INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS CERTIFICATE PROGRAMME

Continous assessment
Part 1
This pilot edition of the TEACHERS' BASIC COMPETENCIES MANUAL was produced for the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, Republic of Namibia with assistance from the United States Agency for International Development through the Institute for International Research, Basic Education Support Project.
Module 4

Continuous assessment
Part 1

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National Institute for Educational Development
Ministry of Basic Education and Culture
Okahandja, Namibia
1996
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following people contributed ideas for this module and provided editing assistance:

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- Discussions with teachers at Henadawa JPS, Okahandja:
  Mr. L.S. Muukua, Mrs. R. van Rooi, Mrs. G. Hevita, Mrs. T. Gawises, Mr. E. Klasen

- The TBCM reference group:
  Patti Swarts, Director, NIED; Susan Alberts, EO, Lower Primary; and Alfred IIukena, Head, Lower Primary Task Force

- The Curriculum Coordinating Group, NIED
- Dr. Rosetta Mante, Assessment Coordinator, BES
- Dr. Nick Cowell, Target Schools Intervention Specialist, BES Project

The following sources were used in the development of this module:

- Informal Assessment in Education - Guerin and Maier, Mayfield, 1983.
- the new grade 1-4 syllabuses, Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, Namibia

Production support for this module was provided by:

- Dr. David McCurry, Instructional Materials Development Coordinator, BES

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Basic Education Support Project
Okahandja, 1996
How to Use This Module

This module is part of a series of 20 modules designed for you, the Namibian teacher teaching Grades 1 through 4. The series is designed to help you become a better teacher.

As you read through each module, you will discover four symbols which mark activities or suggestions for you to follow. They are:

- **Question Box**
  These boxes ask you questions based on what you have read in the module. They are intended to help you learn as you are reading. Answer these questions by yourself as you read the module.

- **Activity Box**
  These boxes suggest activities for you to try. The box will give you instructions. You may try these activities as you read the module or after you complete it. After completing each activity box, you should always discuss what you have learned with another teacher, your principal, or your ORP.

- **Self Test**
  This test gives you a chance to recall key ideas in the module and to determine how well you have understood them. It comes at the end of the module. Take the test by yourself when you have finished the module. Then check your answers with the Answers to Self Test on the following page. If you like, you can review the Self Test with your ORP, another teacher, or your principal.

- **Tips**
  Tips are provided as suggestions for refining the skills you have learned in the module.
This module also contains four additional items to help you learn:

**wall charts**

These pages summarize important module content in graphic form. Refer to them when you are planning lessons or discussing teaching ideas with other teachers or your principal.

**summary at the end of the module**

This page is designed to review the main points of the module. Review these points before taking the Self Test.

**glossary**

This section provides definitions for all the new and important words and phrases presented in the module.

**page titled MY NOTES at the end of the module**

Keep your own notes here. Also, make notes in the margins throughout the module. It is yours to mark up and to make your own.

If you have any suggestions for improving the content or format of these modules, please contact your ORP or send your comments to the BES Target School Intervention Coordinator at Ongwediva Teachers’ Resource Centre, Ongwediva, at the following address:

P.O. Box 2156, Oshakati

telephone and fax: 06751-30670

The Editors
National Institute for Educational Development
Okahandja, 1996
After reading and using this module you will be able to:

- explain why we use informal continuous assessment
- explain the four steps of informal continuous assessment
- make two types of continuous assessment aids
- use informal continuous assessment in your classroom
In Module 2 we discussed how to make a lesson plan. As you might remember, the three essential ingredients of a lesson plan are objectives, activities, and assessment. In this module, we will discuss assessment in greater depth, particularly informal continuous assessment. The focus will be on less structured forms of informal continuous assessment. In the next Module, we will discuss more structured forms of informal continuous assessment, including basic ideas for constructing quizzes (short tests), averaging scores, and assigning symbols.
WHAT IS ASSESSMENT?

When you see children playing, what do you think about? What do you think when you hear your daughter using a new word? Or when you see a learner holding a pencil correctly for the first time? Or when you observe your neighbour riding a bicycle without falling off? Maybe you think "She didn't fall of this time!" If you do, then you are assessing. Even if you do not give her a mark, you are assessing. Whenever you (1) observe an event and (2) make a judgment about its status or success, you are assessing.

There are many kinds of assessment. Noticing the child on the bicycle is a type of assessment. You might also call it observation. Testing is also a type of assessment. Evaluation is a type of assessment. Each type varies in frequency and formality. Frequency means how often, and formality means how structured.
The fourth type of assessment in the chart on the last page is crossed out because, as you know, formal examinations are not used in grades 1 through 4.

FOUR TYPES OF ASSESSMENT

1. **Observation** means noticing someone and judging their action. As in the example of the bicycle, we might judge the action successful or unsuccessful. Observation is perhaps the most important part of continuous assessment, because with it, we assess the whole child. We do not only consider academic achievement. For example, if a learner is having difficulties, maybe he/she is having problems at home. To learn about the child, we can look in four places: the learner, our teaching, the instructional setting, and out-of-school factors. There are many aspects to each of these places. Some are listed below. Can you think of others?

UNDERSTANDING THE WHOLE CHILD:
FOUR PLACES TO FIND INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE LEARNER</th>
<th>OUR TEACHING</th>
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<tr>
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<th>OUT-OF-SCHOOL</th>
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<td>parents</td>
<td>peers</td>
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<td>religion</td>
<td>aides</td>
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<td>culture</td>
<td>facilities</td>
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<td>peers</td>
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<td>economics</td>
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<tr>
<td>work</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>recreation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How you get information in each of these places? You can:

✓ observe learners as they work
✓ listen to what learners tell their friends
✓ chat with learners outside class
✓ chat with other teachers about a learner
✓ chat with the learner's parents

**Question Box**

Think of one learner in your class who is having difficulty. First, identify the specific problem he has. For example, maybe he cannot concentrate. Maybe he has difficulties following directions. Once you have identified a problem, write it down. Then, look at some of the words in the diagram above and ask yourself: "What do I know about this child? Is there anything else I could find out that would help me help him?"

2. Informal continuous assessment: less structured means observing learners for assessment purposes, and recording what we see. (With observation, we might not record what we see.) Informal continuous assessment is informal because it is not formal like a test or exam. It is continuous because it occurs periodically - on a daily or weekly basis. It is assessment because it is systematic and structured.

Let's take an example. You are observing a group of learners in a Grade 1 English class. Paulus names the days of the week in correct order. You go to your record book and tick "naming the days of the week in correct order" for Paulus. Freida can name the days of the week, but not in correct order. Perhaps you record a circle for Freida. This indicates that you will be careful to observe Freida's progress. You will put a tick in the circle when Freida achieves the competency. That is informal continuous assessment.
3. **Informal continuous assessment**: more structured means setting up assessment situations periodically. An *assessment situation* is an activity you organize so that you can assess your learners, and give them symbol, tick or comment. An assessment situation could be a quiz. (A quiz is a short, informal type of assessment in which several questions are asked. A quiz is not an exam.) An assessment situation could also be a group activity in which you observe specific things your learners say. There are many kinds of assessment situations. You can:

- ✓ ask a learner a question individually
- ✓ ask a learner to perform a task
- ✓ observe learners in a group
- ✓ ask a group of learners to perform a task
- ✓ give small quizzes (a few questions)

We will talk more about these assessment situations in Module 5 as well.

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**Informal continuous assessment should be conducted orally in the lower grades until learners are proficient at reading and writing.**

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4. **Formal assessment** is a structured, infrequent measure of learner achievement. Formal assessment means the use of tests and exams. A teacher might use a test or exam once in a term to evaluate learners' knowledge or ability. Exams are used to measure a learner's progress.

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“All assessment in grades 1-4 in Namibia is to be informal continuous assessment. NO FORMAL EXAMS (END-OF-YEAR EXAMS) ARE TO BE GIVEN IN GRADES 1-4 IN NAMIBIA.”
Some teachers believe that giving frequent exams is continuous assessment. IT IS NOT. It is CONSTANT TESTING, not continuous assessment.

Some teachers believe that one or two quizzes (short exams) per term is sufficient. IT IS NOT. If assessment occurs once or twice per term, it is not continuous assessment.

WHY DO WE USE INFORMAL CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT?

We use informal continuous assessment for one reason: to help our learners learn better. Informal continuous assessment gives us information as we teach. This enables us to correct problems as they occur, instead of waiting until the end of the term, when it is too late.

Informal continuous assessment shows us two things: how well our learners are learning, and how well we are teaching. If informal continuous assessment shows us that our learners are not learning well, we must ask ourselves why. We can examine the factors listed on page 2. We can offer additional instruction to learners who need more help.

If our learners are not learning well, this may also mean that we are not teaching well. We can then change our style of instruction to better fit our learners. However, at the end of the day, it is not our instruction that matters; it is our learners' progress. If our learners are learning better, then we are probably teaching better! So the most important reason to do continuous assessment is to help our learners learn better.
HOW DO WE DO INFORMAL CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT?

There are four stages in continuous assessment: observation, diagnosis, consolidation, and follow-up assessment. See the next page for a step-by-step description.
HOW TO DO INFORMAL CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT: 4 STEPS

**STEP 1**
Observation: Noticing that there is a problem

**Example:**
You look at a learner's homework. You notice he is having some problems with addition.

**STEP 2**
Diagnosis: Trying to determine where the problem lies

**Example:**
You assign simple problems from the previous day. The learner cannot complete these either. However, he can correctly complete problems from two weeks ago.

**STEP 3**
Consolidation: Helping the learner develop the knowledge or skills needed to complete the task

**Example:**
You give instruction through verbal explanation, demonstration, trial, and practice. You then introduce problems from one week ago. The learner completes the problems successfully. He does the homework assignment again, this time correctly. You tick "addition" in your assessment book.

**STEP 4**
Follow-up Assessment: Monitoring to ensure the learner is able to do other tasks correctly

**Example:**
You see that the learner has done the task correctly. You continue to check the learner's work when new tasks are introduced. (If there are still problems, go back to Step 2 and continue.)
TECHNIQUES FOR
INFORMAL CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

Once we know the steps to use in informal continuous assessment, what tools can we use to ensure that we are doing it properly? Here are two ideas:

1. Keeping an assessment book You can record symbols in an assessment book simply by putting a tick next to a learner’s name and competency achieved. You can give learners as many ticks as you choose to give. You can also record symbols or other marks.

AN ASSESSMENT BOOK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learner's name</th>
<th>Count to 10</th>
<th>Count to 15</th>
<th>Count to 20</th>
<th>Count to 20 by 2s</th>
<th>Count without using objects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Achieved the competency
Assessed once but did not achieve the competency
Assessed twice but did not achieve the competency
This learner could count to 20 by 2s before she could count by 1s. This is natural. We all learn different things at different times. We should not expect everyone to learn in the same order.
Activity Box

Using an exercise book, set up your own continuous assessment book for this year's Maths class. Try using it for a few days, then discuss it with your ORP.
2. Keeping a learner portfolio  You can collect your learners’ work to judge their progress over time. A learner portfolio also helps you assess your teaching. For example, maybe a learner is having trouble with natural science, but is good in art. Maybe there are artistic elements you can include in your science lessons to reach this learner!

To make a learner portfolio, find or make a folder to contain learners’ work. Or you can put their work between two pieces of paper, or in a box. Collect your learners’ work (drawings, pictures, Maths problems, English compositions, etc.) throughout the year and put it in the folder. Make sure each item has the learner’s name and date written on it.
SUMMARY

1. There are many kinds of assessment. As teachers, we use observation, informal continuous assessment, formal continuous assessment, and formal assessment.

2. We use informal continuous assessment for two reasons: to help the learner learn, and to help the teacher teach better.

3. Informal continuous assessment must be done periodically throughout the term - daily, weekly, or every two to three weeks. If we only do it once or twice, it is not continuous assessment.

4. Formal assessment is usually done once or twice per term. Formal assessment means tests or exams.

5. There are two kinds of informal continuous assessment: less structured and more structured. With informal continuous assessment: less structured, we observe and record learners' progress as we are teaching. With informal continuous assessment: more structured, we set up assessment situations to assess and record learners' progress.

6. With informal continuous assessment, we try to understand the whole child. There are four places to look for information concerning the child: the child him/herself, our teaching (lessons), the setting (school), and out-of-school factors (home, community).

7. The process of informal continuous assessment includes observation, diagnosis, consolidation, and follow-up assessment.

8. Two useful aids for informal continuous assessment are keeping an assessment book, and keeping a learner portfolio.
You have just completed Module 4: Continuous Assessment. The focus of this module has been on less structured forms of informal continuous assessment. In Module 5, we will discuss more structured forms of informal continuous assessment. For more information on formal and informal methods of continuous assessment, as well as promotion considerations, you may refer to the Training Manual for Primary School Principals, Ministry of Basic Education and Culture. See also the National Curriculum Guide for Basic Formal Education. If you have read the summary, you are ready to turn to the next page and take the self-test.
Self Test

1. A. Name four different kinds of assessment.  B. With which types do we record our observations?  C. Which type is not to be used in grades 1-4?

A. 

B. 

C. 

2. Why do we assess continuously?

3. What are the four steps of continuous assessment?

4. What are two continuous assessment aids?
ANSWERS TO SELF-TEST

1. A. Four kinds of assessment are: observation, informal continuous assessment: less structured, informal continuous assessment: more structured, and formal assessment. B. We record our observations for informal continuous assessment (less structured and more structured) and for formal assessment. C. Formal assessment is not to be used in grades 1-4. (6 points: 1 for each correct answer in A, 1 for a correct answer in B, 1 for a correct answer in C.)

2. We assess continuously to help our learners learn. By using continuous assessment, we can identify learners' problems as they occur rather than waiting until the end of the term. We can also use continuous assessment to determine how well we are teaching. (4 points)

3. The four steps of continuous assessment are: observation, assessment, consolidation, and follow-up assessment. (8 points: 2 for each correct answer)

4. Two continuous assessment aids are assessment books and learner portfolios. (2 points: 1 for each correct answer)

20 points total
**assessment**: a way of judging the status or success of something.

**assessment book**: a book in which we tick off achievement of competencies, or record symbols or other marks.

**assessment situation**: an activity we organize so we can give a symbol, tick or comment on learners' performance.

**formal assessment**: structured, infrequent measure of learner achievement. Formal assessment usually means using exams.

**informal continuous assessment: less structured**: observing learners on a regular basis and recording what we observe.

**informal continuous assessment: more structured**: setting up assessment situations periodically and recording what we assess.

**observation**: noticing someone and judging his/her action in some way. As teachers, we observe our learners every day, usually in an unstructured way. This is a type of assessment.

**portfolio**: a place in which a learner's work is kept so we can assess learners' change over time, and so we can assess our teaching methods.
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<td>Okuhonga unona pamikalo odo have ilongo</td>
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<td>Maudigu merongo nyiugana yekambadaro</td>
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<td>Mbatere kovanona avu va dira kukara nawa</td>
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