

## ABSTRACT

### The Classroom Assessment Practices of Grade 7 Integrated Science Teachers and Implications for Continuous Assessment

Marcia Judith Rainford

This qualitative case study examines the classroom assessment practices of two grade 7 teachers as they taught the Jamaican ROSE integrated science curriculum. Based on data obtained from classroom observations for a period of one academic year, interviews, and documents, it describes the assessment strategies they utilized and explores the challenges related to implementing classroom assessment and the various factors that enabled the two teachers to cope with these challenges. The main research findings are that the teachers used a variety of alternative, traditional, individual and group assessment tasks for regular class work and homework activities primarily for formative assessment purposes. Written monthly and end of year tests were used for summative assessment. In conducting classroom assessment the teachers faced several dilemmas relating to the theoretical framework for assessment, the students' performance and the use of the curriculum. The social, physical and educational context in which the teachers taught, contributed to these dilemmas. The teachers' training, understanding of the curriculum, knowledge of assessment procedures, ability to reflect-on-action and reflect-in-action, access to resources and to the administration helped them to address some of these difficulties. The study proposes that the implementation of continuous formative assessment requires that teachers and school administration commit to raising the status of formative assessment in schools. The school administration needs to address issues related to policy, communication, resources and time-table while adjustments to the teachers' classroom practice relate to self, the students, other teachers and the curriculum.

**Keywords:** assessment; classroom assessment; formative assessment; alternative assessment; continuous assessment; integrated science