

Use of Assessment for Learning Strategies in Tanzanian History and Moral Education Classes, in Tanzania Secondary Schools

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Abstract

Assessment for learning has increasingly been recognized as one of the integral and effective pedagogical approaches for achieving competence-based curriculum (CBC). This study examined teachers' use of Assessment for learning strategies in teaching *Historia ya Tanzania na Maadili* - HTM (Tanzanian History and Moral Education), a compulsory subject taught using Kiswahili as medium of instruction in Tanzanian secondary schools. A qualitative case study design was employed, involving HTM teachers, school academic teachers and Form Three students selected conveniently from secondary schools in Kinondoni Municipality. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and document analysis, and were analyzed thematically. The findings have disclosed that assessment activities that employed in classroom HTM teaching and learning are very limited as far as assessment for learning is concerned. The teachers inadequately employ oral questioning when teaching HTM in their classrooms. This means that assessment activities employed in the classroom HTM teaching and learning remain limited as far as assessment for learning is concerned and therefore not in line with CBC. It is recommended that strengthen teacher professional development programmes and support school-based initiatives to promote effective use of assessment for learning strategies.

Keywords: *Assessment, assessment for learning, HTM teachers*

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1. Introduction

The 2023 *Historia ya Tanzania na Maadili* (HTM) syllabus for Tanzania secondary schools requires teachers to employ participatory teaching and learning approaches, in which the assessment should measure both the theory and practical activities done by the student (WyEST, 2023, p. 8). Assessment activities such as students review, self-assessment, student – teacher evaluation as well as teacher – students' evaluation have been recommended. It further suggested that the assessment should correlate with participatory teaching and learning methods and teachers should work with the students in the process of evaluating the whole process of teaching and learning HTM. It follows therefore, that assessment for learning or formative assessment is considered as an integral component in the teaching and learning of this compulsory subject in Tanzanian secondary schools.

Now, assessment *for* learning or formative assessment, as opposed to assessment *of* learning or summative assessment, looks forward as well as back (Florez & Sammons, 2013, p. 2). According to Hattie, J. (2023), this refers to the use of assessment processes to support and improve students' learning during instruction rather than simply measuring achievement at the end of learning. In this regard, teachers who employ assessment for learning strategies are concerned not just to confirm and verify what their students have learnt, but also to help their students and themselves to determine next steps in the teaching process. So, this type of assessment has a 'formative' role and is used in order to support students' learning as well as the teaching process (Kuze & Shumba, 2011).

In particular, there are four strategies of assessment for learning namely; questioning, feedback, peer and self-assessment, and the formative use of summative assessment (Florez & Sammons, 2013). In Florez and Sammons's (2013) view, these strategies work as follows: first, in questioning, teachers are supposed to be strategic—pre-plan the questions, and use appropriate wait-time so that students can engage in the thought process. Second, in feedback, teachers are required to provide chance for students to critique through verbal and written feedbacks. Third, in peer and self-assessment, teachers should let students do activities such as self-marking, paired marking, plenary self-evaluation, traffic-lighting and question setting. Fourth, in formative use of summative assessment, teachers should guide students to prepare their own questions, ask them to discuss them with one another; and review examination results collectively.

A study by Wisniewski, B., Zierer, K., & Hattie, J. (2020) found that students receiving descriptive feedback demonstrate greater improvement in understanding and performance than those receiving only scores or grades. It is revealed that feedback is most effective when it is specific, actionable, and focused on learning goals rather

than grades. Further, Panadero, E., Andrade, H., & Brookhart, S. M. (2018) found that students engaged in structured self-assessment show significant improvements in self-regulation and academic achievement. As such, it indicates that involving learners in assessing their own work and that of peers promotes metacognition, responsibility, and independent learning. In addition, studies conducted in primary, secondary, and higher education contexts show that assessment for learning practices improve learner motivation by clarifying expectations and making learning progress visible (Yan, Z., & Brown, G. T. L. 2021). This means that goal-oriented feedback and student participation in assessment processes increase engagement and persistence in learning tasks.

Based on this background, a study was conducted to examine HTM teachers' employment of assessment for learning strategies while teaching HTM lessons in their classrooms. It focuses on finding out which strategies are in place and how teachers utilise them when teaching HTM lessons. It was contemplated that teachers' effectiveness in employment of assessment for learning strategies, will considerably contribute to successful implementation of the competence-based curriculum (CBC) in secondary schools. As such, this study sought to find out whether assessment activities employed in HTM classrooms were in line with assessment for learning strategies promulgated by CBC approaches.

2. Review of Literature

Several studies have been conducted on the topical issue of the implementation of assessment for learning. For instance, a study by Volante and Beckett (2011) conducted in Canada found that teachers were employing assessment practices such as questioning, feedback without grades, and formative use of summative assessment techniques with a moderate level of success. It was however found that many teachers experienced tension or difficult when using peer assessment and self-assessment strategies (Volante & Beckett, 2011). This means that teachers' competence or knowledge regarding assessment was inadequate. Further, Earl, Volante, and DeLuca (2015) noted that Canadian teachers commonly employ descriptive feedback, learning conferences, peer assessment, self-assessment, and portfolio assessment. However, contemporary research highlights a growing emphasis on assessment as learning, whereby students actively monitor and regulate their own learning processes (DeLuca et al., 2023).

A study by Marshall and Drummond (2006) in UK found that beliefs that teachers hold about learning influence the way they employ assessment for learning in the classroom. They found that teachers whose practise favour assessment for learning had progressive, rather than fixed, view of what went on in any given lesson. Further, research also indicates that external examination pressures sometimes limit teachers' ability to fully implement formative assessment practices (Wiliam, 2017). However, recent literature shows that assessment for learning in Finland focuses heavily on developing democratic values, critical thinking skills, and civic participation through authentic assessment tasks and collaborative learning activities (Niemi, Kumpulainen, & Lipponen, 2022).

Drawing examples from Africa, a study by Perry (2013) revealed that formative assessment activities in Africa are more frequently employed and different countries as well as agencies advocate these practices. Teachers in Africa employ informal formative assessment, questioning and monitoring students as they work and formal formative assessment, homework, quizzes, and tests (Perry, 2013). However, Bundu and Kagete (2013) in Kenya found that teachers used assessment mainly for diagnostic purpose. It was revealed that the frequency of testing did not correspond with the purpose and the resulting data were not effectively used. Further, the study found that implementation of assessment for learning faced various challenges such as lack of school administrative policies to support its implementation, teachers not trained on how to use the assessment results and provide effective feedback to students. This is also evident in Ghana whereby Adam, Bekoe and Poatob (2018) found that although teachers understood the principles of formative assessment, they often used assessment primarily to measure content acquisition rather than to support ongoing learning.

Furthermore, a study by Oladipupo (2013) in Nigeria found that teachers had poor knowledge regarding classroom assessment. The study found that the poor knowledge on assessment consequently reflected in their classroom practises, only tests was used as an assessment technique. The study established that such situation was attributed to lack of teacher professional development or training and insufficient supervision in the schools. Similarly, a study by Joshua and Blessing (2013) also in Nigeria revealed that teachers in secondary schools did not possess adequate assessment skills and were not able to employ assessment when teaching in the classroom. This situation implies that teachers were not adequately trained on how to conduct assessment, particularly, assessment for learning activities. Further, a study by Jane (2013) found that many South African teachers perceive assessment as a tool for improving learning rather than merely measuring achievement, which

encourages the use of formative assessment practices. However, the implementation is often constrained by examination pressures, large classes, and limited assessment literacy among some teachers.

Expanding on that, a study by Paulo (2014) in Tanzania revealed that pre-service teachers were not aware of performance-based assessment methods recommended for the implementation of CBC. It was found that pre-service teachers use paper and pencil assessment methods contrary to recommended formative assessment methods. A study by Malaba (2013) in Tanzania found that teachers regularly conducted assessment in the form of written tests and assignments. This means that teachers still rely on traditional or conventional assessment approaches. This means that assessment practices in Tanzania indicate that many teachers still use assessment primarily for grading and certification rather than for supporting learning (Mcharo et al., 2025). Further, it was observed that teachers provided written feedback to students. However, such feedback was not elaborative enough to indicate which areas students needed to improve or areas where they performed better. This also suggests that teachers' inability to effectively implement assessment for learning strategies in the classroom (Shafii & Berger, 2025).

Similarly, a study by Nordstrum (2015) indicates that most teachers in Tanzania used formal written and oral assessment to measure students' performance, that is, approximately 87% of the classroom teachers. Besides that, a study by Ndalichako (2015) in Tanzania revealed different perceptions about assessment. The study noted that some teachers in secondary schools consider the role of assessment as to increase pass rates in final examinations rather than improve classroom instruction. This denotes that teachers in secondary schools put much emphasis on summative assessment. This means that an examination-oriented culture encourages teachers to focus on summative assessment outcomes rather than using assessment information to improve teaching and learning (Mcharo et al., 2025). However, some teachers consider assessment as a motivation tool, teachers consider the function of assessment in motivating students learning and they are likely to use it in the classroom to enhance students learning outcomes.

In addition, other findings from the same study found that assessment is not used to improve teaching and learning (formative assessment) rather it is used for accountability purpose (Ndalichako, 2015). This is also supported by Lupeja & Komba (2021) and Shafii & Berger (2025) who revealed that assessment activities are often conducted primarily to prepare learners for national examinations rather than to improve learning during instruction. As such, if at all teachers were not supposed to report marks and grades (accountability function); they were unlikely to assess their students so as to avoid extra work. Ndalichako (2015) reported further that, teachers faced conflict in implementing assessment, as confirmed by these statements, "assessment increases the workload of teachers" and "assessment should be conducted based on teachers' convenience" (p. 330). This means that teachers consider assessment as an extra work load to them (in the first statement), and it should be done based on their willingness (in the second statement).

Conclusively, these studies have shown that employment of assessment for learning varies and faces different challenges. Such challenges included teachers' inadequate knowledge regarding classroom assessment and its employment were limited in terms of purpose and frequency. It has also been revealed that teachers conducted assessment mainly in the form of written and for accountability purpose, not largely to improve the classroom teaching and learning.

3. Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative case study research design to explore teachers' use of assessment for learning strategies in HTM classes in selected secondary schools. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' experiences, perceptions and practices regarding the use of assessment for learning strategies within their natural educational settings. Further, it allowed for a detailed examination of the phenomenon within its real-life context and facilitated the collection of rich, descriptive data from the participants.

The study was conducted in Kinondoni Municipality, Dar es Salaam Region, Tanzania. Since, the HTM subject is compulsory taught using Kiswahili as medium of instruction in all schools, the sampled secondary schools were selected conveniently (i.e. convenience sampling), that is, participants were selected based on their accessibility and willingness to participate. This offered a suitable context for investigating HTM teachers' classroom assessment practices. The target population comprised 6 secondary schools, 12 teachers teaching HTM (2 teachers from each school), 6 academic masters/mistresses and 24 Form Three students who were

interviewed in groups (4 students in each group). In total, 42 participants were included in the study after data saturation was reached.

Data were collected in Kiswahili language then translated into English using semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and document review. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with HTM teachers, students and school academic teachers (SATs) to obtain detailed information about their use of assessment for learning strategies. The interview guide contained open-ended questions that allowed participants to express their views freely while enabling the researcher to probe for clarification and additional information. Classroom observations were carried out to examine how teachers implemented assessment for learning strategies during HTM lessons. An observation checklist was used to guide the observation process and ensure consistency across different classrooms. In addition, HTM teachers' schemes of work and lesson plans were reviewed to determine the extent to which assessment for learning activities were integrated into their teaching plans.

Data generated from interviews, observations, and document reviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. This involved transcribing interview recordings, reading the transcripts repeatedly, coding significant statements, and grouping similar codes into themes and sub-themes. The identified themes were interpreted in relation to the study objective and relevant literature. Data from observations and document reviews were triangulated with interview findings to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness.

4. Findings

One of the key aspects of CBC is the emphasis on the use of assessment for learning to support teaching and learning process. The findings in this study answer the question, "*Are the assessment activities employed in HTM classrooms in line with competence-based curriculum?*" So, this section presents the findings and its interpretation regarding HTM teachers' employment of assessment for learning. It is organised into two sub-sections, namely, assessment in HTM teachers' teaching plans and assessment activities in HTM lessons.

4.1 Assessment in HTM teachers' teaching plans

The review of schemes of work shows that statements regarding planned assessment activities were not explicit, no specific assessment activities or items were stated. Also, in some schemes of work, the assessment columns were blank, that is, no statement regarding assessment was written. This implies that the HTM teachers had no specific plans regarding how assessment would be carried out.

Nevertheless, in schemes of work which had statements regarding assessment, the statements were categorised into two groups. First, there were statements regarding oral questions about the lesson to be taught. These kinds of statements aimed to check if students answered oral questions about the main or specific activity. For example, the extracts taken from the HTM Teacher's scheme of work in school **D** showed the following:

Learning activity: Clarify the origin of the Union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar.

Assessment: Oral questions on the origin of the Union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar.

Learning activity: Explain the structure and principles of the Union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar.

Assessment: Oral questions about the structure and principles of the Union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar.

Second, there were statements intended to check whether the students achieved the stated activity which commonly stated to reflect the intended main activity. The following excerpt taken from HTM Teacher's scheme of work in school **F** illustrates statements on assessment intended to examine students' achievement as per the intended activity:

Learning activity: Clarify the origin of the Union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar.

Assessment statement: The origin of the Union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar is clarified.

When teachers' lesson plans were analysed, some had statements regarding assessment while others did not. In those lesson plans which had statements about assessment, the statements were categorised into three groups. The first group represent statements which intended to check if the stated activity(s) was done or well done. As it appears in the scheme of work, such statements reflect the intended main activity. Examples of the kinds of statements are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Statements to Measure the Achievement of Learning Activities

Statement	School					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
i. The origin of the Union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar is clarified	4				6	7
ii. The structure and principles of the Union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar are explained clearly			11			21

Table 1 shows that assessment statements with an adjective such as “clearly” was a dominant key word intended to measure if the intended activity (s) was achieved in satisfactory degree of performance. Assessment statements with no qualifying adjectives were the least in terms of occurrence.

Secondly, there were statements on assessment column which intended to check if the students participated in the planned learning activities. Such statements were for example; *students answered the questions* and *students participated in ...* (mentioning the activity). A summary of such statements is provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Statements to Check Students' Participation in Learning Activities

Statement	School					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
i. Students answered the questions	2	1		7	2	5
ii. Students asked questions		3	2			2
iii. Students participated in ... (mentioning the activity)				9		
iv. Students gave their views on ... (mention the issue)						1

Table 2 indicates that the statement: *Students answered the questions* was dominant in the reviewed teachers' lesson plans. *Students participated ...* (mentioning the activity) followed, however, only noted in school **D**. The following excerpts statements show intended classroom activities taken from some HTM Teachers' lesson plans from school **D** and school **F** respectively:

Learning activities: Listen, sit in groups and discuss.

Assessment: Did students participate in group discussion?

Learning activity: Clarify the concept of regional integration and nation building.

Assessment: Did students able to clarify the concept of regional integration and nation building?

Thirdly, statements regarding lesson exercise(s) were also identified in some reviewed HTM teachers' lesson plans. Such statements required students to attempt the lesson exercise given by teachers. Table 3 summarises assessment statements regarding the lesson exercises.

Table 3: Statements Regarding Lesson Exercises

Statement	School					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
i. Students write answers of the exercise	1					
ii. Students do the exercise in groups					2	
iii. Students do the exercise at the end of the lesson			2			

Table 3 shows that statements regarding lesson exercises rarely appeared in the reviewed teachers' lesson plans. This indicates that only few HTM teachers planned to use the lesson exercises as one of their assessment activities.

Overall, the findings in this sub-section indicate that statements regarding assessment in HTM teachers' teaching plans were general and not explicit as far as assessment for learning is concerned. They were not specific to the kinds of assessment activities or items that could directly be used during HTM lessons. Mostly, the teachers just copied down what had been written in the HTM syllabus. This means that the teachers did not translate those statements into assessment tools that could be practically used in classroom to improve teaching and learning process. Further, some of the HTM teachers' teaching plans also lacked statements on the aspect of assessment which implied limited knowledge among HTM teachers on how to plan classroom assessment and assessment for learning in general.

4.2 Assessment activities in HTM lessons

4.2.1 Kinds of assessment activities

The findings revealed that HTM teachers used different kinds of assessment activities when teaching HTM in the classrooms. The interviews with HTM teachers show that teachers used assessment activities such as oral questioning, quizzes, tests, debate and exercises. Some HTM teachers claimed that they used quizzes and exercises frequently because they were easy to prepare and some could be found in students' textbooks and teachers guides. Commenting on this, HTM teacher from school **D** said:

When I teach HTM lessons, I normally use quizzes, tests, and exercises. I use these because they are readily available in students' textbooks and teachers' guides.

Some HTM teachers emphasised that oral questioning was commonly used by teachers in assessing HTM lessons. Explaining this, HTM Teacher from school **C** had this to comment:

We use different activities to assess our students. Normally, I ask them some questions so that I can understand their prior knowledge or what they have gained from my teaching.

When the students were interviewed, the findings were almost similar to those from HTM teachers. They pointed out that teachers were using oral questioning, exercises and quizzes. They argued that these types of assessment activities were used depending on teachers' preferences and nature of topic being taught. Clarifying this, a student from school **A** commented:

Normally, our HTM teacher uses oral questions, quizzes and exercises to assess the students. But this depends on circumstances because sometimes the teacher can start teaching until the end of the lesson where he asks oral questions or gives a written exercise.

Apart from the mentioned assessment activities, some students claimed that tests were also commonly used. However, they argued that such tests were administered in an ad hoc way, that is, students were not notified when the tests would be administered. One of the students from school **E** claimed:

The teacher teaches a topic, then after finishing it, he administers a test without notifying us.

Some few students from school **B** said that one of their HTM teachers used to ask them to review and discuss questions from past tests and examinations. They argued that that teacher organises students into small groups, asks them to discuss the questions and then invite each group to present before the entire class. In explaining this kind of activity, a student from school **B** had this to share:

Sometimes, the teacher asks us to choose questions from past tests or exams. After that, the teacher asks us to discuss them in our groups and then we make presentations.

Similarly, the findings from interviews with SATs resembled those collected from students, that is, HTM teachers employed tests, oral questioning and exercises as means to assess their students.

4.2.2 How assessment activities were employed

The findings indicate that the mentioned assessment activities were used almost in the same way across the schools as discussed hereunder:

Tests. The findings from interviews with HTM teachers indicate that tests as assessment activities were employed at the end of the topic or after the teacher had finished teaching a topic or several topics. The teachers claimed that tests were conducted in the form of paper-and-pencil and the students were asked to tackle them individually. In commenting on the use of tests as one of the assessment activities, HTM Teacher from school **F** said that:

Normally, after finishing teaching a topic, I used to administer test to students. This enables me to understand what has been understood.

Similarly, SATs argued that tests were conducted after finishing a topic whereby students did them individually. Some SATs also claimed that tests were being conducted after several topics had been taught.

Quizzes. The findings from interviews with HTM teachers, SATs and students show that quizzes were employed at any time during the lesson, or towards the end of the lesson. They claimed that the quizzes were either prepared before the lesson or instantly during the lesson. However, during classroom observations, quizzes were not observed, that is, HTM teachers did not employ quizzes as one of their assessment activities. This means that, although, the respondents claimed that quizzes were one of the assessment activities, they were seldom employed during the observed HTM lessons.

Debates. The interviews with HTM teachers indicate that they were assessing students when participating in debates. For instance, the HTM Teacher from school **D** had the following to comment regarding use of debate to assess students:

Debate is another and best method that can be used to assess students understanding and abilities. Through debate, one can observe students' arguments, their level of expression and understanding.

The HTM teachers pointed out that those debates were conducted using the following steps. First, the teacher introduces the question or the motion by writing it on the chalkboard. Second, the teacher divides the class into two groups, the opposing group and supporting group. Third, the teacher selects one student to be the leader of the discussion. Fourth, the teacher clarifies the procedures and role of the leader during the discussion. Fifth, students conduct discussion whereby individual student from each group one at a time, air his or her views. The HTM teachers claimed that while discussing, they used to observe each individual student and assess his or her understanding of the issue under discussion. Sixth, after students exhausted the question or motion, the teacher concludes by commenting on the points raised by the students and making additional points were necessary.

However, when teachers were observed teaching HTM in their classrooms, debates were not observed which means that if at all they were employed as one of the activities for assessment, they were not frequently used.

Exercises. The interviews with HTM teachers indicate that exercises as assessment activities were done by students individually near or towards the end of the lesson. They argued that the exercises were conducted in the form of questions requiring students to write short answers in their note books and that they were marked within the lesson or sometimes the note books were collected and marked by the teacher in his or her office.

On their part, the SATs also indicated that lesson exercises were conducted towards the end of the lesson. They argued that the questions could either be done individually or in groups. Explaining this, the SAT from school **B** asserted:

After finishing some parts of the lesson or what he or she was teaching, the teacher needs to know if the students have understood. So, the teacher normally, provides the exercise.

Similarly, the findings from classroom observations confirm the use of exercises as one of their common assessment activities. They were employed towards the end of the lesson. The exercises were comprised of one or two written questions. In the most cases, the questions were written on the chalkboard and students were asked to answer them in their note books. While doing the exercises, some HTM teachers used to pass around observing how the students were doing. At the end of the lessons, the students collected their note books for teachers to mark. The following are examples of some of the exercises picked from some HTM lessons observed in schools **C** and **D** respectively:

Exercise

Apart from what we have discussed, explain further the contribution of Tanzania in promoting regional integration.

[The teacher passes around looking the answers written by students]

Exercise

1. *In your group, discuss the role of regional integration in nation building.*
2. *Suggest additional roles that can be done by Tanzania in regional integration.*

[The teacher asks students to write the answers in their note books and collect them for marking]

Oral questioning. The interviews with HTM teachers indicate that oral questioning was employed at any time during HTM lessons, that is, teachers asked question(s) when they thought it was necessary. The HTM teachers argued that oral questions were asked when a teacher wanted to know if the students understood the content taught. They pointed out that oral questioning was also used in the lesson introduction, that is, to determine students' knowledge to the prior or new topic. Further, they claimed that oral questioning was also used after the teachers had taught certain part of the lesson or towards the end of the lesson to measure students' understanding.

When the SATs were interviewed, they asserted that oral questioning was also used after the teacher had taught some aspects of the lesson to check if students were following. The SATs said that normally, the teacher poses or asks a question and then let students respond to the question, one student at a time. For instance, the SAT from school **E** commented:

In most cases, HTM teachers use oral questions when they teach HTM lessons. After teaching parts of the lesson, they normally ask students some questions to assess their understanding of the topic or what they have learned in the lesson.

Similarly, when teachers were observed teaching HTM, the findings indicate that oral questioning was the dominant assessment activity used by HTM teachers in all schools. The following excerpt taken from Teacher in school **A** shows how oral questioning was used when introducing one of his lessons:

Teacher: [After greetings, the teacher asks] What is the contribution of the Union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar in promoting national unity?

Teacher: [Points one student after another to answer] You at the back.

Student 1: Promotion of national identity

Student 2: Promotion of national solidarity

Student 3: Maintain law and order.

Teacher: [Continues asking the same question and briefly write their answers on the chalkboard]

Teacher: [Does not give any comment about the mentioned answers, he quickly writes the name of the lesson on the chalkboard and then say] Okay, today we are going to discuss about the contribution of the Union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar.

Reminding students about what they had learnt in the previous lessons, HTM teacher from school **E** in one of his lessons, conducted oral questioning as follows:

Teacher: [Greet the class and quickly writes the name of the lesson on the chalkboard]

Teacher: So far, what have we learnt in this topic "Union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar?" [Picks few students who are raising their hands]

Student 1: We have learnt the meaning of origin of the Union.

Student 2: We have learnt about the principles of the Union.

Student 3: We have learnt about the founders of the Union.

Teacher: [After these three students have answered]. Good! Our lesson today is about the contribution of the Union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar in promoting national values [Then, he starts explaining the meaning of national values]

Further, it was noted that oral questioning was instantly prepared by HTM teachers after teaching some part(s) or whole the lesson. In most observed lessons, the questions were directed to few or students who could speak the English language fluently. Most of the questions asked were of *what* type requiring students to tell, mention or define some terminologies. The following excerpt taken from HTM Teacher in school C towards the end of one of his lessons describes the nature of the oral questions asked:

Teacher: [After revising what have taught regarding the contribution of the Union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar, he asks] What did we learn today?

Student 1: The contribution of the Union.

Teacher: Yes, we have learned about the contribution of the Union.

Teacher: Who can mention them?

Student 1: One is the promotion of the national identity.

Teacher: Eeoh, another one?

Student 2: Maintain law and order.

Teacher: [Continues pointing other students who mentioned other contribution of the Union]

Teacher: [After the questions, she writes the lesson notes on the chalkboard]

To sum up, the classroom teaching and learning of HTM involved the use of tests, quizzes, exercise and oral questioning as assessment activities. These kinds of assessment activities were used depending on flexibility of the teachers. Quizzes were used at any time of the lesson, whereas exercises were used towards the end of the lesson. On the other hand, tests were used after finishing a specific competence or several specific competences. Oral questioning was commonly used during lesson introduction to arouse students' interests and probe their knowledge about the topic. It was also used at the end of lessons to sum up what have been taught. This means that the teaching and learning of HTM limitedly employed assessment for learning activities, that is, only oral questioning was identified as the most typical assessment for learning strategy.

5 Discussion and Conclusion

Assessment for learning comprised of classroom evaluative practises that can be used to diagnose and inform teachers as well as students about the progress of the learning during the learning process (Jill, 2009). It is useful because it develops learners' autonomy, increases motivation and mastery of the subject-matter which consequently enhances their capacity to plan and monitor their own progress of learning. As such, assessment for learning suits well with constructivist paradigm in which students take the role of constructing meaning and engaged in problem solving learning during the teaching process.

In this study, the findings have indicated that only oral questioning was dominantly used as assessment for learning. Oral questioning was used in lesson introduction to diagnose students' prior knowledge about a certain lesson. It was also used after the teacher had presented some aspects of the lesson or near the end of the lessons to check if students understood the lessons. In this situation, oral questioning was used for diagnostic purpose, that is, to know if students have some ideas or understood what have been taught. This is consistent with the findings by Bundu and Kagete (2013) and Adam, Bekoe & Poatob (2018) in which it was found that teachers often used assessment mainly for diagnosing students' weaknesses or knowledge acquisition rather to improve their teaching or students' learning.

However, it appears that most of the questions asked were directed to a few students and were of *what* type requiring students to tell, mention or define some terminologies. This means that the questions focused on the low levels of cognitive domain. The use of low levels of cognitive domain (knowledge and comprehension) is interpreted to mean that students were being involved in lower-level cognitive skills and therefore would not acquire higher-level cognitive skills such as problem-solving, analysis, synthesis and evaluative skills. This situation implies that HTM teachers' knowledge regarding assessment for learning or classroom assessment was limited. As Oladipupo (2013); Joshua and Blessing (2013); and Shafii and Berger (2025) observed, teachers' knowledge and skills regarding classroom assessment was poor.

Furthermore, it appears that the questions asked were not well in advance planned in the teachers' lesson plans. They were promptly created by the HTM teachers as the lessons progress. Likewise, statements regarding assessment activities in the teachers' teaching plans were not explicit as some were written, for example: "Oral

questions on ...” (mention the name of the topic). It was found that some teachers’ lesson plans, the columns for assessment were blank, that is, no statements reflecting assessment activities. This reflects the findings by Ndlichako (2015) that teachers employ assessment conveniently or when they felt necessary. It also contradicts the findings by Florez and Sammons (2013) who established that teachers’ questioning should be strategic, the questions should be planned prior to the lesson.

The findings indicate further that teachers’ observations were also employed to assess students’ progress in HTM lessons. This personal kind of assessment (teachers’ observation) was also reflected in the teachers’ teaching plans with such questions: “Did students participate in group discussion?” “Did they answer the questions?” and “Are students able to ... (mentioning intended task)?” This however, was limited because no tangible assessment questions or items indicating how such statements would be put into effect.

Such situation would depend on teachers’ perception and interpretation whether the students understood what has been presented. This means that the HTM teachers could not practically interpret the HTM syllabus particularly how assessment for learning should be put into practice. Such statements regarding assessment were just copied as they appear in the HTM syllabus. It appears that the HTM teachers were not able to prepare assessment activities which would enable them to assess whether the students understood the presented content. They solely depended on their eye observation. Thus, the HTM teachers were not knowledgeable enough to employ assessment for learning activities as per the requirements of CBC. These findings as well concur with those by Oladipupo (2013) and Joshua and Blessing (2013) that teachers had poor knowledge of classroom assessment.

The findings have indicated that lesson exercises were also employed as one of assessment activities in HTM lessons. In some HTM teachers’ teaching plans, however, statements regarding lesson exercises were not definite, for example, “students do the exercises given by the teacher”. It appears that most of the exercises comprised either one or two questions given orally or written on the chalkboard. They were provided near the end of the lessons requiring students to answer them in their exercise books, collect and send to the teacher for marking. However, the findings from classroom observations showed that only few HTM teachers employed exercises when teaching HTM lessons. This scenario is interpreted that the lesson exercises were so limited as far as assessment for learning was concerned. They focused much on assessing what were presented and therefore could not provide immediate help to students’ learning. Further, this kind of assessment activity was not among the four strategies for assessment for learning suggested by Florez and Sammons (2013), that is, questioning, feedback, peer and self-assessment, and formative use of summative assessment.

Moreover, the findings indicated that the HTM teachers employed other assessment activities, namely: quizzes, tests, and debates. It appears that quizzes were employed at any time during the lessons while tests and essay writing were used after the teachers finished teaching certain topic(s). The nature of questions in quizzes was the same with those in lesson exercises. These findings are consistent with those by Malaba (2013) and Nordstrum (2015) who found that teachers regularly conducted assessment in the form of written tests and assignments. The findings also are in line with Perry (2013) who established that teachers employed formal formative assessment, particularly quizzes and tests. It is interpreted that the written assessment activities were frequently used in assessing students. However, these assessment activities focused much on measuring students’ achievement rather than enhancing students’ learning. Other assessment activities such as use of feedback, formative use of summative, peer and self-assessment were never observed in this study.

It is evident from this discussion that assessment activities employed in classroom HTM teaching and learning were very inadequate as far as assessment for learning is concerned and advocated by CBC. Only oral questioning was employed by the teachers when teaching HTM in their classrooms. Yet, the oral questioning was limited because not all HTM teachers used it effectively. It is also established that the questions were promptly created, not pre-prepared as theoretically recommended. This situation suggests that assessment activities employed in the classroom HTM teaching and learning were limited and not effective as far as assessment for learning is concerned, that is, the HTM teachers did not adequately employ assessment for learning strategies consistent to CBC approach.

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