

## Teachers' Assessment Practices in Lower Secondary Schools in Tanzania: The Potential and Opportunities for Formative Assessment Practice Implementation

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**Abstract :** The implementation of education assessment reforms in developing countries has been claimed to be problematic and difficult. The socio-economic teaching and learning environment has pointed to constraints in the education reform process. Nevertheless, there are existing assessment practices that if enhanced, can have potential to foster formative assessment practices in those contexts. The present study used the sociocultural perspective to explore teachers' assessment practices and factors influencing them in Tanzania. Specifically, the sociocultural perspective helped to trace social, economic and political histories imparted to teachers' assessment practices. The ethnographic oriented methods like interviews, observations and document reviews was used in this exploration. Teachers used assessment practices, such as questioning and answering, tests, assignments and examinations, for evaluating, monitoring and diagnosing students' understanding, achievement and performance and standards and quality of instruction practices. The obtained assessment information functioned as feedback for improving students' understanding, performance, and the standard and quality of teaching instruction and materials. For example, teachers acknowledged, praised, approved, disapproved, denied, graded, or marked students' responses to give students feedback and aid learning. Moreover, teachers clarified and corrected or repeated students' responses with worded/added words to improve students' mastery of the subject content. Teachers' assessment practices were influenced by the high demands of passing marks in the high stakes examinations and the contexts of the social economic teaching environment. There is a need to ally education assessment reforms with existing socio-economic teaching environments and society and institutional demands of assessment to make assessment reforms meaningful and sustainable. This presentation ought to contribute on ongoing strategies for contextualizing assessment practices for formative uses.

**Keywords :** assessment, feedback, practices, formative assessment

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