

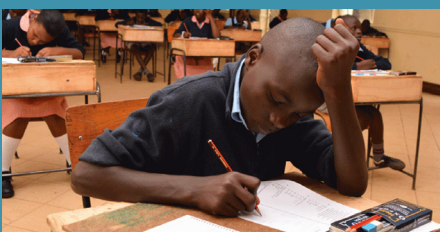
OUT GOES EXAMINATION, IN COMES ASSESSMENT... WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

As long as the clock ticks, there will be change. But, change is disruptive. It pushes us out of our comfort zones –and we don't like that. So, unsurprisingly, many –unwilling to leave the familiar –elect to resist the change. It works... you only need to ask the dinosaurs just how well. On the other hand, the

wise recognise and then adapt to the disruptions. And never have times squeezed so much disruption into so little a period like has happened in this Digital Age. That's how after three decades of serving the country, the 8:4:4 system suddenly became dated and had to retire. In its place came the CBC. Four

years down the line, most of us are yet to grasp the new curriculum. For instance, did you know that examinations are also gone? Instead, learners take Competency Based Assessment, aka CBA. What's the difference? Glad you asked because in the following pages, we answer and more...
The Editor

What is Competency Based Assessment?



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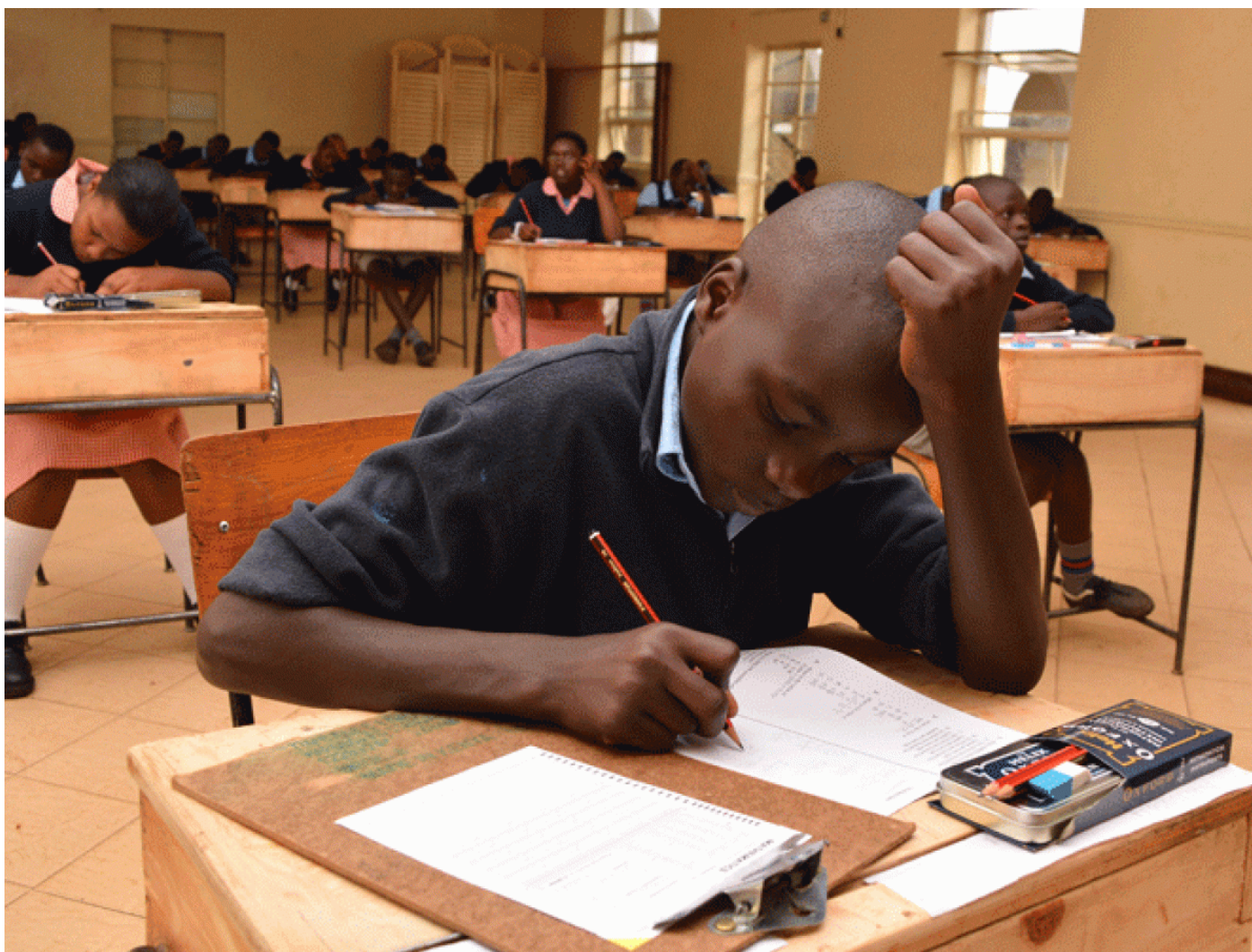


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What is Competency Based Assessment?

It is the process of assessing how much a learner has achieved in the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) framework. In the most basic of explanations, CBA is

to CBC what exams are to the 8:4:4 system. However, the two are significantly more different than similar in both form and application.

Is CBA and CBC the same thing?

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, CBA evaluates the learners' level of achievement under the CBC. Assessments are under the mandate of The Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC).

Under CBC, how is Basic Education structured?

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.



Why was change from 8:4:4 necessary?

The change was informed by the need to improve the quality of education in Kenya and align it with 21st Century development skills. These include; communication and collaboration, critical thinking and

problem solving, digital literacy, self-efficacy, learning to learn, citizenship, imagination and creativity. Quality basic education is also key for sustainable development.



And the new system is designed to achieve this?

Yes. The new curriculum is focused on identifying and developing the diverse range of talents gifted upon our children. Developing the individual learner's strong points creates a wholesome society of immense potential.

How does CBA tie in into all of it?

The assessments developed by KNEC are the tools used to pinpoint the individual student's specific gifts and abilities, forming a critical guide for the path their learning should follow. For instance, CBAs will help reveal a learner exhibiting strong musical talents, and will then be nurtured along that path. The assessments are also used by stakeholders to make necessary adjustments to the system as a whole.



CBA vs regular examination, what's the difference?

Examinations such as the KCPE and KCSE are 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. Exams are usually one-off and are done after the instruction has taken place. They are often a mark of completion of a learning phase.

...and assessments?

On the other hand, assessments such as the CBA are a systematic way of collecting information and documenting what the learner knows and can do on specified competencies. Unlike exams, assessments are more of a procedure, one that happens throughout the teaching and learning process. Assessments evaluate the wider spectrum that includes acquisition of knowledge, skills, values and attitude.

What is the major weakness of exams-based system such as 8:4:4?

Learning in the exams-based system is highly generalised. All the learning also boils down to how much a student can remember at the particular moment they are writing the test. This seemed to work okay in the past when global labour demands were equally generalised, like, for instance, when the village veterinary would be expected to fix the ills of every animal in the compound – and sometimes people too.





Is this diversification bad?

While convenient at times, it does compromise massively on quality of the service or end product. But the global population has grown wealthier and more

learned, and focus has heavily shifted towards quality. This calls for highly specialised skills such as specific veterinary for dogs, cats, cows etc.



How does CBA help in this respect?

Instead of testing a learner's memory like happens with exams, the assessments in CBA gauge competencies. In other words, they measure how well (or not) a learner is able to apply the acquired knowledge, skills, values and attitude to perform a real-life task or solve a problem. This helps in identifying the natural talent in a child.

How are the assessments clustered?

Diagnostic – the assessments are done before learning begins.

Formative – done during learning.

Summative – done at the end of teaching and learning process.



And the types of assessments in new system?

(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). Assessment tools are developed by the teacher. These are activities designed and administered by the teacher during the learning process.

(b) School-based assessment

This assessment starts from Grade 4 to Grade 12. The tools for this assessment are developed by KNEC and uploaded on the Council's website. The teacher downloads the tools from the website and administers them to the learners. The tools are standardised hence uniform to all cohort of learners.

(c) National assessment

The National assessment shall be carried out at Grades 3,6,9 and 12.

Which tools are used in CBA?

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

Tell us more on the assessment rubrics?

An assessment tool that specifies the performance criteria expected from a learner on a task and the different performance levels against which the learner can be assessed.



When are the assessments done?

a) End of Pre-Primary 2:

Learners are assessed internally then they all transition to Grade 1 in Lower Primary (Grades 1,2,3).

b) Grade 3:

They take a school-based national assessment but this is also not used for ranking or placement as they all proceed to Upper Primary (Grades 4,5,6).

c) Upper Primary:

Learners are assessed at each of the Upper Primary grades to track their learning progress (Formative Assessment) ahead of the National assessment (Summative Assessment) at Grade 6.

In each grade, classroom assessment will account for 10% of the learners final grade, same as the School Based Assessment. Cumulatively therefore, 20% at Grade 4, 20% at Grade 5 and 20% at Grade 6, making a total of 60% from the formative assessment..

d) Grade 6:

A national assessment is administered at the end of Grade 6, which will comprise the remaining 40% 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 (Grades 7,8 and 9).

e) Grade 9:

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



Which tools are used to report learner's performance?

These are:

- Kenya School Readiness Assessment Tool (KS RAT) for pre-primary. The tool is developed by MoE.
- Assessment Sheet developed by the teacher.
- School Year Report.
- Filled Classroom Assessment Tool.

Transition Report

- Learner Exit Profile (LEP).

How are assessments records tracked and maintained?

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 Assessment (UPA) number. The number will be used by the learner up to the end of Grade 12.

For learners following the stage-based curriculum pathway, a similar UPA number will be allocated at either Foundation or Intermediate level.

What happens to the records of a learner transferring schools?

On transfer the learner's data remains in the system for continuity. The school where the learner has

transferred to, shall contact the Sub-county Director of Education (SCDE) to effect transfer(s).



Why is parental support in the learning process so important?

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



Where does a parent's input come in?

As a parent, you should:

- 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 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 much. Get to know your child's experiences in school and offer them psychological support.



Why should learners not fear assessments?

Because, even if they may sometimes appear like they are, CBA assessments are not examinations –which have been used (controversially) as tools of measuring intelligence. Instead, CBA assessments are used to

identify a student's talents and to nurture mastery of the particular skills by revealing areas that need improvement. Indeed, these assessments guide the selection of career pathways that leads to success.

Are learners with special needs factored in?

The CBC provides for two curriculum pathways: Age-Based (for learners without and those with mild disabilities) and Stage-Based (for learners with severe disabilities). CBA caters for learners with special needs and disabilities (SNE) in both curriculum pathways. Assessment tools in the age-based pathway are modified to suitable presentation mode such as braille, audio and large print versions and Kenya Sign Language for hearing impaired. CBA has a distinct assessment for the stage-based curriculum pathway that caters for learners with severe or multiple disabilities; mentally handicapped, learners with emotional and behavioural problems. They are assessed using performance tasks that are specific to their nature of disability.

How are CBA 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**
- Repeat the same for all learners.



What happens to KCPE and KCSE Examinations?

The KCPE and KCSE examinations shall be phased out by the year 2023 and 2027, respectively.

If I need further clarification or assistance?

Email: info@knec.ac.ke

Website: www.knec.ac.ke

Twitter: @ExamsCouncil

Facebook: The Kenya National Examinations Council

Sources: The Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC), KYEB sources

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