

Classroom Assessment Methods and their Influence on Classroom Assessment in Early Years Education in Baringo County, Kenya

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Abstract

The Kenyan Government reformed its 8-4-4 curriculum into a competency-based one (CBC) which emphasized classroom assessment. This would enhance skill acquisition in learners. To accomplish this aspiration, pedagogically skilled teachers were needed. However, several studies revealed that teachers couldn't implement classroom assessment effectively. The study sought to establish classroom assessment methods and their influence on classroom assessment in early years education in Baringo County, Kenya. The study used a mixed method approach and cross-sectional descriptive survey research design. Quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were utilized. The instruments were a questionnaire, interview guide, and Focus Group Discussion. The target population was 700 public primary schools, 650 headteachers, 2800 EYE teachers, and 45 curriculum support officers. The study established that EYE teachers used written tests to assess all learners including learners of pre-primary (pp1 and pp2). This was contrary to the requirements of the Basic Education Curriculum Framework which required teachers of pre-primary level to avoid assessing learners using written tests thus posing a negative influence on classroom assessment. The study also revealed that EYE teachers had not guided their learners to develop showcase portfolios which negatively influenced classroom assessment aim of monitoring learners' progress over time. It hindered the promotion of creativity among learners. The study recommends that EYE teachers teaching pp1 and pp2 should avoid assessing their learners using written tests as per the CBAF. Moreover, teachers of grades one, two, and three should also vary the assessment methods they use for classroom assessment rather than dwelling majorly on written tests. During pre-service teacher training, teachers should get adequate training on how to design assessment rubrics for different learning areas based on different assessment criteria and the difficulty index of the classroom assessment.

Keywords: *Classroom Assessment Methods, Classroom Assessment, Early Years Education*

1.0 Introduction

Globally, there have been ongoing educational reforms towards the skills necessary for living in the 21st century. As a result, many countries around the world such as Finland, Germany, Rwanda, Zambia, Tanzania, and Kenya among others reformed their curriculum and adopted a curriculum that focuses on the acquisition of contextually defined competencies. Such a curriculum emphasizes classroom assessment as an integral part of classroom instruction

implying that for its effective implementation, teachers' skills in accurate assessment of learners' competencies are paramount, (Sudkamp et al., 2012).

It is important to note that classroom assessment is key in enhancing the quality of learning, (Mkonongwa, 2018). Therefore, many countries successfully fused classroom assessment frameworks into their educational assessment systems. However, the utilization of summative assessment approaches is prevalent in assessments rather than the expected classroom assessment approaches in a competency-based curriculum, (Chemeli, 2019).

Classroom assessment requires teachers to frequently assess learners using specific formative assessment instruments such as observation in a classroom or outside classroom context (informal assessment), teacher-made classroom written tests (formal assessment), and other forms of authentic assessment tasks such as performance-based assessments, (Mertler, 2016).

At EYE, assessment is individualized and performance-based, (KNEC, 2021); hence teachers are to carry out a performance-based assessment of learners' ability to apply skills and knowledge learned by performing tasks that reflect the roles of professionals such as journalists, teachers, artists, engineers, and etcetera when implementing classroom assessment, (McTighe, 2015). These activities require learners to use their creativity and thinking skills to demonstrate the acquired competencies which eventually enhances learners' learning. This is in line with the aims of a competency-based curriculum. Khadijeh and Amir (2015) emphasized the importance of assessment literacy for teachers. It aids in the analysis and interpretation of learner achievement. They concluded by noting that assessment illiterate teachers conduct imprecise assessments which eventually derail the overall intentions of the assessment that is done.

1.1 Problem Statement

Globally, studies revealed that teachers faced challenges in pedagogical skills necessary for classroom assessment. Although 97.61% of Kenyan teachers had been trained in classroom assessment, 21.04% of schools that did the 2019 MLP had learners without developed portfolios. Quantitative feedback, rigidity, assessing learners of pre-primary level using written tests, and buying tests for assessments were practices that were generally prevalent in Kenyan schools. In Nyandarua County, 46.9% and 54.3% of teachers had challenges in designing assessment rubrics and criteria respectively. In Baringo County, the researcher's area of study, teachers provided quantitative assessment feedback, and EYE learners purchased written tests. In the Tiaty sub-county, 80% of teachers complained of inadequate training in competency-based approaches that involved classroom assessment. This study, therefore, assessed teachers' use of a variety of classroom assessment methods and their influence on classroom assessment.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

The study was guided by the pedagogical content knowledge theory articulated by Desimone (2009) and the curriculum implementation theory propagated by Gross (1971). Desimone (2009) posited that teacher professional development leads to an improvement in teachers' pedagogical skills. Also, teacher professional development leads to effective curriculum implementation strategies. This eventually translates to improved learners' learning which is one of the aims of CBC. Moreover, content focus and duration of training are important components of professional development according to Desimone (2009). Desimone (2009); in Florence & Ndunge (2018) furthered his argument by saying that teacher professional development is productive if its overall effects can be detected in classrooms during classroom

instruction. According to Gross (1971) in Ondimu (2018), teacher ability, awareness, capacity, and support are critical to the success of any educational program. Teacher ability points to teachers' pedagogical skills according to Ningtiyas & Jailani (2018), which is the independent variable of the study. Gross (1971) furthered his argument by saying that if the teacher is not aware of the changes in the curriculum, he may not effectively implement it, thus the teacher needs to be aware of the changes in assessment practices according to CBAF. To successfully implement the curriculum, it is necessary to provide teachers with assistance for their professional growth. As a result, a teacher should be able to apply classroom assessment approaches through proper pre-service and in-service training in the same.

The researcher chose the Pedagogical Content Knowledge theory because it is related to the study in that it sought to establish teachers' pedagogical skills and find their influence on classroom assessment since EYE teachers had been trained in classroom assessment which KNUT (2019) pointed out that it was poorly conducted. Although Desimone (2009) stressed that content and duration of training are significant components of attention during professional development for the effective acquisition of pedagogical skills by trainees, the training sessions were restricted to three days instead of the recommended five days.

Curriculum implementation theory was meant to complement the pedagogical content knowledge theory. It was chosen because classroom assessment was derived from the vision and the mission of CBC meaning that the learning experiences in CBC determine the assessment tasks. They form the basis of classroom assessment, (KNEC, 2019).

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Classroom Assessment

Because of the increasing importance of learners' assessment, teachers' skills in assessment of learners are to be enhanced, (Eun-Young, 2019). Under the CBC dispensation, learners are supposed to be assessed based on demonstration of the desired competency, (Baugman et al., 2012). The desired competencies under CBC are learning to learn, self-efficacy, digital literacy, communication and collaboration, citizenship, creativity and imagination, and critical thinking and problem-solving, (Republic of Kenya, 2017). The above competencies are aimed at developing learners who can apply the acquired knowledge and skills in other contexts outside school, (Leutner et al., 2017). Classroom assessment therefore is carried out so that pupils' abilities can be judged against a standard of performance, (Idrissi et al., 2016). The evidence for judging a pupil's ability is needed, therefore what they do or say constitutes the evidence.

According to Meyer-Adams et al. (2011), learners demonstrate what they know through classroom assessments. Hence teachers are to be pedagogically skilled to prove a learner's ability when making conclusions concerning the assessment that is done. Furthermore, they are to be well-equipped with the principles of assessment such as fairness, flexibility, validity, and reliability so that they make sound judgments about classroom assessments, (The Republic of Kenya, 2017). Teachers also need to know and understand what entails various classroom assessment methods such as portfolios, profiling, journaling, rubrics, questionnaires, performance-based assessment, etc., and know when to execute them in tandem with the specific learning area and the strand content or the competency to be assessed. Moreover, the utilization of classroom assessment results is very important as it assists learners in making various decisions concerning their education. Further, parents, teachers, and other educational stakeholders need to make various decisions about the entire education sector based on the interpretation of assessment results.

Lake (2014) researched the ability of teachers in Ethiopia's Bahir Dar town to assess pupils and discovered that it was very low. He recommended further research to be carried out to investigate the depth of the problem at the elementary school level. This study did so but in Kenya, specifically in Baringo County.

2.2.2 Classroom Assessment Methods

The main aim of EYE is to promote learners' development as a whole and it involves various aspects such as cognitive, life skills, socio-emotional, language, physical, moral aspects etcetera. To attain these aspects in learners, assessments are to be conducted frequently to gauge learners' progress and hence standardized methods of assessments are needed. Drisko (2014) pointed out that in competency-based teaching and learning approaches, assessments are carried out by use of multiple methods such as direct observation of shown competencies via projects, presentations, internships, field practice, and teacher evaluations. In addition, Drisko (2014) noted that assessments should be carried out through written tests and exercises to measure interpretational skills. Portfolios are used to assess learning that took place earlier.

According to the Curriculum Framework for the Republic of Kenya, teachers are supposed to assess learners using a variety of assessment methods but they are to avoid assessing learners of pre-primary section using written tests. Assessment methods according to the framework are portfolios, profiling, anecdotal records, journaling, question and answer, written tests, homework, observations, rubrics, questionnaires, and checklists, (Republic of Kenya, 2017). Brookhart (2011) opined that teachers need to know and understand the purpose and content of a variety of assessment methods and are to be skilled in their utilization.

KNEC's (2020) report on the 2019 Monitoring of Learners' Progress indicated that 21.04% of schools had learners without developed portfolios. There were concerns about its utilization as a classroom assessment tool and how it depicted the 21st Century Skills of creativity and recommended further exploration of the matter.

This study concerned itself with teachers' pedagogical skills in the use of written tests, showcase portfolios, and designing assessment rubrics in conducting classroom assessments. A portfolio is a collection of students' work chosen and arranged in a manner that shows learning progress. A rubric is a method of assessing learners using an achievement criterion meant for reporting and teacher accountability purposes while written tests are tests that are designed to measure learners' attainment of competencies and interpretation of questions, (Republic of Kenya, 2017).

3.0 Methodology

The study used a mixed method approach, Cross-sectional Descriptive Survey Research Design. Quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were utilized. The instruments were a questionnaire, interview guide, and Focus Group Discussion. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics calculated in the SPSS and presented by tables. Qualitative data were thematically analyzed and presented narratively. Baringo County was the study locale. The target population was 700 public primary schools, 650 headteachers, 2800 EYE teachers, and 45 curriculum support officers (CSOs). Krejcie & Morgan's table was used to determine the sample size. This yielded 242 headteachers, 338 EYE teachers, and 40 CSOs. EYE teachers were selected by a simple random sampling technique. Headteachers and CSOs were purposively selected. 25 schools and 34 EYE teachers were randomly selected for piloting while 2 headteachers and 2 CSOs were purposively selected for the same.

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Use of a variety of Classroom Assessment Methods and its influence on classroom assessment

The study assessed teachers' use of a variety of classroom assessment methods and found its influence on classroom assessment. The indicators of the objective were the use of written tests, designing assessment rubrics, and the use of a showcase portfolio. Respondents were asked to rate their degree of agreement with the supplied statements on a Likert scale from 1 to 5. Table 1 summarizes the results of the assessment.

Table 1: Use of a variety of Classroom Assessment Methods

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	SDV
I assess learners in the grade level that I teach using written tests	(145) 67.76%	(26) 12.15%	(10) 4.67%	(19) 8.88%	(14) 6.54%	3.65	1.101
I can design an assessment rubric for different learning areas that are assessed in the grade level that I teach	(17) 7.94%	(31) 14.48%	(112) 52.34%	(24) 11.21%	(30) 14.02%	3.85	1.091
I have guided learners in the grade level that I teach to develop showcase portfolios for specific learning areas	(41) 19.16%	(26) 12.15%	(50) 23.36%	(63) 29.44%	(34) 15.89%	3.73	1.812

4.1.1 Use of Written Tests

From Table 1, out of 214 respondents who participated in the study, 145 (67.76%) strongly agreed that they assessed learners in the grade level they taught using written tests, 26(12.15%) agreed, 10(4.67%) were uncertain, 19(8.88%) disagreed, while 14(6.54%) strongly disagreed with the statement. This statement had a mean of 3.65 and a standard deviation of 1.101. This finding indicated that the majority of EYE teachers used written tests to assess their learners. It was in agreement with Otieno et al. (2015) who opined that in a bid to reinforce formal learning, most schools assessed learners using written tests which eventually had a negative influence on classroom assessment since the mission and the objective of the CBAF was to identify and nurture potentials in each learner by assessing them using a variety of Classroom Assessment methods, (KNEC, 2020). Further, the Basic Education Curriculum Framework outlined that teachers of EYE should desist from assessing learners using written tests, especially in the pre-primary level (Pre-primary one and two). The findings revealed that the method of assessing EYE learners denied them the opportunity to develop holistically.

The interviewed headteachers agreed that EYE teachers assessed their learners using written tests.

HT5 had the following to say;

Society and the parents understand progress in a pupil through written tests, therefore, all EYE learners ranging from pp1 to grade three in my school are assessed through written tests, (HT5, Female, BED, July 2022).

On further probing, HT6 remarked;

How will the learners acquire literacy skills if they can't practice writing letters or numbers? EYE learners need to learn to write early in preparation for middle school, (HT6, Male, BED, July 2022).

The CSOs concluded that teachers who taught pre-school level (PP1 and PP2) assessed their learners using written tests contrary to the requirements of CBC. They did it to enhance formal learning and basic numeracy and literacy skills. This influenced classroom assessment negatively since pre-primary teachers were to desist from assessing their learners using written tests.

Group quotation

“The preschool teachers assess learners using written tests since at this level of learning, learners are taught how to write and read. They are assessed using written tests to enable the teacher to rate their competencies in sound, letter, and number identification.” CSO

The above findings agreed with quantitative findings that EYE teachers in Baringo County assessed their learners using written tests. Wanjohi (2017) posited that learners of pre-primary level (pp1 & pp2) should not be assessed through written tests. This practice therefore negated the implementation of classroom assessment according to CBAF in CBC.

4.1.2 Ability to design assessment rubrics

On designing an assessment rubric for different learning areas that are assessed in EYE, 17(7.94%) strongly agreed, 31(14.48%) agreed, 112(52.34%) were uncertain, 24 (11.21%) disagreed, while 30(14.02%) strongly disagreed that they could design assessment rubrics for different learning areas that are assessed in the grade level that they taught and it had a mean of 3.85 and a standard deviation of 1.091. This revealed that only a quarter of EYE teachers in Baringo County could design assessment rubrics for different learning areas that were assessed. This agreed with the findings of Waweru (2018) who stated that the majority of the teachers implementing CBC couldn't design assessment rubrics for different learning areas that they assessed. Assessment rubrics books were bought by parents in bookshops and adopted by the teachers the way they were. Furthermore, Isaboke & Wambiri (2021) agreed with this finding by reiterating that the use of assessment rubrics to assess learners was still a challenge to teachers at the preschool level in Kenya.

The interviewed headteachers revealed that a few EYE teachers could design assessment rubrics for the assessment of different learning areas. However, they informed parents to purchase assessment rubrics books for their children from bookshops.

HT2 said;

I can say confidently that a handful of EYE teachers, at most four in my school can design assessment rubrics. What happened is that we instructed parents to buy assessment rubrics books for their pupils, (HT2, Male, BED, July 2022).

HT3 & HT4 also echoed the above sentiments. This meant that the majority of EYE teachers in Baringo County couldn't design assessment rubrics thus posing a challenge to the implementation of classroom assessment in line with CBC. This finding agreed with that of Lola (2021) that teachers' ability to design assessment rubrics was low. Further, in agreement with Veloo et al. (2016), teachers exhibited difficulties in designing and constructing assessment instruments, teachers did not use their knowledge to construct assessment items but

instead, they adopted them directly from reference books such as assessment rubrics books bought by parents.

The CSOs also noted that teachers in EYE in the schools within their zones on average could design assessment rubrics.

The fact that a few teachers could design assessment rubrics meant that it had a negative influence on classroom assessment.

4.1.3 The use of showcase portfolios

On guiding learners to develop showcase portfolios for specific learning areas, it was found that 41 (19.16%) strongly agreed with the statement, 26 (12.15%) agreed, 50(23.36%) were uncertain, 63(29.44%) disagreed, while 34(15.89%) strongly disagreed that they guided learners to develop showcase portfolios in the grade level they taught. The mean was 3.73 and the standard deviation was 1.812. These results revealed that the majority of EYE teachers in Baringo County had not guided their learners to develop showcase portfolios to assess them on best work samples. This negated CBC assessment implementation of monitoring learners' progress over time and promotion of creativity and problem-solving skill, (Davis & Ponamperuma, 2005). This finding also concurred with the KNEC (2020) report that there were schools that had learners without assessment portfolios during the 2019 grade three monitoring of learners' progress. The finding also concurred with that of Omondi & Achieng (2020) in Ugunja Sub-County in Kenya who noted that none of the teachers kept portfolios for assessment of their learners.

The interviewed headteachers declared that the majority of EYE teachers in their schools did not guide their learners to develop showcase portfolios in various learning areas but only through the filing of written exams thus influencing the implementation of classroom assessment negatively because learners had nothing to show for their growth. HT4 observed;

Teachers need to have showcase portfolios for learners in tandem with the requirements of CBC. However, it is unfortunate that in my school, teachers have not guided the learners to develop them, (HT4, Female, MED, July 2022).

HT3 opined;

Classroom assessment in CBC should have verifiable evidence but it seems that teachers have not conceptualized this fact because they are implementing it like the 8-4-4 one. If you happen to visit their classes, you will not find any portfolios, (HT3, Female, MED, July 2022)

Further probing revealed the following from HT28 who noted;

Pre-primary school teachers in my school are trying to keep and guide learners on how to develop showcase portfolios. You will find that in their classes, there is something to show in terms of portfolios like moldings and drawings but in grade one all the way to grade three, there is little or nothing to show, (HT1, Male, BED, July 2022).

The CSOs noted that the majority of the EYE teachers in the schools within their zones had not guided their learners to develop showcase portfolios.

Group quotation

“Almost all EYE learners in my zone do not have showcase portfolios. This means that teachers have not guided learners to develop them. Teachers need to be made aware of the importance of portfolios in assessments.” CSO

The above sentiments resonated with the quantitative findings of this study that the majority of EYE teachers had not guided their learners to develop showcase portfolios. This finding corroborated the report of KNEC (2020) concerning the Monitoring of Learners' Progress in Grade Three (2019) which indicated that there were schools with learners without portfolios. It also agreed with the finding of Omondi & Achieng (2020) who found that none of the teachers kept learners' assessment portfolios. It therefore influenced classroom assessment negatively. Akeyo & Kanake (2021) opined that teachers need to implement classroom assessment using the so many available techniques including assessment portfolios.

4.2 Classroom assessment

The dependent variable was classroom assessment. The indicators of this variable were the usage of assessment instruments for formative assessment, frequency of informal assessment, frequency of formal assessment, frequency of performance-based assessment, and techniques of reporting on assessment results. Respondents were asked to rate their degree of agreement with supplied statements on a Likert scale from 1 to 5. Table 2 summarizes the study's results.

Table 2: Classroom Assessment

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	SDV
I use assessment instruments for formative assessment when conducting classroom assessment	(34) 15.89%	(71) 33.18%	(66) 30.84%	(23) 10.75%	(20) 9.35%	3.36	1.14
I conduct informal assessments frequently in the grade level that I teach	(19) 8.88%	(16) 7.45%	(57) 26.64%	(78) 36.49%	(44) 20.56%	3.16	1.14
I conduct formal assessments frequently in the grade level that I teach	(20) 9.34%	(13) 6.07%	(57) 26.63%	(67) 31.39%	(57) 26.63%	4.02	1.03
I conduct performance-based assessments frequently in the grade level that I teach	(23) 10.75%	(57) 26.64%	(42) 19.63%	(61) 28.50%	(31) 14.48%	3.95	0.967

4.2.1 Usage of assessment instruments for formative assessment

From Table 2, out of 214 respondents who participated in the study, on the statement that they used assessment instruments for formative assessment when conducting classroom assessment, 34(15.89%) strongly agreed, 71(33.18%) agreed, 66(30.34%) were uncertain, 23 (10.75%) disagreed while 20 (9.35%) strongly disagreed. This statement had a mean of 3.36 and a standard deviation of 1.14. The study findings revealed that nearly half of the respondents used assessment instruments for formative assessment when conducting classroom assessments. This was a clear indication that slightly above half of the teachers did not use assessment instruments for formative assessment. The findings agreed with those of Kemboi & Nabwire (2017) who noted that the majority of teachers did not use formative assessment approaches during assessment. Also, in agreement with Kayonga et al. (2019), the findings revealed that even though teachers had received in-service training on classroom assessment in accordance with CBC, they couldn't adequately implement it. These could have come about due to a general lack of understanding of formative assessment as a way of enhancing the validity of

assessment results concerning learner attainment of requisite competencies. The use of formative assessment instruments could also have depended on teachers' discretion and this was magnified by the lack of Formative Assessment Guides such as "The Victoria State Guide to Formative Assessment Rubrics" – (Victorian Curriculum & Assessment Authority, 2019) to enhance classroom assessment, (Mgimba, 2021). Also, in agreement with Kafyulilo et al. (2012), the finding revealed that teachers lacked a proper roadmap on how to conduct formative assessments or had inadequate knowledge of formative assessment strategies.

The interviewed headteachers opined that the majority of their teachers did not use assessment instruments for classroom assessment as required.

One headteacher observed;

Teachers lack a thorough understanding of the assessment of competencies. Teachers have reduced competencies to checklists without necessarily checking on actual learner ability. The majority of EYE teachers in my school administer tests only which are normally pegged on the lower level of learning such as recall and memorization, (HT6, Male, BED, July 2022).

The finding revealed that teachers did not adequately utilize assessment instruments for formative assessment. This concurred with the quantitative findings of this study and those of Lee (2019) that pre-service teachers did not get adequate training on the assessment of competencies. It meant that teachers' pedagogical skills influenced the use of assessment instruments for formative assessment moderately because the instruments were not adequately utilized. On many occasions, written tests were widely used.

4.2.2 Frequency of Informal Assessment

On the statement that EYE teachers conducted informal assessment frequently in the grade level they taught, 19 (8.88%) strongly agreed with the statement, 78 (36.49%) agreed, 57(26.64%) were uncertain, 16(7.45%) disagreed while 44 (20.56%) strongly disagreed with the statement and it had a mean of 3.16 and a standard deviation of 1.14. The finding revealed that almost half of the teachers conducted informal assessments frequently in the grade level they taught in a bid to implement classroom assessment. It also revealed that more than half of EYE teachers in Baringo County were uncertain or didn't assess their learners using informal assessment methods frequently. This was in agreement with the findings of Otieno et al. (2015) who reiterated that to reinforce formal learning, learners were frequently assessed formally through written assignments. It was also in tandem with the thoughts of Mizutani (2009) that the effects of the summative assessment that is done for example in Grade 3 (KEYA) influenced the assessment practices before then such that informal assessments were not taken seriously. Also, the findings were in agreement with Brown et al. (2009) that informal assessment practices may not count in the summative evaluation that is done for example KEYA, and thus are disregarded by the teachers.

The interviewed headteachers revealed that informal assessments were conducted on average frequency by EYE teachers since some teachers did not know where to include the informal assessment results. This affected classroom assessment since informal assessment results about the attainment of competencies were not included in the final assessment results.

HT5 remarked;

The EYE teachers in my school conduct informal assessments during normal school activities. However majority wonder where to include the informal assessment results and some use them for their consumption, (HT5, Female, BED, July 2022).

The above remarks were echoed by HT2 on further probing that EYE teachers did informal assessments on average and never took them seriously.

Informal assessments are carried out moderately by the EYE teachers in my school but I don't think they take them seriously because it is normally the observed behavior in a learner, (HT2, Male, BED, July 2022)

The findings complemented the quantitative finding that on average, teachers conducted informal assessments, however, there were no clear guidelines on where to indicate informal assessment results. Hence, the EYE teachers had not explained to their learners that they conducted informal assessments during their everyday school activities. This agreed with the opinion of Shitubi & Wanyama (2012) that teachers found it difficult to explain to learners that assessments other than tests add up to their performance in competence attainment yet quality informal assessments are linked to high student performance in line with classroom assessment, (Nyaboke et al., 2021).

4.2.3 Frequency of formal assessment

Concerning the administration of formal assessments frequently in the grade level taught, 20(9.34%) strongly agreed with the statement, 13(6.07%) agreed, 57(26.63%) were uncertain, 67(31.39%) disagreed while 57(26.63%) strongly disagreed with the statement and it had a mean of 4.02 and a standard deviation of 1.03. The results revealed that a majority of EYE teachers did not conduct formal assessments frequently. The finding concurred with that of Thomas (2012) on teachers' beliefs about classroom assessments that formal tests made little contribution to learning which is why the teachers did not conduct formal assessments frequently. Examination-based teaching was the most predominant strategy that teachers adopted in their everyday practices such that they taught for a certain time and then tested the learners formally once or twice a term, (Ntwiga & Mwangi, 2018).

The interviewed headteachers also opined that their EYE teachers conducted formal assessments once or twice a term.

HT1 noted;

In my school, EYE teachers administer formal assessments in the form of tests once or twice a term. The scores in the assessments are summed up at the end of the term and the teachers calculate the average score that is used to place the learner as per the level at which they met the criteria, (HT1, male, BED, July 2022).

Another headteacher (HT3) said;

Formal assessments are only carried out at the beginning of the term to test the entry behavior of the learners and at the end of the term to test their mastery of competencies. The formal assessments are in the form of written tests and they help the teacher to gauge the level of the learner in the acquisition of competencies, (HT3, Female, MED, July 2022).

The above sentiments concurred with quantitative findings that formal assessments were not frequently administered in EYE in Baringo County. They also agreed with Arsaythambi et al. (2016) that teachers are skilled in assessments but are not ready to conduct classroom assessment that involves frequent administration of formative assessments. This influenced classroom assessments negatively in that the validity of the assessment results from formal assessments was not guaranteed (Kane & Wools, 2019).

4.2.4 Frequency of Performance-Based Assessments

On the frequency of conducting performance-based assessments in the grade level taught, 23(10.75%) strongly agreed with the statement, 57(26.64%) agreed, 42(19.63%) were uncertain, 61(28.50%) disagreed while 31(14.48%) strongly disagreed that they conducted performance-based assessments frequently in the grade level they taught. It had a mean of 3.94 and a standard deviation of 0.967. This showed that nearly two-quarters of EYE teachers conducted performance-based assessments frequently in the grade levels they taught. In agreement with Frey & Schmitt (2010), there was a basic utilization of performance-based assessment in classroom assessment among EYE teachers in Baringo County. Also, in agreement with Paulo (2014), these results revealed that teachers may not be aware of performance-based assessment methods in classroom assessment because of the kind of in-service training they received about it. This is the reason why 19.63% of EYE teachers were uncertain of the statement.

The headteachers agreed that a few Early Years Education teachers administered performance-based assessments frequently in the grade levels they taught.

HT 4 remarked;

There is not much time to prepare and administer performance-based assessments frequently since a substantive amount of time is needed for syllabus coverage, if they do plan for such, it is less frequent, (HT4, Female, MED, July 2022).

Further probing revealed the following from HT5;

The EYE teachers in my school have their pupils perform certain tasks for assessment rarely unless in Music and Movement and Creative Arts learning areas where I see some performances being assessed but on very rare occasions, (HT5, Female, BED, July 2022).

The above findings were in agreement with the quantitative findings of this study and concurred with the opinions of Frey & Schmitt (2010) who said that some teachers were hesitant to implement performance-based assessments in their classrooms since they felt that they didn't know enough about how to fairly assess learners on such performances and it needed a lot of time to prepare meaning extra work for the teachers. It also meant that teachers had not conceptualized the requirements needed for creative and critical thinking among learners and were focused on learners' content mastery, (Nooraini & Kharul, 2014). This posed a negative influence on classroom assessment since the validity of assessment results about learners' competencies was to be enhanced via performance-based assessment.

4.2.5 Techniques of Reporting Assessment Results

The respondents were asked to indicate the techniques that they used to report learners' assessment scores in the grade level that they taught. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Techniques of reporting Learners' Assessment results

	Frequency	Percent
Quantitative	68	31.78
Descriptive	56	26.17
Both	90	42.06
Total	214	100.0

From Table 3, the respondents indicated that the technique that they used to report learners' assessment scores in the grade level was quantitative at 31.78% descriptive at 26.17%, and both quantitative and descriptive techniques at 42.06%. Slightly above two-quarters of EYE teachers used both methods (quantitative and qualitative). According to Heto et al. (2020), the technique of reporting on learners' assessment feedback should be descriptive in CBC yet only slightly above a quarter of EYE teachers complied with the statement. The preceding statement was also emphasized by Mkimbili & Kitta (2020) who stated that classroom assessment feedback should be structured into frequent descriptive feedback. This is to support learning (William, 2011). This revealed that Baringo County EYE teachers' pedagogical skills in reporting assessment results in tandem with CBC were still wanting since a third of teachers still used quantitative methods (numbers) when reporting on learners' assessment feedback in Early Years Education. This was in agreement with Saliu-Abdulahi (2019) who said that teachers implementing CBC in Tanzania provided learners with short evaluative comments without indicating areas to be improved and areas of strength. In this regard, it was clear that there was insufficient feedback provided to learners of EYE in Baringo County regarding their performance in competence attainment in agreement with Paulo & Tilya (2014).

The interviewed headteachers were of the view that the majority of EYE teachers in their schools utilized both quantitative and qualitative techniques.

H6 observed;

The teachers put quantitative marks on students' assessment rubrics and then rate them on how they achieved expectations as per the indicated criteria and later on they indicate descriptive remarks such as exceeded expectation, (HT6, Male, BED, July 2022).

On further probing, HT1 said;

The teachers indicate the total marks scored by a pupil say 45/50 in Mathematics Activities and then place the child on his level of meeting expectations, (HT1, Male, MED, July 2022).

The CSOs also concurred with the above sentiments that most schools used descriptive feedback backed up by quantitative scores when reporting on learners' achievement.

"Majority of EYE education teachers provide descriptive feedback about learners' progress in competency attainment in various learning areas, the feedback is often accompanied by a numeric assignment of numbers depicting scores in each area of learning." CSO.

The above information concurred with the quantitative findings in this study that EYE teachers utilized both quantitative and qualitative techniques when reporting on assessment results. This was against the requirements of CBAF which mandated teachers to provide descriptive feedback only on learners' achievements, (KICD, 2017), therefore the finding meant that classroom assessment had been influenced negatively by the use of quantitative techniques.

4.3 Summary of Findings

The study established that EYE teachers used written tests to assess all learners including learners of pre-primary (pp1 and pp2). This was contrary to the requirements of the Basic Education Curriculum Framework which required teachers of pre-primary level to avoid assessing learners using written tests thus posing a negative influence on classroom assessment.

The majority of EYE teachers also could not design assessment rubrics for assessing various learning areas. Parents were instructed by school administrations to buy assessment rubrics books for their learners. This influenced classroom assessment negatively because teachers were supposed to design their criteria for assessing their learners.

The study also revealed that EYE teachers had not guided their learners to develop showcase portfolios which negatively influenced classroom assessment aim of monitoring learners' progress over time. It hindered the promotion of creativity among learners.

5.0 Conclusion

From the findings, the study concluded that EYE teachers did not use a variety of classroom assessment methods to assess learners. The majority relied on bought written tests for learners. The assessment rubrics books were also purchased from bookshops to be used by teachers during assessment. Learners too did not have showcase portfolios for various learning areas meaning that their teachers did not guide them to develop them. This showed that teachers' pedagogical skills in the use of a variety of classroom assessment methods were still inadequate and therefore led to ineffective classroom assessment.

6.0 Recommendations

The study recommends that EYE teachers teaching pp1 and pp2 should avoid assessing their learners using written tests as per the CBAF. Moreover, teachers of grades one, two, and three should also vary the assessment methods they use for classroom assessment rather than dwelling majorly on written tests.

During pre-service teacher training, teachers should get adequate training on how to design assessment rubrics for different learning areas based on different assessment criteria and the difficulty index of the classroom assessment. Consequently, school administrations should desist from placing the burden on parents to purchase assessment rubrics books for their pupils.

Further, the study recommends that teachers should learn the importance of showcasing portfolios as an authentic assessment method and help their learners to develop them to demonstrate their best work samples and thus promote creativity and problem-solving competencies in them.

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