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## A Review of Continuous Assessment Learning Activity (CALA) in Zimbabwe: 2017- 2023

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### ABSTRACT

The major goal of this paper was to do a review of the CALA in Zimbabwe. Informed by the major tenets of progressivism as a theory of education, the government of Zimbabwe through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE), embarked on a curriculum review exercise in 2015. The study employed secondary data. A closer and thorough inspection of the key stakeholders' overview of CALA shows that fell short of expectations due to financial, ethical, and moral challenges associated with it. This paper concludes that regardless of the immense benefits of CALA, its adoption and implementation have been met with mixed feelings between and among stakeholders in the education sector and this has overshadowed the significance and relevance of CALA in the context of Zimbabwe. Further, this study concludes that for the period under review (2017- 2023), the Ordinary Level pass rate after the introduction of CALA has been fluctuating from one year to another which is similar to trends observed before the introduction of CALA. The researchers recommend the capacitation and active involvement and participation of teachers through attractive remuneration and training workshops as a panacea in the implementation of any curriculum review since teachers are the key drivers in such a process.

### INTRODUCTION

The desire to review the curriculum dates back to the famous Nziramasanga Commission of 1999 which was charged with the responsibility to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of Zimbabwe's education system and to map a way forward. Such exercises resulted in the adoption and implementation of the Continuous Assessment Learning Activity (CALA). CALA apologists argue that it seeks to sufficiently equip and empower the 21<sup>st</sup> century learner with essential and fundamental skills, attitudes, and knowledge for instance critical thinking, innovation, problem-solving, and research skills among others. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) adopted the 2015-2022 curriculum framework to provide a relevant and competence-driven curriculum in Zimbabwe (MoPSE, 2015). As a result, major changes and new learning areas were introduced at junior level, lower and upper secondary level. A key characteristic of

the 2015-2022 curriculum framework was the introduction of Continuous Assessment Learning Activity (CALA) as a compulsory component of academic assessment. According to MoPSE (2023), the first 7-year cycle of competence-based education curriculum introduced in 2015 came to an end in 2022, and currently tremendous efforts are being made to inform the 2023 curriculum review processes. This paper paid particular attention to various and relevant stakeholders in the education sector's thoughts on the relevance, impact, and role of CALA in the education curriculum.

Makamure and Jojo (2023) argue that the relevant authorities came up with the concept of CALA and this approach was operationalized in 2021 to all levels of education in Zimbabwe namely, infant school, junior school, and secondary school. The famous Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training of 1999 (CIET), better known as the Nziramasanga

Commission reported that the local curriculum at that time was too academic in nature and did not speak to the needs of the learners (The Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022). The CIET's observation provided a fertile ground and justification for overhaul or comprehensive curriculum review in Zimbabwe (Coltat, 2012). According to the Ministry of Education, Sports, Arts and Culture (MoESAC) (2010), the National Education Advisory Board (NEAB) noted that little was done to fulfill the recommendations of the CIET and further recommended that a more robust curriculum review was needed. All this culminated in the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022. As a justification for its introduction, the firm believes that CALA seeks to equip a learner with much-needed skills, attitudes, and knowledge for instance critical thinking, innovation problem problem-solving skills among others (Sunday Mail, 2023).

Adding on to this argument, Wondifraw (2019) posits that continuous assessment should be viewed as a progressive approach that seeks to promote holistic learning. Juet, et al., (2021) write that CALA involves testing and examining three key areas, cognitive, psycho-motor, and affective domain. Mapahlalala (2016) further describes continuous assessment as a progressive approach that speaks to global trends, philosophy, and standards. Adding on to this observation Wallace et al (2022) say that CALA speaks to the broad aims of Agenda 2030 that prioritize the production of competent school graduates with lifesaving skills Studies have shown that learners have different learning abilities and styles. In light of this, CALA provides opportunities where academic assessment is robust and objective because a learner's academic potential is not only what they can reproduce during the examinations but also involves other critical skills. This observation is supported by Sithole et al., (2021) who posit that the implementation of the new curriculum in Zimbabwe resulted in the fusion of both formative and summative assessment at different levels in the education sector.

It has been argued that the 2023 curriculum review processes seek to bring out the successes and challenges of the 2015-2022 curriculum framework (MoPSE, 2023). In this regard, the 2023-2030 curriculum framework seeks to

strengthen the curriculum with special attention being given in terms of improving the implementation, monitoring, and supervision of CALA in schools. Such views are also shared by Abejuhu (2016) who states that continuous assessment is critical and fundamental in enhancing and promoting educational quality assurance endeavors. According to MoPSE (2023), CALA is a statutory requirement in the Zimbabwean education system, it is a policy crafted by the Zimbabwean government to take on board coursework performance. In the words of Zindi (2018), CALA entails different learning activities and assessments that require learners to carry out comprehensive academic research-based activities. In line with this statutory requirement candidates sitting for ZIMSEC examinations are examined in physical and behavioral skills (Curriculum Framework for Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022).

Matarise (2023) writes that CALA tasks are research-based activities that cooperate with practical activities, for instance, interviews, questionnaires, observations, and experiments. This means that learners are exposed to academic research. This can be viewed as beneficial as it seeks to inculcate a culture of research and problem-solving skills through research. According to New Curriculum (2015), coursework contributes 30% to a candidate's final mark and the examinations contribute 70% to the candidate's final grade. This system is not entirely new in the context of Zimbabwe for it has been at the tertiary level where students are given assignments, presentations, in-class tests as coursework, and examinations.

In light of this, CALA provides opportunities where academic assessment is robust and objective because a learner's academic potential is not only what they can reproduce during the examinations but also involves other critical skills. This observation is supported by Chiyenge (2017) who posits that the implementation of the new curriculum resulted in the fusion of both formative and summative assessment at different levels in the education sector

Muskin (2015) noted that CALA seeks to blend theory and practice. This represents a hands-on approach. This paper seeks to make a review of Continuous Assessment Learning Activity (CALA)

in Zimbabwe for the period 2017- 2023. This present study tries to ascertain the impact of CALA on the ordinary-level pass rate and recommend strategies for the effective implementation of any program in the context of Zimbabwe's education sector.

The objectives of this study are as follows: (1) To assess the general overview of CALA in Zimbabwe, (2) To assess the impact of CALA on ZIMSEC's Ordinary Level pass rate, (3) To recommend strategies to enhance the successful implementation of CALA in the context of Zimbabwe.

In their study on the implementation of continuous assessment at Arbamiach University, Grima and Darza (2020) found that quite a number of instructors had a commendable appreciation of continuous assessment. Regardless of this positive observation on the implementation of continuous assessment Grima and Darza (2020) further found that a lack of student participation coupled with large class sizes harmed the smooth operationalization of continuous assessment. Fynn and Mashile (2022) conducted a study focusing on online assessment and continuous assessment in South Africa, their study sought to investigate the experiences of learners with specific reference to online continuous assessment. In assessing the impact of online continuous assessment. Fynn and Mashile (2022) noted that there was unequal access to internet facilities and gadgets among learners and this harmed their experiences. In their study, Fynn and Mashile (2022) concluded that students were not sufficiently equipped and prepared to deal with the increased workload brought about by the demands of continuous online assessment.

On the other hand, Rezaei (2015) gives a very positive image of continuous assessment in South Africa, his study revealed that continuous assessment shapes commendable learning behavior and positive academic achievement on the part of learners. Wallace et, al (2022) also paint a positive image of continuous assessment in the context of South Africa describing it as systematic and exemplary. Van Blankenstein et, al (2017) speak in favor of continuous assessment arguing that continuous assessment ensures that learners constantly work during the teaching and learning process. This means that learners are assessed in different and relevant skills during the course period

and this represents better student engagement. Domenech et, al (2015). According to a study conducted in South Africa by Van Blankenstein et, al (2017), it was revealed that in courses where continuous assessment was not done male students performed dismally in comparison to their female peers. The findings of the same study further revealed that in courses where continuous assessment was part and parcel of assessment strategies, the gender difference noted in courses without continuous assessment disappeared (Van Blankenstein et, al. 2017). This observation clearly shows that continuous assessment has a positive impact on students' academic achievement.

Discussing the impact of continuous assessment Holmes (2015) argues that continuous assessment provides constant and useful feedback to learners and this can improve learners' final grades. This observation is also supported by Gonzalez et al (2015) who conducted a study to evaluate students' academic achievement before and after the introduction of continuous assessment in European higher education institutions. According to Gonzalez et al (2015), continuous assessment has a commendable and positive impact or effect on students' academic achievement and success. Rana and Zubair (2019) posit that studies concentrating on learners' perceptions and attitudes toward continuous assessment reveal that students firmly believe that continuous assessment has a positive impact on their academic results. This firm's belief in the positive impact of continuous assessment on students' academic performance is also supported by Holmes (2018) who argues that continuous assessment improves students' engagement in the teaching and learning process.

Ramon-Munoz (2015) raises a slightly different view by stating that research findings show that academic grades obtained for continuous assessment are, "not necessarily high". Ekaterina (2017) concluded that the results of the continuous assessment show that its merits or positives outweigh the demerits. On the other hand, Santos et al (2018) raise a contrasting observation by writing that numerous researchers did not find notable differences in the performance or academic achievement of learners before and after the adoption of continuous assessment in the education system. One study focusing on the challenges of continuous assessment in Chagni, Ethiopia by

Abejehu et, al (2019) found that the implementation process of continuous assessment was marred by serious challenges of lack of constituency and harmony. This observation is also applicable to the case of Zimbabwe as supported by Makamure (2021) who observes that there was a teacher knowledge deficiency in the conceptualization and operationalization of CALA. Obi and Bineli (2019) have argued that in the case of Zimbabwe, a close inspection of CALA exposes the multiple insufficiencies in both the implementation and operationalization of CALA. Such a state of affairs brought about more difficult challenges.

The famous Presidential Commission of Inquiry on Education and Training (Nziramasanga) established in 1999 provides a fertile ground for the revision of the Zimbabwean curriculum. According to Matabvu (2023), the Nziramasanga Commission's recommendations form the genesis of CALA. The author further states that the educationist in the name of Nziramasanga argued that the number of CALA components should not be above reasonable load to ensure that learners fully benefit from such an academic exercise. Critics of CALA have maintained that CALA components per learning area are more than enough

In the context of this study, functionalism as a theory provided a theoretical framework for this study. The basic assumptions of functionalism focus on the practical and different ways that education or curriculum serves the needs or interests of society. In the words of Nickerson (2023), education contributes two basic kinds of functions within a society, namely primary functions and secondary functions. Nickerson (2023) further contends that primary functions of education within a society are the intended and visible functions whereas on the other hand secondary functions are hidden and unintended functions. Bearing in mind the above description the researchers are tempted to contend that education policy makers were motivated by the desire to revamp the Zimbabwean curriculum so that it serves the interests and needs of all sectors of the society. This vision speaks to the mantra and philosophy of functionalists.

Social placement is also a critical component of functionalism as a theory. This mantra is evident in the new curriculum where screening of learners in line with their learning abilities and capabilities is the order of the day. This can also be traced back to

the Nziramasanga Commission (1999) which made a recommendation to the effect that continuous assessment should be the guiding mantra in screening learners so that those who are not, "academically gifted can exclusively focus on practical learning areas".

## **METHODS**

This research employed a documentary review approach to gather data. It used the information which was gathered from published sources from 2015 to 2023. The study used secondary documentary data from 2015 up to 2023 because that's when the CALA was implemented in the education system of Zimbabwe. This was also necessitated by the fact that the new curriculum has completed its first full circle. The data was extracted from the reports published by major stakeholders in MoPSE, and these stakeholders include UNICEF, ZIMSEC, Social Welfare, BEAM, parents, governments, teachers, students' academic publications in the education sector of Zimbabwe concerning CALA, and reports in the media sector of Zimbabwe.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The General Overview of CALA in Zimbabwe**

#### *Overload on Learners*

Zimbabwe Independent, 25 May (2023) noted that some teachers and parents have argued that if a university student can only concentrate on one research project at the end of their program, why should learners from primary to secondary school be made to research on several projects. The findings from this newspaper noted that parents have suggested that learners, especially those in examination classes, should have such projects in their practical subjects of choice such as agriculture, carpentry, science, dressmaking, and cookery, among others Oli and Olkaba (2020)'s study revealed that the implementation of continuous assessment strategy in Ethiopia was characterized by large class size, shortage of sufficient time and a heavy workload on both teachers and learners. In the context of this study, such challenges reported by Oli and Olkaba (2020) are also common in the case of Zimbabwe. In line with the Zimbabwe School Examination Council's (ZIMSEC) expectations and requirements, a learner is expected to do 5 CALA tasks in each every learning area.

Further, a complete Ordinary certificate in Zimbabwe must contain at least 5 Ordinary level passes. This observation speaks volumes on the workload of the learners at the Ordinary Level. In some cases learners found themselves doing more than 5 learning areas. The more the number of learning areas the more the workload would be. Since facilitators are in it together with the learners it means that CALA brought an additional load resulting in facilitators being overwhelmed with marking, grading, and recording CALA projects. Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe explains that ordinary-level learners were doing up to 48 CALA tasks. (New Zimbabwe, 2021). These CALA projects must be done before examinations. CALA critics are questioning such demands and expectations arguing that they may not be realistic from a progressive point of view. Since teachers and learners are in it together an overload on learners also entails an overload on teachers. Pietikainen and Karinen (2020) contend that continuous assessment entails giving constant feedback throughout the course period this is rather time-consuming on the part of the teachers especially when dealing with large class sizes as is the case of the Zimbabwean education system.

#### *It affected non-formal education*

According to Zimsec (2021), it shows that CALA has affected the number of learners who have registered for 2021 ordinary-level exams. Comparisons in terms of candidature of the November Ordinary level between 2021 and 2020 reveal that 249 916 and 264 099 for the exams respectively, this represents a decline of a total of 14 185 candidates. Nyamudzodza et al. (2021) posit that in line with CALA requirements Ordinary level learners are supposed to do research-based tasks which will constitute the coursework component of 30% with the final written exam constituting 70% of the final mark. It is known that CALA tasks are done in schools through formal education. Such a state of affairs harms non-formal education. CALA requirements have drastically reduced the number of non-formal or private candidates.

#### *It was not universal on pass rate assessment*

Further, this study found that there was an uneven or lack of uniform assessment structures and this brought a fair share of challenges thereby disadvantaging certain groups of students.

Discussing the challenges of continuous assessment Omonigho (2019) questions the concept of comparability of standard. Omonigho (2019) argues that the concept of comparability of standards arises due to the observation that there is variation in the quality of tests and assessment instruments employed in different schools. There is also a significant variation in the processes and procedures for marking and grading a variety of assessment instruments in respective schools (Mulenga, 2019). Commenting on teacher-related continuous assessment challenges, Onuka (2020) states that research has shown that teachers avoid testing learners in areas of psychomotor and affective skills due to a lack of know-how or technical skills in coming up with quality test items in the above-mentioned areas. In their study, Atsumbe et al., (2017) note that teachers' favoritism towards students from their localities has spoiled the image of continuous assessment. Atsumbe et al., (2017) aptly conclude that in some cases continuous assessment is "fast becoming continuous harassment". Walde (2018) also talks about the challenges of continuous assessment and points out the lack of clear manuals and guidelines on operationalizing. According to Mohammedseid (2017), poor knowledge and skills of evaluation techniques seriously affect the effective implementation of continuous assessment. The researchers note that all the above-mentioned challenges are also witnessed in the case of CALA in Zimbabwe. As alluded to earlier, such deficiencies raise questions about the integrity of CALA processes and procedures.

Guided by such arguments and in the context of this study there is a significant room to conclude that the standards used by different facilitators in assessing learners' work may not be the same. Again the researchers observe that there are notable differences between and among urban, peri-urban, and rural schools. Such schools have diverse learning environments and conditions. This means that the Zimbabwean learners are of different backgrounds not because of their choice. CALA does not consider such differences and this automatically raises questions on the concept of comparability of standards. Poor implementation of continuous assessment in Ethiopian state universities was also noted by Abera et al. (2017).

### *Misconception of CALA*

The researchers observe that misunderstanding and misinformation about CALA have created a bumpy and rough terrain in the adoption or implementation of CALA in the Zimbabwean education system. The researchers' observations are also shared by MoPSE's Communications and Advocacy Director, who stressed in an interview that stakeholders in general lack a thorough appreciation of what CALA entails (The Sunday New, 2023). This also partly explains the negative stakeholders' attitudes and perceptions towards CALA. Facilitators, learners, parents, and guardians have been critical of CALA and they want it reviewed or shelved by the relevant authorities (The Standard, 2023). The researchers are of the opinion that such negative attitudes and perceptions may result in a lack of confidence and faith in CALA. According to Nyamudzodza et al., (2021), there have been numerous and loud cries by learners, facilitators, and administrators who are facing new and extraordinary challenges brought about by the introduction of CALA. It is our humble submission that if the facilitators themselves find it difficult to handle CALA, learners are left without leadership in their academic endeavors. This warrants academic research on CALA-related issues.

### *CALA as a Burden to parents*

CALA is financially demanding. A snap survey carried out by The Citizen Bulletin (2021) in Gwanda shows that it costs ZAR2 (less than \$0.50) to photocopy or print one picture for a CALA project and some projects require more than ten pictures demand money that parents need to pay out. The findings of The Citizen Bulletin (2021) noted that the CALA program is for the rich, furthermore, she also noted that parents are now forced to do CALA assignments for their children. The findings in Gwanda. Also noted that there are some connectivity challenges in rural schools due to lack of electricity, therefore rural parents need to fork for internet for their children. The Zimbabwe Open University lecturer (2020) noted that the CALA initiative would have been more effective had parents been properly informed about it before its launch.

### *CALA promoted corruption in the education system*

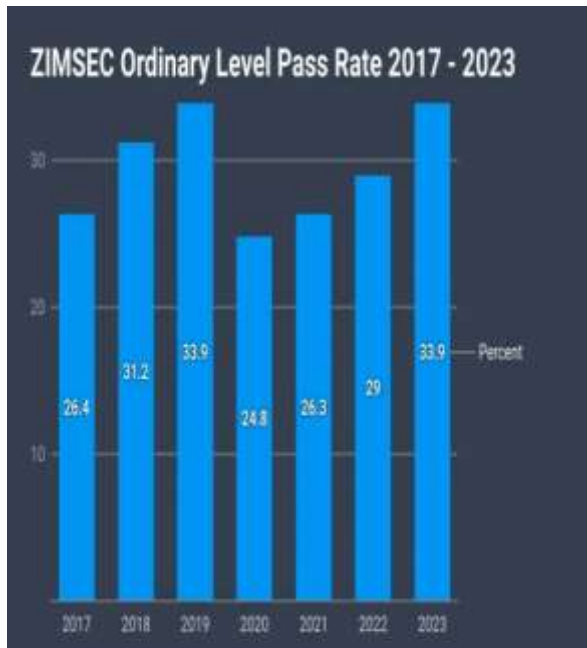
The Zimbabwe CITE news noted that Umzingwane teachers are taking advantage of the

loopholes in CALA implantation and are charging learners between R100 and US\$10 per task. (CITE Tuesday, March 12, 2024). The issue of learners buying CALAs was also observed by Bulawayo 24, it noted that those with access to money ended up buying people (including teachers) to do it for them, with the cost for a primary school project being charged US\$10 for learners doing three projects per subject area, and with six subject areas, they have to do 18 projects in all. The Secondary pupils' projects were charged US\$20 per project and this is how lucrative the venture has emerged to be in schools (Bulawayo 24, 08 October 2021). Nataka et al., (2022) also share the same sentiments, they noted that the ugliest part of CALA is that it is now turning into a very lucrative business in the Zimbabwean education system, they observed that there other academic mercenaries, the unscrupulous members of the community who are making a fortune out of charging approximately 20 USD for a CALA task. Chanda (2012) posits that Continuous Assessment Learning Activities have been facing a lot of backlashes for instance, reports of corruption where learners are said to be paying facilitators and other learned members of the community to do the CALA tasks. Commenting on this matter, the Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe PTUZ (2021) declared that the existence and flourishing of academic mercenaries is devaluing the whole process and purpose of CALA. All these flaws force one to argue that CALA is now falling short of integrity and transparent tests. This provides room for the researchers to posit that in some cases learners are not gaining the expected skills but they are simply benefiting marks. This has a negative impact as such a state of affairs may produce a very weak graduate.

### **Impact of CALA on pass rate**

According to ZIMSEC (2023), the pass rate of grade Seven and Ordinary Level Pass Rates has been fluctuating even before the introduction of CALA.

Fig 1.1 Shows the ordinary level pass rate from 2017-2023.



Source: Zimbabwe School Examination Council (2023)

The pass rate after the introduction of CALA is again showing some variations from one year to another which is similar to that situation when CALA was not yet introduced. There is no rapid increase in the pass rate due to CALA. A sharp increase was anticipated as learners now have 30% which is attributed to coursework. According to ZIMSEC (2023), the official November 2022 Ordinary Level results show that the pass rate stood at 29% representing a slight increase of 2.62% in pass rate about the November 2021 Ordinary Level results. A total of 278 760 candidates wrote the ZIMSEC Ordinary Level in November 2022. A closer analysis shows that this number is well above the number of candidates who sat for the same examination in 2021 where 249 914 candidatures were recorded. This represents an 11.54% increase in candidature between 2021 and 2022. The Herald (2022) reports that the November 2021 Ordinary Level results show an increase of 1.57% in terms of pass rate as compared to November 2020. The official figures released by the examining board ZIMSEC show that for November 2021, the pass rate stood at 26.34%.

The November Ordinary Level results represented a sharp decline in 2020 (24.8%) and 2021 (26.3%) from the pass rate of 2019 (33.9). Defending this drastic fall in pass rate ZIMSEC

through its chairperson blamed the COVID-19-induced disruption of teaching and learning. The Chronicle (2020) reported that the pass rate for the November 2019 Ordinary Level was 31.6% representing a marginal increase in pass rate of 0.4% from the 31.2% pass rate in the 2018 November Ordinary Level results. It is important to note that the 2018 November Ordinary Level results were the first of the CALA era.

The Herald (2020) reported that in November 2017 ZIMSEC Ordinary Level results showed a pass rate of 28.7% where a total of 332 473 candidates sat for the 2017 examinations. The number of candidates who wrote the November 2017 examinations represents a 14.25% increase as compared to the total number of candidates who sat for the 2016 November Ordinary Level. The Herald (2017) reports that the 2016 November session for the Ordinary level recorded a pass rate of 27.92%. In the 2015 November Ordinary Level, a total of 310 917 candidates sat for the final examinations recording a 27% pass rate (Newsday, 2016). These figures of ordinary level pass rates before CALA and after CALA implementation show that it has left effect in improving pass rates.

#### Strategies that promote successful implementation of CALA

The researchers are of the perspective that there are plausible and attractive strategies for the effective adoption of CALA, such plausible and attractive strategies are discussed below

##### *Training of teachers*

In the context of this current study, the researchers are of the perspective that serious and comprehensive training of facilitators and school administrators through regular workshops, seminars, and symposiums on CALA processes and procedures could go a long way in strengthening CALA or another project which are to be done in future. The proposed workshops, training, seminars, and symposiums for any other project that is to be implemented in the Ministry of Primary Secondary Education (MoPSE) should be teacher centered. The private sector, Non-Governmental Organizations could also join hands with the authorities in the spirit of leaving no place and anyone behind.

*Funding of the educational program to bridge the poor and rich gap*

The spread of access to the internet up to rural areas could be viewed as a panacea as far as the implementation of CALA or any other program is concerned. The provision of internet access could provide the much need access to relevant and updated reading materials in different learning areas. This could address equitable access to information between and among learners since they are assessed using the same strategies.

*Use of a single and standard measure per CALA throughout the country*

In his study entitled Continuous Assessment: scope and relevance, Omonigho (2012) writes on the need to make the results comparable across all learning areas and learning institutions. To achieve this noble dream, Omonigho (2012) justifies the need to equip teachers with the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes in continuous assessment designs and procedures. These processes and procedures include but are not limited to test items construction, marking, grading, and computation. The Zimbabwean CALA model needs to adopt such recommendations to make use of a standardized measure per CALA across all secondary schools in the country

*Increasing the salaries of teachers so that they will assist learners*

The researchers noted that the poor implementation of CALA was also necessitated by the demoralization of teachers. They were not interested in taking up the task since they were lowly paid. A demoralized person will not perform to his/her best. The researchers are of the perspective that there is a need to increase the salaries of teachers since they are key stakeholders in the implementation and operationalization of CALA. This strategy is a reaction to the current undesirable situation where school teachers have been accused of corrupt practices of extortion through charging CALA-based tasks given to the learners. Increasing the monetary benefits of teachers through salaries will go a long way in capacitating teachers to fully assist learners in doing CALA-based tasks. This ensures quality teaching and learning.

*Rationalization of CALA tasks*

In their study, Oli and Olkaba (2017) recommend a reasonable workload for teachers about continuous assessment to avoid unnecessary overload. This recommendation could also perfectly fit into the case of Zimbabwe. Informed by research findings, the researchers make a clarion call to the relevant educational authorities to reduce the number of CALA tasks each and every learner is expected to do before they sit for their final examination. They could go a long way in gaining the confidence, trust, and faith of key stakeholders actively involved in CALA processes and procedures. There could be no doubt that this may also help to rebrand the image of CALA in the Zimbabwean education system and beyond.

**CONCLUSION**

Regardless of the supposedly immense benefits of CALA, its adoption and implementation have been met with mixed feelings between and among stakeholders in the education sector. Such mixed feelings have overshadowed the significance and relevance of CALA in the context of Zimbabwe. For the period under review (2017-2023), the ZIMSEC Ordinary Level pass rate after the introduction of CALA has been fluctuating from one year to another which is similar to trends observed before the introduction of CALA. Through the review of stakeholders' observations on CALA, it stood out that the excessive load of CALA tasks proved to be a burden to learners, teachers, parents, and guardians and the absence of comparability of standards in CALA created an uneven playing field for the learners across the country. Further, due to a combination of factors, CALA became a very common and lucrative illegal business with money exchanging hands in the name fulfilling the statutory requirement of CALA. The researchers concluded that the capacitation of teachers through attractive remuneration and training workshops could be viewed as a panacea in the implementation of any curriculum reform since teachers are the key drivers in such a process.

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