

Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) Implementation And The Transition To Junior Secondary School In Kenya

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Abstract

The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), which developed the CBC, released it in 2017 under the direction of the Ministry of Education. According to KICD, the 8-4-4 Curriculum was unsuitable for the shifting of Kenyans since it placed more emphasis on academics than on preparing students for the workforce, necessitating the creation of CBC. Despite the gains in CBC implementation in schools and the transition to Junior Secondary School, the government still faces particular difficulties in implementing this new Curriculum. Secondary research was done to examine the data from already-existing sources and publications to assess and contextualize the implementation of CBC in Kenya and the transition to Junior Secondary School (JSS). This essay evaluates Kenya's CBC implementation and JSS transitional success stories and discusses Kenya's difficulties in doing so.

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I. Introduction

A competency-based curriculum (CBC) bases learning on the needs and potential of particular learners within a flexible framework and set of principles that can vary and adapt in response to the learners' demands. Amutabi and Nsenga (2019) define CBC as a type of communal learning in which the teacher and students collaborate to develop answers and solutions to both straightforward and complicated learning needs that benefit humanity. The CBC promotes hands-on training and infuses learning new material by observation, learning as you go, experiential learning, and practical experimentation to grow at each successive phase. Exams are optional in CBC; however, several Competency measures are employed to assess whether a student understands the topic or enhances their performance. Due to Kenya's management of the new system's implementation rather than the system's promises, scholars have recently emphasized CBC. This essay identifies Kenya's CBC implementation and JSS transitional success stories and discusses the country's difficulties in putting the CBC into practice and switching to JSS.

II. Background

In the words of researcher Kiprotich (2020), Competence-Based Education has evolved over the past century, taking on many different forms before the phrase and idea took hold in the 1960s, starting in the US. By assisting students in acquiring Competency through the development of required competencies, CBC should accept the task of preparing students for both the workplace and society. Africa embraced CBC to satisfy the demand for qualified workers ready to use their abilities in resolving global difficulties and competing in the international market. Competence-Based Education (CBE) was desirable to match education with society's social and economic demands. The Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE) modified the secondary school curricula to give graduates the skills they need to succeed in academics and society today. As part of the redesign, the Curriculum was switched from content-based to competency-based. The content-based Curriculum has come under scrutiny for supplying students with information and abilities that don't correspond to the demands of the global economy or equip its recipients to meet the twenty-first century's complex social and economic concerns.

The KICD created the CBC, a new educational program introduced by the Education Ministry in 2017. This was Kenya's third educational system; the first, 7-4-2-3, was phased out in 1985 and was replaced by the 8-4-4 Curriculum, which, according to the KICD, was unsuitable for the country's shifting needs because it placed too much emphasis on academics rather than preparing students for the workforce.

In the CBC system, children spend two years in pre-primary, six years in primary school, three years in junior high school, three years in senior high school, and three years in postsecondary institutions and universities. Each level of the Curriculum now has new courses. For instance, the courses taught at junior secondary and senior

secondary schools include Kiswahili, mathematics, life skills, English, social studies, religion, sports, health education, integrated science, business studies, agriculture, and physical education.

Since the new system is based on talent, it was created to answer the problems found in the 8-4-4 system. Learners won't take examinations like the national exams administered in the previous system after every level and used to decide a learner's fate. But rather than having to study for the 8-4-4 system, they will be put to the test using Continuous Assessment Tests (CATs) on their learned skills. This will allow the students to grow outside the classroom and concentrate on finding the most effective ways to use their unique talents for a living. ICT requirements have increased across all educational levels due to the new system. Since the Competence Based Curriculum is learner-centred rather than teacher-centred like the old system, the Ministry of Education claims it is the best system Kenya has ever had.

III. Objectives

This paper aims to:

- Identify Kenya's CBC implementation and JSS transitional success stories.
- Describe the challenges Kenya faces in implementing the CBC and transitioning to JSS.

IV. Literature Review

This chapter provides a thorough overview of the research-related literature produced by other scholars and sources working in the same area of inquiry. This includes a discussion of the study's theoretical underpinnings, empirical research on the effects of competency-based curricula (CBC), and the conceptual framework.

Talent realization

Current trends in education in Kenya and around the world demand creating pathways that connect students to fields of interest, aptitude, and talent to ensure that education is structured to enable each student to realize their full potential regardless of location, financial situation, race, or religion. The reforms place demands on schools to develop their own "nitch" as opposed to the current scenario in Kenya, making each a centre of excellence in a specific field of expertise for which it is recognized.

Educational institutions may establish themselves as centers of excellence by upholding the most stringent standards of instruction through outstanding leadership, utilizing methods that focus on learners and distinctive assessments, involving learners in research and training, requiring them to participate in charity work, and putting in place systems and processes for feedback to ensure that all departments maintain quality and standards. When learners can select their field of expertise at a young age, the results match their interests because the initial stages of mastery will develop into valuable domains. The new program will help students go beyond the classroom and concentrate on finding the most effective ways to use their unique talents for a living.

Theoretical Framework

The Competency built Curriculum is built on several distinct theories that have developed over time, allowing researchers to create instructional materials for students. Among the theories are the Social constructivism theory and the theory of visible learning.

Visible learning theory

John Hattie developed the visible learning theory in 2008, focusing on the elements that affect student learning outcomes in schools to achieve the best quality in the new CBC. He believed that instruction is most effective when it helps students develop their independence so they can study alone and that students should see instruction as the key to their learning success. John listed ten variables that affect learning results. These elements include mutual teaching, feedback, student self-reporting grades, instructor clarity, problem-solving instruction, teacher-student relationships, professional development for teachers, formative assessments, metacognitive methods, and self-verbalization.

Hattie (2012) argues that educators must regularly assess their pupils and adapt their instructional strategies in light of the results. Students should be able to comprehend what is required of them and how to complete a task while learning, and teachers should closely assess students' ongoing learning and adopt new teaching strategies for improved results. A solid relationship between teachers and students is necessary for effective teaching and learning so that both sides can work together to accomplish their expected goals. Every student's strengths should be recognized by teachers, who should also encourage students to develop various ways to make learning activities more straightforward and efficient. According to Hattie (2012), teacher-student feedback is crucial, and for it to be effective, it must take place in a learning environment and be pertinent and

concise. The instructor must offer solutions to the problem at hand. Additionally, encouraging positive feedback is advised, especially for kids, to keep them active and increase their self-assurance in their learning capacity.

Social Constructivism Theory

Dewey (2006) concentrated on the social factors that affect students' abilities to attain the students' behavior and talents. He argued that involvement in the classroom content and interaction with the outside world help children learn more effectively. Teachers should only serve as facilitators, advising pupils on the most effective ways to learn new things and become self-directed learners. According to Dewey (2006), teachers should avoid giving students too much academic work and instead encourage them to participate in learning activities. Dewey believed classrooms should be realistic representations of real-life events in social contexts.

Students should study and work together to solve classroom challenges as a roadmap. Teachers must comprehend that each student is unique and that various teaching methods must be used. Students must be given problems, and teachers must watch to see how they handle those challenges without help from other students. Teachers will be better able to identify each student's areas of strength and weakness and offer advice on how to improve as a result.

Critical review of the literature

The study of the competency-based Curriculum's effects shows that because it focuses more on teaching skills than knowledge, the new Curriculum can raise the standard of instruction in classrooms. The instructor or coaches, the student, and the government are the three primary forces behind the course, and they must collaborate closely to ensure the Curriculum's goals are attained. Every learner's abilities and capabilities must be recognized by the teacher, who must then assist them in developing the necessary knowledge and proficiency in their field of study. To apply the appropriate skills and provide the learners with the right competencies, they must thoroughly understand the Curriculum. Periodic training is advised to make sure the suggested policies are implemented. Students must take responsibility for their learning and make sure they follow the proper procedures because this Curriculum promotes learners' self-assessments and performance-based reviews.

V. Methodology

Secondary research, often referred to as desktop research, was used to examine data from already existing resources and publications to define and contextualize the concepts of CBC and the transition to Junior secondary school in Kenya. Desk research is a style of inquiry that draws data from reports and other resources of a similar nature that are accessible online, in public libraries, or through surveys that have already been done, among other sources. Some companies also maintain data that can be used for the study. According to Rothstein (2021), data that researchers have obtained for another purpose can be used to address some social research questions. Abu-Taieh et al. (2020) attribute the frequent use of existing data for the study to the enormous volumes of data that academics have recently collected and archived. They go on to suggest that employing such data is an alternative. To properly enable the Ministry of Education to implement the new CBC curriculum and transit smoothly to JSS, the study first examined the available research data on CBC implementation worldwide and in Kenya.

VI. Results and Discussion

Kenya's CBC implementation and JSS transitional success stories.

According to Robert (2021), the Kenyan government's accomplishment in adopting the CBC with the first cohort class in 2017 and the class's present placement in grade 7, or junior secondary school, is one of the new Curriculum's significant achievements. The learners have completed grades three and six. They are currently enrolled in junior secondary school, making the implementation strategy that started with early childhood education successful in the effort to implement the competency-based Curriculum. The government now takes pride in completing the first and second phases of the curriculum implementation.

Another achievement is the multi-sectoral training of staff members involved in implementing the competency-based Curriculum at Junior Secondary School. Over 100,000 primary school teachers have received training to assist them in comprehending the Curriculum's standards and provide them with the skills, information, and attitudes needed to implement the competency-based Curriculum and transition to JSS successfully. These courses are crucial because they equip the officers with the skills to oversee and perform the new Curriculum. Additionally, the government employed 30,000 permanent and pensionable teachers to instruct in junior secondary schools in 2023.

The creation and distribution of documents, such as the syllabus, schemes of work, assessment records, portfolios, lesson plans, and other documents required for instruction and learning in the JSS, is another accomplishment in implementing the CBC, according to Robert (2021). The availability of these documents makes it easier for teachers, students, and stakeholders to implement the Curriculum smoothly by using actual documents

like the syllabus and the provided samples to create the real documents that will be used in the implementation.

Without these documents, trying to transit to JSS would be a nightmare.

The CBC's implementation obstacles in Kenya.

One problem in implementing CBC and transitioning to JSS is inadequate learning and teaching resources and poor-quality textbooks. It has occasionally been difficult to locate specific books for a given class,

there have been gaps in the textbook preparation process, and publication delays have occurred. This has hampered the transition to JSS since it irritates teachers and parents.

A lack of human resources is another major obstacle to implementing a competency-based curriculum at the junior secondary school level. There has been an issue with the low number of teachers in Kenya's public schools for a very long time. The implementation process is highly challenging due to a lack of teachers, and the substantial work teachers are expected to do.

A lack of parental support is another issue that challenges the competency-based Curriculum's implementation and the transition to JSS. Except for those who work in the education sector and have received training as part of their jobs, most parents of students currently enrolled in CBC were recipients of the 8-4-4 Curriculum. As a result, they are largely ignorant of the new Curriculum. Because of this, it is very challenging for parents to comprehend what is being taught in the classroom and to help their children with their homework and other at-home responsibilities. Due to the lack of parental support and involvement, the transition to JSS is complex, even though teachers and parents are expected to collaborate and co-educate for the new Curriculum to be successfully implemented.

Another obstacle to the transition to JSS is that most teachers lack the expertise to integrate ICT into their classroom instruction within the CBC framework. When technology is employed as a partner, it helps students and teachers gain access to new concepts and tasks. It also allows them to develop new ways to do previously known jobs and explore more horizons in their field of study. Therefore, it is difficult for instructors to execute the Curriculum in this period of technological growth if they still lack specific ICT abilities.

Recommendations

The following suggestions have been offered in response to Kenya's competency-based curriculum implementation and transition to JSS obstacles.

- The government needs to hire additional teachers on permanent, pensionable, contract, and internship conditions to assist in closing the teacher shortfall in the classrooms.
- In addition to ensuring that schools receive adequate learning and teaching resources, the government must make sure that facilities are built in schools, such as spacious classrooms, to give pupils enough space to develop their talents.
- Through community awareness initiatives and media efforts, parents must be aware of their roles in implementing the competency-based Curriculum. This will allow them to collaborate with the teachers and act as co-educators to give their children the greatest education possible with the new Curriculum.
- The government must integrate competency-based curriculum training into teacher training institutions so that when these instructors graduate, the teachers will have acquired the necessary competencies to use and instruct students using the competency-based Curriculum.

VII. Conclusion

Briefly, this article evaluates the challenges and successes of the CBC's implementation and transition to JSS in Kenya. The 8-4-4 Curriculum, according to KICD, was inadequate for Kenyans' changing demands because it prioritized academics over preparing pupils for the workforce, prompting the development of CBC. CBC is flexible, affordable, self-paced, enjoyable, and skill-based. It eliminates unhealthy competition for classroom space in primary and secondary. With the first cohort of junior secondary students already in grade 7, Kenya has effectively implemented CBC. Another accomplishment is the multi-sectoral training of staff members responsible for putting the competency-based Curriculum into practice at JSS. On the other hand, challenges to the CBC's implementation and Transition to JSS include a lack of practical learning and teaching resources, low-quality textbooks, human resources, parental support, and ICT skills among teachers.

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