



THE KENYA NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

"Quality Education Assessment and Credible Certification for a Value Based Society"

UNDERSTANDING THE COMPETENCY BASED ASSESSMENT (CBA)

Introduction

Assessments are critical to the educational process. Without them teachers would never know when to move on to the next concept or how to enhance understanding of concepts when facilitating learning.

What is Competency Based Assessment (CBA)?

It is a **purposeful systematic** continuous process of gathering information from multiple sources for making decisions on **what learners know, needs to learn, has learned and can do**. It involves creating opportunities for learners to apply the knowledge, skills attitudes and values they have learnt to solve real world problems.

Are CBA and CBC the same thing?

Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) is the curriculum or the umbrella structure that guides how teaching is to be conducted. It falls under the mandate of the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD). On the other hand, Competency Based Assessment (CBA) is the process of determining the capability of a learner to apply a set of related Knowledge, Skills, Values and Attitudes required to successfully perform a task. The Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) is mandated to carry out assessments as envisaged in the Basic Education Curriculum Framework (BECF) based on the CBC Designs.

How is Basic Education structured under CBC?

Early Years Education – two years pre-primary (PP1, PP2) and three years lower primary (Grades 1, 2, 3).

Middle School Education – three years Upper Primary (Grades 4, 5, 6) and three years Lower Secondary (Grades 7, 8, 9).

Senior School – Grades 10, 11, 12 and which marks the end of Basic Education.

How is CBA different from regular examinations?

An examination such as KCPE or KCSE is a battery of tests written by a candidate to demonstrate their level of **theoretical** knowledge at the end of a learning cycle and for certification. An examination is usually one-off and is done after the instruction has taken place. It is often a mark of completion of a learning phase and its purpose is mainly to inform learner placement at subsequent levels.

On the other hand, an assessment, such as the CBA, is a systematic way of collecting information and documenting what the learner knows and can do before they learn, as they learn and as they transit from one level to another based on specified competencies and criteria. An assessment uses a wider variety of tools and gives opportunities to learners, peers, teachers and parents to track the progress of the learner through real time feedback mechanisms.

What are the types of assessments in CBA?

The figure below summarises the types of assessments in CBA.



Source: KNEC, 2021

The following are the ways CBA is structured for institutionalization in CBC.

- (a) **Classroom assessment:** This is a continuous assessment and is carried out at the entire basic level of education (thus, at early years, middle school and at senior school). The teacher develops the assessment tools.
- (b) **School-based assessment:** This assessment starts from Grade 4 to Grade 12. KNEC develops and uploads the tools for this assessment on the Council's website. The teacher downloads the tools from the website and administers them to the learners.

- (c) **Summative assessment:** The National Assessment shall be carried out at Grades 6, 9 and 12 to inform policy and education stakeholders on level specific interventions for quality education of our learners

When are the assessments done?

- (a) Before learning (diagnostic assessment)
- (b) During teaching and learning (formative assessment)
- (c) At the end of teaching and learning (summative assessment)

At what levels?

At the end of Pre-Primary 2: The learners are assessed internally then all transition to Grade 1 in Lower Primary (Grades 1, 2, 3).

At Grade 3: They take a school-based national assessment that is not used for ranking or placement, after which they all proceed to Upper Primary (Grades 4, 5, 6).

Upper Primary assessments: Learners are assessed at each of the Upper Primary grades to track their learning progress ahead of the National Assessment at Grade 6. The school-based assessments will account for 60 per cent of the total score.

At Grade 6: A summative assessment is administered at the end of Grade 6 which will comprise the remaining 40 per cent of the total scores. This marks the end of the primary cycle. Performance of the learners at this level and their interests will be used to place them in junior secondary school (JSS, Grades 7, 8 and 9).

At Grade 9: Learners will again be formatively assessed with a summative assessment at the end of JSS (Grade 9). Their scores and preferences will be used for placement in senior secondary school (SSS) where they will follow one of their preferred career pathways.

Which methods and tools are used to assess competencies?

The methods and tools are varied in order to address the learning needs of different individual learners. They include; tests, observation schedules, questions and answers, checklists, quizzes, rubrics, journals, portfolio, learner profiles, anecdotal records, oral or aural questions, questionnaires, rating scales and project where a learner is required to carry out several activities over a period of time. The three main types are classroom, school-based and national assessments.

Does CBA address the needs of learners with special needs?

For learners with special needs and disabilities in the age-based pathway, assessment tools are modified to cater for their individual needs e.g., provided in accessible formats such as braille, audio and large print versions for learners with visual impairment as well as the provision of Kenyan Sign Language for learners with hearing impairment.

How are assessments records tracked and maintained in CBA?

Assessment records will be maintained both at school and at KNEC. Learners are captured in the KNEC system every year at Grade 3 onwards with each learner provided with a Unique Personal Identification (UPI) number. It is either a NEMIS number from MoE or an assessment number from KNEC for those who do not have a NEMIS number. The number will be used by the learner up to the end of Grade 12.

Why is parental support in the learning process so important?

A parent is the first and most important educator in a child's life. A parent is usually a child's role model, and the child will usually mirror the parent's actions and behaviour. Parental influence, therefore, contributes highly in determining the learner's outcome in school.

How can the parent help to nurture the learner's potential?

- Provide enabling environment conducive to learning.
- Instil values and promote positive attitudes in the child towards the family and the community.
- Be involved in the child's learning by engaging them, understanding them and monitoring their progress.
- Provide learners with available or accessible resources for extended activities.

What if a parent is not well educated?

A parent's level of education does not matter. The parent should get to know the child's experiences in school and offer psychological support.

What happens to the records of a learner transferring schools?

Transfer of learners shall be done by the Sub County Director of Education and will be allowed to take place at Grade 3, 4, 5 and all the four levels of the Stage-Based Curriculum Pathway.

No transfer shall be allowed at Grade 6 due to preparation of the summative assessment that will be taking place at the end of the year;

The procedure for transferring learners will be as follows;

- The Head Teacher of the school where the learner was learning shall write a letter releasing the learner.
- The Head teacher releasing the learner will have to include the learner's assessment number and name as it appears in KNEC registration database.
- The head teacher receiving the learner must write an acceptance letter to the Sub County Director of Education acknowledging acceptance of the learner.
- The Sub County Director of Education will log into the KNEC portal: www.cba.knec.ac.ke using the Sub County log in CP2 credentials to transfer or add a learner. Deletion of learners can only be done by KNEC

How are assessment scores uploaded to the KNEC portal?

Log in to KNEC website: cba.knec.ac.ke

- Enter the username and password to log in;
- Select grade;
- Click on capture assessment outcomes;
- Select the learning area and click on capture assessment outcomes;
- Enter scores for every learner in the spaces provided under every task and click save outcomes; and
- Repeat the same for all learners.

How are scores amended?

- Click on view/edit outcomes;
- Click on edit for the learner you want to amend; and
- Amend the scores and save.