Exploring the use of continuous assessment in the context of outcome-based education in Malawian primary schools

Colby Kumwenda\textsuperscript{1} and Wezzie Chiziwa\textsuperscript{2}

\textsuperscript{1}Chancellor College, Malawi
\textsuperscript{2}Affiliation not available

October 22, 2021

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore primary school teacher’s use of continuous assessment (CA) in supporting the teaching and learning of Social Studies in the context of Outcome Based Education (OBE) in Malawi. This was in an effort to seek deeper understanding of how CA is used to support learning. The study was informed by the following main research question: How do teachers use CA to realise the core values of OBE in the teaching of Social studies? The following specific research questions guided the study: What are the teacher’s practices on continuous assessment in the context of OBE? What opportunities and challenges does CA bring in the teaching of Social Studies in primary schools? How do teachers cope with challenges associated with CA practices? This was a qualitative case study of eight primary school teachers. Classroom observation was the main data generation tool. In addition, an in-depth interview and document analysis was done which sought to understand teacher practices in the use of CA as a tool for learning in the context of OBE. The results of the study revealed dominant use of continuous testing practices in form of tests administered fortnightly or monthly thereby negating the use of other forms of CA tasks. Even though participants in the study had good opinion of the integration of CA into teaching and learning process, the CA practices showed little alignment with OBE. The implication of the findings is that the reform regarding CA in OBE remain symbolic if the contextual factors impeding it are not addressed. If teacher CA practice is to support learning in line with OBE, there is need to address contextual constraints such as large class size, limited teacher assessment literacy and limited support mechanism.

Hosted file