

Evaluation Of Teachers' Implementation Of The Competency-Based Curriculum In Kenya

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Abstract

Kenya's transition from a content-based education system to a Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) represents a significant educational reform aimed at equipping learners with essential 21st-century competencies such as critical thinking, collaboration, digital literacy, and problem-solving. This report evaluates teachers' understanding, preparedness, implementation experiences, achievements, and challenges in adopting CBC in Kenyan schools. The findings demonstrate that teacher preparedness plays a central role in determining the effectiveness of CBC implementation. While CBC has contributed to improved learner engagement, skill acquisition, and community participation, numerous challenges persist, including inadequate teacher training, insufficient resources, limited digital literacy among teachers, and inadequate parental awareness. Additionally, the lack of teacher involvement in curriculum planning has affected ownership and smooth implementation. This report recommends strengthening teacher training programs, improving infrastructure and resource allocation, enhancing parental involvement, and promoting collaboration among key stakeholders to ensure the successful implementation and sustainability of CBC in Kenya.

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I. Introduction

Across the globe, education systems are increasingly shifting towards competency-based models in response to the demands of the modern world, which requires individuals who are adaptable, innovative, and capable of applying knowledge in practical situations. East African countries, including Kenya, have embraced these reforms to prepare learners for evolving social, economic, and technological environments. Competency-Based Curriculum emphasizes the development of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and competencies that enable learners to function effectively in society. According to Mulenga and Kabombwe (2019), competence involves not only acquiring knowledge but also the ability to apply that knowledge appropriately, supported by the right attitudes and skills. CBC also aligns with Bloom's Taxonomy by promoting higher-order cognitive skills such as analysis, evaluation, and creation.

In Kenya, the Competency-Based Curriculum has replaced the former 8-4-4 system with a new structure referred to as 2-6-3-3-3. The 8-4-4 system faced widespread criticism for its overemphasis on academic content and examinations at the expense of practical skills and creativity. As noted by Akala (2021), the system contributed to the production of graduates who lacked market-relevant skills, contributing to youth unemployment despite national development plans under Vision 2030. The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development introduced CBC to address these shortcomings and equip learners with competencies such as communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and digital literacy.

II. Teacher Understanding And Skills In CBC Implementation

The successful implementation of CBC depends heavily on teachers, as they are responsible for translating curriculum policy into classroom practice. Teachers' understanding, competence, and attitudes directly influence the effectiveness of implementation. Momanyi and Rop (2020) found that many teachers in Kenya feel insufficiently prepared to implement CBC, with only a small proportion expressing confidence in their readiness. Although the government has provided training programs, many teachers consider these sessions insufficient and rushed.

Digital literacy is essential for CBC implementation. However, studies by Silas (2020) and Akala (2021) indicate that many teachers lack sufficient ICT skills and confidence in using technology for teaching. Teachers also require strong pedagogical and assessment skills to effectively evaluate learners using continuous assessment methods. Ondimu (2018) and Katam (2020) observed resistance among some teachers due to insufficient preparation and unfamiliarity with CBC assessment methods.

III. Successes Of CBC Implementation

CBC has achieved significant successes, particularly in promoting practical and skills-based learning. Amunga, Were, and Ashioya (2020) note that CBC allows learners to demonstrate competence through practical activities, improving skill acquisition and knowledge application. Learners have also participated in community activities, promoting civic responsibility and environmental awareness.

CBC has enhanced learner engagement through learner-centered approaches, continuous assessment, and increased parental involvement. Bunyi (2013) highlights that CBC promotes psychosocial skills such as decision-making and problem-solving. Additionally, parental involvement has strengthened collaboration between teachers, learners, and families, improving learning outcomes (Mwarari, Githui, & Mwenje, 2020).

IV. Challenges In CBC Implementation

CBC implementation has faced several challenges, including inadequate teacher training, limited resources, overcrowded classrooms, and insufficient ICT infrastructure. Waweru (2018) reports that many teachers lack adequate professional development opportunities. Ngwacho (2019) notes that excluding teachers from curriculum development reduces ownership and commitment.

Resource shortages, particularly in public schools, hinder effective implementation (Amunga et al., 2020). Silas (2020) highlights the lack of ICT skills among teachers. Njagi (2020) also reports curriculum material errors caused by rushed implementation. Parental awareness and involvement remain limited due to lack of information and resources (Masika, 2020).

V. Recommendations

The Ministry of Education should strengthen teacher training programs, improve ICT infrastructure, recruit more teachers, and ensure equitable resource distribution. Teacher education institutions should integrate CBC into their training programs. Stakeholder involvement, including teachers and parents, should be enhanced to improve ownership and support implementation.

VI. Conclusion

CBC represents a transformative shift in Kenya's education system aimed at equipping learners with essential competencies for modern society. While CBC has achieved important successes, challenges related to teacher preparedness, resources, and stakeholder involvement must be addressed. Strengthening training, infrastructure, and collaboration will ensure the successful implementation and sustainability of CBC in Kenya.

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