

**International Conference on Assessment – Conference Report  
Learner Assessment for Improved Educational Quality:  
An Exchange of Current Ideas and Best Practices  
Conference Secretariat, ECZ  
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## Sub-regional Conference On Assessment



*Learner Assessment for Improved Educational Quality:  
An Exchange of Current Ideas and Best Practices*

*30 June to 2 July 2003*

*Zambezi Sun Hotel  
Livingstone, Zambia*

*Organized and Hosted by:*

*The Examinations Council of Zambia*

# CONFERENCE REPORT

Conference supported by:

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), The American Institutes for Research (AIR) and  
The Improving Educational Quality Project (IEQ)



## **Conference Theme**

Learner Assessment for Improving Educational Quality: An Exchange of Current Ideas and Best Practices.

## **Conference Sub-Themes**

- Continuous Assessment at Primary and Secondary School Levels.
- Competence Testing in Primary Schools.
- Learner Assessment in Non-Formal Education Environment.

## **Conference Description**

Many developing countries are moving from concentrating on quantitative to qualitative goals and are implementing Educational Assessment Systems that more appropriately measure learning achievements.

Several countries in Southern Africa are using innovative assessment approaches for large-scale assessment of student achievement, classroom assessment of student progress, student teacher assessment, and assessments of students in non-formal situations. What do these assessments look like and how have they developed quality? What lessons can be learned from the processes, products, and outcomes of these assessments? What opportunities are there for collaboration among the countries in the region? The conference attempted to answer some of these questions and raise others through an exchange of ideas and practices at a three-day conference held in Zambia.

## ***Conference Objectives***

It was hoped that at the end of the conference, participants would be better equipped with information and strategies on how to tackle the issues of learner assessment for improved educational quality.

The sub-regional conference on Learner Assessment for improved Educational quality: An exchange of current ideas and best practices

was held at the Zambezi sun hotel, Livingstone. Zambia.  
From 30<sup>th</sup> June to 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2003

The countries that were represented are:

United States of America  
South Africa  
Botswana  
Namibia  
Malawi  
Kenya  
Tanzania  
Sudan  
Zimbabwe  
Zambia as the host country.

**This brief report gives the successful deliberations of the conference. It also gives the (resolutions) agreed upon by the conference participants.**

## **WELCOMING REMARKS**

The Director of Examinations Council of Zambia, Mr. N.N. Mutanekelwa, welcomed all participants from different countries and organizations represented at the conference.

He wished the participants a stimulating, rewarding sharing and exchange of ideas on best practices with regard to the sub-themes of the conference of Continuous Assessment at primary and secondary levels, learner assessment in non-formal educational environments and competence testing in primary schools.

In addition the Director paid tribute to the sponsors of the conference who were:

1. American Institutes for Research (AIR)
2. USAID
3. Improving Educational Quality (IEQ)
4. Zambia Bottling Company
5. Venus Stationers

The Director's speech was followed by the remarks from Mr. Richard Tobin, the Managing Research Scientist from American Institutes for Research (AIR). The emphasis of his remarks was that continuous assessment was important because without knowing how children are performing in schools, there is a risk of misuse of resources. He in addition gave a brief background of AIR and expanded on the different activities of AIR in different countries such as the Improving Educational Quality (IEQ) in some countries in Sub-Sahara Africa. For example in Zambia they are giving Technical assistance to the Ministry of Education in EMIS and to Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) in assessment. He finally applauded the Examinations Council of Zambia and Ministry of Education for hosting the conference.

*Mr. Tobin's remarks were followed by the Deputy Minister for Southern Province Mr. Chilufya Kazenene who basically welcomed the participants. He urged them to feel at home and visit as many tourist attractions in the tourist capital, as possible, especially the Victoria Falls.*

## **OPENING SPEECH BY HON. EDDIE C. KASUKUMYA – DEPUTY MINISTER, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

He started his speech by welcoming the participants. He proposed that it would be useful if such conferences were held every year for the exchange of new ideas. He implored participants to consider good quality education as a product of quality assessment. The minister hoped that the papers and discussions at the conference would contribute towards improving existing assessment strategies and assist in reviewing and reforming educational policies to enhance educational quality in the Sub-Region. He thereafter declared the conference officially open at 09:30 hours.

## **KEY NOTE ADDRESS BY MR. J. MOSKOWITZ, VICE PRESEIDENT AND DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES (AIR)**

This was given by Mr. J. Moskowitz, the Vice President and Director of International Programmes (AIR). His presentation was on measuring student learning to inform policy and practice.

In his paper, he highlighted the purpose, components and the features of measuring student learning outcomes for teaching purposes. He cited the case of Brazil where bimonthly tests had been made compulsory in all the schools.

In the system level assessment, he discussed the implementation framework. He also gave examples of the UK and USA systems as examples of national approaches to monitoring learning achievement. He tackled the issues of international bench marking, analysing assessment results and how results could be put to use. He elaborated the importance of using the results of national assessment, which he thought was being ignored.

## **PAPER PREENTATIONS – DAY 1 – 30th JUNE 2003**

ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF ASSESSMENT THROUGH COMMON ASSESSMENT TASKS  
PRESENTER: Mr. Rufus Poliah (UMALUSI-South Africa)

*The paper started by giving the background of the unbalanced education system inherited from the apartheid system in South Africa. The South African government was seeking to redress the situation and bring about equality irrespective of colour, region or race.*

*The UMALUSI was responsible for maintaining the assessment standards across the nine Provincial Education Departments. In South Africa the purpose for harmonising was to build credibility in assessment through Common Tasks for Assessment (CTAS). The CTAS were divided into two sections but that they were holistic in nature. Section A was skill performance assessment and Section B dealt with pencil and paper assessment.*

The strengths and weaknesses of the CTAS were outline. Proposal's, for improvement in the implementation of CTAS were also made.

### **DISCUSSION**

It was pointed out that the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQUA) was the co-ordinating body of quality assurance and legislation and delegated the responsibility of quality assurance to 27 bodies of which UMALUSI was one. There were specific indicators for auditing the implementation process of CTAS. The focus of the implementation process had been on policy development rather than Teachers' Training.

## **GOOD INTENTIONS, DIFFICULT CHALLENGES: WHY COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT APPROACHES FAIL TO TAKE ROOT**

**PRESENTER: Mr. Obadia Mucheru  
(Kenya National Examinations Council)**

The paper mainly emphasized the difficulties Kenya had experienced in incorporating Continuous Assessment results in the high state examinations. Some of the problems were related to the teachers' failure to submit valid and reliable test scores. This was one of the major reasons why the practical/vocational subjects were dropped from the new curriculum.

### **DISCUSSION**

It was generally felt by the participants that dropping practical subjects from the curriculum was not in the best of interest of the learners. In the discussion it was also explained that continuous assessment did not cover the subjects in the humanities. He also explained that there was need for a strong inspectorate to ensure the implementation of the continuous assessment.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT TEACHERS IN THE ZAMBIA TEACHER EDUCATION COURSE

**PRESENTER: Mr. Hakasenke And Mrs. Muyangana  
(Teacher Education Department  
Ministry of Education Zambia)**

The first part of the paper gave a brief background of the problems that characterized the Teacher Education system up to the early 1990s which led to the establishment of the new Zambia Teaching Education Course (ZATEC).

The paper went on to outline the study areas, competencies and duration of the course.

The second part of the paper gave details and procedures for formative and summative forms of assessment of the ZATEC course.

### **DISCUSSION**

*The presenters clarified that they presented the continuous assessment results in raw form and that the Curriculum Committee selected the sample projects which were presented to the Examinations Council of Zambia. They finally explained the importance of peer assessment as part of continuous assessment.*

## **CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT AT PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL IN SWAZILAND**

**PRESENTER: Mrs. Lucy Angela Mkhonta (Swaziland Examinations Council)**

The presentation started by highlighting the problems that faced the Swazi education system which led to the introduction of Continuous Assessment. The idea was to improve the quality and efficiency of the education system.

The goals of continuous Assessment were discussed which focused on:

1. Improving learning in Primary Schools
2. Improving teaching in Primary Schools
3. Ensuring that learners got the basic skills that they needed to survive on their own. This was seen to be achieved through remediation and enrichment.

*The presentation also described the implementation process. The challenges faced by the Swazi Education system in relation to Continuous Assessment were also discussed in detail.*

## **DISCUSSION**

The presenter clarified the fact that testing after each term was done centrally and teachers marked the test papers unlike before. She emphasized that continuous assessment should be linked to remedial teaching.

## **INTEGRATING PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT IN MALAWI**

**PRESENTER: Dr. Hartford Mchazime  
(Improving Education Quality Project- Malawi)**

*The presentation started by defining the term Continuous Assessment. It was defined as “a way of finding out what children know, what they can do and what they understand.” The purpose of continuous assessment was to improve classroom learning. This was followed by a video show of the work being done in southern Malawi. The video was based on a feasibility study carried out in 2002.*

After the video show , there was a gave a brief explanation on the curriculum concerns and curriculum processes.

## **MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION OF STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN TANZANIA)**

**PRESENTER: Dr. Daniel M. Ndabi  
National Examinations Council Tanzania.**

The presentation gave the background of the education system in Tanzania. General objectives of the education system and the specific objectives of the Examinations system outlined. He highlighted the differences between the



National Examinations and Continuous Assessment. The National Examinations were defined as examinations set to suit the different requirements and Continuous Assessment was seen as an evaluation tool to measure attitudes and performance indicators.

## **DISCUSSION**

The presentation stated that subjects which previously had more than one written paper, had one paper replaced by continuous assessment. It was admitted that project work was an independent endeavor and therefore project results could not be standardized. There was need to develop quality assurance measures in continuous assessment.

### **CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT IN NAMIBIA**

**PRESENTER: Mr. Raymond Du Plessis, Director of National Examinations and Assessment - Namibia**

The presentation began by stating that the “Namibian Education Policy” document had been guided by the document called “Toward Education for all.” It was explained why continuous Assessment was seen to be important in education. He emphasized that continuous Assessment had to be valid and reliable.

The presentation then outlined the tasks for continuous assessment, the challenges and suggestions for improvement in the area of continuous assessment.

## **DISCUSSION**

The presenter clarified the differences between informal and formal continuous assessment. He said it was only formal continuous assessment which contributed to final grading. He concluded that there was need to monitor and evaluate the continuous assessment system.

### **PAPER PRESENTATIONS: DAY TWO - 1<sup>st</sup> July 2003**

#### **FEASIBILITY OF LARGE SCALE IMPLEMENTATION OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT AS A STIMULUS FOR TEACHER DEVELOPMENT.**

**PRESENTER: Mr. Yoas T Kamangira (Malawi)  
Mr. Zembeni (TED Ministry of Education Zambia)**

The presentation was in two parts. The first part was on a longitudinal study which revealed learning problems in children at standard three level in Mathematics and English. After the study, the revelation prompted a search for

remedial interventions, which focused on the teachers' use of continuous assessment in improving teaching and learning.

The second part of the presentation by Mr. Zembeni was focused on TALULAR- the acronym meaning Teaching and Learning Using Locally Available Resources. He distinguished resources from materials. He said materials were limited.

He demonstrated how teaching could be effectively carried out using locally available resources.

## **DISCUSSION**

It was observed that one of the major challenges was taking TALULAR to scale. Another issue that came up during the discussion was that the participants agreed on the important role continuous assessment played on improving teaching, learning and getting feedback. However, one way the presenters gave as the solution to large classes was to have a fluid Time Table where group work could be used.

The participants agreed that continuous assessment should be embedded in good teaching and good learning.

## **CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT AT PRIMARY LEVEL**

**PRESENTER: Mr. Chisenga Modest Chisala  
(Kitwe College of Education – Zambia)**

The paper discussed the modalities of assessing college students. It was envisaged that by using continuous assessment on student teachers, they would in turn adopt the continuous assessment practices in their teaching. The paper outlined the various forms of continuous assessment in the context of the Teacher Education and curriculum reforms.

## **DISCUSSION**

Concern was expressed about the maintenance of Examinations in the process of implementing the continuous assessment system. There were guidelines used to provide standards for assessing in a criterion-referenced manner.

Scores from the Examinations are integrated with the scores from continuous assessment.

## **USING PERFORMANCE BASED ITEMS ON A LARGE SCALE ASSESSMENT**

**PRESENTER: Diane Garavaglia, Dr. Mchazime and Joy Du Plessis.  
(United States of America)**

Continuous assessment was seen as part of teacher development. It was not to be seen as being in contradiction to national assessment, but that it was meant to improve the quality of National Examinations.

It was emphasized that measurement of learning outcomes was closely related to curriculum and teacher education issues.

There was need to develop diagnostic tools to measure what children were learning at whatever level. They were aligned to the state curriculum framework so as to ensure reliability. The tests performance based where teachers mainly observes what and how pupils did.

The paper also emphasized that continuous assessment should neither be meant for passing nor covering the curriculum but should be meant to engage teachers and learners in the learning process.

Weaknesses of continuous assessment prevalent in Africa were discussed. The examples given were:

- (i) lack of useful information on pupils' performances
- (ii) the prominence of high stake testing
- (iii) Absence of use of other modes assessment as approved to the pencil and paper tests.

There was need to train teachers in conducting assessment so that they could integrate teaching and learning.

The third part of the presentation discussed the two levels of curriculum which were the intended and the enacted curriculum. The intended curriculum was exemplified in the examinations syllabuses and the national curriculum. The second level of the enacted curriculum involved the actual process of learning in the classroom.

The continuous assessment process was used at classroom level as a teaching tool. It was emphasized that continuous assessment could be used to improve performance at National Examination level.

### **DISCUSSION**

The participants agreed on the broad concept of continuous assessment which included the informal and formal modes. Examinations should not dictate what should be taught in schools but that the teacher should be in control of the teaching process.

## **ENHANCING TEACHING CAPACITIES AND CAPABILITIES.**

**PRESENTERS: Mr. P.E. Machona and  
Mr. W. Kapambwe  
(Examinations Council of Zambia)**

The presentation first provided the background dominated by low-achievement levels and teacher-centred, examinations-oriented teaching strategies.

The paper then outlined the assessment framework, rationale and the programme objectives – which are based on school-based assessment focused on competence testing.

The participatory management and the strategies used in implementing the activities which mainly focused on production of guidelines, in-service training, test supply and monitoring were explained.

The paper explained the problems that were encountered in the process of implementation. The difficulty in monitoring and supervision of the implementation process at classroom level was highlighted.

The paper acknowledged the shortcomings and discussed the major targeted interventions which the implementation agency intended to undertake in future.

In conclusion, the paper emphasized the need for making the testing of competencies the focus of school-based assessment. It was pointed out that, in addition to testing competencies, a sound assessment framework needed to be continuous, criterion-referenced, cooperative or participatory and comprehensive.

## **DISCUSSION**

In the discussion, the need to make monitoring effective and the cooperation of different stakeholders was emphasized and clarified.

## **TREND ANALYSIS OF THE WRITING PROFICIENCY LEVEL OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN BOSTWANA.**

**PRESENTER: Molefhe Mogapi  
(Examinations Research and Testing Division –  
Bostwana)**

The presenter outlined the developments in education to increase access that were undertaken in the 1990s.

Secondly, the presentation dealt with the Revised National Policy on Education recommendations on the need to improve quality of education product. The emphasis on quality led to the implementation of a diagnostic-based assessment at primary school – as a means of monitoring the quality of education. The results from the competence tests in writing and spelling were used to develop

trends that gave profiles of competence levels over years at district and national levels.

In conclusion, the paper outlined how trend analysis has shown the positive impact that diagnostic testing procedures have had on the delivery of education at the primary school level.

## **PAPER PRESENTATIONS: DAY 3 – 2ND JULY 2003**

### **STANDARD FOUR ATTAINMENT TEST: AN INDICATOR OF COMPETENCE IN BOTSWANA**

**PRESENTER: Mrs. Betangpelo Jeremiah  
(Examinations Research and Testing Division –  
Botswana)**

The presenter gave the background of the Standard 4 Attainment Test which serves as national promotion examination as well as a diagnostic test.

The presenter pointed out that after 20 years of using the tests an evaluation showed that while the tests were deemed suitable for measuring pupils' achievement in standard 4, there are shortcomings regarding the language used and difficulty level.

#### **DISCUSSION**

*In the follow-up discussion it was emphasized that for the examinations to be fair, there was need to revisit the language issue.*

There was also concern expressed regarding the idea of using the tests/examinations for promotional purposes at the basic school level.

In response to the standardization and specifications of the tests/examinations, it was explained that the programme was being reviewed so as to address the identified challenges, such as developing new guidelines.

### **LEARNER ASSESSMENT FOR IMPROVED EDUCATIONAL QUALITY: THE CASE OF THE NATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME IN ZAMBIA AT MIDDLE BASIC EDUCATIONLEVEL**

**PRESENTER: Mr. N.N. Mutanekelwa and Mr. Joe Kanyika  
(Examinations Council of Zambia)**

The presentation first outlined the contextual background and baseline facts on school access regarding Zambia.

It was emphasized that the main purpose of the National Assessment was to obtain information which could be used to make decisions on pupils, curriculum on education policy.

The paper outlined the differences between end of cycle examinations and National Assessment.

The role of the National Assessment in providing data for the implementation of the Ministry of Education programmes was highlighted.

The paper also discussed the challenges encountered with regard to capacity building and technological requirements.

The paper concluded by pointing out that the National Assessment has provided the Ministry of Education with an inbuilt self-checking strategy that the Ministry uses on how it is performing in relation to the defined targets and objectives that focus on learning achievement. The National Assessment serves as a monitoring mechanism for the provision of services, changes in learning achievement over time and pedagogical weaknesses.

Finally, the presentation outlined how the national Assessment helps to set action points that are used to aid the teaching learning process at various levels.

## **DISCUSSION**

It was explained that the tests were developed on the basis of the curriculum specifications. It was also explained that the tests were criterion-referenced.

It was clarified that the desirable and minimum levels are determined by the judgmental method where the teachers and experts, upon reviewing the pupils' work, state their expected marks for the minimum and desirable levels. As for the cut-off points for the minimum and desirable levels, 40% and 60% were given respectively. It was emphasized that the pupils were tested in a natural environment.

## **ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION ENVIRONMENTS**

**PRESENTER: Elizabeth C. Mumba**  
**(University of Zambia)**

The presentation first provided the definition of non-formal education. The background provided the arguments for embarking on the non-formal education as an alternative to formal education. The presenter also discussed the background of non-formal education in the context of the 1990 Education For all Conference in Jomtien as well as the 2000 Dakar World Conference on Education for All.

The paper provided examples of non-formal education in Zambia for both children and adult activities.

The paper then discussed the various methodologies and strategies used in conduction assessment in non-formal education environment. The paper emphasized that assessment in non-formal education was mainly criterion referenced or based on mastery of learning.

The paper acknowledged that due to the diverse nature of non-formal education programmes, there were also diverse, unstandardised methods of assessment. It was, however, pointed out that in most adult literacy programmes participatory assessment and evaluation approaches were predominantly used – while in community schools standardized tests were used.

## **DISCUSSION**

It was agreed that there was need to standardize assessment procedures in non-formal education environments.

Examples of non-formal educational programmes where efforts were being made to use both the formal curriculum as well as standardized tests were given. The cited cases were the IRI programme and the Community Schools.

It was generally appreciated that there was need to structure non-formal education so as to make it attractive and comparable to formal education.

The discussion highlighted the need for the involvement of the community in assessing and evaluating the extent to which the non-formal centres are achieving objectives.

## **LEARNER ASSESSMENT IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT: THE CASE OF CHICHIRI AND ZOMBA PRISONS**

**PRESENTER: Mr. Gerald Axel Chiunda and Dr. Ernest Beele  
(Vice Chancellor – CBU)**

The paper discussed reasons why there was need to promote literacy among inmates. Some of them among the many were:

- (a) to provide education for literacy
- (b) to promote peace within prisons
- (c) to provide knowledge that inmates may use in securing jobs or in self-employment
- (d) to preserve the professional identity of the qualified teachers.

There were many tasks that education had to perform for prisoners. They had to acquire education in order for them to:

- (a) understand the Quran and the Bible
- (b) provide literacy
- (c) educate them on the anti-smoking, AIDS/HIV and family planning
- (d) make them understand their human rights.



The paper further discussed the contextual framework under which the whole system was to operate.

The assessment in prison took the following forms:

- (i) Diagnostic and formative for placement when they enter prisons
- (ii) Tests, debates, quizzes, group discussions, assessing comprehension skills and soon.

Like any other form of education provision, the literacy programme for prisoners in the two districts were said to have both strengths and weaknesses. The paper clearly elaborated what these were and the way forward to redress the weaknesses.

### **TOWARDS QUALITY ASSURANCE IN ADULT EDUCATION: ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN ABET IN SOUTH AFRICA**

**PRESENTER: Ms Valentia Mashigo and Mr. H.J. Ndanga  
(Zimbabwe School Examinations Council)**

The idea of Abet avowed from a background where there was a critical problem of attainment and access to basic Education in South Africa. There was need for adult learners to join in the main stream of education. The rural areas were the worst affected with adult illiteracy.

Abet was introduced for adults who had never had chance to go to school.

It was meant for:

- (i) Workers who did not have qualifications. For this category of people, employers had to embark on Human Resource Development Programmes to ensure that their employees went to school. This was done through Adult Basic Education.
- (ii) Domestic Workers
- (iii) Unemployed illiterates
- (iv) T.B. Centres and so on.

The paper discussed the providers of this adult education and Umalusi being the overall overseer on quality Assurance. In addition, the paper gave detailed challenges that Abet faces and how it Quality Assures

Examination results underwent a verification and moderation before they were accepted.

Though Umalusi is committed to establishing a service which strives to provide the highest standards, it has faced challenges just like any other innovations in the field of education provision. Some of the challenges among the many, were the lack of resources, lack of commitment to abet by stakeholders, attrition of the education providers and so on.

## **CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT**

**PRESENTER:**        **Mr. E.S. Nhandara (Secretariat of Education-Zimbabwe)**

The presenter's opening remarks were that Zimbabwe did not have continuous Assessment as it was conceptualized in the conference. However, he admitted that quality education was the pillar for national Development.

The Zimbabwean system provided education to all the learners up to school certificate level. This meant that examinations at grade 7 or mid-secondary school were not used for selection purposes to proceed to the next grade.

The assessment system combined both the continuous (formative) and summative results. This means that course work was seen as a representation of continuous assessment and that it was hoped that the standard of learning could be raised.

The paper presented outlined the advantages of continuous assessment. Some of these were:

- assessment would help pupils build confidence through continuous feedback.
- Assessment could be used for motivation for both learners and teachers.
- It was seen that classroom assessment was the best to improve learning especially for slow learners as teachers would assist them through remediation.
- Continuous assessment benefits teachers, learners, parents, education providers and donors.

## **DISCUSSION**

It was agreed that there was need to invest in continuous assessment in the classroom.

On the correlation between those who performed poorly and those who performed well, it was said that performance continued to manifest itself even at school certificate level. Schools that took pupils who performed very well at grade 7 level still performed very well at school certificate level.

**ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING OF PUPILS' ACHIEVEMENT IN AN INCLUSIVE SET UP IN ZAMBIA. AN ANALYSIS OF CURRENT PRACTICE AND CHALLENGES.**

**PRESENTER:**        *Mr. M Chilala*  
                              *(Examinations Council of Zambia)*

The paper emphasized the purpose of assessment being the gathering information for purpose of making decisions and improving practices.

The presentation then outlined the Ministry of Education policy on assessment. It was pointed out that there were internal and external aspects of assessment. Examples of the assessment activities being undertaken to assess and monitor learning achievement were discussed and evaluated in terms of their efforts at including Special Education Children (SEN).

With regard to challenges, the paper bemoaned the exclusiveness involved in the current assessment practices.

It was pointed out the high stakes examinations being conducted by the Examination Council of Zambia do not cater for the different learning domains of the SEN pupils.

The paper emphasized the need to address the issue of equity with regard to examinations for the SEN in terms of training examiners, markers review grading system and inclusion of more school-based assessment methods.

In conclusion the paper emphasized the need for implementing an inclusive system of learning and assessment.

**DISCUSSION**

1. It was clarified that the certification for the SEN and regular pupils was the same.
2. The discussion also looked at the difficult challenge of catering for the special needs of the SEN vis-à-vis the issue of inclusiveness and providing the same type of education and assessment.
3. It was appreciated that the inequitable situation existing for the SEN and regular children could not be corrected through testing/assessment but through specific policy changes.

## **ASSESSMENT IN INTERACTIVE RADIO INSTRUCTION: PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES.**

**PRESENTER: Mr. B. Nkhata and Maureen Tandya  
(Education Broadcasting Services – Zambia)**

The background to the paper described what the IRI programme was and how it had developed in Zambia.

It was pointed out that programme was one of the Ministry of Education interventions to promote community participation, provide education to the disadvantaged and increase access to education for all Zambians.

The paper outlined various formative and summative evaluation procedures used to assess the effectiveness of the IRI programme.

The findings from various evaluation and assessment of pupils' performance were presented for discussion. It was observed that while there were encouraging results regarding programme achievements, there was still great need for systematic assessment and evaluation so as to obtain valid and reliable information required for reviewing the programme.

## **THE PROVISION OF QUALITATIVE EDUCATION IN ZAMBIA THROUGH IMPROVED LEARNER ASSESSMENT**

**PRESENTER: Henry Joshua Msango  
(University of Zambia)**

The presenter stated that the education system in Zambia was affected by poverty disintegration of social facilities and a highly complex society.

It was explained that assessment should strive to determine how well the curriculum was taught, how well the learners should be able to do for society. In addition, he explained that education and assessment systems should take into consideration the political and economic groupings that have invested in it, and meet their social and economic expectations.

## **DISCUSSION**

It was agreed that the curriculum should be society based for assessment practices to reflect society norms. It was also agreed that the Examination bodies should strive to consider variety and diversity of situations in which learners are assessed. It was concluded that those who set test items should be trained to develop relevant and fair items.

## **ISSUES AND OBSERVATIONS**

1. Continuous assessment should be integrated in the teaching process.
2. The continuous assessment needed to complement the national examinations.
3. The information from the assessment strategies should be used in reviewing and reforming educational policies to enhance educational quality.
4. Teachers need to be trained and educated in the processes of assessment administration, interpretation, recording and reporting assessment results as well as the use of test results.
5. Teacher training colleges should incorporate continuous assessment in their course work.
6. The assessment process should be collaborative and participatory.
7. Assessment should be conducted regularly and frequently so as to engender continuity.
8. There is need to conduct system level national assessment to monitor learning achievement.
9. There is need to clarify the assessment tasks for different educational programmes.
10. There is need for a strong inspectorate to ensure the implementation and monitoring of the use of continuous assessment in teaching and learning.
11. There is need to link continuous assessment results to remedial interventions.
12. It was unanimously agreed that the assessment should also focus on practical subjects.
13. It was observed that there were different forms of continuous assessment (formal and informal) and both should be used at the classroom level.
14. The conference emphasized the use of criterion referenced testing in the assessment process.
15. Efforts should be made to standardize assessment procedures in non-formal education environments.

16. There is need to develop assessment systems that should cater for Special Education Needs (SEN) children.

17. The purpose of the assessment should determine the method.

### **The Way forward**

18. The conference should become an annual event:

- Zimbabwe offered to host the event in 2004. Malawi was the alternative host.

19. Use this opportunity/forum as a think tank for the sub region.

### **Conference Evaluation**

20. The conference participants said that the conference was a great success in all aspects such as the quality of papers presented, interaction, venue, food, etc. However, there were observations that there was need for more time for discussions.