not assess what students really know				X	

PART E

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE MAIN REASONS WHY CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT HAS BEEN INTRODUCED IN OUR SCHOOLS?

PLEASE WRITE CLEARLY

To enable pupils who perform poorly in formal exams
to pass.

PART F

IN YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE WITH CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT , HOW WOULD YOU RATE EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS :

A = ALWAYS TRUE
B = OFTEN TRUE
C = NOT TRUE

D = ONLY SOMETIME TRUE
E = DEFINITELY NOT TRUE

RATINGS

	A	B	C	D	E
1 Continuous assessment allows me to assess different kinds of tasks		X			
2 I am now better able to understand my students since continuous assessment allows me to develop a cumulative judgement about their performance			X		
3 Continuous assessment has improved my teaching			X		
4 Continuous assessment gives me more options for assessment as a teacher	X				
5 Continuous assessment is what I have been doing all along			X		
6 I feel that I am better able to recognize the cognitive development (eg development of thinking skills) of my students since continuous assessment was introduced.		X			
7 I feel that continuous assessment allowed my students to better develop thier skills , knowledge and understanding than before this policy was introduced .		X			
8 I am now able to explore the curriculum in a much deeper and more meaningful way than before the continuous assessment policy was introduced .		X			
9 I now assess my students more frequently than I did before continuous was introduced	X				
10 I now assess only the important or significant aspects of the syllabus since continuous assessment was introduced			X		
11 I now follow a more systematic approach to assessment because of the department's continuous assessment policy .			X		
12 In my school, ample opportunity has been created to provide feedback to the major stakeholders (parents , pupils etc) on continuous assessment .			X		

PART G

WHAT ARE THREE MAIN PROBLEMS YOU ARE EXPERIENCING IN ATTEMPTING TO IMPLEMENT CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT IN YOUR CLASSROOM .

PLEASE WRITE CLEARLY .

LARGE CLASS NUMBERS .

NO SUPPORT FROM SUBJECT ADVISERS .

APATHY FROM STUDENTS THEMSELVES .

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO - OPERATION

APPENDIX 18

TRANSCRIPT OF AUDIOTAPED INTERVIEW WITH NAVESH.

R = RESEARCHER

N = NAVESH

R : My research is on CA and I want to find out how you as a standard nine Biology teacher is practising CA. Have you been involved in formulating the policy document that has been sent from the Department?

N : No, we have had absolutely no involvement.

R : And how do you feel about that?

N : I think they should have actually played around the idea. They should have come to us.

R : You mean at the grassroot/teacher level?

N : Yeh, because look we were told when the document came to school, we were shown the document and told that look this is what you follow, 50% was for CA. Actually the document says minimum 25% and we follow 50%. I would have hoped that CA forms a major part of it.

R : In trying to implement CA at your school have you received support from maybe Department officials?

N : No, nothing at all.

R : Workshops, circulars?

N : No, nothing at all. Besides the one formal document that has been sent by the Department which was discussed at a staff meeting there were no other documents.

R : Do you think CA has in any way changed the way you teach?

N : Eh, I don't think so. My teaching has basically remained the same. It has gone on the same way. If you look at it now, I would say the number of marks that I have actually allocated to the informal part as I have mentioned before actually hasn't changed significantly, because in the past we had practicals and we used to allocate practical marks right you know that's something like 20%.

R : 25%

N : 25% was allocated for prac work. Now if you look at it now what we have done is reduce the number of marks that are being allocated to pracs and allocated the remainder of the marks to other aspects like projects and things like that.

R : Okay. And do you find any factors in the classroom that has maybe made implementing CA difficult?

N : I think the large numbers we have in our classrooms is a serious problem and I don't know whether we can do justice with CA bearing in mind and looking at the number of students we have in our classrooms. In fact in some cases it probably takes weeks and months to actually know each pupil and seeing them only for a few periods each time you look at certain pupils its like seeing them for the first time. So numbers definitely are a problem.

R : Do you have a better knowledge of your pupils now that CA has come about?

N : Especially when you give them projects. I have given them one project. I was able to see from that, that you had to determine whether they had such talent.

R : Are you able to recognise the weaknesses and problems that pupils experience?

N : Yeh. I think what is evident is that those who are interested will go out of their way and do work and there are those, a fair number, who will not tackle the project. I think another reason for this is probably they feel that look everybody's passing, and if they don't do it they will lose a certain amount of marks but still pass. That is a great problem amongst our pupils at the moment.

R : Has CA enabled you to explore the curriculum more fully?

N : Basically the syllabuses haven't changed. So it hasn't made any difference to my teaching as such.

R : And has it enhanced the learning experience for the pupils. Do you find that pupils are learning better?

N : I think it is a bit early to say.

R : Do you follow a more systematic approach to assessment?

N : No.

R : Has your school got a policy on

N : No, the school hasn't got a policy. It is left to the individual teacher to determine that.

R : Has your school created opportunities for CA to be transparent? Where pupils informed of procedures?

N : No, they are told exactly which aspects will be taken into account for assessment but I don't think it is transparent. We don't actually tell the pupil look for the project you got so many marks and things like that. It's definitely not transparent.

R : Okay, what about parents?

N : eh, I don't think. To my knowledge there hasn't been a case where parents have come to school to query a child's mark.

R : Have parents been informed of CA procedures?

N : I think there has been a circular sent out to parents, but the detailed aspects of CA, no.

SECOND INTERVIEW IN RELATION TO CA TASKS

R : I would like to take one of these tasks and focus my questions on it. Did pupils enjoy completing the project?

N : Yes.

R : What type of successes did they have?

N : Well, you see when the project was completed, you see they were asked to come to the front and tell me very briefly how you made the project. Now this was just to check whether they themselves have done it or not. Of course there were instances where they were different from other people, which was good as long as they understood what they were doing and how the project was working.

R : Did pupils experience any failures when completing the task?

N : As I told you there were certain students that did not tackle the projects at all. Those that did not do the physical projects themselves wrote accounts of how certain things could be done.

R : Was the time adequate for pupils to complete the tasks?

N : Yes, they had more than a term to do it.

R : You did mention that some pupils did not attempt the project. What type of assessment did you give the pupils like that?

N : Well, look there it was very difficult, actually I allocated a small percentage to the project itself, now that places me in a predicament because it would have been somewhat unfair not to assess the other pupils at all so in my own way I assessed them for another piece of work done in class.

R : What type of feedback did you give to pupils? A mark?

N : No, I did not only give the mark. I did give comments.

R : Have you set the project on a significant aspect of the syllabus?

N : Yes, the topic forms a fairly large chunk of the syllabus. So I thought it should be set on it.

R : And were the resources in your are adequate for pupils to complete the tasks?

N : Yes there is enough. They did not actually have to go out of their way to get any equipment to complete the project.

R : Have you used any alternative assessment techniques in assessing your pupils, like group or peer assessment?

N : No, I have not tried those.

.....end of transcript.....

APPENDIX 19

THE PROFILE OF THE THREE PARTICIPATING TEACHERS IN THE CASE STUDIES

1. NAME OF TEACHER	Zanele	Andrew	Navesh	
2. NAME OF SCHOOL	Siyasiswe	Sacred Hall	Scottsdale High	
3. TYPE OF SCHOOL	rural	urban	urban	
4. LANGUAGE MEDIUM OF SCHOOL	English	English	English	
5. GENDER	Female	Male	Male	
6. PROFESSIONAL STATUS	Teacher Level 1	Teacher Level 1	HOD	
7. FORMAL QUALIFICATION	BA(HONS), UHDE	B.Sc Hons M. Sc	BA, J.SED	
8. QUALIFICATION IN BIOLOGY	Matric	M.Sc	J.SED	
9. TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN YEARS	8	15	24	
10. TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN BIOLOGY IN YEARS	8	3	10	
11. PRESENT STANDARDS BEING TAUGHT	9,10	6,8,9,10	6,9,10	
12. LANGUAGE GROUPS PRESENT IN YOUR CLASSROOM	Zulu & English	Zulu, Afrikaans & English	English & Zulu	
13. AVERAGE CLASS SIZE TAUGHT	60	35	35	
14. STATE OF RESOURCE PRESENT AT SCHOOL				
	Textbooks	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
	Laboratory Equip	Nil	Adequate	Adequate
	Audiovisual	Nil	Adequate	Adequate